

Questions About Personal Relationships

(or, What is the Church of Jesus Christ's position on Marriage, Divorce, Remarriage, Sex, Sexuality, Polygamy, Polyandry, and Gender Identity?)

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Introduction

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Marriage is a subject that has been often discussed and for some it is an uncomfortable conversation because of their experiences in life. But marriage is instituted of God, and through marriage the love of God may be more fully appreciated if it is adhered to under the conditions that God has set forth. The difficulties that can arise in life can be overcome by faithful support and diligence in marriage when both the husband and wife commit themselves to one another and to God.

The answers provided here are not directed towards any individual, but represent the ideals presented in the Gospel and supported in the Church. As such, these answers are intended to represent what God has provided in the scriptures. Those that are not members of the Church may find these answers unsatisfactory, narrow minded or out of touch with reality, but such also view the Kingdom of God as being an impractical reality. Some that are members of the Church may have difficulty reconciling these remarks with their own lives, but it is the purpose of the scriptures, and of the Spirit of God to help us improve our condition through the Gospel of Jesus Christ so that we might be presented blameless and holy at the last day.

Likewise, the subject of divorce can be difficult because there is a difference between how divorce is viewed by the world as compared to the Church, and indeed even some in the Church struggle with this subject. Divorce is an important subject because it is viewed by many as an easy solution to problems that may arise in marriage. In many cases, however, correcting those problems without divorce is possible and is the better, though perhaps not easier solution which can allow forgiveness to perform its very important role.

The additional subjects regarding sex and the other terms described above have greater interest in recent years as points of discussion because of the changes that have taken place in modern culture. While these may be more commonly discussed today in public forums, they are certainly not new subjects or ideas. Indeed, these are items that have been discussed or practiced in various forms for thousands of years, which is not itself a permission to engage in them; indeed, history tells us the consequences of each and how they have affected the cultures in which they have been practiced.

Who may marry?

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While unpopular today, the “old fashioned” standard of marriage between a man and woman is entirely scriptural. In fact, the scriptures never mention any other kind of marriage whatsoever. In the absence of references to other kinds of marriage, there is one kind supported by the scriptures: marriage between a man and a woman. The standard preference from a scriptural perspective is for both persons to preserve their virginity until marriage, and this is intended to prevent the problems inherent in committing adultery or fornication in violation of the commandments. However, if one has not been married previously and is not a virgin, they are permitted to marry. Additionally, if one has previously been married but their spouse has died, they are also permitted to marry.

Mark 10:6-9

6 But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female.

7 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife;

8 And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh.

9 What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

Jacob 2:36 Wherefore, my brethren, hear me and hearken to the word of the Lord: For there shall not any man among you have save it be one wife; and concubines he shall have none. For I, the Lord God, delighteth in the chastity of women.

The modern American legal standard for permitting marriage allows two people to marry as long as they are not biologically too closely related, are old enough (and/or have legal parental permission,) and are not currently married to another person. Scripturally, the condition for marriage also requires the two parties to be of opposite biological gender, meaning a biological male and a biological female.

The Church has never served as a regulator of marriage licenses, meaning that legal marriage performed by authorized officials in other churches or by authorized state or federal officials is acceptable, or even marriages performed legally in other countries. While a marriage license is often sufficient evidence for proof, the Church has little if any reason to request proof of marriage. If two people should lie about being married, the sin is upon their own heads. Marriage ceremonies officiated by Church authorities must still receive legal authority from the state in which the wedding takes place in order to observe all civil and federal laws; in other words, the Church does not issue marriage licenses of its own. However, within the Church, the only persons permitted by Church law to conduct such weddings are priests and elders. If the two parties desiring to be married choose to do so by use of a “Justice of the Peace” or a suitably authorized civil court judge, or by an authorized minister from any other church, the Church has no objections to this and will recognize the marriage as lawful.

Under what conditions is divorce allowed?

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Today the American legal standard for permitting divorce is, at a minimum, simply “irreconcilable differences.” This can mean many different things to different people. However, the scriptural allowance for divorce is if either party participates in adultery. If there are other reasons, the scriptures do not list them. Adultery consists of participating in sexual activity with someone that is not part of the marriage. That is to say, the scriptural evidence supports the “allowance” of divorce in such situations but does not demand it. Forgiveness is always to be considered, but in a case of wanton disregard to the marriage, or the lack of repentance for having committed adultery, divorce is an option.

Matthew 5:31-32 (KJV)

31 It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement:
32 But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.

Mark 10:2-12 (KJV)

2 And the Pharisees came to him, and asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? tempting him.
3 And he answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you?
4 And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away.
5 And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept.
6 But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female.
7 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife;
8 And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh.
9 What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.
10 And in the house his disciples asked him again of the same matter.
11 And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her.
12 And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery.

Luke 16:18 (KJV) Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery.

3 Nephi 5:79-80 (Book of Mormon)

79 It hath been written that whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement.
80 Verily, verily, I say unto you that whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery; and whoso shall marry her who is divorced committeth adultery.

The marriage covenant does not demand that an abusive relationship must be maintained at all costs. When life or limb are endangered, or if there is significant persistent emotional abuse, it is only reasonable to separate from one another. Whether the additional step of divorce is permitted, the scriptures simply do not provide further information. Under the Mosaic law of the old testament a writing of divorcement could be given for any variety of excuses, but in the new testament the Mosaic law was fulfilled at Jesus’ crucifixion, so Jesus gave the disciples a standard to abide by which established that adultery was the primary reason for permitting divorce.

Church law as given by revelation provides some additional commentary about these situations:

Doctrine and Covenants 42:20a-c

20a Behold, verily I say unto you, that whatever persons among you having put away their companions for the cause of fornication; or in other words, if they shall testify before you in all lowliness of heart that this is the case, ye shall not cast them out from among you;

20b but if ye shall find that any persons have left their companions for the sake of adultery, and they themselves are the offenders, and their companions are living, they shall be cast out from among you.

20c And again I say unto you, that ye shall be watchful and careful, with all inquiry, that ye receive none such among you if they are married, and if they are not married, they shall repent of all their sins, or ye shall not receive them.

In all cases, if there are those that will not repent of adultery or fornication, they cannot be counted as members of the Church, but if they do repent in all lowliness of heart, they can be numbered as members of the Church.

This is the same advice given in the Book of Mormon when the Lord outlined this same principle to Alma, who was a high priest in the Church.

Alma 11:126-141

126 And because thou hast inquired of me concerning the transgressor, thou art blessed.

127 Thou art my servant, and I covenant with thee that thou shalt have eternal life; and thou shalt serve me, and go forth in my name, and shalt gather together my sheep.

128 And he that will hear my voice shall be my sheep; and him shall ye receive into the church; and him will I also receive.

129 For behold, this is my church; whosoever is baptized shall be baptized unto repentance.

130 And whosoever ye receive shall believe in my name; and him will I freely forgive;

131 For it is I that taketh upon me the sins of the world; for it is I that hath created them; and it is I that granteth unto him that believeth, in the end, a place at my right hand.

132 For behold, in my name are they called; and if they know me, they shall come forth and shall have a place eternally at my right hand.

133 And it shall come to pass that when the second trump shall sound, then shall they that never knew me come forth and shall stand before me;

134 And then shall they know that I am the Lord, their God, that I am their Redeemer; but they would not be redeemed.

135 And then will I confess unto them that I never knew them; and they shall depart into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

136 Therefore, I say unto you that he that will not hear my voice, the same shall ye not receive into my church, for him I will not receive at the last day.

137 Therefore, I say unto you, Go; and whosoever transgresseth against me, him shall ye judge according to the sins which he has committed;

138 And if he confess his sins before thee and me and repenteth in the sincerity of his heart, him shall ye forgive, and I will forgive him also;

139 Yea, and as often as my people repent, will I forgive them their trespasses against me.

140 And ye shall also forgive one another your trespasses; for verily, I say unto you, He that forgiveth not his neighbor's trespasses, when he says that he repents, the same hath brought himself under condemnation.

141 Now I say unto you, Go; and whosoever will not repent of his sins, the same shall not be numbered among my people; and this shall be observed from this time forward.

Divorce in modern-day America typically involves having lawyers file the necessary paperwork for divorce and having a court to approve the disunion. While that may keep some peace it does not resolve the source of conflict, and thus divorce is not always the proper solution. In the Church, marital problems can often be worked out amicably through counseling without having to resort to divorce, and those marriages may be stronger after doing so if both parties make an honest effort to resolve any differences. In the rest of the world, courts are the only arbiter of differences if one or both parties chooses to take the route of divorce to solve their problems.

Under what conditions may I marry another person if I have been divorced?

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Jesus specifically notes that if a marriage is dissolved for reasons of adultery, neither of the two should marry anyone else, as doing so results in committing adultery. For those who are members of the Church, this stands as an example to show that those who plan to marry should not take this commitment lightly.

The apostle Paul wrote that marriage is a covenant that is in effect until either of the two married persons dies. Given that condition, it appears to be scripturally accurate to say that if two people have been married and choose to divorce, they should not remarry unless or until the other person has died.

Romans 7:1-3 (KJV)

1 Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?

2 For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband.

3 So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.

1 Corinthians 7:35-40 (KJV)

35 And this I speak for your own profit; not that I may cast a snare upon you, but for that which is comely, and that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction.

36 But if any man think that he behaveth himself uncomely toward his virgin, if she pass the flower of her age, and need so require, let him do what he will, he sinneth not: let them marry.

37 Nevertheless he that standeth stedfast in his heart, having no necessity, but hath power over his own will, and hath so decreed in his heart that he will keep his virgin, doeth well.

38 So then he that giveth her in marriage doeth well; but he that giveth her not in marriage doeth better.

39 The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord.

40 But she is happier if she so abide, after my judgment: and I think also that I have the Spirit of God.

There are some who say that disallowing someone from getting remarried while their former husband or wife is yet alive effectively denies them of the happiness that they might enjoy otherwise by allowing them to remarry. While there may be some truth in that, there are greater reasons and greater rewards to found in to working out marital problems before taking the step of getting divorced. Marriage may be an institution based on love, but it is also an institution based on choices. The same argument to permit remarriage after divorce can be used to justify committing many crimes under the guise of being happier while doing so. They that enter into marriage should consider very seriously what the purpose of marriage is and dedicate themselves to that goal.

Some have erroneously taken the scriptures to mean that the purpose of marriage is to produce children, but that is not strictly true. If that were the case married couples that are incapable of having children could never fulfill the primary purpose of marriage. Rather, the true purpose of marriage is to build and establish a spiritual bond of love more so than what any physical expression of love alone is capable of accomplishing. If children are a result of that bond it then becomes an opportunity to manifest the love of God in other ways, and this is also pleasing to God.

What if I have already been divorced and have married another person?

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The scriptures do not give any indication that one must leave their new husband or wife in the situation of one or both having been previously married and divorced. Indeed, if one has married again after divorce, there is a scriptural prohibition found in the old testament against marrying the first husband or wife again. While this is an Old Testament regulation and is not strictly mentioned in the New Testament, it should be seriously considered.

Deuteronomy 24:1-5

1 When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house.

2 And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife.

3 And if the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth it in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her to be his wife;

4 Her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled; for that is abomination before the LORD: and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance.

Rather, if one has married a new husband or wife after being divorced, the best step is to stay married and make this marriage work, if it is at all possible. One cannot make one problem better by compounding it with another equal or greater problem.

There are some that have been through more than one divorce. If that is the case, and another marriage is being considered, it is well advised that caution be exercised. A pattern of abuse of the marriage covenant is strong enough to consider not getting married any additional times as this indicates an inability to maintain the covenant. Some states place a limit on how many times a person may be married and divorced for this exact reason. Besides these reasons, the scriptures also speak against this practice.

I'm not married, but I want to have sex with someone -- what is the Church's view on this? [Top](#)

It may seem simplistic, but sexual activity outside of marriage is forbidden. This cannot be overstated. It is an explicit violation of the commandments of God to participate in sex with someone that you are not married to. The terms "adultery" and "fornication" in relation to this question are identified in the commandments of God as sin.

Matthew 5:27-28 (KJV)

27 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery:

28 But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

3 Nephi 5:76-78 (Book of Mormon)

76 Behold, it is written by them of old time that thou shalt not commit adultery;

77 But I say unto you that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery already in his heart.

78 Behold, I give you a commandment that ye suffer none of these things to enter into your heart; for it is better that ye should deny yourselves of these things, wherein ye will take up your cross, than that ye should be cast into hell.

If one persists in sexual activity of this nature, and it becomes known to those in the Church, Church officials may have no recourse but to take their names off the rolls of Church membership. That does not forbid them from attending Church meetings, but it does mean they are not allowed to participate in Church democratic processes or Church-related responsibilities or functional roles, and if the person is a member of the priesthood, they may be censured by the priesthood in their priesthood role. In either case, if evidences are brought forward that a member of the Church has been doing these things, they are allowed to make their case before the Church either to show the report to be false, or to admit that they are guilty of committing this sin, and this must be done before the stated actions can be taken against the person. If they repent and commit themselves to abstinence outside of marriage, they can be forgiven, and their name may be restored to the Church membership rolls. Additional reports of activity such as this will have to be dealt with individually and in like manner.

What does the Church believe in regard to sexuality in the form of LGBTQ or other sexual preferences?

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The scriptures provide for allowing only one form of sexuality, and that is between a man and woman that are married, both of whom are biologically identified in those terms. The lifestyles and practices of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual, or those Questioning (LGBTQ), or those finding other forms of sexuality, are explicitly forbidden, and these are not mere “Church Rules” – they are commandments given by God. As such, the Church is required to abide by those commandments.

Leviticus 18:20-23

20 Moreover thou shalt not lie carnally with thy neighbour’s wife, to defile thyself with her.

21 And thou shalt not let any of thy seed pass through the fire to Molech, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I am the LORD.

22 Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination.

23 Neither shalt thou lie with any beast to defile thyself therewith: neither shall any woman stand before a beast to lie down thereto: it is confusion.

Romans 1:26-32

26 For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature:

27 And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet.

28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;

29 Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers,

30 Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,

31 Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful:

32 Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

1 Corinthians 6:9-10

9 Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,

10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

While the explicit language of the book of Leviticus forbids these sexual relationships from being exercised, there are some who suggest these commandments are no longer in effect since the end of the Old Testament Mosaic law that was brought about by the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. While the punishments for participating in these kinds of forbidden sexual relationships (i.e., death by stoning) have been eliminated, their offensiveness to God has not been diminished. Rather, the sinful nature of these kinds of sexual relationships is reinforced by the apostle Paul in his writings as shown in the references to the New Testament books of Romans and 1 Corinthians listed earlier. The crucifixion of Jesus Christ did not transform what was considered in the Old Testament to be an abomination into something that pleases God today in the New Testament era.

It is commonly reported by people that their LGBTQ (or other) preferences cannot be denied, or that acting upon or expressing these feelings is the only way they can be happy, or that they are biologically driven by their particular sexual preference. The list of reasons for a particular sexual proclivity are many and varied, but the scriptures only permit two forms: heterosexual relationships within marriage, and abstinence. This may seem harsh for those with LGBTQ (or other) interests, but genetically and physiologically the human male and female sexual relationship is designed for a specific kind of use that is not well-suited to other forms. Additionally, any other form of sexual relationship introduces greater possibility for disease transmission and injury.

Perhaps more than this, however, the commandments of God were not given to satiate the feelings or lusts that may arise from alternative sexual preferences. Along with these commandments there is the command, "thou shalt not steal," which does not address if someone wishes to steal because it feels appropriate or right. Neither is the commandment, "thou shalt have no other gods before me," given on conditions of not preferring the Lord God. Rather, they are inviolate, and demand a corresponding effort to obey.

To address this, Jesus remarked about some who are eunuchs at birth, some who are made to be eunuchs, and some who choose to be eunuchs. In this he was not only referring to those that have been surgically changed to remove their sexual organs, but also those that choose abstinence rather than commit sin or that prefer to devote themselves to the ministry or to worship.

Matthew 19:10-12

10 His disciples say unto him, If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry.

11 But he said unto them, All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given.

12 For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.

It is Paul, however, that remarks that if one is not able to live as a eunuch and does not wish to endure the trials of abstinence, and do not wish to break any commandments about adultery or fornication, that they should marry. This is, however, in the context of marriage between a man and a woman. His own preference was to remain unmarried so that he might be fully devoted to serving God.

1 Corinthians 7:8-9

8 I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I.

9 But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn.

Having given these examples, it seems quite clear that the scriptural answer is to either be married in the allowed sense, or to remain unmarried and abstinent.

The importance of this is illustrated by the biblical example of Sodom and Gomorrah. The offensiveness of the sexual immorality practiced by the residents of those cities was enough to draw God's wrath upon them to their utter destruction. The scripture passage itself notes that the men of these cities sexually abused one another, and would have done the same to Lot, his wife and daughters, and even the angels that met with them.

Genesis 19:5-7

5 And they called unto Lot, and said unto him, Where are the men which came in to thee this night? bring them out unto us, that we may know them.

6 And Lot went out at the door unto them, and shut the door after him,

7 And said, I pray you, brethren, do not so wickedly.

The modern criminal offense of Sodomy derives its meaning from this biblical passage in reference to the city of Sodom, where Lot lived and was rescued by the angels who appeared as men. While the criminal term today is most often used in reference to adults that abuse young boys or girls, it is not exclusively so. Many people around the world have been convicted of Sodomy against adults, and it is considered an act of violence. The sexual practices of those in the LGBTQ (or other) community are of a similar nature even when those who do so are consensual participants and when legal systems and courts now permit it.

What does the Church have to say about Polygamy and (its opposite) Polyandry?

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While often controversial, the Church has always believed that marriage is between just one man and just one woman. Polygamy (one man and more than one woman) and Polyandry (one woman and more than one man) have always been condemned by God in scripture even though some of the more popular figures in the scriptures practiced them. Abraham, Jacob, David, and especially Solomon are commonly referenced by those who support polygamy in the belief that because it is found in scripture it must also be good. The flaw in this reasoning is that the scriptures describe conditions where murder was committed, or stealing was performed, and these are specifically condemned by commandment. For these well-known people that participated in polygamy, it is important to see that although they are noted for their peculiarly good relationship with God overall, their practice of polygamy **always** resulted in serious repercussions for themselves and their posterity.

1. Abraham – when Sarah induced Abraham to have a child with another woman (Hagar), the result was not only hostility between Sarah and her handmaid, but the child – Ishmael – became trouble for the marital, or “covenant” offspring of Abraham.

2. Jacob – ultimately having four wives, Jacob faced the contention between sisters he had married, their maid-servants that he also married, and the contention between their sons and their descendants that ultimately resulted in their captivity in Egypt for 430 years.

3. David – ultimately having eight wives, his infatuation with Bathsheba drove David to order the effective murder of her then-husband and resulted in the death of the baby that she had with David.

4. Solomon – having as many as 700 wives and 300 concubines was in direct violation of the face-to-face commandment given to him by God, resulting in the splitting of the kingdom of Israel into the northern and southern kingdoms, ensuing civil wars, intrigues and an overall national weakness that allowed Israel to be overtaken by four major kingdoms over the course of hundreds of years including Babylon, Media-Persia, Greece, and finally Rome.

Even such families as that of the prophet Samuel were not without problems. Samuel’s father was married to two wives, and though things seemed to work out satisfactorily with Samuel, there was contention, harshness and jealousy between the two wives. This shows that polygamy in even devout families is unhealthy.

The commandment concerning marriage states, rather, “For this cause shall a man leave father and mother and shall cleave unto his wife, and they twain shall be one flesh” (Matthew 19:5). One man and one woman – and it explicitly says, “they twain shall be one flesh,” meaning, “these two shall be one flesh.” It never indicates three, four or more, nor does it say that the man would “cleave unto his wives,” which also indicates it is intended to be a state for just one man and one woman, notwithstanding there are those in scripture who violated this commandment.

What is the Church's view on Gender Identity?

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The concept of Gender Identity as being separate from sexual identity being assigned at birth is a relatively new spin on an old idea, serving as a new variation on whether one is LGBTQ or not. A man is male and a woman is female, and these bounds are appointed by God, who is the father of Spirits –

Acts 17:24-27

24 God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands;

25 Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;

26 And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation;

27 That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us:

Hebrews 12:9 Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?

While some believe or have been led to believe that they have the mind of a female but the body of a male, or vice-versa, there is no strong biological or psychological evidence to support this. The reasons why some may believe this are many, but like the question regarding LGBTQ, it is not about how one feels that determines how they should live, but whether one chooses to be obedient to God.

There are some who claim after what may be many years of marriage that they are unhappy with living as their birth gender of female or male, and therefore desire to change their lifestyle to accommodate their changed perspective. This sometimes even happens after having had several children. The difficult situation this places upon people is that they feel the need to either divorce or distance themselves from their family so they may pursue this other mode of life.

Sadly, the causative reason for being unhappy may have little to do with gender sensibilities, but with other factors in life. For those that are not members of the Church, their reasons for having these feelings may not be understood because they lack a knowledge of the scriptures, which identifies any temptations as originating with the devil. That is not to say that they are possessed by a devil, or what some call a demon possession, as that is a much more severe and dangerous interaction between people and evil spirits. However, the devil does have the ability to tempt people in many and diverse ways, including the temptation to change one's view of sexual or gender identity to differ from what was given at birth.

Unlike the teachings of some organizations claiming to be Christian, this is not something that can be treated, as though it were an illness or disease. Rather, it is a conscientious choice to make every day to resist the temptations provided by the adversary. Can people be happy if they have to overcome these temptations every day? They can be if they understand the reason why they need to do so. Consider this statement by Jesus Christ:

Matthew 5:10-12

10 Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11 Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

Though it may seem very strange to suggest that one can have joy and happiness while they are enduring persecutions or temptations such as questioning one's gender identity, yet it is in every way the same. Temptations are what happen to you; joy and gladness are things you can choose despite the circumstances of life -- if you know the reward of faithfulness.

1 Timothy 5:3-7

3 Honour widows that are widows indeed.

4 But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to shew piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God.

5 Now she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day.

6 But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth.

7 And these things give in charge, that they may be blameless.

One may ask, is it fair to ask one group of people to have to resist their "natural" tendencies, while another does not have to?

The answer is that no two people have the same temptations every day. People that do not have any issue with their natural, birth-given gender identity may face other temptations that are equivalent or more difficult to face every day, such as drug addiction, serious injuries, diseases or illnesses. It is possible for all people to have gladness and joy even if they suffer physically, because their rejoicing is not in physical pleasure, but in spiritual life with Jesus Christ. Suffering itself is never joyful or pleasant, but one can have consolation in the hope that is before them in Christ.

Is this fair? This question presumes that fairness and equity are promises we have received from God for this life, and that simply is not true. No two people struggle with the same temptations, and this is because they are different – they have differences of personality, differences of biology, differences of environmental conditions, and so on. Comparing the relative level of temptation with the success or failure in resisting those temptations between any two people is something only God can judge.

Instead, the promises of God to the faithful are not for this life, but for the eternal state of life after death in the resurrection. At that time the faithful will be permitted to enjoy eternal life in the presence of God, where all will be "as the angels of God in heaven," and the more physical, sexual, sensual and carnal desires of life will not be a concern.

Matthew 22:29-30

29 Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.

30 For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven.

Luke 20:34-36

34 And Jesus answering said unto them, The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage:

35 But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage:

36 Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.

The end of all things we must endure, and every commandment we must keep, is to have a brighter hope for eternal life in the presence of God. This is what the apostles and prophets testified in their day.

Alma 10:27-30

27 And now, my brethren, I wish from the inmost part of my heart, yea, with great anxiety, even unto pain, that ye would hearken unto my words, and cast off your sins, and not procrastinate the day of your repentance;

28 But that ye would humble yourselves before the Lord, and call on his holy name, and watch and pray continually, that ye may not be tempted above that which ye can bear, and thus be led by the Holy Spirit, becoming humble, meek, submissive, patient, full of love and all long-suffering; having faith on the Lord;

29 Having a hope that ye shall receive eternal life; having the love of God always in your hearts, that ye may be lifted up at the last day and enter into his rest.

30 And may the Lord grant unto you repentance, that ye may not bring down his wrath upon you, that ye may not be bound down by the chains of hell, that ye may not suffer the second death.

Moroni 7:44-53

44 But behold, my beloved brethren, I judge better things of you, for I judge that ye have faith in Christ because of your meekness; for if ye have not faith in him, then ye are not fit to be numbered among the people of his church.

45 And again, my beloved brethren, I would speak unto you concerning hope.

46 How is it that ye can attain unto faith, save ye shall have hope? And what is it that ye shall hope for?

47 Behold, I say unto you that ye shall have hope, through the atonement of Christ and the power of his resurrection, to be raised unto life eternal; and this because of your faith in him according to the promise;

48 Wherefore, if a man have faith, he must needs have hope; for without faith there cannot be any hope.

49 And again, behold, I say unto you that he cannot have faith and hope, save he shall be meek and lowly of heart; if so, his faith and hope are vain, for none is acceptable before God, save the meek and lowly of heart;

50 And if a man be meek and lowly in heart and confesses by the power of the Holy Ghost that Jesus is the Christ, he must needs have charity; for if he have not charity, he is nothing; wherefore, he must needs have charity.

51 And charity suffereth long, and is kind, and envieth not, and is not puffed up, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, and rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things; wherefore, my beloved brethren, if ye have not charity, ye are nothing, for charity never faileth.

52 Wherefore, cleave unto charity, which is the greatest of all, for all things must fail; but charity is the pure love of Christ, and it endureth forever; and whoso is found possessed of it at the last day, it shall be well with them.

53 Wherefore, my beloved brethren, pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart, that ye may be filled with this love which he hath bestowed upon all who are true followers of his Son Jesus Christ, that

ye may become the sons of God, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is, that we may have this hope, that we may be purified, even as he is pure. Amen.

Moroni 9:27-28

27 My son, be faithful in Christ; and may not the things which I have written grieve thee to weigh thee down unto death; but may Christ lift thee up, and may his sufferings and death, and the showing his body unto our fathers, and his mercy and long-suffering, and the hope of his glory, and of eternal life rest in your mind forever.

28 And may the grace of God, the Father, whose throne is high in the heavens, and our Lord Jesus Christ, who sitteth on the right hand of his power until all things shall become subject unto him, be and abide with you forever. Amen.