

Embracing Life's Choices: Finding Joy and Eternal Happiness

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The story of Eve, often misunderstood and maligned, holds a profound significance in God's Plan of Salvation. In the talks "Lessons from Eve" by Elder Russell M. Nelson and "Where Justice, Love, and Mercy Meet" by Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, we find a nuanced and inspiring exploration of Eve's role in humanity's journey toward eternal happiness.

Eve's decision to partake of the fruit, described by Elder Nelson as a “necessary and courageous step for humanity's progression,” is a pivotal moment in human history. He notes that "if Adam and Eve had not transgressed, they would have remained in the same state in which they were created...and would have had no children."¹ Eve's courageous decision to partake of the fruit was not just a necessary step for humanity's progression, but a moment of profound bravery. As Elder Nelson further clarified that this choice allowed us to know good from evil, experience life's struggles, feel joy, and understand the potential for eternal happiness. Eve decision to leave behind the comfort, beauty, peace and connection with Heavenly Father in the Garden of Eden, must have been heartbreaking. Yet, her faith and trust in God's plan gave her the strength to walk into an unknown territory of desolation where she and Adam would be required to provide for themselves.

The partnership between Adam and Eve powerfully highlights their relationship as one of equality and shared responsibility. They eventually walked together, understanding the full magnitude of their actions and choices. In their partnership, Adam and Eve demonstrated that neither was above the other; both were essential to the purposes God's plan. This serves as a reminder of the significance of unity and love within a marriage to strengthen our families in order to fulfill God's plan - our ultimate purpose here on earth. Working together with God we

¹ Nelson, Russell M. "Lessons from Eve." General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, October 1987. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/1987/10/lessons-from-eve?lang=eng>.

can become better versions of ourselves and prepare to live with Him as Celestial beings throughout the eternities. The union of a man and a woman highlights value and the integral role that we each of us play in His plan of Happiness.

In a talk given by Elder Holland's he emphasizes the significance of the Atonement of Jesus Christ in providing redemption for humanity's fallen state. He states that "the Atonement is not just a solution to the problem of sin; it is a fundamental aspect of God's plan to help us grow and become more like Him."² This teaching emphasizes the interconnectedness of the Fall and the Atonement in the Plan of Happiness, assuring us of the completeness and wisdom of God's plan.

Pondering the lessons learned from Eve's decision, I am reminded of the importance of trusting in God's eternal plan and the Savior's redeeming love. Elder Nelson encourages us to learn from Eve's example, noting that her laboring beside her companion, her responsibilities of parenthood, her worship of the Lord in prayer, her heeding of divine commandments, and her teaching of the gospel to her children are all responsibilities all mothers must try to emulate. I am inspired by and strive to follow Eve's example, seeking to be a faithful partner, a loving parent, and a devoted daughter and disciple of Jesus Christ.

Amid a particularly tough period in my life, marked by successive family hardships, I also have navigated an unfamiliar and dreary landscape. Each day seemed to pile new challenges on top of an already insurmountable level of trials, often leaving me feeling overwhelmed, isolated and in

² Holland, Jeffrey R. "Where Justice, Love, and Mercy Meet." General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, April 2015. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2015/04/where-justice-love-and-mercy-meet?lang=eng>.

a depressive state of despair. During this period of life, which I have dubbed "cry-fest 2023," I received a spiritual prompting to revisit my patriarchal blessing.

My blessing bestowed upon me by my beloved matriarchal grandfather, had always held special significance for me. As I read the familiar words, specific passages suddenly stood out with newfound clarity and urgency. The message was unmistakable: I needed to complete my education.

Acting on this guidance, I initially applied to BYU's continuing education program and UVU's online courses. However, neither option felt quite right. Following another spiritual nudge, I took a leap of faith and applied to Brigham Young University's main campus - a dream I had long held but never pursued.

To my astonishment, I was accepted. These unexpected events opened a new chapter, presenting exciting opportunities and daunting challenges. I knew I would have to confront my anxiety, overcome my fear of tests, and manage my perfectionist tendencies all the while trying to do it in front of other students more than half my age. Yet, the prospect of fulfilling this long-held aspiration filled me with a sense of purpose and joy I hadn't experienced in years.

Immersing myself in the academic environment at BYU has been transformative. Engaging with fellow students and dedicated educators has expanded my horizons and reignited my passion for learning. This journey has not only provided intellectual stimulation but has also served as a powerful antidote to the depression that had long shadowed my days.

Reflecting on this experience, I'm struck by the profound impact of heeding spiritual promptings and embracing the power of choice. By following the guidance received through my patriarchal blessing, I've discovered a path to personal growth, renewed faith, and unexpected happiness.

This journey has reinforced my belief in the divine plan and the joy of aligning our choices with spiritual guidance.

This journey has deepened my appreciation for the fundamental role of choice in our mortal experience. Just as Adam and Eve made the courageous decision to partake of the fruit, setting in motion the Plan of Salvation, we, too, are presented with choices that shape our eternal destiny. Their brave step out of the Garden of Eden, coupled with our Savior's Atonement, has granted us the freedom of agency. This divine endowment allows us to make decisions that lead to growth, learning, and, ultimately, if we choose wisely, our best celestial selves. My choice to pursue education at BYU, inspired by spiritual promptings, exemplifies how embracing righteous choices can bring joy and align us with God's plan, even when those choices might prove to be more challenging than what we were already living. As we navigate life's challenges and opportunities, we can find solace and strength in knowing that our choices, guided by the Spirit, are powerful tools for personal development and spiritual progression. In this way, we honor the sacrifices of our first parents and the atonement gift of our Savior, so we can make the most of the mortal experience they made possible for us.

Eve's courageous choice and partnership with Adam allowed humanity to experience life, joy, and the potential for eternal happiness. Through the Atonement of Jesus Christ, I have received redemption and forgiveness for my sins, bringing peace and a sense of renewal. I am grateful for Eve's example and trust in God's eternal plan and the Savior's redeeming love. Her example of sacrifice is inspiring and relevant to my life in many ways.