

**Dale G. Renlund**  
**Family History and Temple Work: Sealing and**  
**Healing**  
**(CR Apr 2018)**

1. As Church members, we do have a divinely appointed responsibility to seek out our ancestors and compile family histories. This is far more than an encouraged hobby, because the ordinances of salvation are necessary for all of God's children. We are to identify our own ancestors who died without receiving the ordinances of salvation. We can perform the ordinances vicariously in temples, and our ancestors may choose to accept the ordinances. We are also encouraged to help ward and stake members with their family names. It is breathtakingly amazing that, through family history and temple work, we can help to redeem the dead.
2. But as we participate in family history and temple work today, we also lay claim to "healing" blessings promised by prophets and apostles. These blessings are also breathtakingly amazing because of their scope, specificity, and consequence in mortality. This long list includes these blessings:
  3. Increased understanding of the Savior and His atoning sacrifice;
  4. Increased influence of the Holy Ghost to feel strength and direction for our own lives;
  5. Increased faith, so that conversion to the Savior becomes deep and abiding;
  6. Increased ability and motivation to learn and repent because of an understanding of who we are, where we come from, and a clearer vision of where we are going;
  7. Increased refining, sanctifying, and moderating influences in our hearts;
  8. Increased joy through an increased ability to feel the love of the Lord;
  9. Increased family blessings, no matter our current, past, or future family situation or how imperfect our family tree may be;
  10. Increased love and appreciation for ancestors and living relatives, so we no longer feel alone;
  11. Increased power to discern that which needs healing and thus, with the Lord's help, serve others;
  12. Increased protection from temptations and the intensifying influence of the adversary; and
  13. Increased assistance to mend troubled, broken, or anxious hearts and make the wounded whole.
14. If you have prayed for any of these blessings, participate in family history and temple work. As you do so, your prayers will be answered. When ordinances are performed on behalf of the deceased, God's children on earth are healed. No wonder President Russell M. Nelson, in his first message as President of the Church, declared, "Your worship in the temple and your service there for your ancestors will bless you with increased personal revelation and peace and will fortify your commitment to stay on the covenant path."
15. An earlier prophet also foresaw blessings for both the living and the dead. A heavenly messenger showed Ezekiel a vision of a temple with water gushing out of it. Ezekiel was told:
16. "These waters issue out ... and go down into the desert, and go into the [dead] sea ... , [and] the waters shall be healed.
17. "And it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live: ... for they shall be healed; and every thing shall live whither the river cometh."
18. Two characteristics of the water are noteworthy. First, though the small stream had no tributaries, it grew into a mighty river, becoming wider and deeper the farther it flowed. Something similar happens with the blessings that flow from the temple as individuals are sealed as families. Meaningful growth occurs going backward and forward through the generations as sealing ordinances weld families together.
19. Second, the river renewed everything that it touched. The blessings of the temple likewise have a stunning capacity to heal. Temple blessings can heal hearts and lives and families.
20. God will strengthen, help, and uphold us; and He will sanctify to us our deepest distress. When we gather our family histories and go to the temple on behalf of our ancestors, God fulfills many of these promised blessings simultaneously on both sides of the veil. Similarly, we are blessed when we help others in our wards and stakes do the same. Members who do not live close to a temple also receive these blessings by participating in family history work, collecting the names of their ancestors for temple ordinances to be performed.
21. President Russell M. Nelson, however, cautioned: "We can be inspired all day long about temple and family history experiences others have had. But we must do something to actually experience the joy ourselves." He continued, "I invite you to prayerfully consider what kind of sacrifice—preferably a sacrifice of time—you can make [to] do more temple and family history work." As you accept President Nelson's invitation, you will discover, gather, and connect your family. Additionally, blessings will flow to you and your family like the river spoken of by Ezekiel. You will find healing for that which needs healing.