

Is there anything in your conduct relating to the members of your family that is not in keeping with the teachings of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints?

I may not have the wording exact, but that is approximately one of the questions in the temple recommend interview. I was always uncomfortable with this question; its phrasing seems pretty unforgiving. When I expressed this hesitation years ago I remember the bishop explaining that this dealt with issues of abuse. I felt confident in responding in the negative in that case, and for years I gave that explanation as I responded to that question.

A few years ago a member of the Stake Presidency stopped me on that, and told me that I was just supposed to answer the question. I don't remember exactly how he phrased it, but he didn't approve of my caveat. I don't remember how I responded at that time, because I believe it was the following year, with the Stake President, that I tried again, and he wouldn't accept any sort of a half-answer. That time I left without a temple recommend.

After pondering and meditating I was led to the Proclamation on the Family, and noted that happiness in family life was most likely to be achieved when based on several principles, which included in particular the principle of repentance. I concluded that I was doing my best to repent when I did commit errors, and a week later obtained my recommend.

The next year, with one of the counselors in the Stake Presidency, I explained that justification, and he said that if I was falling into the same sins over and over then I wasn't really repenting. Interestingly, I don't remember the exact circumstances of that interview either, but I think we did end satisfactorily and I was given a recommend.

Then the First Presidency announced that recommend interviews would be conducted on a bi-annual basis, and so I actually didn't have to face that question for two years. However, the time went by, and recently I went in again. To a large extent I simply rationalized the question in my mind by saying that if the Lord expected perfection in this principle we wouldn't need so many temples. The Stake Presidency counselor was very busy, and didn't have time to talk, and so it didn't come up as a topic of discussion.

Now interestingly enough, through all this I never felt wrong about answering the last question, "Do you consider yourself worthy in every way to enter the temple and participate in temple ordinances?" Is there an inconsistency there? Was I just rationalizing? I guess I am not sure of the answer. I believe that once I felt that I could

make it past the “family” question that I really was OK.

However, after my interview this last time, the question continued to bother me. A few days later I got into a discussion with a friend on a closely related experience he had observed. As we talked I had this sudden insight that there was a larger principle involved than just how I behaved with my family. To some extent, this principle involves understanding how gospel subjects, especially of worthiness, relate to my personal state of progress.

I have reflected before how there are different stages of progression, and what may be a serious problem to someone at a given state in their progression may not even be an issue to someone else at their particular stage. Somehow, though, I had never applied that concept to this problem.

The thinking that led me to this was again the idea that Heavenly Father expects many of his children to be able to go to the temple, and yet he knows that we are all imperfect in our keeping of any commandments. The atonement of His Son makes up the gap between what we can do and perfection. So at the heart of my concern lies the issue of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Do I truly believe that his atonement is sufficient to cover my imperfections? Am I continuing in faith on Him, knowing that my best with his grace is enough?

If I truly have faith in the Savior, then when I recognize *anything* wrong in my life, I will strive to correct it. If I am doing this, then I can answer this question in the negative. However, if I answer in the affirmative, I am bringing into question my whole commitment to the gospel, and should not go to the temple.