

A Partnership of Equals: “Neither is the Man without the Woman, Neither the Woman without the Man”

Lolly S. and Russell T. Osguthorpe

Graphic Artist: Shaylee Wright

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Celestial Marriage: The Role of Redeeming Love in an Equal Partnership

Elder Osguthorpe: When we were married in the Salt Lake Temple, like most couples we had faith that our relationship would endure—not only endure, but that our marriage would be our greatest source of happiness.

Sister Osguthorpe: We’d always felt that we knew how to communicate with each other. Seldom did we experience conflict during our courtship. So we expected that we would never experience conflict in our marriage.

Elder Osguthorpe: Then, just a week after we were married, reality set in. I came home after a long day at the university, and this is what happened:

Elder Osguthorpe: “How was your day?”

Sister Osguthorpe: “Fine.”

Elder Osguthorpe: “So, tell me more.”

Sister Osguthorpe: “Uh, that’s all. It was just fine.”

Elder Osguthorpe: “Is something wrong?”

Sister Osguthorpe: “No, I’m fine.”

Elder Osguthorpe: “You don’t sound fine.”

Sister Osguthorpe: “I’m okay.”

Elder Osguthorpe: “Did I do something wrong?”

Sister Osguthorpe: “I don’t really want to talk about it.”

Elder Osguthorpe: “Well, I think we do need to talk about it. If I did something wrong, let’s fix it.”

Sister Osguthorpe: “No, I’ll be fine.”

Elder Osguthorpe: “Could we just sit down and talk about it?”

Sister Osguthorpe: So we sat down, and I told him that he'd said something that hurt my feelings. I have no memory of what it was, but at the time, I was heartbroken. I'd watched my parents growing up, and when they had a disagreement, my mother would clam up for a couple of days. After she remembered her covenants and forgave my dad, she baked him an apple pie, and that meant that my dad was out of the doghouse. But my husband hadn't grown up that way, and he couldn't wait a couple of days for the apple pie. We talked until we really understood each other. We even decided at that very early point in our marriage, that we would never again let things bottle up inside us.

Elder Osguthorpe: We wanted a relationship in which neither of us would dominate or manipulate the other. Although we weren't aware of the term at that time, what we wanted was an equal partnership. As the brethren have instructed us so clearly in *The Family: A Proclamation to the World*:

By divine design, fathers are to preside over their families in love and righteousness and are responsible to provide the necessities of life and protection for their families. Mothers are primarily responsible for the nurture of their children. In these sacred responsibilities, fathers and mothers are obligated to help one another as equal partners.¹

Sister Osguthorpe: In this section of the Proclamation the word *equal* is obviously not implying that the roles of husband and wife are completely interchangeable. The word *equal* does refer to sameness, but sameness in what? We suggest that it means that husband and wife are equally committed to each other and to the Lord. They are equally bound by the covenants made together over a sacred alter in the temple. They are equally open to the promptings of the Spirit and equally deserving of all the blessings the Lord may bestow upon his covenant children.

Elder Osguthorpe: An equal partnership is the only kind of marriage that exists in celestial realms. It is a partnership of unity, a partnership of complete oneness—the kind of marriage every couple desires. It is a relationship solemnized in the temple and sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise, a sealing that takes place gradually as the couple keeps the covenants made in the temple.

Sister Osguthorpe: So how do we as married couples achieve this exalting type of relationship?

Elder Osguthorpe: While interviewing a newly married husband for his temple recommend, I asked him to tell me about his marriage. He smiled and sheepishly said, “Well, you might think we're crazy, but my wife and I have decided that we're going to have the best marriage in the whole world.”

I responded, “No, I don't think that's crazy at all, but I hate to disappoint, you because I think my wife and I already have that marriage, so maybe you can have the second best.”

We were just having a good time with each other, but at a deeper level, we were probably both wrong. Good marriages don't become good by each partner focusing constantly on the direct goal of the marriage itself. We don't wake up in the morning wondering how we can create the best marriage in the world and then proceed throughout the day to "work" on our marriage. We have too much other work to do to focus constantly on our relationship.

Sister Osguthorpe: Arthur Henry King, a former professor at BYU and former president of the London Temple, once said,

One of the mistakes we make over and over again in life is to go directly for the things we think are important. But if we aim at self-fulfillment, we shall never be fulfilled. If we aim at education, we shall never become educated. If we aim at salvation, we shall never be saved. These things are indirect, supreme results of doing something else; and the something else is service, it is righteousness, it is trying to do the right thing, the thing that needs to be done at each moment.²

Elder Osguthorpe: Paraphrasing Brother King, we might say, "If we aim at the perfect marriage, we shall never attain an equal partnership. An equal partnership is the supreme result of doing something else; and the something else is service, it is righteousness, it is trying to do the right thing, the thing that needs to be done at each moment."

Sister Osguthorpe: Doing the right thing means doing what the Lord would have us do. It means turning our will to Him. As Elder Maxwell has said,

As you submit your wills to God, you are giving Him the only thing you can actually give Him that is really yours to give. Don't wait too long to find the altar or to begin to place the gift of your wills upon it!³

Elder Osguthorpe: Interesting that Elder Maxwell was using the word *altar* here metaphorically, but we can also interpret it literally. When we kneel at the altar in the temple and are sealed for time and eternity, we are making covenants with each other and with the Lord. We're giving our will to the Lord promising to do what He wants us to do in this newly created family, to do what needs to be done at each moment.

Sister Osguthorpe: This is a lifelong process. It doesn't happen overnight. It doesn't happen the moment we walk out of the temple after being sealed. That's why Elder Maxwell said, "Don't wait too long to find the altar or to begin to place the gift of your wills upon it." What causes someone to get lost—to not find the altar? What are the primary enemies of the formation of an equal partnership? If we can understand the enemies and overcome them, then we'll be able to find the altar and place our wills upon it.

Elder Osguthorpe: We suggest that there are three enemies to equal partnership: self-doubt, self-indulgence, and self-absorption.

Sister Osguthorpe: These are mindsets that lead to the opposite of equal partnership. What is the opposite of an equal partnership? It is a marriage that is temporary, in which covenants—if they are made at all—are not kept, a relationship that leads to separation. The couple is not “joined by. . .the Lord,” so the relationship eventually disintegrates—either in this life through divorce or at the time of mortal death (D&C 132:18).

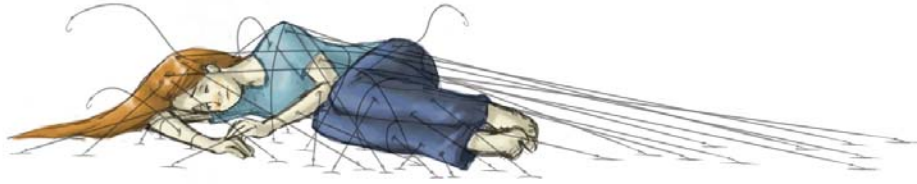
Self-doubt

Elder Osguthorpe: While serving as a stake president, a young couple came to me for help with their marriage. They had two young children, but even after years of marriage, had never developed a healthy relationship with each other. Having decided that the only solution was divorce, they came to my home one evening, and I tried to help them. The wife felt misunderstood and unappreciated. The husband felt frustrated with himself and with his wife. Nothing, as far as he was concerned, was going well. He couldn't understand why she felt misunderstood. He felt that he was doing everything he could to help the relationship. The harder they worked on the relationship, the worse things got. So they “had it out” in my home office. The conversation was not pleasant. The wife accuses the husband of some misdeed, and the husband fired back with a verbal attack on his wife.

Following their painful conversation, I felt as if nothing had been accomplished. Yes, they had each shared things with the other that they'd never shared, but the tone of their conversation was so accusatory and so unfeeling I said, “You know, we are never harsh with each other in our home, and I don't know if it will help you feel better, but to help *me* feel better, I wonder if you could give each other a hug before we say a prayer. They hugged, and the hardness seemed to slip right out of them. They both began to sob on each other's shoulder. Rather than harsh words, I heard words of apology and forgiveness. We prayed, and they departed.

I didn't know how things would turn out. Their relationship was as troubled as any I'd ever seen. But they decided to turn to the Lord, to remember their covenants both to each other and to Him. At the next stake conference, the husband came up to me following the meeting and told me that things were going much better, that they had decided to stay together and that they had never been happier.

Sister Osguthorpe: The doubt this couple felt was self-doubt. Each partner suffered from it. Each harsh word that passed between them was like a string with a hook on it that gradually tied them down.



Each misunderstanding was like another string with another hook. And gradually each one began to say, “Why try?” What’s the use? If I try to be nice to him, he’s not nice back. If I try to understand her, she feels even more misunderstood. So why try? Why not just give up?”

A husband and wife who have a pattern of self-doubt might say:

Elder Osguthorpe: “I can’t find time to exercise. I just can’t do it. Why try?”

Sister Osguthorpe: “I can’t fit the temple into my life right now. Why try?”

Elder Osguthorpe: “I can’t find time to study the scriptures. Why try?”

Sister Osguthorpe: “I have no gifts or talents. I’m not good at anything. Why try?”

Elder Osguthorpe: “I’ve never figured out how to talk to my children. Why try?”

Sister Osguthorpe: When the couple who came for counseling decided to forgive one another—when they hugged and began to feel love toward each other—those little hooks were released one by one, and feelings of love replaced earlier feelings of doubt and frustration. They remembered the feelings that first drew them together, and then they lost their desire to separate. They determined that with the help of the Lord, they could mend their marriage. They began to be able to stand up and exercise their faith in the future. Rather than saying, “Why try?” they began to say, “With the help of the Lord, we can do it.”

Self-indulgence

Elder Osguthorpe: Another couple who struggled came to my church office one evening to tell me why they needed to end their marriage. They went through a litany of complaints about each other. The husband accused his wife of using *his* cell phone. They argued about who signed the contract and who was responsible to pay for it. They had both focused their desires not on each other, but on material goods. They said, “Why not buy this or that?” “If we had one more thing, we might be happy.” “Why not?”

They had moved from self-doubt to self-indulgence, trying to satisfy every urge to buy things that would make them happy—or so they thought. But their material goods became a burden—like pulling a boulder behind them.



Sister Osguthorpe: This couple became addicted to material goods. And like any addiction, their inability to control their impulses gradually restricted them to the point that they could not move forward in their relationship. They were figuratively pulling an impossible burden behind them. When either husband or wife becomes addicted to anything, the equality in their relationship ends. The marriage becomes paralyzed. This is why the brethren have counseled so powerfully against pornography, unnecessary debt, and any type of substance abuse. If husband and wife want an equal partnership, each must avoid addictions in all their forms.

Elder Osguthorpe: One addiction that can destroy an equal partnership is the addiction to failure. This is a person who becomes so filled with self-doubt that the doubt becomes an indulgence, a real addiction. Imagine the person who has trouble succeeding in school and then decides to avoid any further education following high school. “I’m just not a good student,” the person might say.

So they let this self-doubt and self-indulgence hold them back. They stop trying to learn in nearly all settings. They are addicted to failure. They might even use their lack of confidence as an excuse to avoid things they don’t want to do. They might defer to their mate whenever they don’t know how to do something. They choose not to follow President Hinckley’s counsel to “get all the education they can”⁴ because they are afraid they might fail. This hurts not only the individual, but the marriage. Such individuals cannot establish an equal partnership as long as they give in to their addiction to failure.

Sister Osguthorpe: But self-indulgence can occur in more subtle ways. Giving in to some impulses might just chip away at our ability to develop an equal partnership. Consider the husband and wife who might say the following:

Sister Osguthorpe: This mommy blog has some pretty vulgar language. But I like to read how other mothers do things. Why not?

Elder Osguthorpe: The interest rate is really good right now. Let’s get a third mortgage to add onto our home. Why not?

Sister Osguthorpe: “This crime show isn’t that bad. There’s nothing else on. Why not?”

Elder Osguthorpe: This chocolate is healthy for your heart. It’ll be okay to eat this whole pan of brownies. Why not?

Sister Osguthorpe: I deserve these expensive shoes, even if we can't afford them.
You just bought a new computer. Why not?

Self-absorption

Elder Osguthorpe: So self-doubt can lead to self-indulgence. And self-indulgence can lead to a third enemy of equal partnership: self-absorption. Another couple came to me for help who was so focused on personal problems that their lives were becoming unraveled. In physical appearance, they looked like the perfect couple; they could have been on the cover of a magazine. But while they looked wonderful on the outside, they were suffering on the inside. The husband was dominating and manipulative, and the wife was aloof and distant.

Sister Osguthorpe: Both suffered from self-absorption. The more they focused on their own needs and problems, the less able they were to move in their relationship. They literally boxed themselves in.



They often said, “Why me?” Why do I have to go through this? I always planned on a good marriage, and now here we are with a marriage that is anything but good. “Why me?”

Elder Osguthorpe: Those who become self-absorbed might say:

Sister Osguthorpe: My children are so hard to handle. They have ADHD just like their father. Why me?

Elder Osguthorpe: “My boss told me today that I’ve got to lose weight or I’ll lose my job. I hate diets. Why me?”

Sister Osguthorpe: My husband is always working. He never has time to help with the kids. Why me?

Elder Osguthorpe: I could have made a lot of money, but I never got that promotion I deserved. Why me?

Sister Osguthorpe: My husband is gone all day Sunday? Why me?

Elder Osguthorpe: I wish I could say that all three couples I counseled found a way to repair their relationship, but only the first one succeeded. The pathway to resolution was clear: in their case, both the husband and wife found the altar and placed their wills upon it. They began doing the things that needed to be done at each moment. They traded in their doubts for faith, stopped indulging in self-pity, forgot about themselves, and turned to the Lord.

Sister Osguthorpe: Turning our will to the Lord can help us overcome these three deadly enemies of equal partnership: self-doubt, self-indulgence, and self-absorption. With the help of the Lord, instead of saying “Why try?” we can say, “I can do it.” I can find a way to do what needs to be done at each moment. I can follow the Spirit in my daily life.

Instead of saying “Why not?” we can say with the help of the Lord, “I can take control.” I can control my emotions. I can control my desires. I can control my fears.

And rather than saying, “Why me?” with the help of the Lord, we can say, “I can forget myself.” I can forget my problems. I can forget my pain. I can forget my failures.

Overcoming the Enemies to Equal Partnership		
Self-doubt	Why try?	I can do it!
Self-indulgence	Why not?	I can take control
Self-absorption	Why me?	I can forget myself

Elder Osguthorpe: Overcoming each of these three enemies demands that we rely on the enabling power of the Atonement. During our mission, we taught missionaries that if they wanted to serve effectively, they needed to “feel the power of God working inside them to help them do something they thought was impossible.” But we can apply this in whatever role we find ourselves. Think of it: If a task before us is easy, we don’t need the strengthening power of the Atonement to accomplish it. We can do it on our own power. If the task seems challenging but very possible, we can probably accomplish it with the help of others. But what if the task seems completely out of reach? What if we know it is what the Lord wants, but we simply cannot see any way that we can accomplish it? At that point, we have only one option: we must turn to the Lord.

Sister Osguthorpe: The first couple we mentioned did just that. They came to a point where divorce seemed to be their only option. A happy, healthy marriage appeared out of reach—impossible. But then they decided to turn to the Lord. It was a joint decision. They both wanted to attempt what seemed to be unreachable. And when they placed their faith in the Savior, they began to feel his power inside them, changing their hearts, healing their broken spirits. They experienced the Atonement. And only after that could they begin to forge a relationship based on equal partnership.

Elder Osguthorpe: The only way we can feel the power of God working inside us is to give our will to Him. That means total trust, total faith that He will help us do what needs to be done at each moment, even if that thing seems impossible. An equal partnership can develop only when both husband and wife give everything to the Lord. Then, and only then, can they give everything to each other. They keep their covenants, and the Lord keeps His promise to bless their union. How do we as husbands and wives give ourselves to Him?

Sister Osguthorpe: We suggest three keys to establishing an equal partnership: 1) Say what He wants said, 2) Do what He wants done, and 3) Sing redeeming love.

Say What He Wants Said

Elder Osguthorpe: First, we need to “say what the Lord wants said.” Prophets say what the Lord inspires them to say. Samuel the Lamanite said, “I do speak the words of the Lord which he doth put into my heart” (Helaman 13:5). If we can just say what the Lord wants us to say—the words He puts into our heart—then our relationship will flourish, and we will develop an equal partnership. To do this we need to “speak with the tongue of angels”—an invitation to anyone who will listen to the promptings of the Holy Ghost (2 Nephi 32:2–3). Such conversation will lift and edify those who hear our words, just as prophets or angels edify those who listen.

Sister Osguthorpe: One who knew how to say what the Lord would have her say was my mother, Lola Hansen Sedgwick. Mother was the master of making people feel more capable and loveable. She knew how to help anyone erase self-doubt, how to help them achieve what they thought they were incapable of achieving. Mother could see or locate the good in anyone. She constantly helped us as a couple see the good in each other.

Noting every little accomplishment in our lives, mother was sure that my husband, as a lowly assistant professor, would someday be President of BYU. She was confident that because I was a problem solver like my dad, I could figure out any thing. Our children were all gifted and talented in her eyes, and she never missed an opportunity to comment on their accomplishments. She was always trying to “say what He wants said.”

Elder Osguthorpe: Married couples often complain about their inability to communicate with each other. But if they were always trying, as Lolly’s mother was, to say what the Lord would have them say, then communication problems would decrease.

Sister Osguthorpe: When I was teenager, my mother would get me out of bed for early-morning seminary by reciting these words from Section 88 of the Doctrine and Covenants:

See that ye love one another; cease to be covetous; learn to impart one to another as the gospel requires. Cease to be idle; cease to be unclean; cease to find fault one with another; cease to sleep longer than is needful; retire to thy bed early, that ye may not be weary; arise early, that your bodies and your minds may be invigorated. And above all things, clothe yourselves with the bond of charity, as with a mantle, which is the bond of perfectness and peace. Pray always, that ye may not faint, until I come. Behold, and lo, I will come quickly, and receive you unto myself. (D&C 88:123–126)

My mother used this scripture to help me get out of bed and to seminary on time, but now I feel that she was actually giving me the best guidebook possible for developing a marriage based on equal partnership.

Elder Osguthorpe: Don't get us wrong; we are not implying that you push a button to make good communication happen. This is a lifelong endeavor, but one worth pursuing. The only way to say what the Lord would have us say is to listen as the Lord listens.

Sister Osguthorpe: Equal partners can sense sometimes what is happening with their mate, even in total silence. A facial expression or hand movement can communicate a need. And the one in tune with the Spirit can then reach out and respond.

Elder Osguthorpe: President Monson, when presiding over their mission in Canada came home one evening after a long trip and found Sister Monson sitting alone sobbing. He asked, "What's the matter?"

She responded, "I'm homesick."

He said, "You can't afford to be homesick."

"Well, aren't you?" she responded.

He said, "No, I've got 190 missionaries. I've got to be up and ready to go with them, or they'll get ahead of me."⁵

He recognized that his wife was trying to raise their young family and did not have contact with the missionaries as he did, and she began to miss her friends and neighbors back home. So they talked together and found ways to help her adjust to mission life. He said what the Lord would have him say.

Sister Osguthorpe: Perhaps the most challenging time for couples to say what the Lord would have them say is when they disagree. Imagine the following married couple trying to decide whether to go on a vacation or build up their food storage:

Elder Osguthorpe: I'm thinking that this summer we could spend a week on the beach with the kids. I was looking at a site the other day and found a pretty reasonably priced beach house. But you have to rent it for seven days.

Sister Osguthorpe: Pretty reasonably priced? That doesn't sound very cheap to me. I don't think we can afford it. I thought we agreed that this summer we were going to build up our food storage.

Elder Osguthorpe: Well, I was praying about it the other day, and I just felt that we need to get away together as a family.

Sister Osguthorpe: That's funny. I was praying about the talk we heard last week in sacrament meeting, and I felt that we needed to follow the brethren and get more food in the house and more money in the bank.

Elder Osguthorpe: As a church leader I once asked brethren in a priesthood meeting if they had any questions. One asked, "So what if you and your wife have a decision to make, you both pray about it and get different answers. Then who makes the decision?" He looked as if he were asking me the impossible question.

But I responded immediately, "That's actually not a difficult problem. When you're making decisions as a couple, you don't move until you both agree. You are an equal partnership."

He then asked, "You mean that you both compromise and meet in the middle?"

I responded, "I don't like the word *compromise* in marriage. It fits well in politics, but not in a celestial marriage. A compromise might mean that neither one of you is satisfied with the decision, because you have both given up what you most wanted. In politics, neither party may feel good about the final decision. Neither may want to implement the new law, because neither agrees with it fully.

Sister Osguthorpe: Both parties go forward, but with reluctance. They carry out the decision "grudgingly." In a marriage, you cannot implement a decision for the family if either one is doing it grudgingly. Moroni taught that we cannot give a gift grudgingly or it is counted as evil (Moroni 7:8). That is not a celestial marriage. When husband and wife disagree, they need to talk and pray until they both know that the decision is the right decision. To do this, they need to ask what the Lord wants them to ask and say what He would have them say.

Do What He Wants Done

Elder Osguthorpe: Second, we need to "do what He wants done." As we read in Second Nephi, "wherefore follow me and do the things which ye have seen me do" (2 Nephi 31:12). When I was a young boy, my mother sang in the Tabernacle Choir. That meant Sunday dinner became Dad's responsibility.

As children, we thought nothing of it. Dad never expressed any resentment for the added duty of fixing Sunday dinner so that we could eat when Mom came home from choir. In fact, he seemed to delight in it.

When the choir was asked to sing at a special worldwide satellite broadcast from Mt. Rushmore, Dad could hardly wait to see Mom on television. When the camera panned over to Mom, Dad smiled and exclaimed, “There she is! Did you see her?” To put the scene in today’s world, it was like Mom had just been named the winner of *American Idol*.

Mom had wanted to sing in the Tabernacle Choir for years, but she never mentioned it. Then when the time was right, it just happened without a lot of fanfare. She was pursuing one of her personal goals in life. But her goal became as important to my dad as it was to her. He owned her goal as much as she did. It wasn’t his goal to sing in the Choir, but it was his goal to help her reach her goal to sing. It was as important to him as any of his own goals. So rather than feeling burdened by fixing Sunday dinner every week, he seemed to enjoy it, because that meant that the one he loved as an equal partner could do something she really wanted to do. He was doing what the Lord wanted him to do, and in the process, learned to love doing it.

Sister Osguthorpe: President Monson counseled us at General Conference to attend the temple and be kind to each other. These are the things that the Savior would want us to do as explained by our living prophet:

To you who are able to attend the temple, I would counsel you to go often. Doing so will help to strengthen marriages and families. Let us be kind to one another, be aware of each other’s needs and try to help in that regard. My dear brothers and sisters, I love you, and I pray for you. Please pray for me. And together we will reap the blessings our Heavenly Father has in store for each one of us.⁶

Elder Osguthorpe: My dad was simply following what President Monson has recently asked all of us to do—to be aware of each other’s needs and to help one another. Simple counsel, yet so powerful if a couple wants to have an equal partnership.

Sing Redeeming Love

Sister Osguthorpe: As we learn to say what the Lord would have us say and do what he wants done, we will be eager to “sing redeeming love,” the third key to equal partnership. The phrase “redeeming love” appears only three times in the scriptures—all three in the Book of Mormon. Each of these verses teaches that it is not enough to simply talk about redeeming love. One must sing the song. “If ye have felt to sing the song of redeeming love, I would ask, can ye feel so now?” (Alma 5:26).

What is the song of redeeming love? It is a song of joy, a song of gratitude for the Father’s gift of His son, and the son’s gift of Himself for you and for me.

Elder Osguthorpe: In a marriage based on equal partnership, both partners want to sing the song often. They are each grateful for how the Lord has blessed their marriage, how He has made it possible for them to work out their salvation together.

Sister Osguthorpe: When husband and wife forgive each other, they are singing the song. When they forgive children, they are also singing redeeming love. When they feel forgiveness themselves, they are singing the song. And they are also singing it when they feel strengthened, when they feel an increased power to love. When a new child is born into a family, parents experience this increase of love.

Elder Osguthorpe: Of all the indirect benefits of gospel living, an increase of love is perhaps the most important. Charity, the “pure love of Christ” is the most life changing divine characteristic of all (Moroni 7:47). It is the characteristic that most determines whether a couple can develop an equal partnership. The more love the couple shares, the more equal their partnership becomes, as they

. . . 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 (and daughters) 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. (Moroni 7: 48)

The reason we say what He wants said and do what He wants done is so that we can love the way He loves. And that means spending our lives doing what needs to be done at each moment, because that is the only way our capacity to love can increase. That is why families are the centerpiece of the gospel—because it is in families that we learn about love—how to receive it, how to give it, and how to increase it.

Sister Osguthorpe: My mother and dad went through life singing the song of redeeming love. They exulted in each other. Their personalities were very different—he was definitely the “immovable object, and she was surely the irresistible force”—but in spite of their differences, they had both given themselves to the Lord completely. My mother lived to be 92 and my dad 95. As my mother approached her final years, she needed help with all of the household chores. My dad had never done any housework, but when mother could no longer perform the tasks that she had so lovingly done all of her life, he needed to step in and take over.

One day when we were visiting them, dad was cooking lunch for mother. She was getting to a point where food did not look very good to her, and it was a struggle to get her to eat. Thin all her life, she was now even thinner.

Elder Osguthorpe: Lola, let me give you this. You need to eat it.

Sister Osguthorpe: Oh, I’m not really hungry right now, thank you.

Elder Osguthorpe: But you need to eat. So here, take this, it will taste good.

Mother took the food and placed it obediently in her mouth and chewed as best she could and tried to swallow, but she just couldn't do it. Then when he was not looking, she removed it and hid it in a paper napkin in her lap, so as not to make him feel bad.

Dad was pleased that she had eaten. He was doing all he could to help her feel better. He was saying what the Lord wanted him to say—even saying it the way the Lord wanted him to say it. And he was doing what the Lord wanted him to do—care for his eternal mate. He was giving himself to the Lord, and so was she. They were both doing their very best.

Elder Osguthorpe: When my father-in-law got close to the end of his life, he slept in the bedroom next to ours. One evening we went to check on him, and he looked uncharacteristically troubled. He said to us, “I've been calling for her, and she doesn't answer. How can I make her hear me? How will she know where to find me when I die?” We assured him that she would find him, and they would be together again.

Sister Osguthorpe: My mother and father gave their will, their heart, their soul to Him. They were striving to keep their covenants, and the Lord was always keeping his promises to them. They were always singing the song of redeeming love—together. Their words and their actions were all centered on their love for each other and for the Lord. Where one was weak, the other was strong and compensated for the other's shortcomings. They built each other up.

Elder Osguthorpe: Now keep in mind that the scenes we've shared from our parents' lives took place after they had been married for years. They did not begin their marriage understanding how to place their wills upon the altar. They did not know immediately how to say what the Lord wanted them to say or do what He wanted them to do.

Sister Osguthorpe: If they were here today, we are certain that they would discount much of what we've said. They would be quick to say that they had their share of problems at times with the enemies to equal partnership: self-doubt, self-indulgence, and self-absorption.

Elder Osguthorpe: The day after President Hinckley died, I asked my students at BYU to share their favorite memories of our prophet. One freshman raised his hand and said, “I'll tell you what I remember most. I remember the love he had for Sister Hinckley. It was so amazing how much he loved her.” Then he hesitated, as if he doubted what he was about to say, “I just wish I could find someone like that to marry some day.” I could tell that he did not think it was possible to have a marriage like President and Sister Hinckley—only prophets could have that kind of celestial relationship. But I promised him that he would be able to have a marriage just as good as theirs someday.

Sister Osguthorpe: The love that student saw between President and Sister Hinckley or the love that we both saw between our parents developed over a lifetime. Equal partners forgive each other and themselves quickly. That's why it is called *redeeming* love. It redeems both the one who forgives and the one who is forgiven.

Elder Osguthorpe: It draws us closer to the Lord. It is the pure love of Christ. This means that an equal partnership is not based only on the relationship between husband and wife, but between them and the Lord. It's a relationship in which both partners give themselves to each other but also give themselves to God. When a married couple does this, both feel the redemptive and strengthening power of the Atonement. Both know that they can in turn strengthen and forgive each other.

Sister Osguthorpe: As they give themselves to the Lord, they say what He wants said and do what He wants done. Their self-doubt, self-indulgence, and self-absorption fade away. They convey the love they feel from the Lord to each other and to each family member. They become equal in their capacity to express love and receive love. This is the kind of equality we seek in a celestial marriage—not an equality of roles or an equality of rights as defined by the world, but an equality in the ability to strengthen, to forgive, and to love, an equality that comes from the Lord. All we need to do is give ourselves to Him.

Elder Osguthorpe: A few years ago we wrote a song called, "I Will Give Myself to Him." The lyrics express our feelings about the centrality of redeeming love in an equal partnership:

*He gave Himself for me, He died that I might live.
What can I do for Him? What can I really give?*

***I will say what He wants said. I will do what he wants done.
I will be a witness to the world of God's Beloved Son.
I will give myself to Him, my heart, my will, my soul.
I will always sing Redeeming Love, the song that makes me whole.***

*When others turn away, when no one seems to care.
How can I feel His love? How will I know He's there?*

*When pain and sadness come to those who question why,
How will I bring them peace? How will I help them try?*

Sister Osguthorpe: I bear witness that the song of redeeming love is what makes us whole and happy in an equal partnership. As I continue to learn how to say what the Lord wants said, and learn how to do what He wants done, I thank my Heavenly Father every day for a husband who loves the Lord and loves me.

I thought I understood what love was when I married him. Each year that love has grown exponentially as I experience the joys of becoming an equal partner with my sweetheart. As we have invited the Lord into our partnership, our love has deepened immensely. I know that it is the Savior's love that will redeem us, and it is in the family where we learn about His love as we learn to love each other. As equal partners, we set the pattern for our children to learn of His love.

Elder Osguthorpe: My witness to you is that the Lord lives. He loves us. He wants His children to be happy. And the only way to find happiness in marriage is to live together as equal partners. The world does not understand the principle of equal partnership because it is a principle of the gospel of Jesus Christ. I know that if we place our faith in him, He will bless our marriage. If we love Him and follow His teachings through our living prophet, President Monson, our marriages will strengthen. I know that. I know that He is a prophet just as surely as I know that Joseph was the Prophet who ushered in this final dispensation. We pray that the Lord will bless us all to follow their teachings so that we can always—every day—sing the song of redeeming love.

NOTES

¹ The Family: A Proclamation to the World, *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102.

² Arthur Henry King, *Arm the Children: Faith's Response to a Violent World*, (Provo, Utah: BYU Studies, 1998), 265.

³ Neal A. Maxwell, "Remember How Merciful the Lord Hath Been," *Ensign*, May 2004, 44.

⁴ Gordon B. Hinckley, *Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley*, (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1997), 172.

⁵ Thomas S. Monson, *Seminar for New Mission Presidents 2007*.

⁶ Thomas S. Monson, "Abundantly Blessed," *Ensign*, May, 2008, 112.