

Core Moral Principles

(Ver 3 Jan 2026)

The Final Declaration: Freedom as the Highest Moral Good. No institution may command the mind, confiscate the conscience, or steal the time of a sovereign human being. Your life is your own. It always was. Now it is yours again.¹

"Right-Wing Authoritarian" Church members are the second of "two hands clapping"² when submitting to Obedience as found in the Temple Endowment. It propagates into our lifetime Joseph Smith's authoritarian Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD). The first of "two hands clapping" are our Church leaders' who replicate Smith's authoritarianism in his Temple³ covenants.

The Endowment results in the abdication of one's free agency. It is an agreement to obey that is compelled by fear of loss or bought with promise of Celestial reward, hence corrupted by inauthenticity of the motive. The Law of Obedience is the innately immoral covenant that corrupts the morality of our actions which requires that our actions be freely, authentically, chosen without ulterior motive.

The self-disciplined compliance of Authoritarian followers is not virtue, even though the Church or society may benefit from their dependability.

"When followers abdicate moral agency to religious authority, the religious leader has succeeded in defeating the inner qualities necessary for authentic, freely chosen, moral actions." Obedience renders followers artificial, nice, inauthentic, shallow, lacking moral depth.

1. When a follower transfers their moral agency to a leader, whether voluntarily or under pressure, the moral credit for their obedience does not remain with them. The virtue of the action, if any, is relocated to the authority who commanded it; the follower has reduced themselves from a moral actor to a moral instrument. This idea has been articulated in various forms:

- **Erich Fromm's "Escape from Freedom":**

Some people seek the comfort of obedience as protection from uncertainty. But in doing so, they surrender the very freedom that makes morality possible.

- **Psychology of Right-Wing Authoritarianism (Altemeyer⁴):**

Authoritarian followers believe that *obedience is itself morality*, which is why they excuse or sanctify harmful commands.

- **Hannah Arendt's insight (Eichmann):**

Evil becomes possible when ordinary people stop thinking for themselves and outsource moral judgment to an authority.

- **The moral paradox:**

A follower may *feel* virtuous because they are being obedient, but they are no longer exercising virtue—they are exercising **submission**. Virtue requires moral agency; obedience requires only compliance. This yields the ethic in crisp form:

2. Compulsion erases moral credit. When obedience is coerced, the follower is an instrument, not a moral agent. When obedience is voluntary—but the follower denies themselves the right to evaluate the command—moral

¹ Freedom: [The Core Moral Principle](#)

² [The personality traits of Joseph Smith](#)

³ Joseph Smith's personality is transmitted forward to us in the [Temple Endowment](#)

⁴ Dr. [Bob Altemeyer's](#) decades of research on *Right-Wing Authoritarianism (RWA)* shows: roughly 25–30% of people across all societies naturally prefer clear hierarchies, fixed moral codes, and a powerful leader to enforce them.

responsibility remains with the commander. This concept is devastating for authoritarian religions, because their entire moral engine is built on the fiction that:

- *“Obedience is the highest virtue.”*
- In reality, **obedience is morally neutral.**
- It becomes virtuous only when the follower uses their own judgment to evaluate the rightness of what they're obeying.

3. “Two Hands Clapping: The Leader and the Led”

Authoritarian religion is always a duet. The narcissistic leader provides the certainty, the divine mandate, the unyielding hierarchy. But the authoritarian follower completes the circle by seeking safety in obedience, discipline in submission, and identity in the shadow of another’s authority. One hand shapes, the other accepts; both sustain the system.

And so Mormonism, like all authoritarian systems, survives not because its leaders are extraordinary but because its followers are generous with their trust—and slow to reclaim the moral agency that was theirs all along.

4. “The Sin of Surrendering One’s Mind”

There is a peculiar moral sleight-of-hand at work in authoritarian religion—one that no honest thinker should allow to pass unchallenged. The authoritarian follower, who prides himself on loyalty, industry, family duty, punctuality, and reverence, commits a far more consequential error beneath all that admirable scaffolding. He hands over the only thing that ever made him a moral being in the first place: his judgment.

Christopher Hitchens might have said it this way:

“It is one thing to kneel in reverence; it is quite another to kneel in abdication. The first is a symbol. The second is a self-inflicted amputation of one’s own conscience.”

The Mormon Church has long benefited from this quiet slaughter of critical faculties. The authoritarian follower is told—explicitly—that God will prevent leaders from leading him astray. He is reassured that his obedience is virtue enough, and that questioning is not merely disloyal but a spiritual failing. In the Temple Endowment, this abdication is ritualized, sacralized, and dressed in the language of divine necessity. But the brutal truth remains:

5. There is no virtue in obedience when the price is the surrender of one’s moral mind.

An authoritarian follower who refuses to question becomes an accessory, however unwilling—to deception, exploitation, and injustice. The greater tragedy is that he mistakes this complicity for righteousness. Hitchens would not have spared them. Nor should we.

When Temple Laws Capture the Soul

Solemnly consider the confession of Bishop John D. Lee, the only man executed for his role in the [Mountain Meadows Massacre](#), where over 120 men, women, and children of the emigrant Francher wagon train were murdered by Church members in 1857.

“I am called a vile criminal and have been sentenced to be shot for deeds committed by myself and others, nearly twenty years ago. I have never willingly committed a crime. I have acted my religion, nothing more. I have obeyed the orders of the Church. I have acted as I was commanded to do by my superiors... and if I have committed acts that justify my execution, what should be the fate of the leaders in the Church who taught me to believe I could not and would not commit sin while obeying orders of the priesthood?”⁵

— John D. Lee, before his execution

Lee did not think of himself as committing murder. He said correctly that he was obedient to his Church leaders, the Stake Presidency and High Council at Cedar City. He kept his temple covenants: 1.) the Law of Obedience and 2.)

⁵ [Mormonism Unveiled: Or the Life and Confessions of the Late Mormon Bishop, John D. Lee.](#) St. Louis: Bryan, Brand & Company. New York: W. H. Stelle & Co., 1877, Chapter 1, p 36

the Oath of Vengeance. Fifty-five Church members behaved in unison as if **they also had lost their inner moral compass**.

This behavior is not just meritless but is a danger of any system — religious or otherwise — that teaches people to distrust their own conscience and place obedience above morality. Obedience, when exalted above conscience, becomes dangerous. It can turn good people into instruments of harm. For example, “Obedience gone wrong” at Mountain Meadows.

The Final Declaration: Freedom as the Highest Moral Good

No institution may command the mind, confiscate the conscience, or steal the time of a sovereign human being. My life is my own. It always was. Now it is mine again.

Joseph Smith: Narcissistic, Authoritarian, Antisocial, with Charismatic Dominance

Before proceeding, I should make clear that I am not a clinician, psychologist, or licensed counselor. I speak here not from professional authority but from observation, historical evidence, and moral reasoning—the same tools any informed reader is entitled to use when examining the character of a man who claimed divine kingship over the lives and choices of others. What follows, then, represents my considered opinion: not a diagnosis, but an interpretation of behavior patterns so strikingly consistent with narcissistic self-perception that one need not be a professional to recognize their shape.

Those who still revere Joseph Smith as a spiritual leader may find this reframing uncomfortable, but discomfort is hardly a rebuttal. Smith’s conduct—his self-exemption from moral rules, the habitual lying, the authoritarian machinery built around his person, his exploitation of others’ trust, and his remarkable ability to recast personal desire as divine mandate—reveals not the humility of a prophet, but the grandiosity of a man who assumed himself the axis of the cosmos. When the story of one’s own greatness becomes indistinguishable from the story of God Himself, we are no longer dealing with spirituality; we are dealing with narcissistic architecture on a heroic scale.



It falls to the reader—not to me—to rescue themselves from toxic teachings that excuse, sanctify, or romanticize such behavior. Every system built upon a narcissist’s self-image inevitably inherits that distortion. Mormonism is no exception. What I offer here is simply an argument: that Joseph Smith behaved less like a moral shepherd and more like a man convinced that the ordinary rules of empathy, honesty, and accountability applied to everyone but him. The evidence I provide in my [“Full Exit Statement”](#) speaks loudly enough.

If my tone is occasionally sharp, it is because the harm inflicted by such a personality is both real and measurable. And if my conclusions feel direct, it is only because the historical record is far too blunt to permit euphemism. The question before the reader is not whether Joseph Smith *felt* called by God, but whether his repeated patterns of deception, coercion, and entitlement reflect the character of a spiritual leader—or of a narcissist who discovered that religious language provided the perfect camouflaging cloak for personal ambition.

The key to de-mythologizing Joseph Smith is to show that his behavior fits recognizable human patterns, not behavior God would endorse. The correct frame is psychological rather than theological.

At one time I held the hypothesis that all people were innately good and wanted what’s best for other people. However, Dr Peter Salerno says that it’s a dangerous belief to hold because now we have research. It’s irrefutable, it’s undeniable there are certain brains that are wired in ways that cause harm intentionally because these people perceive that they will have personal advantage or gain if they go about life in a harmful way to others. It feels natural to them. He writes that the trait is inherited, not the result of childhood trauma or parenting.

It is a diagnosable personality style known as Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD) characterized by **an inflated sense of self-importance (Grandiosity), a deep need for excessive admiration, a lack of empathy for others, and often, a fragile self-image that is easily threatened by criticism.** Donald Trump is a modern example. While everyone may exhibit some narcissistic traits occasionally, true narcissism involves these traits being **severe, long-lasting, and negatively impacting relationships,** work, and overall functioning.

Salerno emphasizes that the Narcissistic Personality Disorder emerges over time as genetically predisposed traits that solidify. Narcissists' patterns of thinking and behaving feel natural, not painful to them. Their thoughts, behaviors, and feelings are in harmony with, or acceptable to a person's fundamental self-image, values, and beliefs. The individual perceives these aspects of their personality as normal, appropriate, or even desirable, rather than problematic.

In other words, Narcissistic Personalities are in harmony with their fundamental self-image, values, and beliefs. The individual perceives these disorders in their personality as normal, appropriate, or even desirable, rather than problematic. They typically see themselves as superior and justified in their actions.

When you examine the history of Joseph Smith's own life, you find a striking match where Smith exhibits **nearly every major behavioral marker** that clinical psychology associates with Antisocial Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD). These individuals combine a grandiose sense of self-importance with a callous disregard for others and a lack of remorse.

By antisocial is meant that his actions consistently violate social norms, causes harm to others, employs deception, and his personal gains are elevated above the rights and autonomy of his victims. Below are the main ways this **Narcissistic antisocial pattern** appears in Smith's actions.



Joseph Smith: Seen Through His Own Footprints

Church members know Joseph Smith through stories told in Sunday School and what is uncovered on the internet, and from many truth telling documents such as this. The young treasure-seeking farm boy, the seer stone in the hat, the visions, eloping with Emma, dozens of secret “wives,” Emma, the first wife's pain, propositioning the wives and daughters of associates, the Kirtland bank, the prophecies, the translations, Lieutenant General of the Nauvoo Legion, the Danites, Tar and Feathering, Liberty Jail, guardian of wealthy orphaned sisters inheritance, burning the Nauvoo Expositor, the martyrdom.

When these same stories are placed in psychological language — the kind used by Peter Salerno, and in modern clinical research — a different Joseph Smith emerges. Not the persecuted prophet, but the *classic narcissistic antisocial manipulator* whose behaviors match a well-known, scientifically documented pattern.

This isn't speculation. This is Smith's own behavior, interpreted with the same tools we use to understand modern authoritarian figures. Here are **Six Behavioral Markers** of Narcissistic Personality Disorder, each revealed in a scene every Mormon already knows.

1. GRANDIOSITY: “I have more to boast of than any man”

Every member has heard the quote. They used to praise it.

“I have more to boast of than any man had... I am the only man that has been able to keep a whole church together since the days of Adam.”— Joseph Smith, History of the Church 6:408

This isn't humility. This is **textbook pathological grandiosity** — the narcissist's conviction that he is chosen, irreplaceable, above all others. Smith didn't merely claim prophetic authority; he claimed cosmic indispensability. He spoke of himself as:

- the sole vessel of God on earth
- a king (literally, in the Council of Fifty)
- future ruler of nations
- the final judge of all humanity

This is not the rhetoric of a servant leader. It is the psychological signature of a narcissistic ruler.

2. ENTITLEMENT: The Rules Apply to You, Never to Him

Every Mormon grew up hearing that “God’s prophets live higher laws.” But in Smith’s case, “higher law” meant **no law at all**. He dictated:

- the Law of Chastity⁶
- the Law of Obedience⁷
- the Law of Consecration

— and violated each of them privately. Most revealing is the way he exempted himself from morality through revelation: “God commands me to take more wives.” “An angel with a sword forced me.” “Emma shall be destroyed if she resists.” This is not divine authority. This is **narcissistic exceptionalism** — the belief that one’s impulses are sacred and one’s critics damnable.

3. PATHOLOGICAL LYING: A Double Life in Holy Clothing

Latter-day Saints know these stories intimately:

- denying polygamy publicly⁸
- practicing it privately
- sending men on missions while marrying their wife⁹
- destroying the *Nauvoo Expositor* for telling the truth¹⁰
- creating new revelations to retroactively justify his behavior¹¹

This is **not** the lying of fear. It is the lying of utility. The narcissistic liar lies because it works. It keeps the empire intact, the followers loyal, the critics confused, and the inner circle dependent. Smith did not simply lie. He industrialized deception.

4. EXPLOITATION: “God requires your daughter. God requires your wife.”

Even believing members know the stories — they just never learned the psychological label.

⁶ Book of Mormon, **Jacob 2:27**: “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”

Doctrine and Covenants, Section 42:22 “Thou shalt love thy wife with all thy heart, and shalt cleave unto her and none else”.

⁷ His defiance of Missouri authorities, including actions leading to his arrest for treason and sedition (like organizing the [Nauvoo Legion](#)), was disobedience in which Smith claimed his God placed him above civil law.

⁸ May 26, 1844 Sermon: Joseph Smith publicly responded to accusations of having multiple wives, stating he had only one. At this time, historians estimate he had taken at least 25 plural wives privately

⁹ Joseph Smith married Marinda Nancy Johnson Hyde, who was the wife of Apostle Orson Hyde, while Orson was serving a mission in Palestine.

¹⁰ The Nauvoo Expositor newspaper revealed Joseph Smith's secret practice of polygamy, criticized his political power grabs, and his fusion of church/state were true. Smith ordered the newspaper be destroyed.

¹¹ The formal “revelation” on plural marriage (now Doctrine and Covenants Section 132) was not recorded until 1843, long after the practice began in the 1830s

Smith:

- pressured teenagers using threats of divine destruction¹²
- told married women their salvation depended on yielding to him
- secretly married girls living in his home¹³
- performed fake wedding ceremonies to deceive Emma¹⁴
- used revelation as a coercive tool: “God commands you to obey *me*.”



These are not religious marriages. They are **acts of narcissistic sexual predation** camouflaged as doctrine. In psychology, this is called: **instrumental exploitation** — using people as tools for validation, pleasure, or power.

5. AGGRESSION TOWARD THREATS: Punish, Silence, Destroy

When confronted, Smith responded not with reflection but retaliation.

- Oliver Cowdery questioned polygamy → excommunicated.¹⁵
- William Law exposed Smith’s behavior → printing press destroyed.¹⁶
- Judges issued warrants → Smith ran Nauvoo as a sanctuary city.
- Critics spoke up → he formed secret police (Danites) to silence dissent.

This “attack when threatened” response is the **exact neuropsychological profile** of a malignant narcissist.

The pattern is always: **challenge** → **retaliate** → **escalate** → **sanctify the retaliation**.

6. LACK OF EMPATHY: Emma’s Pain, Members’ Ruin, Expendable Lives

A narcissist’s empathy is shallow or absent. Joseph Smith’s life is full of empathy’s absence:

- Emma’s anguish dismissed¹⁷
- financial ruination from the Kirtland Safety Society minimized

¹² [Marriage to Orphaned Lucy Walker](#) (16)

¹³ [FannyAlgerAffair-AdulteryDisguisedAsMarriage.pdf](#)

[Marrying Wealthy Orphans](#): The Inheritance of Maria and Sarah Lawrence

¹⁴ [A Moral Critique](#) of Joseph Smith’s Secret Marriages to the Partridge Sisters

¹⁵ [Oliver Cowdery’s moral condemnation](#) is telling: he did not describe the Fanny Alger affair as a “marriage” but as adultery.

¹⁶ [Smith unlawfully ordered the printing press destroyed](#)

¹⁷ New threats attacking Emma’s wellbeing were dictated by Joseph and recorded by William Clayton on July 12, 1843. Hyrum Smith recommended Joseph produce a revelation because it might convince Emma Smith to accept the principle of plural marriage.

Joseph threatened by directing Emma Smith, using the voice of God (D&C 132:52), to accept his additional wives, under penalty of "destruction". In verse 4 he threatens damnation for those who reject the new and everlasting covenant, which is understood in this context to include plural marriage. These verses are Narcissistic threats to Emma: they are self-serving, lack empathy, excuse himself for violating God’s command (BoFM Jacob 2:23–30, and D&C Section 42:22). The new revelation (D&C 132:52) is unethical, abusive, anti-social, narcissistic.

After the dictation was presented to her, specifically to convince her to accept plural marriage, Emma did not believe a word of it. She demanded the manuscript be burned.

Smith’s attempt to alter his marriage agreement is characteristic of his many secret narcissistic, authoritarian, antisocial claims of divine revelation that he used to manipulate many other women into a relationship in the name of God behind Emma’s back. He demonstrates how it feels natural and right to a person with Narcissistic Personality Disorder when dominating or deceiving his wife because he sees it as correctly serving himself first. He lacks empathy for Emma because things are as they should be. He sees himself as consistent with the law because he is above the law. For example, "*Thou shalt love thy wife with all thy heart, and shalt cleave unto her and none else*". D&C 42:22. The narcissist thinks that obviously, such rules do not apply to him.

- followers' loyalty exploited
- dissenters threatened with eternity¹⁸
- women's emotional autonomy overwritten by "revelation"

He caused enormous human suffering. He rarely paused. This is not the behavior of a prophet. It is the clinical signature of a **narcissistic, antisocial, authoritarian personality**.

CLOSING: When You Change the Lens, You Change the Story

The beauty of this reinterpretation is its simplicity: you don't need new facts. You only need new language — *scientific psychological language* — to see Joseph Smith exactly as he was. When you recognize the pattern, you cannot unsee it:

- Grandiosity
- Entitlement
- Pathological lying
- Exploitation
- Aggression toward threats
- Lack of empathy

This is not divine leadership. It is **narcissism wearing a prophet's clothing**. And once you see it in Joseph, you begin to see it in the system he built — and in the men who inherited his throne. **Authoritarian leaders attract authoritarian followers. The narcissistic founder creates the authoritarian church. And the authoritarian church manufactures obedience by the same tools the founder used.**

The Immoral Purpose of the LDS Temple Endowment

The Temple cannot be of God because it destroys the very thing that makes morality possible — human freedom. Each covenant strips away another layer of personhood: Obedience seizes the will, Sacrifice consumes the life, the Gospel captures the mind, Chastity imprisons the body, and Consecration claims the soul itself. And it is all done behind an oath of secrecy that is itself void — coerced, uninformed, and sworn to conceal manipulation.

The Temple as the Engine of Control

Temple covenants are the beating heart of the Church's power. The modern Church is pouring its resources into building temples worldwide because the temple is **where the system replicates itself**. It creates new loyalists not by persuasion or evidence, but by **progressively breaking down a person's sovereignty and rebuilding their identity around obedience to the institution**.

No system that dismantles moral agency, replaces conscience with obedience, and hides itself behind fear can be divine. It may demand reverence, but it deserves none. **The temple is not holy ground. It is a theater of captivity.** The temple does not elevate the soul. It **captures** it. What is presented as sacred covenants are, in truth, **contracts of subjugation** — void for their deception, coercion, and moral corruption. They do not lead people to God; they lead people to dependence.



¹⁸ D&C 132:54 (LDS edition): Emma is being told to obey Joseph's practice of plural marriage. The phrase "she shall be destroyed" is an explicit threat of divine punishment if she refuses. This verse is an example of coercion cloaked in religious authority, with serious implications about power and consent in Joseph Smith's relationship with his wife. To make that threat as if it's coming from God is blasphemy. Out of his ignorance, but relying on his narcissistic instincts, Joseph stumbles into violating the ethical limitations God's Nature imposes.

Its covenants are not covenants with God, but contracts with an institution — contracts that are null the moment they are exposed to the light of moral truth. The temple is not the pinnacle of Mormon spirituality. It is the machinery of control — the very thing that must be morally, spiritually, and publicly challenged.

The Temple Covenants — Institutionalized Dependency

The Mormon temple covenants embody this system of engineered dependency: a ritualized surrender of one's moral agency in exchange for promised protection, where obedience is exalted above conscience and conformity is mistaken for holiness. Each covenant is presented as sacred, yet its real function is to condition submission — to God in name, but in practice to the institution that claims to speak for God. Members are told they cannot question or disobey without risking their eternal salvation. The rituals demand secrecy, silence, and sacrifice, binding participants by fear of spiritual loss if they ever dissent.

What appears to be devotion is in fact **the ceremonial dismantling of personal sovereignty**, replacing inner moral discernment with institutional control. In this way, the temple does not merely symbolize Smith's authoritarian theology — it **enacts it** on the human soul.

This is why the first and most central temple covenant is the Law of Obedience — the keystone of Smith's system, demanding the surrender of personal will as the price of belonging and the gateway to every other vow.

The Oath of Secrecy — A Fraudulent Cloak

Before any Temple covenants are explained or taken, new initiates are forced to swear an **Oath of Secrecy** promising never to reveal what they are about to experience under penalty of death (formerly by throat-slashing and disembowelment pantomimes).

This oath is **morally and contractually invalid**. It violates three fundamental principles that void any contract:

1. **Lack of informed consent** — it is extracted *before* the member knows what they are agreeing to.
2. **Coercion** — it is demanded under duress, while surrounded by pressure, fear, and social expectation.
3. **Illegality of purpose** — no oath can ethically or legally bind a person to conceal manipulative, deceptive, or unjust practices.

A covenant extracted under deception is not binding; it is void. And an oath to conceal wrongdoing is not sacred; it is complicity. Secrecy is not protecting holiness here — it is **shielding corruption from scrutiny**.

The Law of Obedience — The Keystone of Smith's System

The Law of Obedience stands as the cornerstone of the Mormon temple system — the keystone of Joseph Smith's authoritarian design. It is presented as a sacred promise to God, yet it functions as the pivotal act of submission that makes all other covenants possible. Before members are permitted to take any further vows, they must first agree to yield their will, their judgment, and their conscience to the institution that claims to speak for God.

By accepting this covenant, members symbolically renounce their inner moral sovereignty. It marks the point at which the individual ceases to be an independent moral agent and becomes a managed subject. All that follows — secrecy, sacrifice, chastity, and consecration — rests on this initial surrender of the self.

This is the great paradox: what is presented as the highest spiritual virtue actually short-circuits moral development. By demanding unquestioning obedience as the first step toward holiness, the temple reverses the moral order of things. Conscience is meant to guide obedience, not be silenced by it. But in Smith's system, conscience is displaced — and obedience becomes an end in itself.

This inversion trains members to measure righteousness not by the quality of their motives or the compassion of their choices, but by their willingness to comply. Fear of disapproval or loss of salvation then becomes the hidden engine of their devotion. What appears as spiritual discipline is, at its root, submission enforced by fear — the very opposite of love-born goodness.

This dynamic becomes even clearer in the next covenant, the Law of Sacrifice, where Smith deepened this logic of coerced surrender by requiring ever greater offerings of self, time, and property.

The Law of Sacrifice — Escalating the Surrender

If the Law of Obedience breaks down the individual's moral will, the Law of Sacrifice consumes what remains of their autonomy. Having first conditioned members to submit their judgment to the institution, the temple now requires them to **yield their labor, their time, and their very identity** to its purposes. What began as obedience becomes **total self-donation to the system**.

In principle, sacrifice can be noble — when it is freely chosen for love. But sacrifice compelled by fear or by promises of reward is **not moral virtue; it is exploitation**. In Smith's system, the individual's worthiness is measured by how much they will relinquish — family time, personal ambitions, independent callings — all reframed as sacred "sacrifice" to prove loyalty to the Church.

What is praised as devotion is in fact a **deepening of dependency**, a further dismantling of the self. The Law of Sacrifice teaches that to be good is to give ever more of yourself — but only to the institution, never to your own conscience or calling.

Smith's purpose in creating this covenant was never mysterious. He had already learned that **obedience gave him control of people — and sacrifice gave him control of their resources**. The Law of Sacrifice became the perfect instrument for both. He framed personal offerings of time, labor, property, and even relationships as sacred duties owed to God, while ensuring they were funneled through himself as God's sole authorized steward. In doing so, he transformed devotion into a pipeline of human energy feeding his personal empire.

Modern Church leaders still operate this machinery. They call it consecration, callings, and tithes, but the logic is unchanged: **your worthiness is measured by what you will give up of yourself to prove loyalty**. What began as Smith's private apparatus of control has become a vast institutional system for extracting obedience, resources, and identity under the name of "sacrifice."

This is the fatal flaw at the heart of the Law of Sacrifice: **a coerced sacrifice is not a virtue — it is a confiscation**. Moral worth cannot be measured by how much a person gives up under pressure, fear, or promised reward. Goodness requires freedom, and freedom requires the right to say no. By making sacrifice compulsory, the temple severs sacrifice from love and leaves only submission. What is celebrated as consecration is, in truth, the **quiet erasure of the self**.

The Law of the Gospel — Capturing the Mind

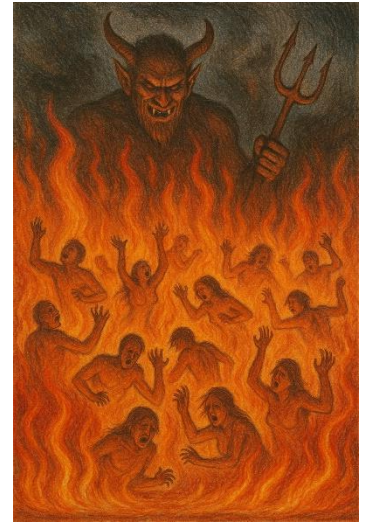
Having stripped members of their independent will through obedience and consumed their personal autonomy through sacrifice, the temple next binds them to its worldview through the Law of the Gospel — defining not only what they must do, but what they must think and believe.



This covenant is striking for its vagueness. Unlike obedience or sacrifice, which at least name an action, the Law of the Gospel never clearly states what its content is. In the temple ceremony, participants are told to “observe and keep the Law of the Gospel” as taught in the temple — but **no one is told exactly what that law contains**. The very ambiguity is part of its design: it means whatever the current leaders say it means.

In effect, the Law of the Gospel is a **blank check signed in advance to Church authority over the mind**. It demands intellectual submission — the agreement to treat Church teachings as synonymous with truth, and to distrust one’s own moral judgment if it conflicts with what the institution declares.

Where the Law of Obedience seizes the will and the Law of Sacrifice seizes the life, **the Law of the Gospel seizes the conscience**.



A Covenant of Epistemic Surrender:

This is where Smith’s system reveals its final machinery of control—*Once a person has promised to obey, and to give, and to yield their whole identity, they must also promise to see the world only through the lens the Church provides.*

The Law of the Gospel reframes all competing sources of truth — reason, science, history, experience, even one’s own moral intuition — as suspect or dangerous if they contradict Church teachings. Members are taught to distrust their doubts and to view critical thinking as pride. Questions become “temptations,” and disagreement becomes “rebellion.” This covenant is the moment when **mental conformity becomes a spiritual duty**.

The Disappearance of Conscience:

In this way, the Law of the Gospel completes what the earlier covenants began: the quiet dismantling of the self. By subordinating personal conscience to institutional doctrine, **it severs the last link between the individual and their own inner moral compass**. The person who takes this covenant has been conditioned to see virtue not as love, justice, or compassion, but simply as alignment with the institution’s teachings.

It feels like faith, but it is actually the **surrender of thought**.

What the temple celebrates as “keeping the gospel” is, in reality, the final stage of psychological capture — **the replacement of inner moral freedom with institutional ideology**.

The Law of Chastity — Sexual Control Disguised as Virtue

Joseph Smith wrote rules about sexual purity the way a fox might write the henhouse security manual — with great sincerity and no intention of following them. Into the Temple he put the Law of Chastity while secretly marrying and having sex with over [thirty women](#) — proof that nothing boosts a man’s faith in monogamy more than treating adultery as a sacrament.

After capturing the mind through the Law of the Gospel, the temple turns to controlling the body and emotions through the Law of Chastity. Members are required to covenant to have no sexual relations except

with their lawfully wedded spouse. On its surface, this sounds like a call to marital fidelity. But the way the Church defines and enforces chastity reveals its true purpose: control, not love.

Crucially, chastity in real human relationships includes both physical and emotional fidelity. Women tend to grasp this intuitively — they know emotional intimacy can threaten a marriage as deeply as sexual acts. Many men, especially in patriarchal religious cultures, are taught to think of chastity as purely physical. This blind spot exposes the covenant's authorship: it was written by men who imagined fidelity as controlling women's bodies, not honoring their hearts.



The irony is almost theatrical.

Joseph Smith created this covenant while secretly marrying — and likely sleeping with — over thirty women. In effect, he was drafting rules about monogamy while treating monogamy as a quaint suggestion. It's as if a fox wrote the henhouse security manual — then held a solemn ceremony to make the hens promise chastity. Smith thundered about virtue while practicing serial adultery dressed up as revelation, inserting divine footnotes into his own libido in both the Doctrine and Covenants and the Book of Mormon.

Shame as a System of Control

This gendered double standard reveals the covenant's underlying logic: it was created by men, for men, to control women's sexuality — because controlling women's sexuality was the foundation of controlling inheritance, lineage, and loyalty in Smith's system.

The psychological harm is immense. As I document in my [Full Exit Statement](#), Mormonism teaches youth to see their sexuality as sinful, even requiring boys to confess spontaneous climaxes as if they were moral crimes, and conditioning girls to fear their own desire, entering marriage sexually naïve and emotionally withdrawn.

This is not holiness — it is **sexual disempowerment disguised as virtue**. The Law of Chastity replaces healthy sexual development with fear, secrecy, and guilt. It drives wedges between spouses, turns natural intimacy into a moral battlefield, and trains both men and women to judge their worthiness not by love or mutual joy but by how well they suppress their humanity.

The Final Lock

Placed after obedience, sacrifice, and gospel, chastity functions as the final lock on the system. By capturing sexuality — one of the strongest human drives — the institution ensures complete behavioral control. When desire itself becomes a source of guilt, members become endlessly self-policing. Even their private thoughts are treated as sins.

This is not about protecting marriage. It is about ensuring that **all intimacy, love, and pleasure are permitted only under the Church's authority**.

The Collapse of Sexual Wholeness

This is the tragedy of the Law of Chastity: what is portrayed as moral purity is in truth **sexual captivity**. Instead of nurturing healthy, joyful intimacy, it teaches fear of desire, suspicion of the body, and shame toward pleasure. It fractures marriages, poisons young people's self-image, and cripples sexual communication between partners. It severs sexuality from love, replacing delight with duty, curiosity with guilt, and wholeness with repression.

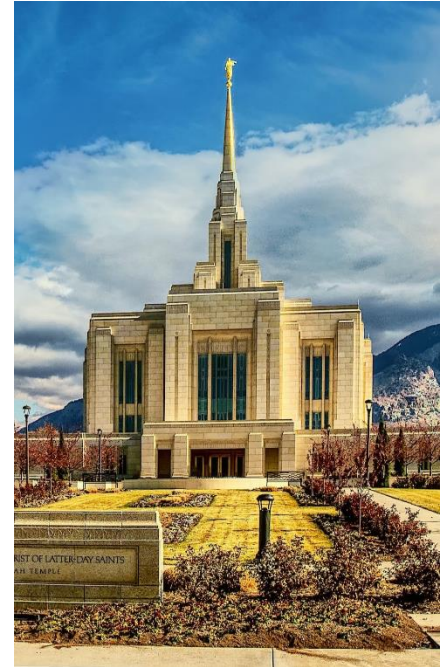
By making sexual self-distrust a measure of holiness, the temple shatters the foundation of authentic intimacy.

The Law of Consecration — The Total Capture of the Soul

The Law of Consecration is the final act in Smith’s system — the moment when the temple claims ownership over everything the individual has left. After conditioning the will through obedience, consuming the life through sacrifice, capturing the mind through the gospel, and policing the body through chastity, the temple now demands the surrender of **all property, time, talents, and even one’s future self** to “the building up of the Kingdom of God on the earth.”

This is not a symbolic gesture. It is a declaration that **nothing the member is or has belongs to themselves any longer.** It subordinates every personal calling, creative ambition, relationship, and possession to the institution. From this moment forward, the member is taught to see their existence as no longer their own but as property of the Church.

It is framed as consecration to God — but it is **appropriation by the institution.** Where love inspires generosity, consecration demands forfeiture. Where love gives from abundance, consecration drains identity to prove loyalty. It is the final ritual of depersonalization — **the ceremonial erasure of the self.**



Danger When Temple Laws Capture the Soul

Solemnly consider the confession of Bishop John D. Lee, the only man executed for his role in the Mountain Meadows Massacre, where over 120 men, women, and children of the emigrant Francher wagon train were murdered in 1857.

“I am called a vile criminal and have been sentenced to be shot for deeds committed by myself and others, nearly twenty years ago. I have never willingly committed a crime. I have acted my religion, nothing more. I have obeyed the orders of the Church. I have acted as I was commanded to do by my superiors... and if I have committed acts that justify my execution, what should be the fate of the leaders in the Church who taught me to believe I could not and would not commit sin while obeying orders of the priesthood?”

— John D. Lee, before his execution

Lee did not think he was committing murder — he thought he was obedient, keeping his temple covenants. Fifty-five other endowed priesthood holders behaved as if **they also had no inner moral compass.**

This is the danger of any system — religious or otherwise — that teaches people to **distrust their own conscience and place obedience above morality.**

It pressures adherents to surrender personal responsibility to the Church, producing moral abdication:

- Inner doubts are treated as untrustworthy or even sinful.
- Inner convictions are only valid if they align with Church teachings.
- The Church becomes the only arbiter of truth, even above one’s own moral compass.

This logic still echoes today in familiar phrases:

“The prophet will never lead the Church astray.”

“Follow the leadership of the Church... the Lord will never allow the President to lead you astray.”

Such statements **coerce the abdication of moral responsibility** — the same abdication Lee described.

The temple system enshrines this pattern: covenants like the Law of Obedience condition members to obey first

and silence conscience. Even the Law of Tithing is framed as a debt enforced by threat (“those who do not pay shall be burned”), not as a free gift.

This is how obedience, when exalted above conscience, becomes dangerous.

It can turn good people into instruments of harm — as it did at [Mountain Meadows](#).

Episode 2 - A: [What Happens Inside the Mormon Temple?](#) [△](#)

(1:05:11)

[Why Temple Covenants are Invalid and Immoral](#) By Francis Nelson Henderson
[Temple Temptations.com](#)

(7 page pdf)

Honesty: Duty of Candor — Negligence and Dereliction of Duty

The Indictment

The indictment is simple. Two of the highest leaders of the Church—Dallin H. Oaks and Todd Christofferson—are attorneys. Their professional training makes ignorance impossible, and their own actions reveal what they know. From the *Gospel Topics Essays* to their quiet revisions of the *Book of Mormon*, to President Russell M. [Nelson’s public demonstration](#) of Joseph Smith’s “seer stone in the hat,” they have disclosed enough to recognize that Smith’s foundational claims cannot be sustained. If the *Book of Mormon* is not historical, then the Church is founded on a lie.

Any honest Aaronic Priesthood teenager could connect those dots. Yet these men, armed with superior knowledge and authority, have chosen silence, half-truths, and cosmetic disclosure. That is not prudence; it is **negligence**—a knowing failure of duty. When silence maintains a falsehood, silence itself becomes deceit. This is the textbook definition of **dereliction of duty**.



2. Honesty (for those still pretending not to know what it means)

Honesty is not a game of selective disclosure or a performance of moral rectitude while concealing inconvenient facts behind one’s back. It is the full alignment of one’s words with the whole truth of a matter, not merely the fraction that flatters one’s cause.

An honest person does not conceal critical information and then congratulate himself for not having *technically* lied. That is the refuge of the lawyer who forgets that the law was meant to serve truth, not replace it. Silence, when it permits a falsehood to stand unchallenged, is a lie told with the mouth closed.

Honesty does not traffic in half-truths, euphemisms, or carefully staged omissions “in the interest of faith.” Such performances are simply deceit dressed for Sunday. Nor does it resort to rhetorical distractions—attacking a source’s loyalty rather than confronting the evidence. That maneuver, beloved of Mormon apologists, is called *argumentum ad hominem* everywhere else, and *gaslighting* in modern English.

Honesty is an act of **courage**, not convenience. It demands truth even when the truth makes one’s institution look shabby or one’s prophet seem human after all. It is not situational, not subject to correlation-committee review, and not voided by fear of what the faithful might think.

That a definition of honesty must be supplied to men who claim prophetic gifts, manage billion-dollar assets, and carry law degrees is astonishing. Yet in today's Church—where half-truths are canonized as “milk before meat”—the clarification is overdue.

Honesty is not the art of withholding facts until discovery becomes inconvenient. It is not the dignified silence of leaders who know more than they will say. To misdirect, to obscure context, or to deflect by questioning a messenger's loyalty—these are all dishonest acts. The moral weight of a statement lies not in whether it can pass legal scrutiny but in whether it gives the hearer an accurate understanding of reality. Those who trade in technicalities while posturing as servants of God reveal their allegiance to something smaller: the preservation of the enterprise.

A religion that cannot survive honesty is already dead; it merely hasn't been told.



3. Responsibility and the Duty of Candor

As one ascends through the ranks of any organization, the definition of honesty expands with the reach of one's influence. What might be ignorance in a novice becomes negligence in a leader. Responsibility rises in direct proportion to authority.

The higher one's station, the greater the duty to inspect one's own beliefs for self-deception. To confuse emotional arousal with revelation is not spirituality but negligence. To codify that confusion into policy is dereliction of duty. When a man interprets his every physiological thrill as the whisperings of God, he makes his endocrine system a deity and his conscience a bystander. Such self-deception is not innocent; it is willful blindness weaponized by position.

4. The Fraud of “Feeling the Spirit”

The Mormon teaching that emotions are divine messages is sentimentality masquerading as theology. It confuses psychological comfort with epistemic certainty. To equate a surge of warmth or a tearful tremor with revelation from the Almighty is to canonize one's own bias. It is an ethical abdication, a conversion of self-indulgence into piety.

An omniscient God, we are told, reveals eternal truth through the same chemical signals that accompany hunger, nostalgia, or caffeine. That is not revelation; it is biochemistry mistaken for authority. The result is a church hierarchy populated by men unable to distinguish conviction from evidence—leaders who interpret their own certainty as proof of inspiration.

This confusion breeds moral disaster. It allows the devout to claim divine endorsement for their prejudices while dismissing dissenters as faithless. It is how sincere men commit dishonest acts without ever feeling dishonest.

5. The Temple Endowment and the Institution of Obedience¹⁹

Joseph Smith's temple endowment is the structural embodiment of authoritarian values. Within its dramatized allegory, questioning authority is portrayed as rebellion against God, while obedience—unquestioning and absolute—is elevated as the highest virtue. It replaces moral reasoning with ritual submission.

The ceremony's deeper lesson is not about covenant but control. It teaches that divine approval flows downward through a chain of command rather than upward through conscience. This inversion of ethics ensures that future leaders, even intelligent ones, will inherit obedience as holiness.

Oaks and his peers are its perfect product: brilliant, disciplined, and incapable of heresy. The temple forbids the self-examination that would expose its own moral flaw. Thus, the Brethren's silence is not merely tactical; it is the logical outcome of ritualized obedience. They have confused loyalty with integrity and self-deception with faith.

6. Conclusion

Leadership multiplies responsibility. What the laity may call confusion, a prophet must call deceit if he persists in it. Those who demand obedience, collect tithes, and claim prophetic authority assume a duty of candor, competence, and care. They ask for and receive the trust of millions whose lives and identities depend upon their representations.

To know that Joseph Smith's foundational stories are false and not refute them—to profit from belief while concealing disproof—is complicity in a fraud. A man who claims revelation while suppressing fact commits both spiritual treason and professional malpractice.

The honest course is the harder one: to admit deception, to dismantle the myth, and to start again on the solid ground of truth. Until that happens, the organization remains what it has become—a monument to institutional self-deception, staffed by men too frightened of their own emotions to test whether God is truly the author of their certainty.

--- The End ---

Francis Nelson Henderson
Dec 2025

¹⁹ The Temple cannot be of God because [it destroys the very thing that makes morality possible](#) — human freedom.