

Three Messages to Young Adults



If you will put the things of God first, you will make good decisions. Nothing else counts if you do not qualify to return to live with Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ.

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My young adult friends, you live in a time of great promise. Never in the history of the world have there been so many opportunities for choice and success.

I have three messages for you as you make your way in the world: be an active member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, prepare today for life tomorrow, and be willing to accept the responsibilities of marriage.

Be Active in the Church

As you secure a quality education, commence employment, and look forward to marriage, you should always keep in mind your Church activity.

Young single adults are a highly mobile group. You change addresses and telephone numbers often. As Church leaders, we are saddened when we lose contact with you. When this occurs, we can't be in touch with you to invite you to accept a Church calling and to share in all the blessings of Church membership.

One of our greatest concerns is that

many of our young adults have not established themselves in a unit where they have a bishop and their bishop knows who they are. Every member of the Church should be known by and be accountable to a bishop or branch president. This relationship will provide you with an opportunity to participate in priesthood ordinances, have interviews, secure temple recommends when appropriate, and receive callings in the Church.

There should be a clear line to someone holding priesthood keys. If you have two bishops, you have no bishop. If your membership record is not in the ward where you attend and you are not in a position to accept





a calling, you may quickly find yourself becoming lost to your leaders.

A Church calling is one of the most wonderful blessings you can enjoy at your stage of life. You have so much to contribute to the ward or branch where you live. Your talents and skills are necessary to a growing Church. If you are a returned missionary, you can influence other members with your enthusiasm and your testimony. A calling is also important if you have not yet served a mission.

If you have not established yourself in a ward or branch and are not known by your bishop or branch president, will you accept my personal challenge to immediately correct that matter? Become accountable to your priesthood leaders. Sisters, get to know the members of the Relief Society in your area. Become involved in the Relief Society organization. Young men, be worthy to assume the increased responsibilities and enter into the sacred covenants that are part of progressing from the Aaronic Priesthood to the Melchizedek Priesthood. Establish yourself in your local elders quorum, and become an active participant.

If you are established in a ward or branch, I challenge you to think of friends or associates in the gospel who have become lost to their priesthood leaders. Encourage these friends to reestablish themselves in the gospel and to become participating members of the Church.



Every member of the Church should be known by and be accountable to a bishop or branch president. This relationship will provide you with opportunities to contribute to the ward or branch where you live.

Get a good education, and acquire the skills necessary to successfully obtain employment, rear a family, and be a contributing member of society.

Prepare Today for Life Tomorrow

The second message I bring you is to make wise decisions in preparation for your future.

I have associated with thousands of college-age students. I can honestly say that what you decide to do with respect to your education, employment, preparation for marriage, and Church activity at this time of your life will set the pattern for your future.

If you will put the things of God first, you will make good decisions. It is so easy to make a decision that seems attractive at the time but that, in the aggregate, will lead you away from the kingdom of God. Nothing else in eternity counts if you do not qualify today to return to live with Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ.

In the scriptures we find several statements that may be of help to you. Jesus Christ said, “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matthew 6:33).

On another occasion He said, “He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it” (Matthew 10:39). Do you understand that losing your life in the service of others allows you to find your true identity as a child of God? The alternative—being self-centered and not serving God or others—results in losing your life in an eternal sense.

As you prepare for your future, your service and association in the environment of the Church are most important.

Secure a Good Education

We encourage you to get a good education and to acquire the skills

necessary to successfully obtain employment, rear a family, and be a contributing member of society.

Education and vocational training can be expensive. Learn how to save money and wisely use what funds are available to you. This will help minimize the debt you may have when you complete your education.

If you are securing an education while married, it will require that you and your spouse exercise good decision-making skills as you sacrifice to care for your family. You will need to ensure that the needs of your family, your employment, and your education are not jeopardized.

Single or married, those of you who are employed should develop a good work ethic. Be productive; magnify your employment skills. Be loyal to your employer. Seek opportunities for advancement and for additional responsibility. Pay your tithes and offerings. Save some of your income, and develop the habit of thrift and self-reliance.

Know the True Value of Money

One of the great challenges at this stage of your life is to know how to make decisions with respect to spending money.

President Brigham Young taught: “If you wish to get rich, save what you get. A fool can earn money; but it takes a wise man to save and dispose of it to his own advantage.”¹¹

So many enticing and interesting products are available in our society. They provide pleasure and relaxation. They are intriguing, and they seem necessary.

Yet the Savior said:

“Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

“But lay up for yourselves treasures in





heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

“For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (Matthew 6:19–21).

Be careful that you do not unwisely surround yourself with physical, temporal playthings that may not be necessary at this stage of your life. Do not feel that you must immediately provide for yourself what your parents had when you left their home. In most cases it took your parents decades to acquire the conveniences of a modern home, and it is simply not practical to seek to acquire them now as you begin your new family home.

I can personally testify that some of the sweetest memories my wife and I have are of when our growing family was living in a small apartment as I was completing law school. We had few of life’s luxuries. But we didn’t know we were poor because we had each other and the blessings of the gospel. These blessings completely overshadowed our lack of physical possessions.

Be Willing to Accept the Responsibilities of Marriage

The third message I would like to discuss with you—and it connects with the previous two messages—is to be willing to accept the responsibilities of marriage.

The Brethren of the Church have a deep and abiding



concern that our young single adults know the doctrine of the Church on marriage. The doctrine of the Church with respect to the eternal family is clear. Let me quote from the Doctrine and Covenants:

“Therefore, if a man marry him a wife in the world, and he marry her not by me nor by my word, and he covenant with her so long as he is in the world and she with him, their covenant and marriage are not of force when they are dead, and when they are out of the world; therefore, they are not bound by any law when they are out of the world.

“Therefore, when they are out of the world they neither marry nor are given in marriage; but are appointed angels in heaven, which angels are ministering servants, to minister for those who are worthy of a far more, and an exceeding, and an eternal weight of glory” (D&C 132:15–16).

In simple, plain language, marriage for time and all eternity is essential for exaltation.



Challenges That May Delay Marriage

With this scripture in mind, let me mention some of the factors that may delay marriage.

1. To some, there may seem to be less encouragement for returned missionaries to get married. If that is your understanding, it is a false assumption. All returned missionaries should be encouraged when they return home to remain active in the Church, secure an education, acquire employment skills, and move in the direction of finding an eternal companion.

2. Some young men feel they cannot meet the expectations of some young women. The phrase “high maintenance” is often used to describe those who give the impression they need more than the other can provide. Proper communication can address that uncertainty.

3. An emphasis on education or career may put marriage in a lesser role. Marriage, education, and career can go together. A career without family, where family is possible, is a tragedy.

4. Do not let your life be simply an existence that is fun or selfish. Life is more than an amusement park. Do not be hooked on obtaining possessions. Accept responsibility.

5. A negative perception of marriage as the result of media reports or the experiences of family or friends may deter one from marriage. Some say, “Why get married when there are so many divorces?” The existence of divorce does not mean you cannot have a happy and successful marriage. Don’t let the actions of others make your decisions. Determine that your marriage will not be a failure.

6. Some put off marriage for financial reasons. Postponing marriage until money is sufficient to sustain a stylish living is not wise. So much of life together—struggling, adjusting, and learning to cope with life’s challenges—is lost when that happens.

These and many other concerns may delay marriage. It is not my intent to answer each of these objections to your personal satisfaction. I simply declare the doctrine of the Church with respect to marriage, and I encourage you to have the faith sufficient to move forward in this most important decision of your life.

Fear

If I could choose one word that best describes most of the reasons for delaying marriage, it would be *fear*—fear of the future, fear of failure, and so on. It is not unusual to have fear. Fear can be overcome by preparation and faith.

When the Apostles of old feared that a great storm would sink their ship, Christ “arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.

“And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?” (Mark 4:39–40).

The Apostle Paul taught, “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind” (2 Timothy 1:7).

I can honestly say that in my generation, when the opportunity to marry the right person came, the challenges of continuing one’s education became secondary to the all-important decision to marry the right person. Many of you young adults have already made that decision and are moving forward with your lives, even though you do not have all the conveniences you might otherwise have. But you are moving forward in accordance with an

eternal plan and under a divine pattern that this Church offers all members.

Family

Some time ago, Sister Tingey and I, who have 4 children and now 21 grandchildren, had a “granddaughter sleepover.” Five of our granddaughters, ages 6 to 14, came to our home. In addition to being cousins, they are the closest of friends.

We ate a wonderful meal prepared by Sister Tingey. Then the granddaughters did some crafts, also prepared by Sister Tingey. Afterward we played their favorite games, and then they presented a little talent show for Grandma and Grandpa. In the course of the talent show, they sang several favorite Primary songs adapted to grandparents, including the following:

*I'm so glad when [Grandpa] comes home,
Glad as I can be;
Clap my hands and shout for joy,
Then climb upon his knee,
Put my arms around his neck,
Hug him tight like this,
Pat his cheeks, then give him what?
A great big kiss.²*

Five granddaughters were on my lap as they sang this song, arms around my neck, patting my cheeks and giving me great big kisses.

This is what it's all about. This is family. This is the gospel. This completely overshadows all physical possessions and things that cost money.

Unless you understand what your future can hold with respect to family, it will be difficult for you to make wise decisions affecting your future. Family is everything. It overshadows all other relationships and decisions.

Not All Will Marry

Now, I know that not all who wish to marry will do so in this life. The Lord's plan provides for that.

The wonderful story of Ruth in the Old Testament is a story of a woman who lost her husband and then chose not to pursue only her own individual goals. Ruth was single, but she remained devoted to family and to God.

When her mother-in-law, Naomi, encouraged her to move forward with her life, Ruth uttered a great faith-promoting statement: “Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God” (Ruth 1:16).

As you will remember, later in life Ruth met Boaz, and they were married and became a link in the chain of the ancestry of Jesus Christ. All the blessings promised to faithful followers of the Lord were hers.

The family is the heart and soul of the gospel. Through the family we progress into the eternities. An eternal marriage and family are worth any struggles.

Please ponder these thoughts I have shared with you. Pray about them. Know that your Heavenly Father will bless you and will help you replace fear with faith if you call upon Him.

I humbly bear my witness and testimony that being active in the Church, preparing well for your future, and being sealed to a spouse for time and all eternity can help you discover the joy that is the promise of the gospel of Jesus Christ. ■

From a Church Educational System fireside address given at the Ogden Utah Institute of Religion on May 2, 2004.

NOTES

1. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young* (1997), 229.
2. “Daddy’s Homecoming,” *Children’s Songbook*, 210.

Family overshadows all other relationships and decisions. Unless you understand what your future can hold with respect to family, it will be difficult to make wise decisions. An eternal marriage and family are worth any struggles.