

TO THE POINT



Is it OK to go to **dances** or **parties** where I know **bad stuff** will be going on, in order to be a **good example**?

Ask yourself: “What kind of example do I really think I’m going to be setting in that situation?” If you intend to go someplace where there might be drugs or alcohol, immodest dress, music with suggestive lyrics, or lewd dancing, how will you show people how much fun they can have without those things? What would the people around you likely be thinking—“Isn’t that a great example of faith and standards?” or “Why did that person even come?” In most cases, you’ll be a much better example by not going at all, because you won’t be deliberately and knowingly exposing yourself to temptation. ■

How much influence does Satan have over my thoughts?

Our Heavenly Father ensures that we have moral agency, the ability to choose good or evil. He won’t force us to do good, and the devil can’t force us to do evil (see *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 214).

So, when it comes to your thoughts, the devil has only as much influence as you’re willing to give him. The Prophet Joseph Smith said, “Satan cannot seduce us by his enticements unless we in our hearts consent and yield” (*Teachings:*

Joseph Smith, 213). He also said, “The devil has no power over us only as we permit him” (214).

In addition, the scriptures tell us that “there is none else save God that knoweth thy thoughts and the intents of thy heart” (D&C 6:16), so Satan doesn’t actually know what you’re thinking. He can only offer temptations and enticements. But if you choose to follow them, he

gains greater power over you and the temptations get stronger. By the same token, if you resist evil and choose good, you will be strengthened and blessed. ■