

I Love Loud Boys

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Of the Seventy

*Let us love our boys—although some of them are loud boys.
Let us teach them to change their lives.*



I would like to tell you about a group of loud young men who came into my life when I was a young bishop in Seoul, Korea, many years ago. These were boys who lived in the neighborhood. Only one or two of them were members of the Church at the time. The boys who were members were the only members in their family. They were all friends, and they came to the church to play and to be together. They liked to play Ping-Pong during the weekdays, and they liked to have fun activities on Saturdays. Most of them were not good students in school and were considered by many to be troublemakers.

I was a young father of two sons, who were seven and nine years old at the time. I did not know what I could do for these young men. They were so rowdy that once my wife, Bon-Kyoung,

asked me if we could move to another ward so that our sons could see good examples from other young men. I pondered and prayed to Heavenly Father to help me to find the way to help these young men. Finally I made the decision to try and teach them how they could change their lives.

A vision came upon my mind very clearly. I felt that if they were to become missionaries, their lives would be changed. From that moment on, I became very excited, and I tried to spend as much time as possible with them, teaching them the importance of missionary service and how to prepare for a mission.

At that time, Elder Seo, a full-time missionary, was transferred to our ward. He was one who had grown up in the Church and as an Aaronic Priesthood youth had participated in a young men's singing group with his friends. He met those boisterous boys in our ward. Elder Seo taught those who were not members the missionary discussions, and he also taught them the songs he used to sing. He made a triple quartet with those loud boys and named them the Hanaro Quartet, which means "be as one." They were happy to sing together, but we all needed "big" patience when we listened to their singing.

Our home was open to the members anytime they wanted to visit. The boys visited our home almost every weekend and even on some weekdays. We fed them and taught them.

We taught them the principles of the gospel as well as the application of the gospel in their lives. We tried to give them a vision of their future life.

They sang together every time they came to our home. Their loud sound hurt our ears. But we always praised them because listening to them sing was far more enjoyable than seeing them get into trouble.

Through the years these activities continued. Most of these young men matured in the gospel, and a *miracle* happened. Over time, nine of the boys who were not members were baptized. They changed from loud, rowdy boys into valiant stripling warriors.¹

They served missions, met beautiful young sisters in the Church, and married in the temple. Of course, there were different challenges for each of them as they served missions, attended school, and got married, but they all stayed faithful because they wanted to obey their leaders and please the Lord. Now they have happy families with children born in the covenant.

Nine loud boys have become 45 active members in the Lord's kingdom, including their wives and children. They are now leaders in their wards and stakes. One is a bishop, two serve in bishoprics, one is serving on the high council, and two are Young Men presidents. There is a ward mission leader, an executive secretary, and a seminary teacher. As a group, they still sing together, and the *other miracle*—they actually sound good!

There are two basic principles that helped these young men become like the sons of Helaman.² Even though the boys' mothers were not members of the Church and did not understand the words of the Lord, priesthood leaders became like their fathers, and leaders' wives became like their mothers.

These nine boys—I call them the "Boys of the Lord"—learned that they would be blessed when they listened



to the Church leaders, even though they didn't always understand why. They became like Adam, our first father, who when he made an offering to the Lord was asked by an angel, "Why dost thou offer sacrifices unto the Lord? And Adam said unto him: I know not, save the Lord commanded me."³ They became anxious to be obedient and to serve the Lord with their whole hearts.

They also learned that attending their Church meetings was very important. President Ezra Taft Benson

said in his speech entitled "To the 'Youth of the Noble Birthright'": "May I now direct your attention to the importance of attending all of your Church meetings. Faithful attendance at Church meetings brings blessings you can receive in *no* other way."⁴ As they attended their Church meetings regularly, the boys felt the great love of the Lord and learned how to apply the doctrines and principles of the Church in their own daily lives. They also learned how to participate in meetings with great joy and happiness.

Now, we have three of our own sons, including our youngest, who was born during the time I served as bishop. As our sons grew, those nine boys became the leaders of the ward and the stake, and they became the teachers and leaders of our sons. They taught our boys and other boys in the same way I taught them when they were troublemakers. They loved *our* young boys in the same way *I* loved them. *These loud, rowdy boys of the past became our children's heroes.* Our sons liked to follow their great examples of becoming wonderful missionaries and getting married to righteous companions in the temple.

These young men continue to influence our family. Two months ago our ward had a missionary activity on a Saturday evening, inviting everyone, including part-member families. Our youngest son, Sun-Yoon, had just come back from a youth camp in the afternoon of that same day. He said he was not going to the missionary activity because he was not a member of a part-member family and he was so tired. He didn't come to the activity. My wife called him on the phone to explain that everyone was invited to the activity. He said, "I know, but I am not coming today," and hung up.

Right after the meeting started that evening, Sun-Yoon came in and sat by his mother very quietly. He whispered to her, saying, "Right after I hung up the phone, I remembered asking Dad what made the Hanaro Quartet so successful in their lives. He told me that they obeyed the words of the Church leaders and that they regularly attended the meetings of the Church. That was the key that changed their lives and made them so successful." My son continued, "All of a sudden, the words of my father came into my mind, and I decided to follow them because I want to have a happy family like theirs and to be successful in my life."

Dear brethren, let us love our boys—although some of them are loud boys. Let us teach them to change their lives. Modern sons of Helaman come not only from our precious families within the Church but also from new and young converts who do not have parents in the gospel. You and your wives are to be their “goodly parents”⁵ until they become like the sons of Helaman.

I am so pleased and happy to see your constant loving leadership for our young boys. These young men are all of our sons. As we reach out to them, lift them, and help them, we will feel like John, who said, “I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.”⁶

Dear young men, let us obey the leaders of the Church and be like Adam, who didn’t always have to know the reason why but was just happy to be obedient. And please faithfully attend your Church meetings. If you do this, you will learn how to prepare for your future, and you will be successful. To young boys who were born in the Church and also to those who have joined the Church, *you* are the army of the Lord. You will become wonderful missionaries and righteous fathers to your families. Heavenly Father will bless you to have a happy family. You have a bright future in the gospel, and like the sons of Helaman, you will bring eternal joy to all of us.

I love you, and I know that our Heavenly Father loves all of us, so He sent His Only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ, as our Redeemer. President Thomas S. Monson is our living prophet, who leads us in the right way. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTES

1. See Alma 53:20–22.
2. See Alma 56:10.
3. Moses 5:6.
4. Ezra Taft Benson, “To the ‘Youth of the Noble Birthright,’” *Ensign*, May 1986, 44; emphasis added.
5. 1 Nephi 1:1.
6. 3 John 1:4.