



# YOU HAVE THE AUTHORITY

IN A WORLD OF  
SINKING STANDARDS, YOU CAN  
RISE ABOVE THE NORM AND BE A  
MORAL AUTHORITY.

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Church Magazines

Imagine you're having fun swimming in the ocean. The water seems fine, and you're a strong enough swimmer to keep your head above water. Besides, you can see land nearby. But what if the level of the sea itself is sinking? No matter how hard you swim you have no choice but to go down with the level of the water you're in—even if you're sitting in a life raft. But if you're standing on firm ground, you'll stand tall no matter how low the water level goes.

All around us in today's world, moral standards are falling. Society's acceptable levels of right and wrong are sinking. But you can stand on the solid ground provided by the gospel of Jesus Christ as you develop your moral authority—your ability to influence yourself and others for good.

In the October 2013 general conference, Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles told about a woman he knew from Mexico. Her faith in God and the way she lived had empowered her with a natural ability to affect others. He said, "This lovely woman radiated a moral authority, born of goodness, that influenced all around her for good" ("The Moral Force of Women," *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 29).

Elder Christofferson pleaded that you "protect and cultivate the moral force that is within you" and said that you have a duty to "stand for truth and righteousness" ("Moral Authority," 31–32).



## BECOMING A MORAL AUTHORITY

You have the power to be an influence for good. Your moral authority will come from what you do and say. Elder Christofferson explained: “Take particular care that your language is clean, not coarse; that your dress reflects modesty, not vanity; and that your conduct manifests purity, not promiscuity. You cannot lift others to virtue on the one hand if you are entertaining vice on the other” (“Moral Authority,” 31).

### WHAT CAN YOU DO TO DEVELOP AND PROTECT MORAL AUTHORITY IN YOURSELF AND IN OTHERS?

#### YOUNG MEN CAN HELP . . .

##### YOURSELF

- Take part in Duty to God.
- Begin now preparing to serve a full-time mission.
- Prepare to become a husband and father who can preside over, provide for, and protect your family.
- Respect yourself by always dressing and acting modestly.
- Remember that others are daughters and sons of God.
- Keep your mind clean by avoiding pornography.
- Strengthen your spirituality through daily prayer and scripture study.
- Promise yourself to stay sexually pure.
- Think of yourself as a son of God.

##### OTHERS

- Don't be ashamed to let those around you know that you look forward to becoming a husband and father.
- Always use language that's clean and uplifting.
- Be an example in the way you treat others.
- Do not tell off-color jokes or stories.
- Support modesty by asking out young women who dress and act modestly.
- Suggest a wholesome movie when choosing what to watch with friends.
- Compliment young women on their modest clothing.

#### YOUNG WOMEN CAN HELP . . .

##### YOURSELF

- Take part in Personal Progress.
- Prepare to become a wife and mother who can nurture and teach her children.
- Respect yourself by always dressing and acting modestly.
- Remember that others are sons and daughters of God.
- Keep your mind clean by avoiding pornography.
- Strengthen your spirituality through daily prayer and scripture study.
- Promise yourself to stay sexually pure.
- Think of yourself as a daughter of God.

##### OTHERS

- Don't be ashamed to let those around you know that you look forward to becoming a wife and mother.
- At school pay more attention to young men who dress and act modestly and who show respect to young women.
- Listen to uplifting music when you are with friends.
- Dress in clothes that are modest rather than clothes that simply use your body to get attention.
- Compliment others when they dress in modest clothes. **NE**

