

TRUTHS MOST WORTH KNOWING

If you have stumbled or even been lost for a time, you can move forward with faith and not wander to and fro in the world any longer.



**By President
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Some youth have questions and are searching for direction. Others are wondering how they got off the gospel path and how they might return. While I speak to all, I speak most earnestly to the one who is seeking.

Your Spiritual Account

We all live on spiritual credit. In one way or another, the account builds and builds. If you pay it off as you go, you have little need to worry. Soon you begin to learn discipline and know that there is a day of reckoning ahead. Learn to keep your spiritual account paid off at regular intervals rather than allowing it to collect interest and penalties.

Because you are being tested, it is expected that you will make some mistakes. I assume that you have done things in your life that you regret, things that you cannot even apologize for, much less correct; therefore, you carry a burden. You, perhaps, may feel inferior in mind and body and are troubled or burdened with the weight of some spiritual account that is marked “past due.” When you come face to face with yourself in those

moments of quiet contemplation (which many of us try to avoid), are there some unsettled things that bother you? Do you have something on your conscience? Are you still, to one degree or another, guilty of anything small or large?

Too frequently we receive letters from those who have made tragic mistakes and are burdened. They beg: “Can I ever be forgiven? Can I ever change?” The answer is yes! (See 1 Corinthians 10:13.)

Repentance Gives Relief

The gospel teaches us that relief from torment and guilt can be earned through repentance. Save for those few—those very few—who defect to perdition after having known a fulness, there is no habit, no addiction, no rebellion, no transgression, no offense small or large which is exempt from the promise of complete forgiveness. No matter what has happened in your life, the Lord has prepared a way for you to come back if you will heed the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

Some are filled with a compelling urge,

a temptation that recycles in the mind, perhaps to become a habit, then an addiction. We are prone to some transgression and sin and also a rationalization that we have no guilt because we were born that way. We become trapped, and hence comes the pain and torment that only the Savior can heal. You have the power to stop and to be redeemed.

A Rattlesnake Named Pornography

President Marion G. Romney (1897–1988), First Counselor in the First Presidency, told me once, “Don’t just tell them so that they can understand; tell them so that they cannot misunderstand.”

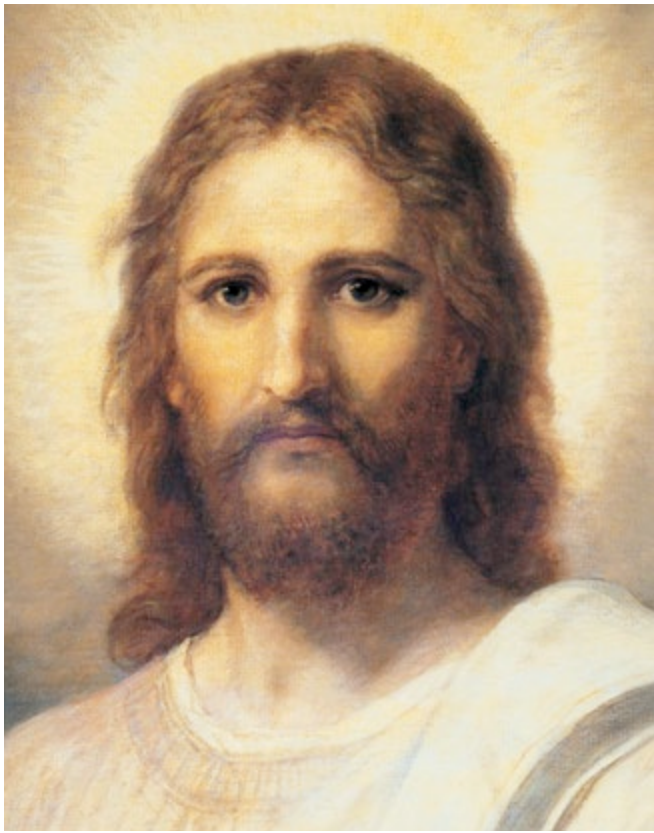
Collecting or viewing pornography is akin to keeping a rattlesnake in your backpack.

So listen up! I will speak plainly as one called and under obligation to do so.

You live in a day when the scourge of pornography is sweeping across the world. It is hard to escape it. Pornography is focused on that part of your nature through which you have the power to beget life.

To indulge in pornography leads to difficulties, divorce, disease, and troubles of a dozen kinds. There is no part of it that is innocent. To collect it, view it, or carry it around in any form is akin to keeping a rattlesnake in your backpack. It exposes you to the inevitable spiritual equivalent of the serpent’s strike with its injection of deadly venom. One can easily understand, with the world being what it is, that you can almost innocently be exposed to it, to read it, or to view it without realizing the terrible consequences. If that





describes you, I warn you to stop it. Stop it now!

The Book of Mormon teaches that all people “are instructed sufficiently that they know good from evil” (2 Nephi 2:5). That includes you. You know what is right and what is wrong. Be very careful not to cross that line.

Although most mistakes can be confessed privately to the Lord, there are some transgressions that require more than that to bring about forgiveness. If your mistakes have been grievous, see your bishop. Otherwise, ordinary confession, quietly and personally, will do. But remember, that great morning of forgiveness may not come all at once. If at first you stumble, do not give up. Overcoming discouragement is part of the test. Do not give up. And as I have counseled before, once you have confessed and forsaken your sins, do not look back.

The Lord is always there. He is willing to suffer and pay the penalty if you are willing to accept Him as your Redeemer.

The Savior’s Suffering for Our Sins

As mortals, we may not—indeed cannot—understand fully how Jesus Christ fulfilled His atoning sacrifice. But for

now the *how* is not as important as the *why* of His suffering. Why did He do it for you, for me, for all of humanity? He did it for the love of God the Father and all mankind. “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13).

In Gethsemane, Christ went apart from His Apostles to pray. Whatever transpired is beyond our power to know! But we do know that He completed the Atonement. He was willing to take upon Himself the mistakes, the sins and guilt, the doubts and fears of all the world. He suffered for us so that we would not have to suffer.

Complete Forgiveness Is Possible

If you have stumbled or even been lost for a time, if you feel that the adversary now holds you captive, you can move forward with faith and not wander to and fro in the world any longer. There are those who stand ready to guide you back to peace and security. The grace of God, as promised in the scriptures, comes “after all we can do” (2 Nephi 25:23). The possibility of this, to me, is the truth most worth knowing.

I promise that the brilliant morning of forgiveness can come. Then “the peace of God, which passeth all understanding” (Philippians 4:7) comes into your life once again, something like a sunrise, and you and He “will remember [your] sin no more” (Jeremiah 31:34). How will you know you have been forgiven? You will know! (See Mosiah 4:1–3.)

This is what I have come to teach you who are in trouble. He will step in and solve the problem you cannot solve, but you have to pay the price. It does not come without doing that. He is a very kind ruler in the sense that He will always pay the price necessary, but He wants you to do what you should, even if it is painful.

I love the Lord, and I love the Father who sent Him. Our burdens of disappointment, sin, and guilt can be laid before Him, and on His generous terms, each item on the account can be marked “paid in full.” (See Isaiah 1:18–19.)

Live Faithfully and Remain Worthy

The scripture “learn wisdom in thy youth; yea, learn in thy youth to keep the commandments of God” (Alma 37:35) is an invitation attended by the promise of peace and protection from the adversary. (See also 1 Timothy 4:12.)

Do not expect that all will go smoothly throughout your life. Even for those who are living as they should, it sometimes will be just the opposite. Meet each of life’s challenges with optimism and surety, and you will have the peace and faith to sustain you now and in the future.

For those who do not yet have all of the blessings you feel you want and need to have, I firmly believe that no experience or opportunity essential for redemption and salvation will be denied you who live faithfully. Remain

worthy; be hopeful, patient, and prayerful. Things have a way of working out. The gift of the Holy Ghost will guide you and direct your actions.

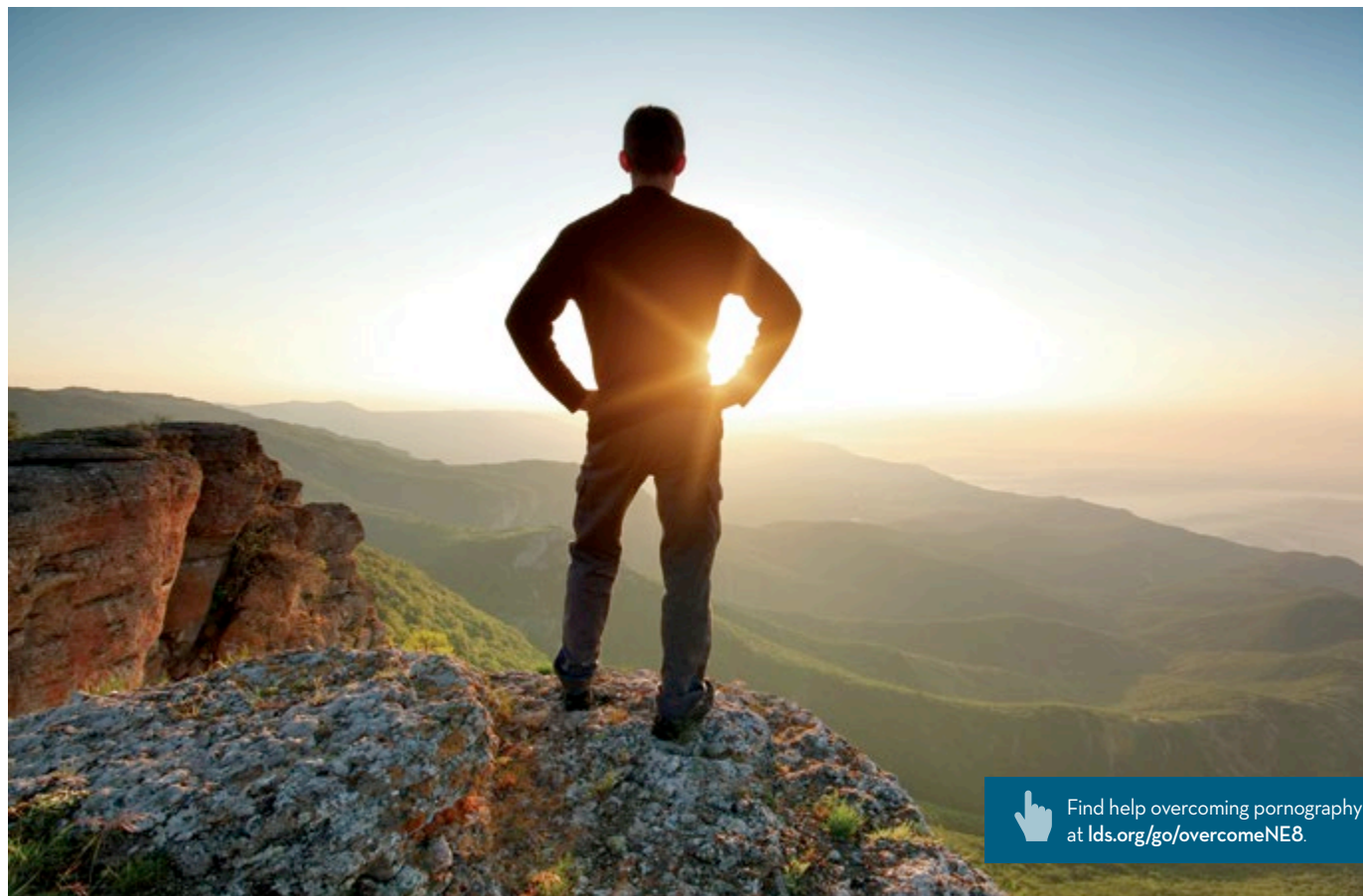
I know you as the youth of the Church, and I understand that you’re not perfect, but you are moving along that road. Have courage. Know that any person who has a body has power over one who has not.¹ Satan is denied a body; so if ever you are confronted with temptations, know that you outrank all those temptations if you will exercise the agency given to Adam and Eve in the garden and passed on to this very generation. **NE**

From a devotional given at Brigham Young University on November 6, 2011. For the full text, go to speeches.byu.edu.

NOTE

1. See *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 211.

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Find help overcoming pornography at lds.org/go/overcomeNE8.