

THE MESSAGE YOU SEND

What you say, think, wear, and do sends a message. What message do you want to send?

By Joshua J. Perkey
Church Magazines

Modesty. It seems like every time it comes up, we start talking about clothes.

But this time, we're not talking about how tight or how short someone's clothes are. Well, not exactly, anyway. We're talking about ourselves. About what kind of message we send to the world. And a little bit about who we really are on the inside.

Because what we say, think, wear, and do sends a message—whether we mean for it to or not.

OK, so we know we aren't responsible for how other people act or think. Everyone has agency.

But what we're thinking and how we're feeling and the way we act, dress, and talk can affect ourselves and other people. It can send positive messages that invite us and others to be happy, thoughtful, grateful, excited, uplifted, inspired, encouraged, and a host of other things.

Or it can send a negative or even just a distracting message.

But ultimately, if we recognize the messages we're sending, we'll be able to understand a lot about what's really going on inside us. About how we're feeling and maybe even why we feel that way. And that means we'll begin to see that how we act affects the way we think and how we feel.



So, what are some of those messages?

I'm confident, or I'm filled with doubt. I respect myself, or I don't. I believe in standards, or I disrespect them. I love this particular TV show or that color. I'm happy, or I'm sad. I want you to be happy, or maybe I don't care. I want people to notice me or to not notice me. I love God, or maybe I'm not sure.

Now, we *do* have to put what we're talking about in the context of each of our own lives. Sometimes the way we feel or act is a reaction to some truly negative things happening to us, and that's nothing to ignore. Or maybe we don't even intend to send a message in a certain way.

But a lot of how we feel, act, or influence others has to do with our own choices.

That means we can help build the world—make it a stronger, happier, healthier, more marvelous place.

Or we can pull it down.

Here's the really cool part: there's great power in each of us to do good, to help focus ourselves and others on the good that comes from God.

We just have to take a step back from ourselves and ask a couple of simple questions: What do I really believe? What kind of person do I



THE POWER OF THE PLAN

"If we understand the Father's plan, we will have great respect and reverence for our physical bodies. Understanding the gospel and the plan of happiness affects everything—where you go, what you say, what you eat, what you drink, what you think, and what you wear. If you understand who you are as a son or a daughter of God and the purpose for having a physical body in this life, and if we understand what we can become after we leave this life, no one should have to tell you how to dress. You will know."

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, from a meeting with youth in Argentina on February 23, 2016.


want to be? And what message do I want to send to the world—and myself—today?

Talking, thinking, dressing, and acting in a way that's truly modest is a message that's based in the gospel, and that's a powerful message. It reminds us of who we really are and sends a message—to the world, to us, and to God—that we know God really is there, that we love Him, and that He's ready to help, no matter what problems we're facing.

That message can inspire and empower. And it certainly will change someone's life—including yours.

So, what message do *you* want to send today? **NE**



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