

⊕ THE ENEMY IS CIRCLING.
YOUR FAMILY NEEDS YOU MORE THAN EVER. ⊗



The

WARRIOR IN YOU

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In this modern day, we're all warriors whether we want to be or not. "We live in a very dangerous world that threatens those things that are most spiritual," teaches President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. "The family, the fundamental organization in time and eternity, is under attack from forces seen and unseen" ("These Things I Know," *Ensign*, May 2013, 7).

Instead of a battlefield with tanks and mortar blasts, this is spiritual warfare—and it has eternal stakes. "The adversary is about," President Packer teaches. "His objective is to cause injury. If he can weaken and destroy the family, he will have succeeded."

Imagine your mom and dad standing on a hillside before oncoming enemies carrying massive weapons in overwhelming numbers. Sound intimidating? Well, maybe. But in addition to all the armor and knowledge they have, your parents also have another secret weapon you might have not thought about. *They have you.*

TURNING THE TIDE OF BATTLE

If the adversary wins when he weakens a family, what's the best way to fight back? Strengthening your family! And you—yes, you—can make an enormous difference here.

Maybe you live with two parents. Maybe you live with only one parent. Perhaps they're armed with the protection of the gospel. Perhaps one doesn't attend church or isn't a Church member. Your home life might be challenging. Whatever the conditions, though, you can help shore up your family's spiritual defenses.

Doing so strikes a blow for good and strikes back against

the adversary's efforts. Every act of righteousness on your part strengthens the army of good and is a hand grenade lobbed at the enemy.

As explained in *For the Strength of Youth*, "Strong families require effort" ([2011], 14). "Your family will be blessed as you do your part to strengthen it."

So how do we strengthen our families? What can we actually *do* to make our homes stronger and safer spiritually? The following seven principles from the "Family" section of *For the Strength of Youth* (pages 14–15) are a great place to start:



1. "BE CHEERFUL, HELPFUL, AND CONSIDERATE OF FAMILY MEMBERS. MANY PROBLEMS IN THE HOME COME FROM FAMILY MEMBERS SPEAKING AND ACTING SELFISHLY OR UNKINDLY."

Each time you help your sister with homework or help your mom, you strengthen your family. That last cookie in the cookie jar? Try slipping it into your brother's lunch box with a kind note that uplifts him instead of snitching it for yourself. (Positive spiritual warfare at its best!)

2. "SEEK TO BE A PEACEMAKER RATHER THAN TO TEASE, FIGHT, AND QUARREL."

Finding a way to help siblings get along instead of arguing keeps contention—one of the devil's favorite weapons—out of your home (see 3 Nephi 11:29).

3. "SHOW LOVE FOR YOUR FAMILY MEMBERS EACH DAY."

Smile! Hug! Tell your family often that you love them. Few things strengthen a home like increased love. Show them your love by doing something kind for a parent or sibling every day—and by telling them those three little words: "I love you."

4. "SHARE YOUR TESTIMONY WITH YOUR FAMILY THROUGH WORDS AND ACTIONS."

Telling your family during dinner about an answered prayer is just as powerful as bearing testimony in a packed chapel. Look for simple ways to bear testimony in daily life.



5. “HONOR YOUR PARENTS BY SHOWING LOVE AND RESPECT FOR THEM. OBEY THEM AS THEY LEAD YOU IN RIGHTEOUSNESS.”

Showing disrespect to parents is another way contention can enter homes. Respecting and obeying parents helps bring peace and harmony. Will showing up a few minutes after curfew really make a big difference in your activities? Probably not. But showing up on time for curfew will have a big impact on showing your parents you honor them—and receiving the blessings from doing so.

6. “PARTICIPATE IN WHOLESOME FAMILY ACTIVITIES AND TRADITIONS.”

Can a family tradition of making gingerbread houses every December strengthen a family? You bet! So can any other activity or tradition that helps your family stay close and spend time together.

7. “JOIN YOUR FAMILY IN FAMILY PRAYER, FAMILY SCRIPTURE STUDY, AND FAMILY HOME EVENINGS. . . IF YOUR FAMILY DOES NOT DO THESE THINGS TOGETHER, PRAY AND STUDY THE SCRIPTURES YOURSELF. YOUR EXAMPLE MAY ENCOURAGE YOUR FAMILY MEMBERS TO JOIN YOU.”

Ultimately, keeping the commandments is the best possible thing you can do to strengthen your family—even if you do so alone. And the commandments to have daily prayer and scripture study and weekly family home evening will have a greater influence on your future than you may realize.

YOU CAN MAKE ALL THE DIFFERENCE

Remember when Nephi broke his bow and his whole family was hungry? Through Nephi’s faithful obedience, he was able to bless his entire family with food as well as help them draw closer to the Lord (see 1 Nephi 16:14–32). How much worse might things have been if Nephi had merely complained and given up alongside everybody else, thinking it wasn’t worth it to try when he was doing it all alone?

All family members have a responsibility to encourage and strengthen one another. “In these last days it is

essential—even critical—that parents and children listen to and learn from one another,” teaches Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (“Mothers and Daughters,” *Ensign*, May 2010, 21).

Yes, it’s a dangerous world out there spiritually. But God’s power is much greater than the enemy’s. And you’re a highly capable warrior for righteousness when you live the gospel and strengthen your family.

Enemies beware. NE