

REAL CONFIDENCE

*Want to feel better about yourself?
Want to gain confidence? Then this
year's Mutual theme is for you.*

BY THE YOUNG WOMEN AND YOUNG MEN GENERAL PRESIDENCIES

At times, we all wrestle with thoughts of insecurity. Have you ever asked yourself: “What can I do to feel more confident?” or “How can I feel better about myself?”

There's a great answer in the scriptures. It says that if you have charity and “let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly; then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God” (D&C 121:45). That kind of confidence is true confidence. If you are confident in God's presence, you can feel confident around anyone else.

“So,” you might ask, “what does *virtue* mean?” President James E. Faust, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, says that *virtue* has many definitions—moral excellence, right action and thinking, goodness of character, and chastity.¹

And then you might ask: “How can I do this? Is there something to guide me?” Yes, there is. The principles and doctrines in *For the Strength of Youth* will guide you to make decisions that will qualify you for the companionship of the Holy Ghost. And if you have the Holy Ghost with you, you are, in a sense, living in the presence of God. Think of the confidence Heavenly Father has in you to send you His Spirit.

As you live the standards described in *For the Strength of Youth*, you are promised that the Lord “will increase your opportunities, expand your

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vision, and strengthen you.”² You will become more and more virtuous, more and more confident.

But be careful. This is not the way the world tells you to have confidence. The world tells you that to be confident you have to be better than others in some way—that you need to have more things, more talent, more intelligence, more popularity. This simply is not true. That is counterfeit confidence.

The Lord’s standards are different from the world’s standards. While the world focuses on outward appearance, “the Lord looketh on the heart” (1 Samuel 16:7). You are a child of God, and your divine nature is not inferior or superior to anyone. In fact, everyone—including you—has different talents and abilities. These are gifts of the Spirit given to you so you can perform your divine mission on the earth. Heavenly Father wants you to be happy, growing and becoming all that He intends for you to become.

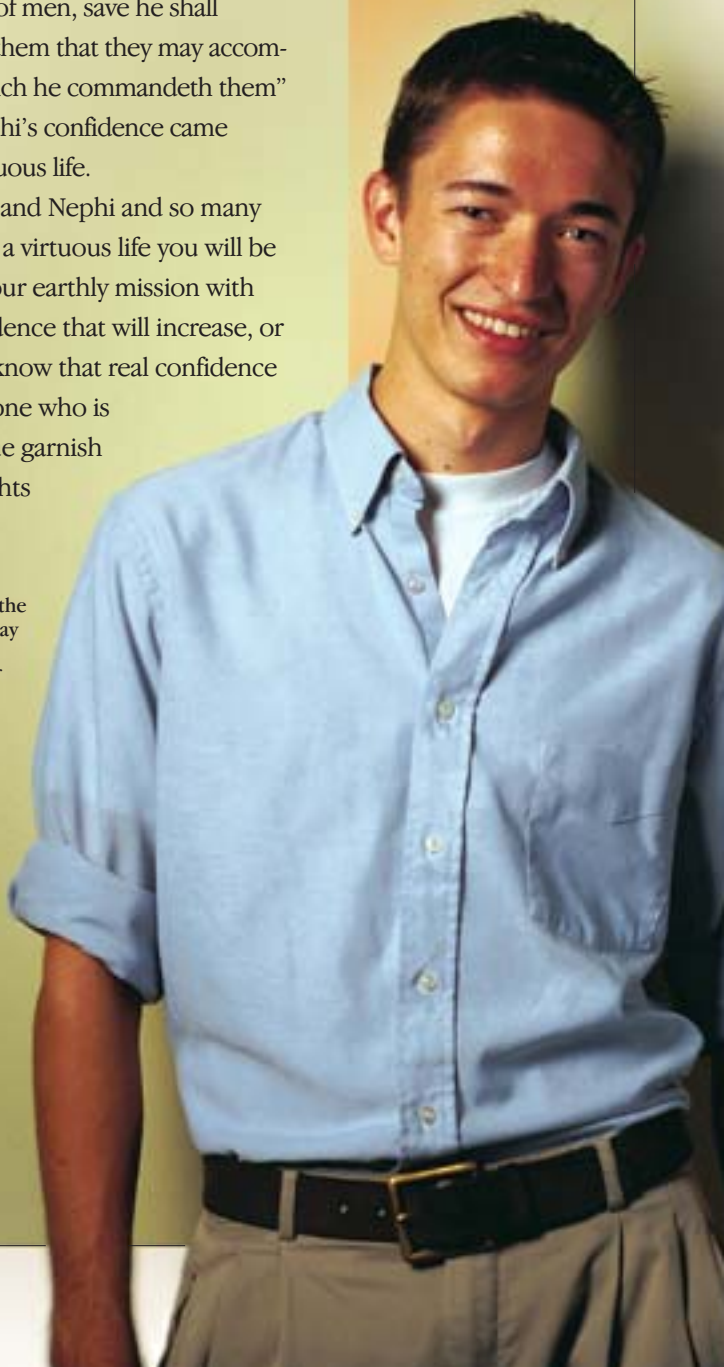
When you experience opposition in your life, think of scriptural heroes. Like Moses, you can gain strength by praying and remembering that you are a child of God (see Moses 1:13, 20–22). Nephi is another good example

of one who had confidence in the Lord. When he and his brothers were asked to obtain the brass plates, he confidently knew he could do it with the Lord’s help. He said, “I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded, for I know that the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them” (1 Nephi 3:7). Nephi’s confidence came because of his virtuous life.

Just like Moses and Nephi and so many others, as you live a virtuous life you will be free to perform your earthly mission with confidence, confidence that will increase, or “wax strong.” We know that real confidence is available to anyone who is willing to “let virtue garnish [his or her] thoughts unceasingly.” **NE**

NOTES

1. See “How Near to the Angels,” *Ensign*, May 1998, 95.
2. *For the Strength of Youth* (2001), 42.



The Young Women general presidency: Susan W. Tanner (center), Julie B. Beck (left), Elaine S. Dalton (right). The Young Men general presidency: Charles W. Dahlquist II (center), Dean R. Burgess (left), Michael A. Neider (right).

Nephi's response to being

asked to obtain the brass plates sets an example for us all: "I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded, for I know that the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them."

I CAN DO IT! CONFIDENCE BUILDERS

If you want to grow more and more confident, here are some things you can do:

- Pray, as Moses did, that the Lord will help you remember that you are His child and that you have an important work to do.
- Make a list of your strengths and good qualities.
- Read and ponder your patriarchal blessing, or prepare to receive one.
- Serve others, and write in your journal how service makes you feel.
- Eat well and exercise. Your body is a gift from God, and good nutrition and physical activity will lift your mood and help you feel better about yourself.
- Offer prayers of gratitude, and record your gratitude in a journal.
- Develop your talents.
- Keep the commandments.

Remember that confidence does not come by being better than someone else. It comes from knowing you are a child of God and doing what He would have you do.

HOW TO HAVE GOOD THOUGHTS UNCEASINGLY

Here are some Mutual activities and family home evening ideas that can help you let virtue garnish your thoughts:

- Read the scriptures listed in the Topical Guide under "Thought" and "Virtue."
- Memorize or review the 13th article of faith. What does it mean to you? List ways you can "seek after these things."
- List synonyms for the words *virtue* and *virtuous*. How can you apply these words in your life?
- What does *pure* mean? Why does water need to be pure before we drink it? Why should our thoughts be pure?

- Read the account of Joseph fleeing Potiphar's wife in Genesis 39. When should you flee and get yourself out? How can you be in the world but not of the world?
- Make a booklet with a favorite scripture or thought from each young man and young woman in your ward.
- Choose a "scripture of the week," and post it someplace where you can read it every day. See if you can memorize 52 scriptures this year—one every week. If you memorize scripture mastery scriptures, you're halfway there!
- Make a commitment not to use any profanity.
- With your quorum or class, make a commitment to avoid any form of pornography. How will you help each other?
- As a family, decide on ways you can show your love and support to each other through positive words and actions.
- Read and study the sections "Entertainment and the Media" and "Language" in *For the Strength of Youth*. Highlight the word *Spirit* in those sections. List ways the Spirit will bless your life as you live these standards.
- Discuss Internet and media safety as a class or quorum and as a family.
- "Holiness to the Lord" is inscribed on our temples. Discuss how virtuous thoughts help prepare you to attend the temple. If possible, attend the temple to perform baptisms for the dead.
- Memorize two favorite hymns you can hum or sing to replace bad thoughts with inspired words.
- Work on Duty to God or Personal Progress. The spiritual development section of Duty to God or the integrity value in Personal Progress will especially help you understand more about purity and the blessings of letting "virtue garnish [your] thoughts unceasingly."

