

Do **young men** have **to serve a mission** as soon as they **turn 18**? And are **young women** more strongly encouraged to serve a mission now that they can **go at 19**?

What can I do if **I'm pressured** to **break Church standards** by other youth who are also active Church members? I don't want to appear **self-righteous or judgmental**.

When President Thomas S. Monson announced the change in the age of eligibility for missionary service, he said, "I am not suggesting that all young men will—or should—serve at this earlier age. Rather, based on individual circumstances as well as upon a determination by priesthood leaders, this option is now available."¹ Consider your physical and emotional health, financial preparation, and spiritual preparation. You can counsel with parents and priesthood leaders about these things when deciding about the right time to serve.

Regarding young women, President Monson said, "Young women . . . are not under the same mandate to serve as are the young men. We assure the young sisters of the Church, however, that they make a valuable contribution as missionaries, and we welcome their service."² **NE**

NOTES

1. Thomas S. Monson, "Welcome to Conference," *Ensign*, Nov. 2012, 4–5.
2. Thomas S. Monson, "Welcome to Conference," 5.

Have the courage to stand up for Church standards, even if the pressure is coming from other Latter-day Saint youth who know the standards and who might think you're acting self-righteously. Which holds the greater risk: disobeying the Lord's commandments or looking like a

goodie-goodie to some of your peers? (Now, if they're pressuring you to do something that makes you feel *personally* uncomfortable or that violates a standard set by your *family* rather than the Church, you can still stand up for yourself by simply saying that you prefer not to do it and asking them to respect your feelings.)

Of course, you should try to handle the situation tactfully. As the prophet Alma told his missionary son Shiblon, "Use boldness, but not overbearance" (Alma 38:12). There's no need for harsh condemnation or a condescending attitude. You can just matter-of-factly let people know what standards you have chosen to live by. And if active Church members are asking you to violate clear-cut Church standards, remember what President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, said: "Be a friend to all, but never compromise your standards."¹ **NE**

NOTE

1. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "Your Wonderful Journey Home," *Ensign*, May 2013, 128.

