

“Some people tell me I need to have friends who don’t share my standards in order to strengthen mine. Is this true?”

Ultimately, strengthening your standards comes from learning and living the gospel of Jesus Christ, and friends can help or hinder you in doing that. Friends have a big influence on you—from the way you think, speak, and act to even the person you become. *For the Strength of Youth* recommends, “Choose friends who share your values so you can strengthen and encourage each other in living high standards” ([2011], 16). These kinds of friends help you live the gospel of Jesus Christ, keep your standards, and become a better person.

However, not all the people you associate with will have similar standards as yours or be members of the Church. It’s important to be friendly to everyone and to treat them the way the Savior would treat them—with love and kindness. As you continue to live your standards, you can be “an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity” (1 Timothy 4:12). Through your example, they will see how you are blessed by living high standards, and you can encourage them to do the same.

Seek the guidance of the Holy Ghost—and have the courage to act on His promptings—as you choose friends and strive to strengthen your standards. **NE**



**Tell Them about Your Standards**

My first year in middle school I was nervous that I wouldn’t be able to find friends who would respect my standards. After a short time I became good friends with a classmate, and I told him that I was a Mormon. He asked me about it, so I gave him a *For the Strength of Youth* pamphlet. Starting that day, he quit swearing in front of me. If your friends are true friends, they will respect your decisions and help you maintain your standards.

*Candela M., 13, Buenos Aires, Argentina*



**Follow the Prophets’ Counsel**

Sometimes it’s hard to resist temptation if we hang out with friends who make bad choices or try to get us to make bad choices. The prophets have told us in the *For the Strength of Youth* pamphlet that friends “will influence how you think and act, and even help determine the person you will become” ([2011], 16). I think we should have friends who are willing to respect our standards and even show interest in us keeping our standards.

*Calvin W., 16, Arizona, USA*

**Remember Your Standards**

Friends who don’t share your standards could actually weaken and tear your standards down. When I first

moved to my new school, I tried to fit in by saying some of the things people around me would say. I almost forgot some of my standards while trying to be like everyone. I know now that in order to build your standards, you need friends who support and share your standards. I'm grateful I eventually found friends like that because they remind me of my standards.

Logan J., 15, Utah, USA



### Keep Your Standards High

Friends with different standards do not necessarily strengthen yours, but by being their friend, you can give them a good example to follow. When you have friends who do share your beliefs, it can encourage you to keep your standards high and help you stand up for what is right.

Warren S., 14, Oregon, USA



### Find Friends Who Respect You

If your friends don't share your standards, it can be more difficult to strengthen your own. Reading *For the Strength of Youth* always helped me choose good friends who respect me. Now I am preparing to serve a mission, and I know that being around people with my standards helped me remain faithful in the gospel.

Nair M., 19, Buenos Aires, Argentina



### Hold to the Iron Rod

Having friends with good standards is exactly what you want.

You want to surround yourself with friends who will help you keep the commandments and motivate you to live righteously. Keep a strong grip on the iron rod, which leads to the tree of life, not to the large and spacious building. Surrounding yourself with unrighteousness will lead to temptations. Have good friends who will influence you to live the gospel.

Annie P., 13, Utah, USA



### Pray to Find Friends

After my family and I moved to a new state, I prayed constantly to find friends with whom

I could talk about the gospel. As I prayed, I felt comforted, and a few months later I made some incredible friends. I can count on their support,



### THE INFLUENCE OF GOOD FRIENDS

"Everyone needs good friends. Your circle of friends

will greatly influence your thinking and behavior, just as you will theirs. When you share common values with your friends, you can strengthen and encourage each other. Treat everyone with kindness and dignity. Many nonmembers have come into the Church through friends who have involved them in Church activities."

President Thomas S. Monson, "That We May Touch Heaven," Oct. 1990 general conference.

and they have helped me to develop an even greater love for the gospel. I know that friends are important and they can make it easier for us to live the gospel.

Sarah P., 16, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

*Responses are intended for help and perspective, not as official pronouncements of Church doctrine.*

## UPCOMING QUESTION

"Besides prayer and scripture study, what's the best way to strengthen my testimony?"

Send your answer and photo by November 15, 2016.

Go to [newera.lds.org](http://newera.lds.org), click "Submit Your Work," sign in with your LDS account, and then select "New Era" under "Choose Magazine." Click "Add File" to select your file and your photos, and then click "Submit" to upload.

Responses may be edited for length or clarity.