

“Wherefore, my beloved brethren, pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart, that ye may be filled with this love, which he hath bestowed upon all who are true followers of his Son, Jesus Christ; that ye may become the sons of God; that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is; that we may have this hope; that we may be purified even as he is pure” (Moroni 7:46–48).

Additional references: Matthew 25:31–46; 1 John 4:18; Ether 12:33–34; D&C 12:8; 34:3; 121:45

*See also* Love; Service

## **Chastity**

Chastity is sexual purity, a condition that is “pleasing unto God” (Jacob 2:7). To be chaste, you must be morally clean in your thoughts, words, and actions. You must not have any sexual relations before you are legally married. When you are married, you must be completely faithful to your husband or wife.

Physical intimacy between husband and wife is beautiful and sacred. It is ordained of God for the creation of children and for the expression of love within marriage.

In the world today, Satan has led many people to believe that sexual intimacy outside of marriage is acceptable. But in God’s sight, it is a serious sin. It is an abuse of the power He has given us to create life. The prophet Alma taught that sexual sins are more serious than any other sins except murder and denying the Holy Ghost (see Alma 39:3–5).

Sometimes people try to convince themselves that sexual relations outside of marriage are acceptable if the participants love one another. This is not true. Breaking the law of chastity and encouraging someone else to do so is not an expression of love. People who love each other will never endanger one another’s happiness and safety in exchange for temporary personal pleasure.

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When people care for one another enough to keep the law of chastity, their love, trust, and commitment increase, resulting in greater happiness and unity. In contrast, relationships built on sexual immorality sour quickly. Those who engage in sexual immorality often feel fear, guilt, and shame. Bitterness, jealousy, and hatred soon replace any positive feelings that once existed in their relationship.

Our Heavenly Father has given us the law of chastity for our protection. Obedience to this law is essential to personal peace and strength of character and to happiness in the home. As you keep yourself sexually pure, you will avoid the spiritual and emotional damage that always come from sharing physical intimacies with someone outside of marriage. You will be sensitive to the Holy Ghost's guidance, strength, comfort, and protection, and you will fulfill an important requirement for receiving a temple recommend and participating in temple ordinances.

### Sexual Sins

The Lord and His prophets condemn sexual immorality. All sexual relations outside of marriage violate the law of chastity and are physically and spiritually dangerous for those who engage in them.

The Ten Commandments include the command that we not commit adultery, which is sexual intercourse between a married man and someone other than his wife or between a married woman and someone other than her husband (see Exodus 20:14). The Apostle Paul said that it is "the will of God" that we "abstain from fornication," which is sexual intercourse between an unmarried person and anyone else (1 Thessalonians 4:3). Latter-day prophets repeatedly speak out against these sins and against the evil practice of sexual abuse.

Like other violations of the law of chastity, homosexual activity is a serious sin. It is contrary to the purposes of human sexuality (see Romans 1:24–32). It distorts loving relationships and prevents people from receiving the bless-

ings that can be found in family life and the saving ordinances of the gospel.

Merely refraining from sexual intercourse outside of marriage is not sufficient in the Lord's standard of personal purity. The Lord requires a high moral standard of His disciples, including complete fidelity to one's spouse in thought and conduct. In the Sermon on the Mount, He said: "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart" (Matthew 5:27–28). In the latter days He has said, "Thou shalt not . . . commit adultery, . . . nor do anything like unto it" (D&C 59:6). And He has reemphasized the principle He taught in the Sermon on the Mount: "He that looketh on a woman to lust after her, or if any shall commit adultery in their hearts, they shall not have the Spirit, but shall deny the faith and shall fear" (D&C 63:16). These warnings apply to all people, whether they are married or single.

If you have committed sexual sin, speak with your bishop or branch president so he can help you through the process of repentance (see "Repentance," pages 132–35).

If you find yourself struggling with sexual temptations, including feelings of same-gender attraction, do not give in to those temptations. Be assured that you can choose to avoid such behavior. You can receive the Lord's help as you pray for strength and work to overcome the problem. As part of this process, you should seek counsel from your bishop or branch president. He will help you.

### Keeping the Law of Chastity

No matter how strong temptations seem, the Lord will help you withstand them if you choose to follow Him. The Apostle Paul declared, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye

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may be able to bear it" (1 Corinthians 10:13). The following counsel can help you overcome the frequent and blatant temptations in the world today:

*Decide now to be chaste.* You need to make this decision only once. Make the decision now, before the temptation comes, and let your decision be so firm and with such deep commitment that it can never be shaken. Determine now that you will never do anything outside of marriage to arouse the powerful emotions that must be expressed only in marriage. Do not arouse those emotions in another person's body or in your own body. Determine now that you will be completely true to your spouse.

*Control your thoughts.* No one commits sexual sin in an instant. Immoral acts always begin with impure thoughts. If you allow your thoughts to linger on obscene or immoral things, you have already taken the first step toward immorality. Flee immediately from situations that may lead to sin. Pray for constant strength to resist temptation and control your thoughts. Make this a part of your daily prayers.

*Stay away from pornography.* Do not view, read, or listen to anything that depicts or describes the human body or sexual conduct in a way that can arouse sexual feelings. Pornographic materials are addictive and destructive. They can rob you of your self-respect and of a sense of the beauties of life. They can tear you down and lead you to evil thoughts and abusive conduct.

*If you are single and dating, always treat your date with respect.* Never treat him or her as an object to be used for lustful desires. Carefully plan positive and constructive activities so that you and your date are not left alone without anything to do. Stay in areas of safety where you can easily control yourself. Do not participate in conversations or activities that arouse sexual feelings. Do not participate in passionate kissing, lie with or on top of another person, or touch the private, sacred parts of another person's body, with or without clothing. Do not allow anyone to do such things with you.

*If you are married, be faithful to your spouse in your thoughts, words, and actions.* The Lord has said: “Thou shalt love thy wife with all thy heart, and shalt cleave unto her and none else. And he that looketh upon a woman to lust after her shall deny the faith, and shall not have the Spirit; and if he repents not he shall be cast out” (D&C 42:22–23). Never flirt in any way. As much as possible, avoid being alone with anyone of the opposite sex. Ask yourself if your spouse would be pleased if he or she knew of your words or actions. Remember the Apostle Paul’s counsel to “abstain from all appearance of evil” (1 Thessalonians 5:22). When you stay away from such circumstances, temptation gets no chance to develop.

### Forgiveness for the Repentant

The best course is complete moral cleanliness. It is wrong to commit sexual sins with the thought that you will simply repent later. This attitude is a sin itself, showing irreverence for the Lord and the covenants you make with Him. However, if you have committed sexual sins, the Lord offers forgiveness if you repent.

Repentance is difficult, but it is possible. You can be clean again (see Isaiah 1:18). The despair of sin can be replaced with the sweet peace of forgiveness. To learn what you must do to repent, see “Repentance,” pages 132–35.

Work toward the day when you will be worthy to enter the temple, guided by the words of the Psalmist:

“Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place?

“He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart” (Psalm 24:3–4).

Additional references: Exodus 20:14; 1 Corinthians 6:18–20; Alma 38:12; 3 Nephi 12:27–30

*See also* Marriage; Pornography