


Ensign



**Talking
about
Sexuality
from a
Gospel
Perspective**

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**Maintaining a Healthy Brain
as You Age, page 44**

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Self-Reliance, pages 8, 32**

THE
CHURCH
IS HERE

Kyiv

Ukraine





PHOTOGRAPH FROM GETTY IMAGES

Kyiv, the largest city and capital of Ukraine, has been inhabited for at least 1,400 years. The Kyiv Ukraine Stake has eight wards and three branches. Here are some facts about the Church in Ukraine:



11,153

Church members

congregations, 2 missions,
1 stake



48



35

family history
centers

temple



1

30

hours required (one way)
to travel by train to nearest
temple (Freiberg, Germany)
prior to temple in Kyiv

1990 First Latter-day Saint missionaries
arrive in Ukraine

1996 Church is granted national registration

2004 First stake organized

2010 Kyiv Temple dedicated



Learn more about the Church in various locations at history.ChurchofJesusChrist.org/GlobalHistories.

COVID-19 and This Issue

Due to the continually changing nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, some of the content in this issue may not be applicable in your local circumstances. Please adapt suggestions as needed according to the most recent Church and government guidelines.



Ministering through
Self-Reliance

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The Divine Purposes of
Sexual Intimacy

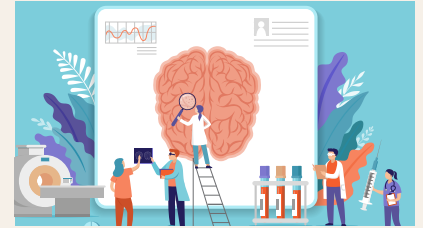
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How, When,
and Why:
Talking to Your
Children about
Sexuality

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Walker and
Meg O. Jankovich

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Maintain Your Brain, Prolong Your
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Teaching How to Be Sexually Pure and Prepared

As a professor at Brigham Young University, I have researched and taught about parenting for the past 15 years. When I speak with parents, one of the most common questions I get is when and how to talk with children about sexuality. When I talk with college students, I often hear about how scared or uncertain they are about sexuality or how little they know and understand.

We hear increasingly from Church leaders and wonderful new Church resources how parents and youth can better communicate about sexual intimacy so young people can have positive and accurate views of sexuality and the law of chastity. President M. Russell Ballard has said, "Be positive about how wonderful and beautiful physical intimacy can be when it happens within the bounds the Lord has set, including temple covenants and commitments of eternal marriage" ("Fathers and Sons: A Remarkable Relationship," *Ensign*, Nov. 2009, 49).

- Co-author Meg Jankovich and I share with parents some ideas on the how, when, and why of talking to their children about sexuality (see page 20).
- Elder and Sister Renlund discuss the importance of keeping the law of chastity (see page 14).
- The articles for young adults discuss how to develop a positive view of sexuality and how the law of chastity blesses us (see page 68).
- Find related articles in the digital edition of this issue at ensign.ChurchofJesusChrist.org or in the Gospel Library app.

It is my prayer that, through these articles, young people and parents will desire to talk with one another openly and draw closer to the Lord as they resist incorrect information that is being communicated in the world today about sexual intimacy and instead contemplate the power of being both sexually pure and prepared.

Sincerely,

Laura M. Padilla-Walker, PhD



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Photograph by
Leslie Nilsson

🕒 Quick Reads

📖 Come, Follow Me Support

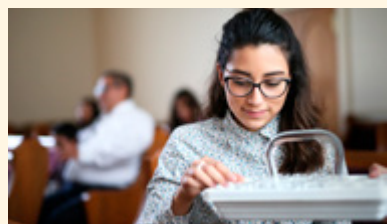
August Digital-Only Articles

Available in the Gospel Library app or at ensign.ChurchofJesusChrist.org



Come, Follow Me Resources

For a list of articles and activities (organized by week) that can enrich your family's study of the Book of Mormon, see "Come, Follow Me: Book of Mormon—Support Articles and Activities" in the digital version of this issue (available in the Gospel Library app or at ensign.ChurchofJesusChrist.org).



I'm Supposed to *Prepare* for the Sacrament?

By Zoe Campbell

Taking the time to realize the blessings of the sacrament each week can give you spiritual power.



Bridling Your Passions: How to Align Sexual Thoughts and Feelings with the Lord's Expectations

By Ensign staff and Family Services

How can you better live the law of chastity?

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FOUR TRUTHS ABOUT LOVE AND MARRIAGE

Prior to her marriage to President Russell M. Nelson, Sister Wendy W. Nelson was a professor of marriage and family therapy for 25 years. In a worldwide devotional for young adults, she shared these four truths:

1. “Truths about love and marriage are brought to you by the Holy Ghost from our Heavenly Father.”



2. “Personal purity is the key to true love. The more pure your thoughts and feelings, your words and actions, the greater your capacity to give and receive true love.”

3. “As an important part of the expression of their love, the Lord wants a husband and wife to partake of the wonders and joys of marital intimacy.”

4. “For true marital intimacy, the Holy Ghost needs to be involved. It is simply not possible to have the kind of intimate experiences outside of marriage that you can have within because the Spirit will not be present.”

You can read or watch Sister Nelson's devotional address “Love and Marriage” at ChurchofJesusChrist.org/go/8205. This issue also contains several articles about the gospel view of sexuality (see pages 14, 20, and 68). See also in this month's New Era the article “Talking to Your Parents about Sex” (page 38).



Abner Garcia and Midalys Soto

Arecibo, Puerto Rico



After Hurricane Maria devastated Puerto Rico in September 2017, Abner and Midalys moved to Florida, USA. Soon they received a prompting in the temple to move back to Puerto Rico and open a barbershop.

RAUL SANDOVAL, PHOTOGRAPHER

Abner

I found a small unit we could rent for our barbershop. When the owner told me the cost for rent, it was more than we could afford. I asked if he could lower the cost. He called me later and said, "I want to know who I'm renting to. Bring your wife so I can meet her."

Midalys

We prayed that he would see that we are good people. After meeting him, he said, "God is helping you. I've had this space for a long time. Many people have asked to rent it, but it never felt right. I feel strongly that you are good people."

He lowered the rent for three years. I was surprised. He said the exact words my husband and I had prayed for.

Abner

We are now much more secure and peaceful. We're making money, and we are blessed.

Midalys

God loves and guides us. Returning to Puerto Rico was the right thing for our family. This was Heavenly Father's perfect plan for us.



DISCOVER MORE

See more about Abner and Midalys's journey of faith, including additional photos, in the digital version of this article in the Gospel Library app or at ChurchofJesusChrist.org/go/E8206.

Elder Ronald A. Rasband shares how the Lord can guide us in the small details and major milestones of our lives at ChurchofJesusChrist.org/go/8207.



Ministering Principles

MINISTERING THROUGH SELF-RELIANCE

Helping others become self-reliant is providing and ministering in the Lord's way.

Many of our family members, friends, and neighbors are interested in becoming more self-reliant. Using the Church's self-reliance initiative, Church members are finding opportunities to serve, care, and minister as they bless others with principles that bring "greater hope, peace, and progress."¹

"I Was Home"

By Chrissy Kepler, Arizona, USA

I was struggling financially following a divorce, trying to find my way back into the workforce after being a stay-at-home mom for eight years. I was also struggling spiritually, seeking truth and faith, though I had not set foot inside a chapel since I was a teenager.

One Sunday I was doing my laundry at the home of my oldest sister, Priscilla, an active member of the Church. While I was there, Priscilla invited me to attend church with her family—my first invitation in over 15 years.

I was reluctant at first, but just the night before, I had pleaded with God to show me how to get closer to Him. After feeling an internal tug, I concluded, "Why not go to hear and see for yourself as an adult with your own heart and eyes?"

While we were at sacrament meeting, I noticed a flyer in the Sunday bulletin announcing a self-reliance course on personal finances. I wasn't ready to return to church, but I felt drawn to the 12-week course. With encouragement from my sister and brother-in-law, I signed up, expecting to learn only how to make a budget and pay off debt. The classes, however, transformed me spiritually.

I had been surprised by the spiritual messages the first couple of weeks of class, but during the third class, I was overwhelmed with a feeling of confirmation that I was home and hearing new but familiar truths. I left the class and drove straight to see Priscilla. In tears, I asked her, "How do I get more of this feeling in my life?" She arranged for the missionaries to start teaching me.







INVITE, ATTEND, STRENGTHEN

To help Latter-day Saints achieve self-reliance—both financial and spiritual—the Church began its self-reliance initiative in 2014.

After an introductory devotional, attendees choose from four different 12-week courses.

Because self-reliance groups operate as a council, they offer an excellent opportunity to minister to others' financial, educational, professional, and spiritual needs. Group members learn from, counsel with, and support one another. They also share ideas and are accountable to each other.

Pray about which family members, friends, or neighbors you could invite to a self-reliance course, and attend with them. Remember that principles of self-reliance can bless all of God's children, regardless of whether they are members of the Church or not.

Members of my self-reliance class came to my missionary lessons and supported me. They made a lasting impact on my spirituality and helped me develop a testimony of the gospel and modern-day prophets.

In the time it took me to complete the course, I made several temporal and spiritual changes. I started a new career with a good company, and I paid off several loans.

But the deeper, sweeter blessings that came from the course included creating beautiful friendships, developing a positive relationship with an encouraging bishop, finding a testimony of tithing, receiving my temple recommend, being endowed, and seeing my two oldest children get baptized.

My path to self-reliance is still unfolding, but for the rest of my journey, I will cherish the lessons I've learned and the friendships I've made.

"I Left Each Class Feeling Loved"

When she visited Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, with her 10-year-old son, Vincent, in December 2016, Katie Funk considered herself "comfortably agnostic." She left the Church at age 16, became a single mother at 17, started getting tattoos, and developed a taste for coffee. But during that Temple Square visit, Vincent felt the Holy Ghost and asked his mother if he could take the missionary lessons.

Despite her two-job, 80-hour workweeks, Katie studied the gospel with Vincent, researching answers to his questions between missionary visits. By the summer of 2017, she began attending Church meetings, where she learned about the Church's self-reliance courses.

“I realized they were something that could help me,” she said. “Maybe I wouldn’t need to work two jobs or lean on my parents for the rest of my life.”

Katie called her course “incredibly strengthening temporally and spiritually,” not just because of what she learned but also because of how her self-reliance group accepted and ministered to her. ■

NOTE

1. “Message from the First Presidency,” in *Personal Finances for Self-Reliance* (2016), i.

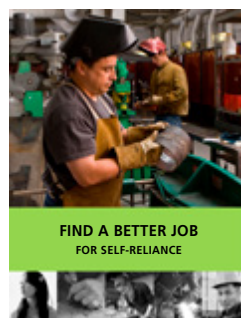
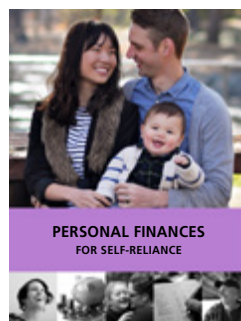
HOW YOU CAN HELP

Here are some ideas from Katie for how we can make the Church’s self-reliance initiative an opportunity to minister both spiritually and temporally:

- “I know it’s cliché, but don’t judge a book by its cover. The fact that I was able to go to that course and not feel judged by others was huge.”
- “Give support and encouragement. My group supported me in such a way that I left each class feeling loved.”
- “Share your experience. The honesty and openness we had for each other made our hearts feel better. You never know who’s going to benefit from what you share.”
- “Be vocal. I’m vocal about how my life is much better because I pay my tithing and go to church. I take my *Personal Finances for Self-Reliance* book with me to my job as a behavioral therapist. When appropriate, I share some of its principles with others.”
- “Go to a self-reliance course for yourself, but watch for those who might need your help. I had to miss almost half the classes because of a change in my work schedule, but members of my group stayed in contact and cheered me on. It was amazing to feel that I still belonged even when I couldn’t be there.”

SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCES

To send us your experiences with ministering to others or being ministered to, go to ensign.ChurchofJesusChrist.org and click “Submit an Article or Feedback.”



These manuals represent four of the Church’s self-reliance courses. For more information, ask your bishop or visit srs.ChurchofJesusChrist.org.

MINISTERING THROUGH SELF-RELIANCE

“Self-reliance is taking responsibility for our own spiritual and temporal welfare *and for those whom Heavenly Father has entrusted to our care*. Only when we are self-reliant can we truly emulate the Savior in serving and blessing others.”

Elder Robert D. Hales (1932–2017) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “A Gospel Vision of Welfare: Faith in Action,” in *Basic Principles of Welfare and Self-Reliance* (booklet, 2009), 1–2; emphasis added.

fun Family Study



Flip a Choice

Alma 42:4 (July 27–August 2)

Read Alma 42:4 together and talk about how this life is a time for us “to repent and serve God.”

- 1 Sit in a circle and give each family member three index cards.
- 2 On two of the cards, write good choices. On the third card, write a bad choice.
- 3 Turn the cards face down and mix them up in the middle of the circle.
- 4 Take turns flipping over one card at a time. When someone reads a good choice, give the person a high-five (or another gesture that means “Good job!” in your culture).
- 5 When someone reads a bad choice, the person shares something they could do to repent and serve God instead.

Discussion: Testify that Jesus Christ makes it possible for us to change and become better people. How can we use our time this week to follow Him and serve God?

Consider these activities during family scripture study or home evening.



Captain Moroni Says

Alma 50 (August 3–9)

Alma 50 describes how Captain Moroni protected his people against their enemies.

- 1 Read Alma 50:1–6 and make a list of what the Nephites did to defend themselves: dig up heaps of earth, build a timber wall, and so on.
- 2 Come up with an action to represent each defense. For example, pretend to shovel dirt for “digging up heaps of earth.”
- 3 Now play a Book of Mormon version of Simon Says. One family member starts by saying “Captain Moroni says to . . .” and then picks one of the defenses. The rest of the group should quickly do the corresponding action. Then Captain Moroni gives a new command.
- 4 If Captain Moroni gives a command without first saying “Captain Moroni says,” anyone who does the action is out.

Discussion: What spiritual dangers exist in the world? What can we do to protect ourselves and our homes from the adversary? For further insights, read and discuss Alma 43:19, 23–24.

FAMILIES WITH YOUNG CHILDREN

Find more home evening ideas in this month's *Friend*.



Obeying Every Word

Alma 57:19–27 (August 10–16)

Read Alma 57:19–27 together and talk about how the stripling warriors were protected when they obeyed “with exactness” (verse 21).

- 1 Blindfold one family member and have them stand against a wall.
- 2 Place an object anywhere along the opposite wall and have the blindfolded person try to find the object in one minute without any help.
- 3 After the time is up, have the person try again, except this time give them instructions to follow “with exactness.”

Discussion: How do God’s “instructions” help us stay safe and reach our goals?



Name Game

Helaman 5:6–7 (August 17–23)

Read Helaman 5:6–7 together and talk about how Nephi and Lehi were named after righteous ancestors.

- 1 Invite a family member to say the first letter of their first name.
- 2 Each person in the family then tries to name a righteous person in the scriptures, or an ancestor, whose name also starts with that letter.
- 3 Play again until everyone has had a chance to use their first initial.

Discussion: How can remembering examples from the scriptures and our righteous ancestors help us make good choices?



Do You Remember?

Helaman 8 (August 24–30)

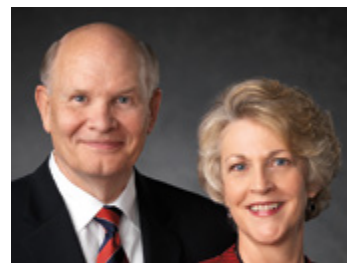
Read Helaman 8:19–25 together and talk about how Nephi wanted people to remember what the prophets taught.

- 1 Set out items that represent the gospel (scriptures, pass-along card, Church magazine, CTR ring, etc.).
- 2 Look at the items for one minute. Then invite someone to leave.
- 3 Remove one item, then invite the person to return and try to remember what is missing.
- 4 Play again until everyone has a turn.

Discussion: What can we do to remember important gospel lessons that bless our lives?



THE Divine Purposes OF Sexual Intimacy



By Elder Dale G. Renlund
Of the Quorum of the Twelve
Apostles
and Ruth Lybbert Renlund

Understanding the God-given gift of sexuality within the plan of happiness helps us understand the importance of the law of chastity.

Our purpose in mortality is to become like our heavenly parents. Our divine understanding and use of sexual intimacy are essential to that process of becoming.

The law of chastity is an eternal law, given by our Heavenly Father to all His children in all ages. It remains in force and is as applicable today as it was in earlier times in history. As with other commandments, the law is given by Heavenly Father to bless and help His children achieve their divine potential. Obeying the law of chastity includes abstaining from all sexual relations before marriage and remaining completely faithful and loyal after marriage. Sexual relations are to be limited to marriage between a man and a woman.¹

Heavenly Father intends that sexual relations in marriage be used to create children and to express love and strengthen the emotional, spiritual, and physical connections between husband and wife. In marriage, sexual intimacy should unite wife and husband together in trust, devotion, and consideration for each other.² Sexual relations within marriage must respect the agency of both partners and should not be used to control or dominate.

We may wonder, though, “Why should I obey the law of chastity? Why does God care about my moral behavior?” To answer these



questions, God has revealed doctrine that, if correctly understood, will motivate us to keep the law of chastity and choose to express our sexuality within the boundaries He has set.³ As with all of God's commandments, the law of chastity is best understood within the context of Heavenly Father's plan of salvation and exaltation (see Alma 12:32). Obedience to the law of chastity will bring extraordinary blessings.

Exceptional Promises

All human beings are beloved spirit sons or daughters of heavenly parents with a divine nature and eternal destiny. The reason we have bodies is to build on that divine nature so we can ultimately realize our eternal destiny.⁴ Heavenly Father wants us to gain earthly experience, progress toward perfection, and eventually enjoy the fulness of happiness that He enjoys. He knows that for us to have this kind of enduring joy, we need to progress along the course He has established, obeying the commandments He has given.

Understanding that family relationships are to be perpetuated throughout the eternities after this life is vital. After mortality, the faithful are promised that “they shall pass by the angels . . . to their exaltation and glory . . . which glory shall be a fulness and a continuation of the seeds forever and ever.

“Then shall they be gods, because they have no end” (Doctrine and Covenants 132:19–20).

The doctrine of eternal families in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is unique among Christian traditions. We were not created solely to praise, adore, and serve some incomprehensible God.⁵ We were created by loving heavenly parents to grow up to become like them.⁶ Male and female spirits were created to complement each other. That is why gender is not fluid in the eternities—because it provides the basis for the ultimate gift Heavenly Father can give, His kind of life.⁷

For us to realize this blessing, Heavenly Father commanded that sexual intimacy is to be reserved for marriage between a man and a woman.⁸ Marriage was intended by God “to mean the complete merger of a man and a woman—their hearts, hopes, lives, love, family, future, everything . . . to be ‘one flesh’ in their life together.”⁹ We cannot achieve the kind of life our Heavenly Father enjoys by ourselves or without a complete commitment to fidelity within a marriage to our husband or wife according to God's plan.

God allows us to choose how we will live our lives. He will not force us to follow the path He has established even though He knows it will lead to our greatest happiness. God's commandments and covenants constitute the path that enable us to become a full inheritor in His kingdom, a joint heir with Jesus Christ (see Romans 8:17). Through making righteous choices, we develop the divine nature that is within us. Sexual relations are “one of the ultimate expressions of our divine nature.”¹⁰ Our proper expression of sexuality makes it possible for God's plan to unfold on earth and in the eternities,¹¹ qualifying us to become like our Heavenly Father.¹² God promises eternal life for the faithful that

includes eternal marriage, children, and all other blessings of an eternal family.¹³

Distracting Philosophies and Satan's Deceptions

Flawed reasoning and Satan's deceptions have produced distracting philosophies that claim to eliminate the need for obeying God's commandments, especially the law of chastity. Satan's opposing voice is loud, and his philosophies are often enticing. In the Book of Mormon, some espoused these philosophies to deceive others and to profit from the deception. For example, Nehor taught the Nephites "that all mankind should be saved at the last day, and that they need not fear nor tremble, but that they might lift up their heads and rejoice; for the Lord . . . had also redeemed all men; and, in the end, all men should have eternal life" (Alma 1:4).

If we adopt Nehor's philosophy, we have no incentive to curtail our sexual appetites because there are no eternal consequences. And if we violate the law of chastity? No worries, since those who followed Nehor "did not believe in repentance of their sins" (Alma 15:15). This enticing philosophy can be seductive, and many find it appealing; we can do whatever we want with no eternal consequences.

Other false teachers in the Book of Mormon preached that believing in Jesus Christ, His Atonement, and keeping His commandments is to "yoke yourselves" to "foolish things" and derives from the ridiculous "traditions of your fathers" (Alma 30:13, 14). Indeed, they proclaimed, looking forward to "a remission of your sins" is merely a mental or emotional problem, the "effect of a frenzied mind" (Alma 30:16). The inescapable conclusion of these teachings is that every man and woman succeeds in this life "according to [their] genius" and "strength" and that whatsoever a man or woman does is "no crime" (Alma 30:17). These false teachings promote disobeying the law of chastity because the concept of right and wrong is outdated.

No wonder these philosophies are still popular! No accountability for any choice sounds like the ultimate freedom. If we can avoid most worldly consequences by being discreet and careful, what is the harm? Against this backdrop, the law of chastity seems old-fashioned, prudish, or unnecessary.

Understanding that family relationships are to be perpetuated throughout the eternities after this life is vital.

Eternal Laws

God's laws are not negotiable. He allows us to disregard them, but we are not free to create our own rules for the eternities any more than a person is free to create his or her personalized laws for physics. God wants us to be a qualified heir in His kingdom. To expect His heavenly inheritance while following a different course than He has outlined is naïve.

Before being called to full-time Church service, I (Elder Renlund) cared for patients with severe heart failure. In heart failure and transplant cardiology, there are defined, established courses to follow to obtain the best outcome: longer and better quality of life. Treating a patient in another way does not result in the best outcomes. It was astonishing that some patients tried to negotiate the treatment course. Some patients said, "I prefer not to take any medications," or "I don't want to have any heart biopsies after transplantation." Of course,





PHOTOGRAPH BY DENISE RENEE BIRD

patients are free to follow their own course, but they cannot pursue an inferior course of action and expect the best outcome.

The same is true for us. We are free to choose our own course in life, but we are not free to choose the outcome that comes from following our own rules, no matter how many times someone says we can. Heavenly Father is not to blame when we do not receive blessings connected to the law of chastity because of disobedience.

In this dispensation, the Savior taught that eternal laws are not flexible and open for discussion. He said, “And again, verily I say unto you, that which is governed by law is also preserved by law and perfected and sanctified by the same.

“That which breaketh a law, and abideth not by law, but *seeketh to become a law unto itself*, . . . cannot be sanctified by law, neither by mercy, justice, nor judgment” (Doctrine and Covenants 88:34–35; emphasis added). We cannot substitute our own rules for eternal laws any more than a man who touches hot coals can decide not to get burned.

If we are not obedient, we will enjoy only “that which [we] are willing to receive, because [we] were not willing to enjoy that which [we] might have received” (Doctrine and Covenants 88:32). Obeying the law of chastity is one way we demonstrate that we are willing to do whatever it takes to receive all the extraordinary blessings associated with eternal families.

God’s Laws Are Always, in the End, Fair

Not all Heavenly Father’s children have the opportunity in this life to experience sexual intimacy in married relationships

according to God’s law. Some will not have the opportunity to marry. Others are convinced that their unique circumstances make living the law of chastity so challenging and unfair that they can choose to ignore it.

Fairness, however, must be judged from an eternal perspective, from that of Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ.¹⁴ The Savior exhorted His people to withhold judgment on what is fair or unfair until that day when He makes up His jewels (see Malachi 3:17–18). The “jewels” the Savior references are those who, despite perceived or temporary unfairness or any other impediment, keep His commandments.

When our circumstances feel unfair to us, it is best to follow King Benjamin’s advice. He said, “I would desire that ye should consider on the blessed and happy state of those that keep the commandments of God. For behold, they are *blessed in all things*, both temporal and spiritual; and if they hold out faithful to the end they are received into heaven, that thereby *they may dwell with God in a state of never-ending happiness*” (Mosiah 2:41; emphasis added).

Ultimately, nothing compares to the infinite unfairness the Savior endured. Yet, if we are faithful, He will compensate us for any unfairness we experience, and we will achieve a state of never-ending happiness.

As we choose to keep the commandments of God, including the law of chastity, we will experience joy and “peace in this world, and eternal life in the world to come” (Doctrine and Covenants 59:23)¹⁵ because we will be part of an eternal family, with ancestors and posterity.¹⁶ As husband and wife are eternally sealed together by priesthood authority, they will be exalted and have a fulness of glory and eternal progeny.¹⁷

As husband and wife are eternally sealed together by priesthood authority, they will be exalted and have a fulness of glory and eternal progeny.

Temptation and Repentance

God anticipated that we would be tempted as we try to live the law of chastity. That is why He provided His Son to be our Savior

PHOTOGRAPH BY JAMIE DALE JOHNSON

and Redeemer. Through Jesus Christ and His Atonement, we can be strengthened to resist temptation. All God’s children who experience temptation of any kind can turn to the Savior for help.¹⁸ Jesus Christ understands what we are going through because He “was in all points tempted like as we are,” and we are encouraged to “come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Hebrews 4:15, 16).

When we stumble, we need to remember that we can become clean through faith in Jesus Christ and sincere repentance.¹⁹ Repentance is joyful because, “though [our]

sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow” (Isaiah 1:18). The Savior will not only forgive; He will forget our sin.²⁰ What more could we ask: help when tempted, forgiveness when we repent. Repentance should not be feared even though Satan does try “to block us from looking to Jesus Christ, who stands with open arms, hoping and willing to heal, forgive, cleanse, strengthen, purify, and sanctify us.”²¹

Testimony

God’s laws are designed for our ultimate happiness. He wants us to use our bodies and sexuality in ways He has ordained so that we can become like Him. We have been blessed in our marriage with mutual trust as we live the law of chastity. Our confidence in each other and in our Heavenly Father has grown as we have kept this commandment. God’s plan is the only path that enables the fullest measure of joy. We promise that you too can know that God loves you and that you will be eternally blessed as you live His commandments. ■

NOTES

1. See Jacob 2:27–30; *Preach My Gospel: A Guide to Missionary Service* (2004), “Lesson 4: The Commandments,” 80.
2. See *General Handbook: Serving in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (2020), 2.1.2, ChurchofJesusChrist.org; David A. Bednar, “We Believe in Being Chaste,” *Ensign*, May 2013, 41–44; Russell M. Nelson, “Nurturing Marriage,” *Ensign*, May 2006, 36–38; Richard G. Scott, “Making the Right Choices,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, 37–39.
3. See Boyd K. Packer, “Little Children,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 16–18.
4. See “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign*, May 2017, 145. The intended meaning of gender in the proclamation is biological sex at birth.
5. See Thomas Watson, “Man’s Chief End Is to Glorify God,” in *A Body of Practical Divinity* (1833), 8; Roger E. Olson, *The Story of Christian Theology* (1999), 506; *The Catechism of Christian Doctrine: Prepared and Enjoined by Order of the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore* (1885); all as quoted in Terryl L. Givens, *Feeding the Flock: The Foundations of Mormon Thought: Church and Praxis* (2017), 1.
6. See Dallin H. Oaks, “Apostasy and Restoration,” *Ensign*, May 1995, 84–87.
7. See “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” 145. Throughout eternity, we will not be genderless, as some theologians have suggested. See Givens, *Feeding the Flock*, 188–90.
8. See Doctrine and Covenants 42:22–24; see also “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” 145.
9. Jeffrey R. Holland, “Personal Purity,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 76.
10. David A. Bednar, “We Believe in Being Chaste,” 42.
11. See Neil L. Andersen, “Children,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 28–30.
12. See Dallin H. Oaks, “Apostasy and Restoration,” 84–87.
13. See Doctrine and Covenants 131:1–4; 132:19–20, 24.
14. See D. Todd Christofferson, “Why Marriage, Why Family,” *Ensign*, May 2015, 50–53.
15. See also Mosiah 2:41; *General Handbook*, 2.1.2.
16. See Malachi 4:1.
17. See Doctrine and Covenants 132:19.
18. See Alma 13:28.
19. See Isaiah 1:18; Doctrine and Covenants 58:42.
20. See Doctrine and Covenants 58:42.
21. Russell M. Nelson, “We Can Do Better and Be Better,” *Ensign*, May 2019, 67.





How, When, and Why: **Talking to Your Children about Sexuality**

If you were to ask youth, “What is the law of chastity?” you may get a blank stare, or they may fidget with discomfort and then quickly quote something like, “It means not having sexual relations before marriage.” Our experience is that many young people remain abstinent before marriage but deeply misunderstand the full meaning and purpose of the law of chastity or of sexuality—misunderstandings that often, sadly, result in future marital struggles. Our goal as parents and leaders should be to help our children to be both sexually pure and prepared.



To help our children prepare for and enjoy sexuality in its beauty and wonder within marriage, we need to guide them as they work toward controlling their God-given feelings.

By Laura M. Padilla-Walker

Professor, School of Family Life, Brigham Young University

and Meg O. Jankovich

Student in BYU Marriage, Family, and Human Development master's program

Consider All Aspects of the Law

The physical aspects of the law of chastity (for example, abstinence before marriage and complete fidelity after marriage) are central and important. However, abstinence is sometimes discussed more often than the emotional and spiritual aspects of the joy and beauty of sexual intimacy in marriage, as well as the peace that comes from living a life of virtue and purity both before and after marriage.

In addition to procreation, sexual intimacy in marriage has another important purpose.

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained: “Intimate relations . . . are not merely a curiosity to be explored, an appetite to be satisfied, or a type of recreation or entertainment to be pursued selfishly. They are not a conquest to be achieved or simply an act to be performed. Rather, they are in mortality one of the ultimate expressions of our divine nature and potential and a way of strengthening emotional and spiritual bonds between husband and wife.”¹

In order to help our children prepare to enjoy sexual intimacy in its beauty and wonder within marriage, we need to help them understand their sexual development and guide them as they work toward controlling their God-given feelings and emotions.



As our children grow, they need information taught by parents more directly and plainly about what is and is not appropriate.

If you worry that you haven't talked with your children about sexuality soon enough or in the right ways, you're not alone. There are a number of reasons why these conversations can be challenging. However, it is never too late to start teaching. Below are three tips to help you get started:

1. How to Talk about Sexuality

One critical element of healthy parent-child conversations about sexuality is to promote a culture of openness. Research suggests that teenagers get most of their information about sexuality from media or peers but that they *want* to get information from their parents.

President M. Russell Ballard, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, said: "As our children grow, they need information taught by parents more directly and plainly about what is and is not appropriate. Parents need to . . . talk to [their children] plainly about sex and the teaching of the gospel regarding chastity. Let this information come from parents in the home in an appropriate way."²

To foster open communication, you can:

- Start when your children are young by calling body parts by their correct names. This teaches children about their wonderful bodies and provides them the language they need to be healthy and informed.

- Let your children know they can ask you any questions, and then try not to overreact or attach shame to their questions or confessions. Celebrate that they are talking to you, show them love and support, and do your best to keep lines of communication open.
- Avoid using metaphors for sexuality. Children need information presented in a clear and honest way. For example, some youth tell of lessons where breaking the law of chastity is compared to chewed gum or food that is passed from person to person around the room and therefore no longer desirable. Though well intentioned, these types of metaphors often promote fear of sexuality or feelings of low or irreparable self-worth, undermining the hope and peace that results from true repentance.

2. When to Talk about Sexuality

Most parents have a single conversation with their children about sexuality. But given the false messages youth are getting from the world today—sometimes on a daily basis—children need more than one talk from their parents.³ Children benefit

most from a proactive approach in which parents anticipate the struggles children will face regarding sexuality and arm them with helpful strategies.

In speaking about potential exposure to pornography, Sister Joy D. Jones, Primary General President, said: “Earlier discussions are better, and children will come forward more readily when they know they are loved and nothing they say or do can change that love. . . .

“Parents, we must start the conversation and not wait for children to come to us. . . . We want children to feel prepared and empowered, not scared. We want to talk with them and not at them.”⁴

To be more intentional, you can:

- Have home evening lessons on topics related to sexuality and let your children teach as they feel ready. Topics might include puberty, body image, the positive aspects of sexuality, the dangers of pornography use, that it is normal to have sexual feelings, and more.
- Help your children come up with specific strategies to resist temptation. For example, if your child is struggling with impure thoughts or behaviors, brainstorm together on what to do when these thoughts come. For example, sing a hymn, think of a scripture, pray, engage in physical exercise, or wear a bracelet that reminds them to choose the right.
- Teach children how to avoid sexual predators and to stay safe. Note: try not to teach about safety (which often produces fear) at the same time you teach about sexual intimacy within marriage; children may project fear onto all aspects of sexuality.





3. Talk about the *Why* of Sexuality

Children often want to know *why* they are expected to do things. Why *should* they keep the law of chastity when some people around them do not? When they understand the reasons behind expectations, they are more likely to internalize shared gospel and family values. Youth who know why they are committing to keep the law of chastity find that this commitment “ceases to [be] a burden and, instead, becomes a joy and a delight.”⁵

If we want our children to keep God’s law of chastity, we need to give them reasons for why it is important to abide by this law. They must be taught that “sexuality is a powerful gift from Heavenly Father and that it should be used within the bounds He has set.”⁶ Understanding how this “powerful gift” develops will help youth make choices in line with their desire to keep God’s law of chastity.

As you discuss sexual development with your child, consider these teachings:

- Sexuality is an inherent part of each child of God. We are created “in the image of God” (Genesis 1:27), which means that our bodies, including our sexual organs, are a divine creation.
- Experiencing sexual feelings and sexual arousal is normal. Children don’t need to act on those feelings and sensations but instead can be mindful of them. This means noticing sexual

Youth who know why they are committing to keep the law of chastity find that this commitment ceases to be a burden.

feelings but not negatively judging them. Research has shown that practicing mindfulness can help us make better choices that are in line with our values and goals, such as keeping the law of chastity.

- Masturbation is often a child’s first experience with sexuality and is done in ignorance. Even young children are prone to self-touching, and how parents respond to these early behaviors can set the stage for how young people feel about themselves and their sexuality. It is important for parents to find a balance

between helping children understand the why behind God's commandment that sexual behavior occur within a marriage relationship, while also not reacting with disgust or anger when children engage in self-touching or youth admit to masturbating.

- If children understand the why behind standards related to relationships and sexuality (including dating, modesty, chastity, etc.), they are more likely to see the wisdom in God's laws and have the motivation to keep them. As you teach these standards, remember that it's important to do so without imposing shame or fear.

Emphasize the Power of the Atonement of Jesus Christ

Just as when our toddlers are first learning how to walk, youth may stumble as they learn to understand and regulate their own sexuality. It is important for us to remember to promote growth instead of guilt and to teach children that Jesus Christ can bless them with grace and power and mercy to strengthen them and help them remain sexually pure and one day enjoy the blessings of sexual intimacy in marriage.

Being a parent is not easy. And our efforts in teaching our children may not always be perfect, but we can do our best to teach our children about the beautiful gift that is sexual intimacy in marriage. If we feel that we fall short, we can do better with the Lord's help. Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said, "With the gift of the



Atonement of Jesus Christ and the strength of heaven to help us, we *can* improve, and the great thing about the gospel is we get credit for *trying*, even if we don't always succeed."⁷ ■

NOTES

1. David A. Bednar, "We Believe in Being Chaste," *Ensign*, May 2013, 42.
2. M. Russell Ballard, "Like a Flame Unquenchable," *Ensign*, May 1999, 86.
3. See Dalmacio Flores and Julie Barroso, "21st Century Parent-Child Sex Communication in the United States: A Process Review," *Journal of Sex Research*, vol. 54, no. 4-5 (2017), 532-48.
4. Joy D. Jones, "Addressing Pornography: Protect, Respond, and Heal," *Ensign*, Oct. 2019, 25, 26.
5. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "Forget Me Not," *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 122.
6. "Sexual Intimacy Is Sacred and Beautiful" (family home evening lesson), [ChurchofJesusChrist.org/addressing-pornography/resources](https://www.ChurchofJesusChrist.org/addressing-pornography/resources).
7. Jeffrey R. Holland, "Tomorrow the Lord Will Do Wonders among You," *Ensign*, May 2016, 125-26.

Editors' note: If you have teenage children, consider sharing with them the article on page 14 on this topic, as well as the August *New Era* article "Talking to Your Parents about Sex."

Area Presidency Assignments

The First Presidency has announced the following Area Presidency assignments, to be effective August 1, 2020.

Africa Central



Matthew L. Carpenter
First Counselor



Joseph W. Sitati
President



Thierry K. Mutombo
Second Counselor

Africa South



Edward Dube
First Counselor



S. Mark Palmer
President



Ciro Schmeil
Second Counselor

Africa West



Larry S. Kacher
First Counselor



Hugo E. Martinez
President



Jörg Klebingat
Second Counselor

Asia



Peter F. Meurs
First Counselor



David F. Evans
President



David P. Homer
Second Counselor

Asia North



L. Todd Budge
First Counselor



Takashi Wada
President



James R. Rasband
Second Counselor

Brazil



Joaquin E. Costa
First Counselor



Adilson de Paula Parrella
President



Joni L. Koch
Second Counselor

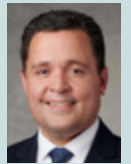
Caribbean



Eduardo Gavarret
First Counselor



Jose L. Alonso
President



Jorge M. Alvarado
Second Counselor

Central America



Taylor G. Godoy
First Counselor



Brian K. Taylor
President



Alan R. Walker
Second Counselor

Europe



Massimo De Feo
First Counselor



Gary B. Sabin
President



Erich W. Kopischke
Second Counselor

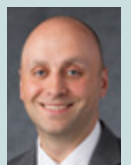
Europe East



Hans T. Boom
First Counselor



Christoffel Golden
President



Kyrlo Pokhylko*
Second Counselor

Mexico



John C. Pingree Jr.
First Counselor



Rafael E. Pino
President



Hugo Montoya
Second Counselor

Middle East/Africa North



Randy D. Funk
First Counselor



Anthony D. Perkins
President



Jeffrey H. Singer*
Second Counselor

Administered from Church headquarters

North America Central



Chi Hong (Sam) Wong
First Counselor



S. Gifford Nielsen
President



Arnulfo Valenzuela
Second Counselor

North America Northeast



W. Mark Bassett
First Counselor



Randall K. Bennett
President



John A. McCune
Second Counselor

North America Southeast



Vern P. Stanfill
First Counselor



James B. Martino
President



Marcos A. Aidukaitis
Second Counselor

North America Southwest



Kyle S. McKay
First Counselor



Paul B. Pieper
President



Evan A. Schmutz
Second Counselor

North America West



Scott D. Whiting
First Counselor



Kevin W. Pearson
President



Rubén V. Alliaud
Second Counselor

Pacific



K. Brett Nattress
First Counselor



Ian S. Ardern
President



Kazuhiko Yamashita
Second Counselor

Philippines



Steven R. Bangerter
First Counselor



Taniela B. Wakolo
President



Yoon Hwan Choi
Second Counselor

South America Northwest



Mathias Held
First Counselor



Jorge F. Zaballos
President



Jorge T. Becerra
Second Counselor

South America South



Allen D. Haynie
First Counselor



Benjamín De Hoyos
President



Juan Pablo Villar
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Utah



Mark A. Bragg
First Counselor



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President



Walter F. González
Second Counselor

* Area Seventy



Alma 39–42

JULY 27–AUGUST 2

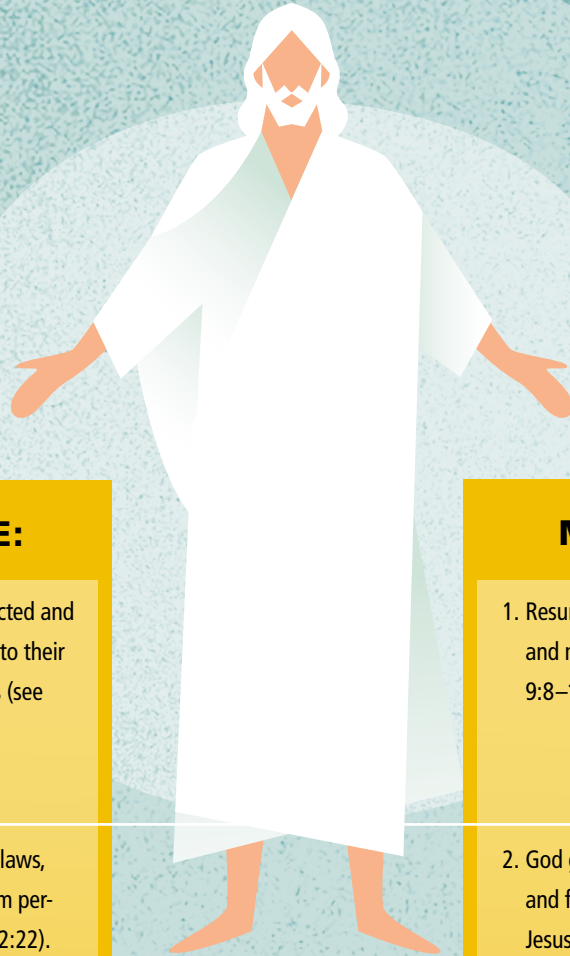
It might seem like justice and mercy are at odds with each other, but both work together in God’s plan.



DISCUSSION

What do the words *justice* and *mercy* mean to you? Why are justice and mercy both necessary in God’s eternal plan of happiness? How have you experienced the mercy of Jesus Christ in your life?

How is God both just and merciful?



JUSTICE:

1. All will be resurrected and judged according to their works and desires (see Alma 41:2–3).
2. God has given us laws, and He obeys them perfectly (see Alma 42:22).
3. We are not compelled to repent, but we will face the consequences of our deeds if we do not repent (see Alma 42:27).

MERCY:

1. Resurrection is both just and merciful (see 2 Nephi 9:8–15).
2. God grants us repentance and forgiveness through Jesus Christ and His Atonement (see Alma 42:22–23).
3. We can choose to come unto Christ to be redeemed (see Alma 42:27).

Jesus Christ “atone-
eth for the sins of the
world, to bring about
the plan of mercy, to
appease the demands
of justice, that God
might be a perfect, just
God, and a merciful
God also” (Alma 42:15).



Alma 43–52

AUGUST 3–9

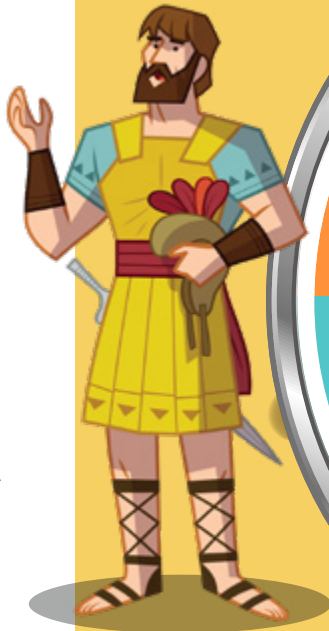
Captain Moroni and Amalickiah focused their lives on different things. While “Amalickiah had . . . been obtaining power by fraud and deceit, Moroni . . . had been preparing the minds of the people to be faithful unto the Lord their God” (Alma 48:7).

What can we learn from the differences between Moroni and Amalickiah?

DISCUSSION

Moroni’s focus was “inspired by a better cause” (Alma 43:45). Where do you place the focus in *your* life?

What other examples can you find in the Book of Mormon of people defending righteous causes? How can their examples help you?



Where is your focus?

MORONI:

1. Was “appointed by the chief judges and the voice of the people” (Alma 46:34).
2. Made his beliefs known “with a loud voice” and invited others to do good (see Alma 46:19–20). His heart swelled “with thanksgiving to his God” (Alma 48:12).
3. Swore an oath to defend his people, rights, country, and religion but did not glory in bloodshed (see Alma 48:13, 16).
4. Found joy in liberty (see Alma 48:11), and his heart gloried in “preserving his people” (Alma 48:16).

AMALICKIAH:

1. Sought to dethrone the king of the Lamanites and make himself king (see Alma 47:8).
2. Was a “subtle man to do evil” and secretly “laid [his] plan in his heart” (Alma 47:4). He also cursed God (see Alma 49:27).
3. Stirred the Lamanites to anger to cause a war and swore an oath to drink Moroni’s blood (see Alma 47:1; 49:27).
4. Fought to place others in bondage (see Alma 49:26) and “did care not for the blood of his people” (Alma 49:10).





Alma 53–63

AUGUST 10–16

How can youth build up the kingdom of God?

Helaman was inspired by the powerful faith of his stripling sons. Consider how their actions gave them spiritual protection (see Alma 57:25–27) and how following their example can help you build up the kingdom of God.

DISCUSSION

How can you defend the gospel and the teachings of Christ in your own community? How can you help others do the same?

“Like Helaman’s 2,000 stripling warriors, you also are the spirit sons [and daughters] of God, and you too can be endowed with power to build up and defend His kingdom.”

President M. Russell Ballard, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “The Greatest Generation of Missionaries,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2002, 47.

Choose Whom to Follow

These youth chose their leader—the prophet Helaman (see Alma 53:19). How can you choose the prophet as your leader?

Be True at All Times

These youth “were true at all times in whatsoever thing they were entrusted” (Alma 53:20). How can you be truer to your responsibilities?

Trust in the Teachings of Righteous Parents

These youth “had been taught by their mothers, that if they did not doubt, God would deliver them” (Alma 56:47). How can you likewise teach your children to have faith?

Exercise Faith

These youth were few in number and had little battle experience. Nevertheless, they had faith: “God is with us, and he will not suffer that we should fall; . . . let us go forth” (Alma 56:46). How can you “go forth” in faith?





Helaman 1–6

AUGUST 17–23

Do you remember to remember?

Helaman counseled his sons to remember:

Helaman gave his sons the names Nephi and Lehi so that they would remember the good works of the Nephi and Lehi who came before them.

In Helaman chapter 5, Helaman uses the word *remember* 11 times.

DISCUSSION

The Book of Mormon includes over 200 references to remembering. As you read, consider looking for the things we are counseled to remember. Most importantly, we should remember that redemption comes through the Lord Jesus Christ. What can you do to better remember the Savior?

Nephi and Lehi “did remember [Helaman’s] words; and therefore they went forth, keeping the commandments of God” (Helaman 5:14).

▶ That Christ would come to redeem people from their sins (see Helaman 5:9–11).

▶ To look to the righteous examples of their ancestors (see Helaman 5:6).

▶ To build their foundation on Jesus Christ (see Helaman 5:12).

▶ To “keep the commandments of God” (Helaman 5:6).

▶ That it is only through the Atonement of Jesus Christ that we can be saved (see Helaman 5:9).



Time Well Spent

By David Dickson
Church Magazines

Because Pele Mika Ah Lam makes the most of her time, she finds happiness daily, she owns a small business, and she can look back without regret.

Island time in the Pacific runs a bit differently than it does in many other parts of the world. Daily tasks are completed by the position of the sun, not the clock. You wake to the sounds of birds and the crashing of waves, not to a shrill alarm.

For Pele Mika Ah Lam of Samoa, there's another important consideration about time that she lives by: "I make the most of it wherever I am."

Learning in and out of Class

Pele grew up in a village where families—including her own—live off the land. Running water and electricity are never a given, and the homes are simple and beautiful. Education is not easy to pay for. "Our whole family helps support each other with education costs," Pele says. "It's the Samoan way."

After working hard and getting top marks in school, Pele was accepted to attend the National University of

Samoa. She chose to study accounting, mathematics, and computing. She also made room in her schedule for institute classes.

Along the way, Pele participated in another activity that would change her life in the near future, though she didn't realize it at the time. For fun, every Friday evening she met with other Church members attending the university to discuss the gospel and learn new skills. These activities varied from week to week with one exception: on the last Friday of each month, they had a standing tradition of learning how to cook a different meal.

"I paid close attention," Pele says. "I didn't want to waste a chance to learn something new."

That decision would yield big dividends in the future.

A Door Closes, a Window Opens

The cost of a university education can be a major obstacle to nearly anyone. For Pele, when her funding

ran out, she had to leave school. She had worked hard, however, and learned all she could while there—including how to cook many different meals.

As a wife and as a mother of young children, she thought hard about how she might use what she had learned to help support her family. Throughout her life, Pele has been taught to believe in God and to work hard.

"I decided to start my own business," she says. "I now run a barbecue and salad stand, cooking food that I learned how to make while going through school!"

Because of her business success, Pele makes enough money to take care of her immediate family, as well as help care for her parents and siblings.

"Our family believes that 'faith without works is dead' [James 2:20]," she says. "We have faith in God and believe that He will help us in every way. But we have to do our part."

Island Time

Pele still lives life on “island time.” She rises and retires with the sun and embraces the simple, peaceful Samoan lifestyle. And she understands and lives the following truth: “Time flies on wings of lightning; we cannot call it back.”¹

Elder Ian S. Ardern of the Seventy has taught: “Time is never for sale; time is a commodity that cannot, try as you may, be bought at any store for any price. Yet when time is wisely

used, its value is immeasurable.”²

Because Pele is trying to make the most of the time she has, God has prospered her and her family, and they have found joy even in the midst of challenges. She has a strong testimony, a successful business, and a bright future.

“We are very blessed,” she says. ■

NOTES

1. “Improve the Shining Moments,” *Hymns*, no. 226.
2. Ian S. Ardern, “A Time to Prepare,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 31.



A FIVE-STEP PLAN FOR TIME MANAGEMENT

If you’re looking for ways to balance your busy schedule, consider the following five steps from *My Foundation for Self-Reliance*:

1. *List tasks.* “Each morning, make a list of tasks to do. Add names of people to serve.”
2. *Pray for guidance.* “Listen. Commit to do your best.”
3. *Number your priorities.* “Put a 1 by the most important, a 2 by the next most important, and so on.”
4. *Set goals and act.* “Listen to the Spirit. Set goals. Work hard. Start with the most important task and work down the list.”
5. *Report.* “Each night, report to Heavenly Father in prayer. Ask questions. Listen. Repent. Feel His love.”¹

NOTE

1. From *My Foundation for Self-Reliance* (2016), 14.





By Elder
Brian K. Taylor
Of the Seventy



Alma 39–42
JULY 27–AUGUST 2

Seeing Yourself in the

GREAT PLAN of HAPPINESS



We see God's eternal vision unfold for us as we come to understand our true identity, purpose, and destiny.

IMAGE BY CHRIS GOULD/GETTY IMAGES



Legend says that when some of his contemporaries were invited to peer through Galileo's new invention—the telescope—they would not so much as take a look. Because they would not look, they missed seeing the remarkable vistas he had discovered in our solar system.

If you were offered the chance to peer through a heavenly telescope and see God's eternal vision for you,¹ including your vital role in the great plan of happiness, wouldn't you be excited? Or would you, like Galileo's colleagues, decline the opportunity?

Two Ways of Seeing

Those who refuse to look through an eternal lens may instead see the world as the 17th-century French philosopher Blaise Pascal describes: "When I survey the whole universe . . . and man left to himself with no light, as though lost in this corner of the universe, without knowing who put him there, what he has come to do, what will become of him when he dies, incapable of knowing anything, I am moved to terror, like a man transported in his sleep to some terrifying desert island, who wakes up quite lost and with no means of escape."²

In contrast, those who seek to understand God's eternal perspective are like the third President of the Church, John Taylor (1808–87), who could see and describe our destiny in the great plan of happiness: "When the saint of God considers, and the visions of eternity are open to his view . . . he soars above the things of time and sense and bursts the cords that bind him to earthly objects. He contemplates God and his own destiny in the economy of heaven and rejoices in a blooming hope of an immortal glory."³

Such opposite outlooks can have staggeringly different effects on the way we conduct our lives, both day to day and in the long term.

In the Book of Mormon, we see Lehi's sons adopt very different outlooks while traveling together across the same rugged terrain

and vast ocean. Their opposite responses to events could make us wonder if they were actually on the same journey! Devoid of vision and filled with rebellion, Laman and Lemuel constantly doubt and murmur, while Nephi and Sam move forward with faith, empowered by “views” that are “glorious” (2 Nephi 1:24).

Perish or Flourish

The scriptures teach us that “where there is no vision, the people perish” (Proverbs 29:18). The converse is equally true: Where there *is* vision, the people *flourish*. The Lord’s eternal perspective helps us to flourish because it provides us with eternal understanding and clear vision of three interrelated, divine truths: (1) our identity, (2) our purpose, and (3) our destiny.

Imagine these truths as three precisely aligned lenses that are part of a carefully crafted heavenly telescope. Individually, each component—identity, purpose, and destiny—possesses power to illuminate spectacular new vistas in our lives. Yet when positioned in perfect alignment, their combined magnifying power pierces the veils of eternity and simultaneously focuses on our noble past, our purposeful present, and our glorious future.



The Lord’s eternal perspective provides us with eternal understanding.

**THE LENS OF
IDENTITY**

Three Great Questions

Let’s take a look at how the Lord’s eternal telescope creates crystal-clear understanding that answers three great questions of the soul.

The identity lens parts the premortal veil, revealing our true, eternal identity as valiant spirit children of God. It answers the question, “Where did I come from?”

The purpose lens helps us to see our earthly mission, which includes following Jesus Christ, faithfully walking the covenant path, and gathering Israel. It answers the question, “Why am I here on earth?”

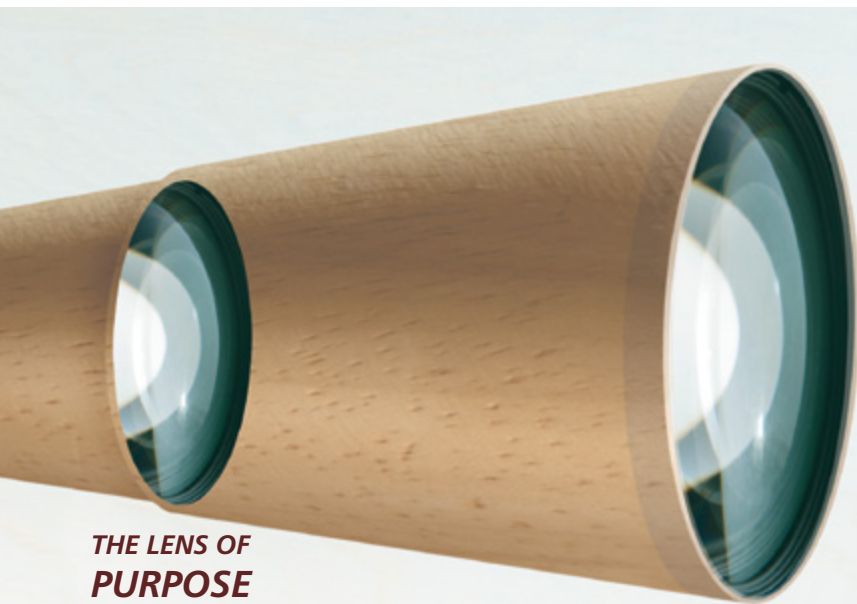
The destiny lens defines our eternal possibilities, enabling visions of our joyful, eternal family bonds in the presence of God forever. This third lens answers the ultimate question, “Where will I go after death?”

Our life’s journey is greatly blessed by these expansive views, which illuminate our important role within the overarching framework of God’s great plan of salvation.

Now, let’s discover the eternal importance of each lens individually.

The Lens of Identity

While serving as a member of the Seventy, Elder Douglas L. Callister shared a story originally told by President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008): A young woman in Australia was employed at a shop serving ice cream. Approached by missionaries, “she seemed inattentive to [their] message . . . until one of them said, ‘Do you know that you are a child of God?’ She replied, ‘Nobody has ever said that to me before. I had no idea that I might be a child of God.’ Thereafter she went to her room, got down on her knees, and



**THE LENS OF
PURPOSE**



**THE LENS OF
DESTINY**

inquired: ‘Are you there? Am I your child? Please let me know.’ Then she said, ‘There came into me a surge of feeling that brought me the conviction that was the case.’ She joined the Church.

“Two weeks later she was asked to give a talk in a Church meeting. Her first impulse was to run from it. Then she thought, ‘If I am a child of God, I can do anything.’”

Elder Callister then commented, “Our entire perspective of ourselves, our worth, and what we can make of our lives is altered for good when we come to understand that we are God’s children and that we can become like Him.”⁴

Living prophets affirm: “Each [of us] is a beloved spirit son or daughter of heavenly parents, and, as such, each has a divine nature and destiny.”⁵

The God-given lens of identity resolves personal confusion and despair. It prepares us to see more through the purpose and destiny lenses.

The Lens of Purpose

In the Book of Mormon, Alma reprimands his son Corianton, telling him he

must “refrain from [his] iniquities” and “turn to the Lord” (Alma 39:12–13). Alma then bears testimony of the coming of Christ and reminds Corianton that he was called as a minister “to declare these glad tidings unto this people” (Alma 39:16). Given a fresh reminder of his sacred purpose (see Alma 42:31), Corianton repents and returns to help establish “continual peace . . . and exceedingly great prosperity in the church” (Alma 49:30; see also Bible Dictionary, “Repentance”).

Moses was also shown his divine purpose. In a face-to-face conversation, Heavenly Father told him, “I have a work for thee, Moses, my son” (Moses 1:6). And Joseph Smith was similarly told by the angel Moroni “that God had a work for me to do” (Joseph Smith—History 1:33).

President Russell M. Nelson said that whether we are “diligently moving along the covenant path” (like Moses and Joseph Smith) or “have slipped or stepped from the covenant path” (like Corianton), we all need to “experience the strengthening power of daily repentance” and thus qualify ourselves to fulfill significant purposes in life.⁶

Speaking to the youth of the Church, President Nelson emphasized:

“You were sent to earth at this precise time, the most crucial time in the history of the world, to help gather Israel. . . .

“This gathering should mean *everything* to you. This *is* the mission for which you were sent to earth.”⁷

The lens of purpose provides inspiring insights and much-needed direction in our lives.



The Lens of Destiny

I remember my vision being enlarged one day as I read the following words from the Book of Mormon: “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 7:48). In that moment I was able to see further and understand more—that, grace for grace, my Heavenly Father and my Savior would bless me to become even as They are—holy and full of joy forever!

This lens of destiny expands our vision, providing “a perfect brightness of hope” (2 Nephi 31:20). Its lengthened views promise “never-ending happiness” in heaven (Mosiah 2:41) as we strive to “progress toward perfection and ultimately realize [our] divine destiny as heirs of eternal life.”⁸

Christ’s Invitations

We thrill with those of you who can clearly see your divine role in the great plan of happiness. And our hearts sorrow for those who are struggling mightily, who silently cry out, “I cannot see it” or “I don’t believe this can happen to me” or “I just can’t do it.” To each of you, I bear witness of our living and compassionate Savior, Jesus Christ. I know He can heal and cleanse you, for He has healed and cleansed me. “Be not afraid, only believe” (Mark 5:36).

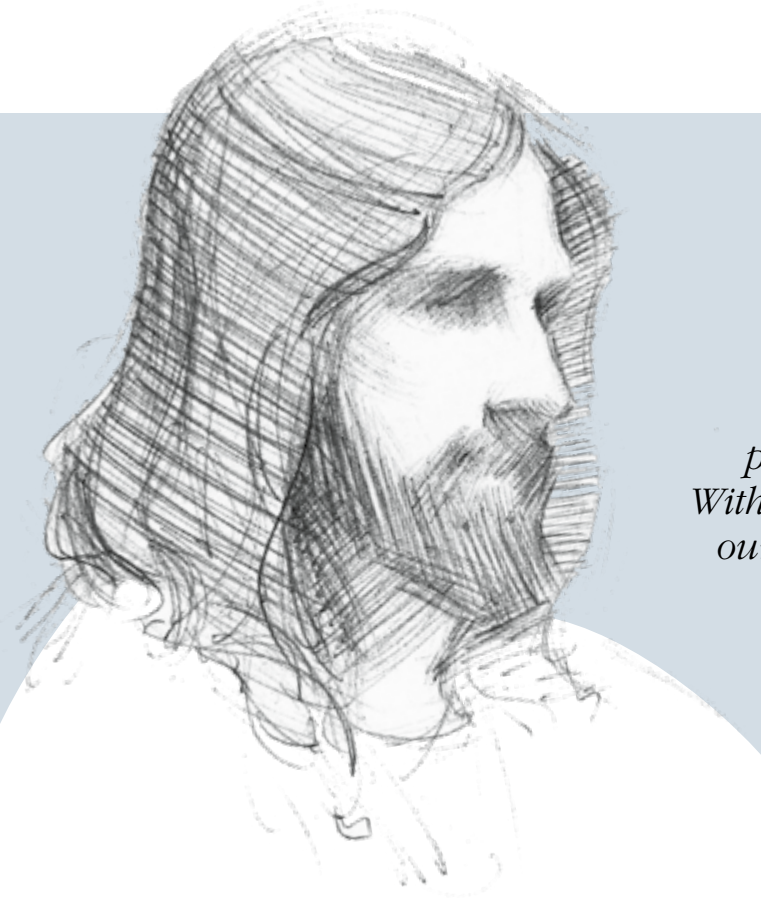
With Him, I earnestly invite you to “lift up your eyes” (Isaiah 40:26) and peer deeply and patiently into the Lord’s heavenly telescope. We can do this daily through fervent prayer, through searching the holy scriptures and words of the living prophets, and, imperfect as we are, through striving to obey His commandments and keep our covenants.

Beautiful, hope-filled vistas await your faithful response to Jesus’s loving invitation to “come and see” (John 1:39). And, unlike Galileo’s foolish peers, who missed out, your diligence in looking will open to you God’s supernal vision of your divine identity, purpose, and destiny.

How reassuring is the powerful and precious voice of our dear President Nelson, who said, “I promise you that when you begin to catch even a glimpse of how your Heavenly Father sees you and *what He is counting on you to do for Him*, your life will never be the same!”⁹ ■

NOTES

1. See Russell M. Nelson, “My 2020 Invitation to You: Share the Message of the Restoration of the Savior’s Gospel,” blog post, Jan. 1, 2020, ChurchofJesusChrist.org.
2. Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*, trans. A. J. Krailsheimer (1995), 59.
3. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: John Taylor* (2001), 1–2.
4. Douglas L. Callister, “Our God Truly Is God,” *Ensign*, Jan. 2008, 67–68.
5. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign*, May 2017, 145.
6. See Russell M. Nelson, “We Can Do Better and Be Better,” *Ensign*, May 2019, 67–69.
7. Russell M. Nelson, “Hope of Israel” (worldwide youth devotional, June 3, 2018), HopeofIsrael.ChurchofJesusChrist.org.
8. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” 145.
9. Russell M. Nelson, “Stand as True Millennials,” *Ensign*, Oct. 2016, 27; emphasis added.



HE IS THE WAY

Before we were born, Heavenly Father presented a plan for us to become like Him. Within that plan, the roles of Jesus Christ make our eternal growth possible. Jesus is “the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6).

REDEEMER

Jesus Christ saved each of us from death and sin. He willingly suffered for our sins in Gethsemane and on Calvary. After dying on the cross, He was resurrected. Through His Atonement, Jesus Christ overcame both spiritual and physical death. Jesus redeems all who believe and “who have a broken heart and a contrite spirit” (2 Nephi 2:7).

See also Isaiah 26:19; 2 Nephi 9:5–7, 10–12; Moses 5:14–15.

JUDGE

Because of His Atonement, Jesus Christ understands us perfectly and will serve as our judge. “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ” (2 Corinthians 5:10). We will be judged by what we have done and by what we have become.

See also John 5:22; Revelation 22:11–12; 2 Nephi 9:15–16.

ADVOCATE

An advocate is someone who represents another during a trial. Jesus Christ is our Advocate. He has supported us from the beginning and will plead for us before the Father. Jesus will satisfy “the demands of justice” (Mosiah 15:9) for all who repent and believe in Him. Because Jesus is the Mediator between us and God, we have the chance to receive eternal life.

See also 1 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 9:15; 1 John 2:1; Doctrine and Covenants 45:3–5; Moses 7:39.





I AM
THE WAY,
THE TRUTH,
AND THE LIFE.

JOHN 14:6

SAVING YOU IS THE PLAN

The life, example, and sacrifice of Jesus Christ are central to our salvation and exaltation. By following Him, we can become like our Heavenly Father and return to His presence.

CHOSEN

Jesus Christ was the first spirit born into Heavenly Father's family. Jesus was chosen "from the beginning" (Moses 4:2) to be our Savior. When the Father presented His plan for our exaltation, Satan and his followers rebelled, but Jesus remained faithful. It is by the power of Jesus Christ that Satan was cast down.

See also John 17:5, 24; Mosiah 18:13; Ether 3:14; Moses 4:3; Abraham 3:24–27.

CREATOR

Under the direction of His Father, Jesus Christ created this beautiful earth for us. "All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made" (John 1:3).

See also Colossians 1:16–18; Mosiah 4:2; 3 Nephi 9:15; Doctrine and Covenants 14:9; Moses 2:26–27.

EXEMPLAR

As part of Heavenly Father's plan, Jesus Christ was born on earth and received a mortal body. He "took upon him the form of a servant" and "humbled himself" (Philippians 2:7–8) so He could understand how to help us in our own mortal journey. His life and teachings give us a perfect example of how to live. By following Him, we can become like God and return to Him one day.

See also 1 Peter 2:21; 2 Nephi 31:16; 3 Nephi 18:16.

All page numbers come from the May 2020 *Ensign*.

YOU'RE INVITED

The prophet Mormon taught, "That which is of God inviteth and enticeth to do good" (Moroni 7:13). As you study the conference talks, note the invitations you find. Here are some to get you started:

- "I invite you to **remember each day** the greatness of Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ and what They have done for you" (Elder Dale G. Renlund, "Consider the Goodness and Greatness of God," 44; emphasis in bold added).
- "I invite you to be part of the marvelous coming forth of the Book of Mormon in your own life. I promise you that as you prayerfully and consistently **study its words**, you can partake of its promises and rich blessings" (Elder Ulisses Soares, "The Coming Forth of the Book of Mormon," 35; emphasis in bold added).
- "Seeing others as God does is a gift. I invite all of us to **seek for this gift**" (Douglas D. Holmes, "Deep in Our Heart," 23; emphasis in bold added).
- "I renew my plea for you to do *whatever* it takes to **increase your spiritual capacity** to receive personal revelation" (President Russell M. Nelson, "Hear Him," 90; emphasis in bold added).

WE CAN AND SHOULD HOPE

"God does work in this world, so we *can* hope, we *should* hope, even when facing the most insurmountable odds."

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, "A Perfect Brightness of Hope," 83.



FOUR GREAT ASSURANCES

"God's plan gives us four great assurances to assist our journey through mortality," said President Dallin H. Oaks. "All are given to us through the Atonement of Jesus Christ, the centerpiece of the plan." What are they?

1. If we repent, we can be cleansed of our sins.
2. Because the Savior took upon Him all mortal infirmities, we can call on divine help to give us strength to bear any burden of mortality, personal or general.
3. Through His infinite Atonement, the Savior revokes the finality of death and gives us the joyful assurance that we all will be resurrected.
4. Our progress does not need to conclude with the end of mortality.

See "The Great Plan," 94–95.

Maintain Your Brain, PROLONG YOUR SERVICE

As we take steps to maintain our mental abilities, we can prolong our capacity to actively serve others.

By David R. Larsen

Director of Education, American Brain Council


An increasingly common health challenge, inhibiting the service of many senior members in the Church, is cognitive or memory decline. Ailments like Alzheimer's disease seem to be sweeping the world like a plague. In later stages, this decline is referred to as dementia—a debilitating reduction in two or more mental abilities, such as memory and judgment.

Unlike many ailments, no drugs have been found to reverse this decline. Perhaps that is because, as we now know, cognitive decline has more than 60 potential contributors, including poor circulation, high blood pressure, high blood sugar, prolonged stress, lack of sleep, and hormonal decline. Increased toxins in our air and diet have also greatly heightened this risk.

The good news, however, is that such losses are not inevitable, even for those with a genetic predisposition. You may have heard that nothing can prevent or mitigate Alzheimer's or other forms of cognitive decline, but we now know that is not true. Recent studies show that the preservation of our mental abilities is more within our control than previously thought.

Latter-day Saints know that blessings are predicated on obedience to laws. As President Russell M. Nelson has observed, “Whenever a blessing is received, it’s because a law has been obeyed.”¹





The following scriptural accounts provide helpful insights into the laws governing physical and mental health and what we can do to ward off this plague.

Healthful Diet

Our Creator obviously knows, and anciently gave counsel based on, the laws governing human health. For example, when Daniel was chosen to serve in the court of King Nebuchadnezzar, he and his companions knew what they should and should not eat and drink to keep their bodies and minds healthy. So they declined the king's wine and rich diet in favor of a diet of "pulse" (primarily vegetables) and water. As a result, the king found "in all matters of wisdom and understanding," Daniel and his companions were "ten times better" than his other advisers. (See Daniel 1:3–20.)

Soon after the Lord restored His Church, He renewed his warnings and counsel on diet (see Doctrine and Covenants 89). And numerous studies since have confirmed the wisdom of that counsel.²

Physical and Mental Activity

Throughout history, from Adam to Moroni and from Joseph Smith to President Nelson, the prophets and people of God have been physically active. Initially it was required in order to eat (see Genesis 3:19). Obviously, Heavenly Father knew that physical activity would be important for our bodies and brains. However, in our day most jobs and meals don't require much physical exertion.

Nevertheless, physical activity remains essential for optimal physical and mental health. It facilitates

digestion and the circulation of nutrients to the brain. It helps control blood sugar, blood pressure, stress, and inflammation in the body, which can damage the brain. It also improves sleep and boosts hormones and energy for thinking and remembering. Moreover, we

now know that physical activity and some foods can increase growth factors in the brain that facilitate the creation of new connections and memories.³

The Lord has also admonished the Saints to “seek learning, even by study and also by faith” (Doctrine and Covenants 88:118; 109:7, 14). The brain is a use-it-or-lose-it organ. If we want it and our memories to stay sharp and clear, we must stay engaged in learning and sharing new things throughout the duration of our mortal life. President Nelson is an excellent example of that as well!

Social Interaction

The Lord commands His Saints to meet together often and to look out for one another within their families, wards, and elsewhere (see Moroni 6:5; Doctrine and Covenants 20:55). Such social interaction, including one-on-one ministering and service, is one of the best ways to keep our minds active and healthy as we advance in years. Those who do not have much social interaction in their later years tend to have a harder time maintaining their mental faculties.

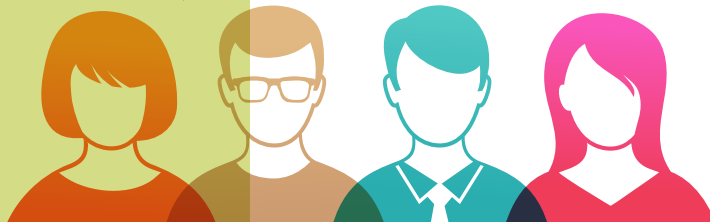
Study Results

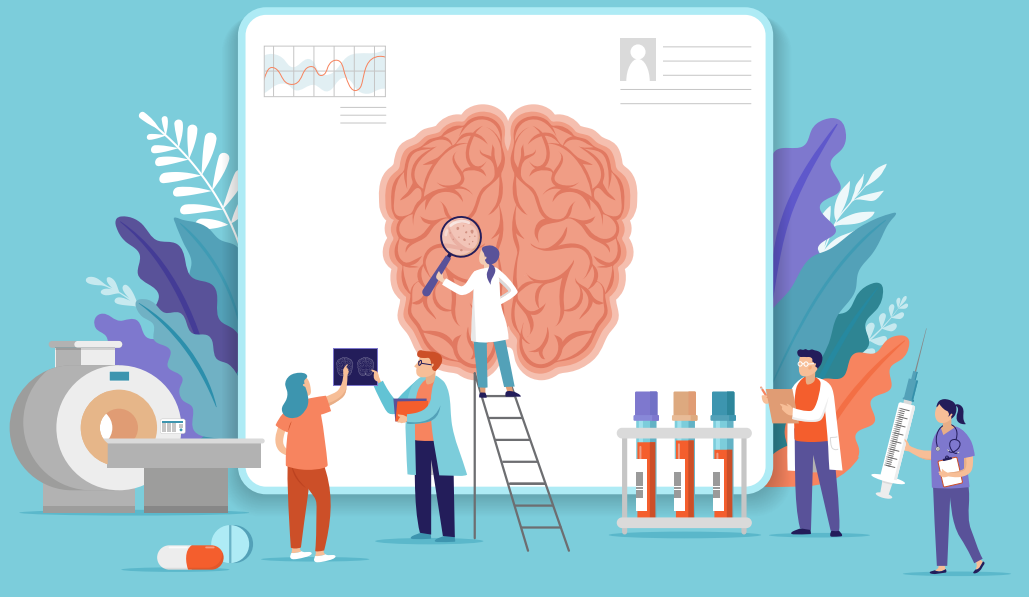
While no single revelation emphasizes the importance of all of these activities for brain health, Heavenly Father appears to have inspired a variety of researchers in recent years to validate the importance of the above noted counsel for promoting and prolonging healthy brain function. Here are a few examples.

- In 2014 the “Finnish Geriatric Intervention Study to Prevent Cognitive Impairment and Disability”—commonly referred to as the FINGER study—was presented at an international conference on Alzheimer’s. This study of more than 1,200 seniors with significant cognitive impairments found that those who maintained a healthier diet and lifestyle—that is, stayed physically, mentally and socially active—were on average able to think faster, reason and remember better, and dramatically reduce their risk for dementia.⁴
- In July 2019, a similar study conducted in the Chicago, Illinois, area found that a healthful diet, physical and mental activity, drinking less alcohol, and not smoking “reduced risk of Alzheimer’s dementia by 60%” compared to adopting none or only one of those protective factors.⁵ Most active Latter-day Saints embrace these practices, but periodically we may want to ask ourselves: How healthful is my diet? Am I getting enough physical and mental activity?
- During this same period, a Loma Linda Medical Center study in California found, after reviewing more than 300 related studies, that more than 80 percent of Alzheimer’s cases could probably be avoided by adhering to a variety of healthful dietary and lifestyle principles and practices.⁶

A Personalized Approach

Those already experiencing cognitive difficulties, and their families, should be encouraged by another study conducted by Dr. Dale Bredeesen, a neurologist and researcher from the University of





California at Los Angeles. In his personalized study of 10 individuals in the early to mid-stages of Alzheimer's, he found that the following interventions resulted in a reversal of symptoms in 9 out of 10 patients:

- Addressing individual nutritional needs.
- Avoiding harmful food additives and environmental toxins.
- Engaging in physical, mental, and social activities.
- Meditating and praying.
- Controlling blood sugar and blood pressure.
- Getting a good night's sleep.
- Optimizing blood flow and hormone levels.
- Addressing other related health issues.⁷

A later study using this same approach showed improvements in more than 100 individuals in various stages of cognitive decline.⁸ Physicians and others trained in these interventions are now achieving similar results in clinics throughout the world. It's abundantly clear, however, that the earlier cognitive difficulties are addressed, the easier they are to arrest.

As Maria C. Carrillo, chief science officer for the Alzheimer's Association, has said, "A large body of research now strongly suggests that combining healthy habits promotes good brain health and reduces your risk of cognitive decline."⁹

In this day of increasing cognitive peril, we are blessed to be led by President Nelson, who will turn 96 years old next month and who has learned and applied the principles of good health. May we follow his remarkable example so that we too may prolong our service in the Lord's kingdom in these latter days. ■

NOTES

1. In Lane Johnson, "Russell M. Nelson: A Study in Obedience," *Ensign*, Aug. 1982, 20.
2. To learn more about what constitutes a brain-healthy diet and lifestyle, see the American Brain Council Foundation, ABCBrain.org; apollohealthco.com; Alzheimer's Foundation of America, alzfdn.org.
3. See Tiia Ngandu and others, "A 2-Year Multidomain Intervention of Diet, Exercise, Cognitive Training, and Vascular Risk Monitoring versus Control to Prevent Cognitive Decline in At-Risk Elderly People (FINGER): A Randomised Controlled Trial," *Lancet*, vol. 385, no. 9984 (June 6, 2015), 2255–63; see also Miia Kivipelto and others, "The Finnish Geriatric Intervention Study to Prevent Cognitive Impairment and Disability (FINGER): Study Design and Progress," *Alzheimer's and Dementia*, vol. 9, no. 6 (Nov. 2013), 657–65.
4. See Tiia Ngandu and others, "A 2-year Multidomain Intervention," 2255–63; see also Miia Kivipelto and others, "The Finnish Geriatric Intervention Study to Prevent Cognitive Impairment and Disability," 657–65.
5. See "Lifestyle Interventions Provide Maximum Memory Benefit When Combined, May Offset Elevated Alzheimer's Risk Due to Genetics, Pollution," Alzheimer's Association, alz.org.
6. See Blue Zones interview with Drs. Ayesha Sherzai and Dean Sherzai, "Researchers Say Most Alzheimer's Disease Cases Are Preventable—Find Out How," bluezones.com/2017/09/researchers-say-alzheimers-disease-cases-preventable-find; see also Dean and Ayesha Sherzai, *The Alzheimer's Solution* (2017).
7. See Dale E. Bredesen, "Reversal of Cognitive Decline: A Novel Therapeutic Program," *Ageing*, Sept. 2014, aging-us.com.
8. See Dale E. Bredesen and others, "Reversal of Cognitive Decline: 100 Patients," *Journal of Alzheimer's Disease and Parkinsonism*, vol. 8, no. 5 (2018), omiconline.org.
9. Maria C. Carrillo, in "Lifestyle Interventions Provide Maximum Memory Benefit When Combined," Alzheimer's Association, alz.org.

What Church Leaders
Have Said

about Aging Faithfully

Various Ways to Serve

"I express gratitude for our senior missionaries. They are young in spirit, wise, and willing to work. They even tolerate remarks from their fun-filled children who might change President Spencer W. Kimball's plea 'Lengthen your stride' to 'Hasten your shuffle.' . . .

"As I extol the work of senior missionaries, I realize that there are many more who would like to serve but are not able to do so. Limitations imposed by age or by poor health deserve realistic appraisal, as do the important needs of family members. When desire burns within yet such limitations exist, you can extend your service through others. They can be your arms and legs, and you can provide needed funds. Still others can contribute time and talents as live-at-home missionaries. Each will be pleasing to the Lord, and each will receive His praise."¹

—President Russell M. Nelson, President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints



*Your service, whether
at home or abroad, is
pleasing to the Lord.*

We pray that you will feel the joy of a life well spent and one filled with fond memories.

The Need for “Finishers”

“There has always been a need for those persons who could be called finishers. Their ranks are few, their opportunities many, their contributions great. . . .

“I pray humbly that each one of us may be a finisher in the race of life and thus qualify for that precious prize: eternal life with our Heavenly Father in the celestial kingdom. I testify that God lives, that this is his work, and ask that each may follow the example of his Son, a true finisher.”²

—President Thomas S. Monson (1927–2018), President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Appreciation for the Elderly

“I love the elderly who have faced into the storms of life and who, regardless of the force of the tempest, have gone forward and kept the faith. May your older years be filled with happiness and with satisfying remembrance of lives well lived.”³

—President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008), President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints



Wisdom and Rewards of the Golden Years

“The Lord knows and loves the elderly among His people. It has always been so, and upon them He has bestowed many of His greatest responsibilities. In various dispensations He has guided His people through prophets who were in their advancing years. He has needed the wisdom and experience of age, the inspired direction from those with long years of proven faithfulness to His gospel. . . .

“Our desires are that your golden years will be wonderful and rewarding. We pray that you will feel the joy of a life well spent and one filled with fond memories and even greater expectations through Christ’s atonement. We hope you will feel of the peace the Lord promised those who continue to strive to keep His commandments and follow His example. We hope your days are filled with things to do and ways in which you can render service to others who are not as fortunate as you.”⁴

—President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994), President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints





“Cast Me Not Off in the Time of Old Age”

“The older years may bring even more time for service as the hours once devoted to earning a livelihood or rearing a family can be used to enrich the lives of others through church and community service. . . .

“Some who reach retirement age seem to feel, ‘I’ve done my share. Now it’s someone else’s turn.’ But withdrawal, according to gerontologists and others who work with the aging, can actually hasten the aging process. . . .

“When the time of old age comes upon us—and it surely will, for ‘swiftly fly the years,’ as the song says—we need to come to that time with a courage born of faith and of preparation. Underlying all we do for ourselves and for our own, we must remember the aged with the compassionate spirit of Christ in whose work we are engaged.

“May the cry of the psalmist ring in our hearts:

“‘Cast me not off in the time of old age;

“‘Forsake me not when my strength faileth.’ (Ps. 71:9.)”⁵

—Sister Barbara B. Smith (1922–2010), Relief Society General President

Never Released from Being Active in the Gospel

“In your golden years there is so much to *do* and so much to *be*. Do not withdraw into a retirement from life, into amusement. That, for some, would be useless, even selfish. You may have served a mission and been released and consider yourself as having completed your service in the Church, but you are never released from being active in the *gospel*.”⁶

—President Boyd K. Packer (1924–2015), President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Learning from Failure

“Every person, young and old, has had his own personal experience with falling. Falling is what we mortals do. But as long as we are willing to rise up again and continue on the path toward the spiritual goals God has given us, we can learn something from failure and become better and happier as a result.”⁷

—Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Dealing with Seasons of Sadness and Sorrow

“Like everyone else, I have had times in my life when it seemed that the heaviness of my heart might be greater than I could bear. During those times I think back to those tender days of my youth when great sorrows came at the losing end of a football game.

“How little I knew then of what awaited me in later years. But whenever my steps led through seasons of sadness and sorrow, my mother’s words often came back to me: ‘Come what may, and love it.’

“How can we love days that are filled with sorrow? We can’t—at least not in the moment. I don’t think my mother was suggesting that we suppress discouragement or deny the reality of pain. I don’t think she was suggesting that we smother unpleasant truths beneath a cloak of pretended happiness. But I do believe that the way we react to adversity can be a major factor in how happy and successful we can be in life.

“If we approach adversities wisely, our hardest times can be times of greatest growth, which in turn can lead toward times of greatest happiness.”⁸

—Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin (1917–2008) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Please Share Your Feedback

Are articles such as these helpful to those of you who may be our older readers? What topics would you like to see covered? What other feedback do you have? To submit your comments, go to [ensign.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://www.ensign.ChurchofJesusChrist.org) and click “Submit an Article or Feedback.” Or send a letter to *Ensign* Editorial, 50 E. North Temple Street, Salt Lake City, UT 84150-0024. We’d love to hear from you!

NOTES

1. Russell M. Nelson, “Senior Missionaries and the Gospel,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2004, 79, 81
2. Thomas S. Monson, “Finishers Wanted,” *Ensign*, July 1972, 68, 70.
3. Gordon B. Hinckley, “This Is the Work of the Master,” *Ensign*, May 1995, 70–71.
4. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Ezra Taft Benson* (2014), 205, 206.
5. Barbara B. Smith, “In the Time of Old Age,” *Ensign*, May 1978, 85, 86.
6. Boyd K. Packer, “The Golden Years,” *Ensign*, May 2003, 84.
7. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “You Can Do It Now!” *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 57.
8. Joseph B. Wirthlin, “Come What May, and Love It,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2008, 26.
9. Bruce R. McConkie, “The Dead Who Die in the Lord,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1976, 107.

Gaining Eternal Life—Though Not Yet Perfect

“Those who have been true and faithful in this life will not fall by the wayside in the life to come. If they keep their covenants here and now and depart this life firm and true in the testimony of our blessed Lord, they shall come forth with an inheritance of eternal life.

“We do not mean to say that those who die in the Lord, and who are true and faithful in this life, must be perfect in all things when they go into the next sphere of existence. There was only one perfect man—the Lord Jesus whose Father was God. . . .

“But what we are saying is that when the saints of God chart a course of righteousness, when they gain sure testimonies of the truth and divinity of the Lord’s work, when they keep the commandments, when they overcome the world, when they put first in their lives the things of God’s kingdom: when they do all these things, and then depart this life—though they have not yet become perfect—they shall nonetheless gain eternal life in our Father’s kingdom; and eventually they shall be perfect as God their Father and Christ His Son are perfect.”⁹

—Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–85) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles





By Elder Lynn G. Robbins
Of the Seventy

Meekness and Prayer

*Our prayers for others
can demonstrate meekness
and Christlike love.*

My father was among the meekest men I have ever known. He was humble before God and meek before his fellowmen. I never heard him boast about himself or seek the honors of men, even once, but he did express joy in his family, just as our Father in Heaven expressed joy in His Son, “in whom [He was] well pleased” (Matthew 3:17; 17:5; Mark 1:11; 2 Peter 1:17; 3 Nephi 11:7).

When my children were young, if my father happened to be at our home at bedtime, he loved to tuck his grandchildren into bed. In addition to providing bedtime stories, he would ask their permission to offer the prayer at their bedside. With the tender affection of a grandfather, he would use that opportunity to pray for the grandchild—praising them to their Father in Heaven, speaking good things about them, and asking Father in Heaven’s blessings upon them. His grandchildren remember with fondness these precious moments with their grandfather.

Elder Neal A. Maxwell (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles was another example of meekness. Many years ago, I was on assignment with him in

Northern California, USA. At day’s end we returned to the hotel. As we walked down the hallway, we came to his room first. He said, “Would you like to have a word of prayer before we retire for the evening?” I gladly followed him into his room, where we knelt together.

In a gesture of meekness, he said, “Would you mind if I offered the prayer?” After expressing gratitude for the blessings of the day, he began praying for me. He then prayed for my wife and then for my children. The experience impacted me profoundly.

Our supreme example of meekness is the Savior. One of the most inspiring moments in the New Testament is when He offered what is known as the great Intercessory Prayer. In a selfless plea to His Father, the Savior prayed for His disciples: “I pray . . . for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine” (John 17:9). In this poignant moment in history, His prayer was turned outward, unselfishly focused on those He loved. How inspiring!

The Lord instructed us, “Govern your house in meekness” (Doctrine and Covenants 31:9). May these examples of meekness and prayer inspire each of us as we strive to do exactly that. ■



Giving Children Love, Limits, and Latitude

These three L's apply to parenting children of any age.

By Larry Nelson

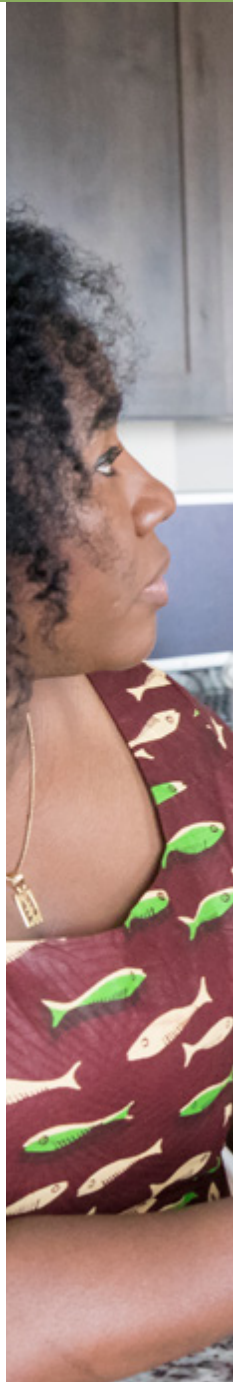
Professor, School of Family Life at Brigham Young University

In our family, my son is nine years younger than his siblings. When he was little, we often heard him say, “But why? They [his older sisters] don’t have to do that!” For example, as a preschooler, he was usually sent to bed long before his teenage sisters, and he never felt this was fair.

Many parents may find themselves wondering how to be fair, consistent, or equal in their parenting. But let me tell you something I’ve learned from years of studying parenting and raising children myself: it’s not as important to be perfectly equal in parenting *practices* as it is to be consistent in following sound principles of parenting. Children differ in age, gender, personality, needs, strengths, and weaknesses. So instead of trying to treat them exactly the same—which will keep us from really focusing on the needs of each one—we can focus on making sure our parenting is guided by the important principles of love, limits, and latitude.

Love

Love is essential at every age, but it may take different forms as children grow up. Parents may show love to toddlers by reading them bedtime stories, cuddling them when they fall, and giving hugs and kisses. Love for older children may take the form of help with homework, rides to rehearsals, and appropriate physical affection. For teenagers, love might evolve to include staying up late to hear how a date went, allowing more verbal give-and-take, and patiently listening to concerns and problems. As children transition into young adulthood, parents might show love through supportive texts, giving advice when asked, or talking through big decisions.





Why is love so important? Think about the parable of the sower (see Matthew 13:3–8). The scattered seeds ended up in different environments. Some landed in stony or thorn-covered ground, and others landed in good ground. While all of the seeds had the potential to grow, only the ones in the good ground actually did. Similarly, parenting isn't just about teaching good things. It's also about creating a loving climate that prepares the hearts of our children to be like the good ground—where seeds of righteous teaching can take root and flourish. In other

words, when we foster a loving climate in our home, relationships are strengthened, and when relationships are strong, children are more likely to receive our teachings.

Limits and Latitude

It's hard to think about limits without also thinking about latitude, because we often



think that one restricts the other. But this isn't the case. Both limits and latitude can work together in parenting. The tricky thing is making sure we understand them correctly.

For example, someone in Sunday School once asked, "Isn't it okay to control our children as long as it is for their own good?" In the pre-earth life, Satan's opposition to the Father's plan probably sounded eerily similar. As President Russell M. Nelson taught: "To rule children by force is the technique of Satan, not of the Savior. No, we don't own our children. Our parental privilege is to love them, to lead them, and to let them go."¹

Setting limits should not be confused with controlling our children. Instead, setting limits is about providing boundaries so children can safely practice making choices. And—as is true with love—what limits look like will change over the years. But within these limits, even young children need to have choices. For example, parents may have a rule that vegetables must be eaten at dinner. This is an example of a limit.

Within that limit, parents may allow the child to choose which vegetable is served at dinner.

And that leads us to the idea of latitude, or giving children chances to express ideas, give input, and help make decisions. Allowing children to make choices now prepares them to make more significant choices as teenagers and emerging adults. And don't worry—this doesn't mean that teenagers get to do whatever they want! Their brains are still developing, and they are still learning about decisions. But as we shift to more latitude, we can include them in the process of setting limits. For example, parents and teenagers could talk about why a curfew might be appropriate (such as safety concerns and how we need enough rest to function the next day) and then decide together what the curfew should be.

This gradual shift from limits to latitude, done in the context of a loving relationship, allows our children to learn to make wise choices. As Elder Larry Y. Wilson, an emeritus member of the Seventy, said, "Wise parents prepare their children to get along without them." He cautioned:

"If parents hold on to *all* decision-making power and see it as their 'right,' they severely limit the growth and development of their children.

"Our children are in our homes for a limited time. If we wait until they walk out the door to turn over to them the reins of their moral agency, we have waited too long. They will not suddenly develop the ability to make wise decisions if they have never been free to make any important decisions while in our homes."²

A Note about Learning

So we see that limits aren't about controlling our children, latitude isn't about letting them do anything they want, and both are about providing safe boundaries for children to make choices. They will learn through trial and error as they exercise agency. "This means," as Elder Wilson said, "children will sometimes make mistakes and learn from them."³ Although learning from mistakes is part of God's plan, it can be tough for parents. During trying times, parents might benefit from this comforting advice from Elder Robert D. Hales (1932–2017) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

"Act with faith; don't react with fear. When our teenagers begin testing family values, parents need to go to the Lord for guidance on the specific needs of each family member. This is the time for added love and support and to reinforce your teachings on how to make choices. It is frightening to allow our children to learn from the mistakes they may make, but their willingness to choose the Lord's way and family values is greater when the choice comes from within than when we attempt to force those values upon them. The Lord's way of love and acceptance is better than Satan's way of force and coercion, especially in rearing teenagers."⁴

Remember

The scriptures say God's work and glory is "to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39). In other words, in His heavenly home, God is focused on His role as a parent. Indeed, out of all His divine titles, He asks us to refer to Him as our Father. We can follow His example and make it our primary focus to rear our children "in love and righteousness."⁵ As we consider the needs of each child in our home and apply the principles of love, limits, and latitude, we can help each individual reach their full potential. ■

NOTES

1. Russell M. Nelson, "Listen to Learn," *Ensign*, May 1991, 22.
2. Larry Y. Wilson, "Only upon the Principles of Righteousness," *Ensign*, May 2012, 104.
3. Larry Y. Wilson, "Only upon the Principles of Righteousness," 104.
4. Robert D. Hales, "Strengthening Families: Our Sacred Duty," *Ensign*, May 1999, 34.
5. "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," *Ensign*, May 2017, 145.

A BOOK OF MORMON EXAMPLE

The story of Jesus visiting the land of Bountiful includes examples of love, limits, and latitude that might be helpful to think about:

- **A small voice (3 Nephi 11:3).** God used a soft voice. We can also avoid yelling at our children. A small voice can have a powerful effect at home.
- **An expression of love (3 Nephi 11:7).** God spoke about how He loved His Son. Our children need to hear love and affection expressed verbally.
- **Physical touch (3 Nephi 11:14).** As a witness of His love, the Savior allowed each person to touch Him. Appropriate physical touch can let our children know we love them.
- **Teaching and correction (3 Nephi 11:31; 18:34).** Much of the Savior's visit was spent teaching. He didn't leave this important job only to His disciples.
- **Time together (3 Nephi 17:5–8).** Jesus didn't rush off as soon as possible. Do we spend time with our children?
- **Listening (3 Nephi 26:14).** This scene with the Savior reminds us that, given the opportunity to speak, children can often teach their parents.
- **A decision (3 Nephi 28:1).** The Lord made expectations clear but then allowed people to make decisions. Do we follow that example with our children?
- **A period of peace (4 Nephi).** The Savior's visit resulted in a remarkable period of peace. As we follow the examples above and lovingly set boundaries, teach correct principles, and then let children make decisions, we can foster greater peace in our homes.

6 Strategies for Family Media Safety



Ideas for helping our children safely navigate this digital world.

By Sarah M. Coyne and Laura A. Stockdale,
Professors of Family Life at Brigham Young University

Here's a question to think about: If you could magically erase media from your children's lives completely, would you?

We frequently hear from parents who answer "Yes!" Their concerns reinforce the idea that raising children in this digital landscape can be overwhelming at times. However, media, when used appropriately, can be a wonderful blessing. Like any tool, it can be used for destruction and devastation or to create and build.

Stephen W. Owen, former Young Men General President, taught: "Modern technologies bless us in many ways. They can connect us with friends and family, with information, and with news about current events around the world. However, they can also distract us from the most important connection: our connection with heaven."¹

We can help our children gain the skills necessary to be spiritually healthy users of media—able to access the best that media has to offer while hearing and heeding the voice of the Spirit in an increasingly noisy, loud, and contentious world. Following are ideas for both short-term and long-term strategies your family could consider.

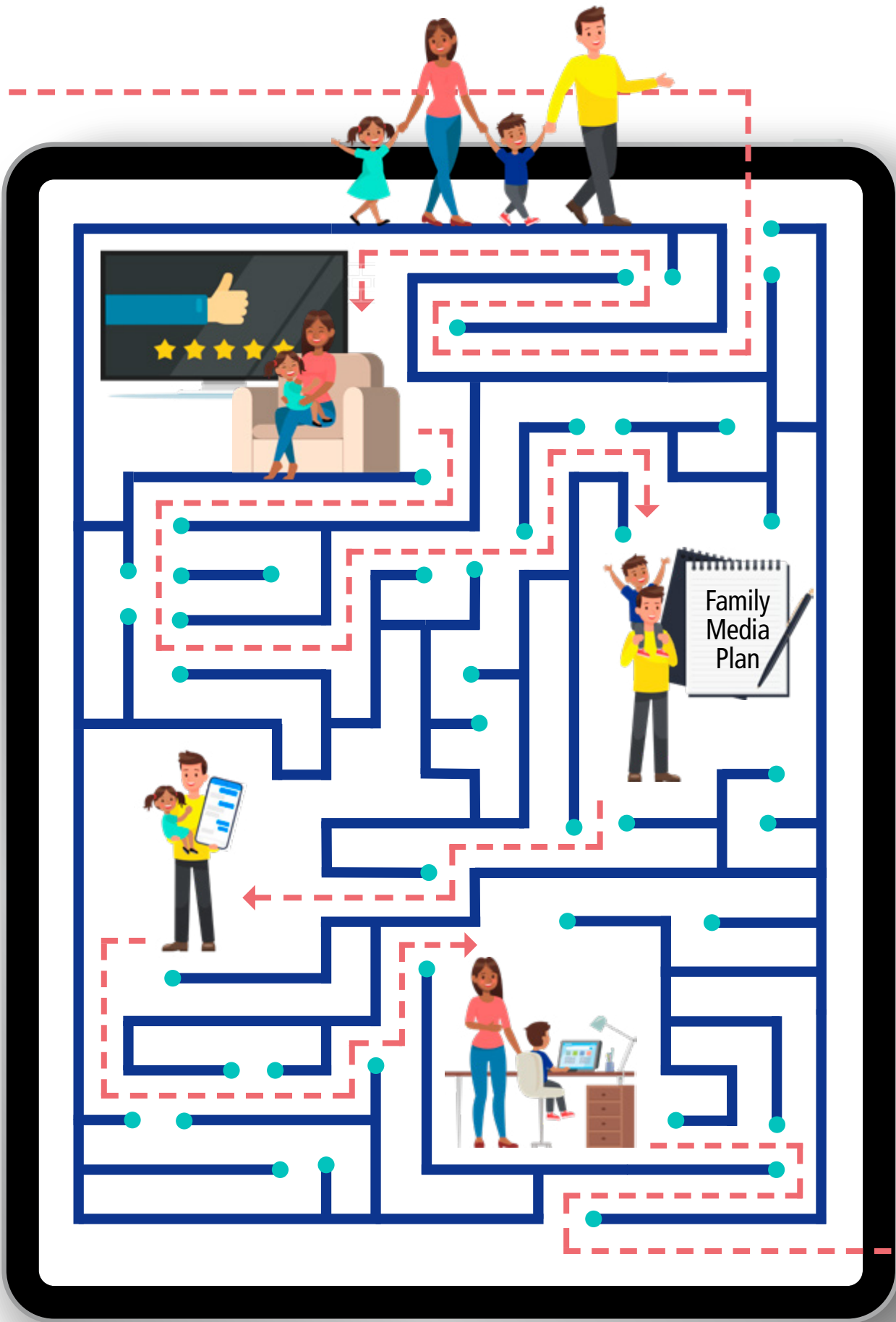
Short-Term Strategies

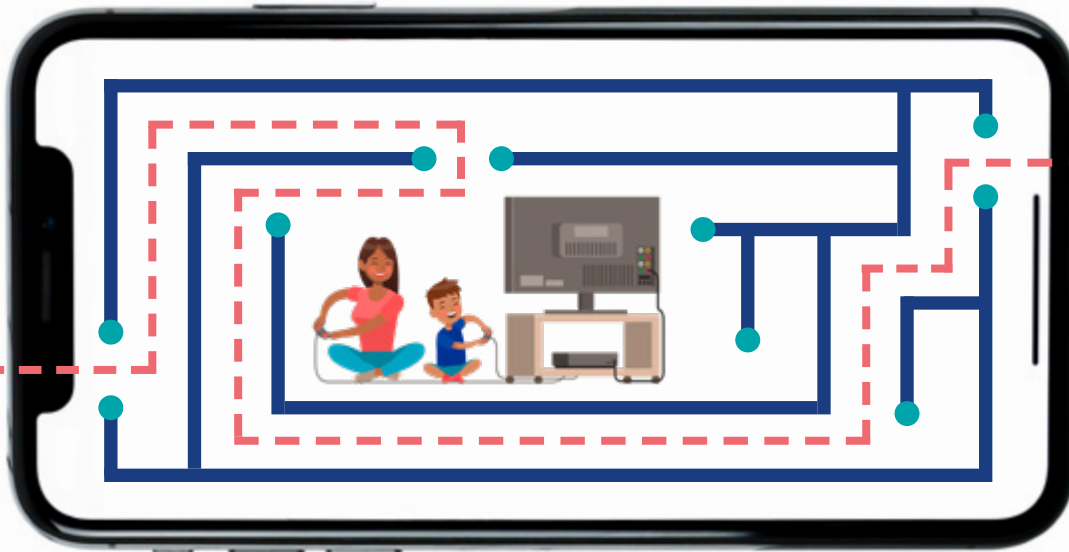
Here are two steps parents could take right away.

1. Use filters, ratings, and websites

One of the most effective things parents can do is to have appropriate internet filters. The importance of these filters cannot be overstated. If you don't have an internet filter, please get one!

We can pay attention to ratings, which exist to help parents navigate the content of television, movies, music, and video games. They can be a powerful tool to help parents





understand minimum age recommendations, and yet studies suggest many parents don't regularly consider them. There are also websites that provide detailed information about content and include suggestions for what is age appropriate. One of our favorites is commonsensemedia.org. These tools are not perfect, but they can be valuable safeguards from the most damaging content when we can't preview everything our children see.

Some families encourage older children to do this media research for themselves. For example, when our older children ask whether they can watch a new movie, we ask them to research the content. Then we talk about whether the movie seems appropriate. This gives our kids some autonomy and encourages them to learn to make their own choices, with our input. Our job as parents is—to modify a classic quote—to teach older children correct media principles so they can govern themselves.²

2. Create a family media plan

The American Academy of Pediatrics has recommended that every family use a “family media plan,”³ which sets up general rules for how each family member will use media. We recommend involving your children as much as possible in creating these guidelines so that

they can feel some ownership in the plan. These questions can help you get started:

1. What are our family's goals regarding technology use?
2. How can we use technology to bring us closer together?
3. What do we do with cell phones at certain times (family meals, family activities, car rides, sacrament meeting, etc.)?
4. How should we deal with media privacy concerns, such as password-protected apps, text messaging, and email?
5. What other rules would be good for helping us (both parents and children) manage technology use?

Long-Term Strategies

Here are four ideas for helping kids develop an internal filter for making media decisions. As Sister Linda S. Reeves, former Second Counselor in the Relief Society General Presidency, said, “Filters are useful tools, but the greatest filter in the world, the only one that will ultimately work, is the personal internal filter that comes from a deep and abiding testimony of our Heavenly Father's love and our Savior's atoning sacrifice for each one of us.”⁴

1. Remember developmental progression

One of the biggest mistakes parents make is giving children technological devices too early. Learning how to use media in healthy ways is developmental, and most early adolescents are not ready to have unfettered access to the internet. So we recommend easing into technology little by little. For example, when our older children asked for phones, we first gave them flip phones that could not access the internet. When they showed us they could be responsible, we moved on to a restricted smartphone. The plan is to remove restrictions as our children grow and develop. By the time they leave our homes, we hope

our children will be smart, effective users of media. Just like helping them learn to drive a car, we know that this will take patience and a careful process.

2. Teach self-regulation

We should help children slow down and think when they are feeling frustrated, angry, or overwhelmed. The parts of the brain associated with regulatory control are not yet developed in teens, so it can be difficult for them to stop, breathe, and react thoughtfully instead of impulsively. Sometimes that means that you as the parent need to set an especially good example of emotional regulation.

One of our children struggled with disconnecting from video games. He would get upset whenever it was time to transition to the next activity. To help him learn to better regulate his media use, we created a stoplight system. He would be on “red” during a day when we had to tell him to stop playing video games and he refused or threw a fit. He would be on “yellow” when we told him it was time to be done and he was able to effectively transition. Finally, he would be on “green” if he was able to regulate his own use and recognize when it was time to be done playing. We used this stoplight activity (which included various incentives) for several weeks, and tantrums decreased substantially as he strengthened his media-related self-control.

3. Encourage talking

As parents, it’s our job to create a safe environment where we have regular discussions with our children and they come to us with questions, including about media. Our research has found that when parents actively discuss media content, it tends to diminish the negative effects of harmful media and increase the positive effects.

This principle is especially important for social media, which can be a wonderful tool of connection but can also be destructive. Research suggests that the amount of time spent on social media is less important than the way it is used.⁵ Adolescents who avoid comparing the best in others with the worst in themselves, and who are mindful and purposeful in their use, tend to fare better than other adolescents. As parents, we play a vital role in helping our kids learn to moderate social media use, including taking a break completely from time to time.

4. Model appropriate use

Parents set the tone for their family’s media habits and attitudes. We’ve done a lot of research about “technoference,” a term used to describe when technology interferes with relationships. Our studies have found that many adolescents report that their parents ignore them in favor of mobile phones. These teens feel less connected with their parents and report technoference elsewhere in their lives.

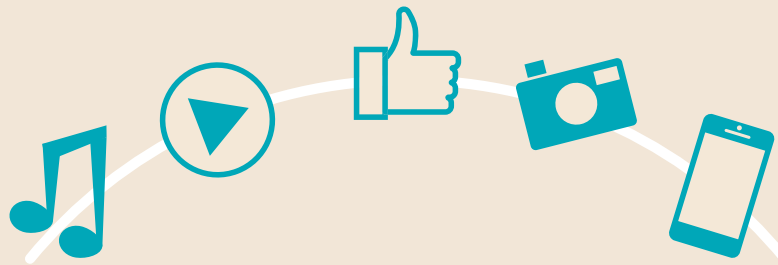
Along the same lines, one of us recently realized that nights were being spent sitting next to a spouse playing on our mobile phones. We were physically in the same space but were worlds apart. Now our family has a check-in basket where our phones go at home. It’s a beautiful thing to spend uninterrupted and focused time with the people you love.

We hope these ideas help you evaluate, and perhaps adjust, your own media use as a family! ■

NOTES

1. Stephen W. Owen, “Be Faithful, Not Faithless,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2019, 12.
2. See *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 284.
3. See “Media and Children Communication Toolkit,” American Academy of Pediatrics website, aap.org.
4. Linda S. Reeves, “Protection from Pornography—a Christ-Focused Home,” *Ensign*, May 2014, 16.
5. See César G. Escobar-Viera and others, “Passive and Active Social Media Use and Depressive Symptoms among United States Adults,” *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*, vol. 21, no. 7 (July 2018), 437–43.





How Do I Talk to My Kids about Safe Media Use?

Sometimes it's hard to know how to start a conversation. We hope these prompts will help.

Comments and Questions You Could Use



- Please come to me with *any* questions, even if they feel weird or uncomfortable to talk about. You won't get in trouble for asking questions.
- Did you see any pictures or videos lately that you had questions about? It's good for us to talk about them, even if you think I won't like them.
- Do you have any questions about bodies or what bodies do? It's natural to feel curious about our bodies.
- Has anyone online ever asked for your address, or other personal information? Always check with me if someone asks you for this kind of information. We need to be extra careful about what we share online.
- Have you seen mean comments online about anyone? We should treat people kindly and stick up for them online, like we would in person.
- What should you do if something online makes you uncomfortable? (This might be a good time to come up with a family turn-away plan, if you don't already have one. See the first bullet in "Topics for Longer Conversations.")



5

Topics for Longer Conversations



- What should your family do when they encounter bad media? One family taught their children the phrase “crash and tell.” This meant the children were to turn off, or crash, the device and tell an adult right away if something bad showed up.
- What websites and media do your children enjoy using and why? Your interest will help keep lines of communication open.
- How could your family use media to become closer? You could make a list of ideas—like video-chatting with a relative or adding stories and pictures to

FamilySearch.org—and pick one thing to try each week.

- How do your children’s friends use media? Talk about how others may have different standards for what they view. Help your children practice different ways to say “No, thanks” if friends offer something uncomfortable.
- Some children may have already become entangled in bad media, like pornography, by the time they talk with us about it. Our first priority should be to reassure them that they are still loved! Then we can help them connect with the emotional, spiritual, and professional resources they need to get back to healthy media use. (For help in that situation, see the “Additional Helpful Resources.”)

4

Activity Ideas



- Play together! Do something fun! Physical activities help children limit media overuse and replace isolating habits with relationships.
- Spend time together using media in healthy ways—like playing a video game as a family or watching the new Book of Mormon videos.
- Decorate a poster together and write your family’s media rules on it, then hang it somewhere everyone can see.
- Read and talk about articles from the *Friend* and *New Era* about media use.

Additional Helpful Resources

- Addressingpornography.ChurchofJesusChrist.org has resources for individuals, spouses, and parents.
- “Aim for the Best,” *Friend*, Aug. 2015, 24–25.
- “Crash and Tell,” *Friend*, June 2011, 8–10.
- For other articles from the *Friend*, visit lessonhelps.ChurchofJesusChrist.org and click on the topic “Media.”
- Video: “Things as They Really Are” (ChurchofJesusChrist.org/media-library).
- “So, Can I Watch It or Not?” *New Era*, Dec. 2014, 32–33.
- “Four Ways to Become a Media-Savvy Family” (news story, Apr. 2, 2014), ChurchofJesusChrist.org.





The Lord Stood by Me

By Elodie McCormick, Alabama, USA

I hadn't expected my husband's military deployment to last for a whole year, but this experience helped us grow spiritually as a family.

My family and I had been in Texas, USA, for about three months when my mother phoned me one day from her home in England.

"I don't know, Mum," I told her, "but I feel like something's going to happen today, and I don't know if I'm going to like it."

When my husband, Matthias, came home that evening, he said, "I have something to tell you." I knew instantly that he had to go away, but I hadn't expected his military deployment to last for a whole year. We had two weeks to prepare for his departure. I shed a lot of tears during that time.

It was a tough year. Not having my husband with me or my family in England nearby frightened and worried me, but it was also a great experience for me as a new mother with a baby and for us to learn how we could continue to grow spiritually as a family.

We had already established daily habits of family prayer and scripture study. So when Matthias and I had opportunities to talk to each other, normally through Skype, we would

pray and read scriptures together.

As I read the scriptures on my own and with my husband, a verse kept coming to my mind: "Wherefore, be of good cheer, and do not fear, for I the Lord am with you, and will stand by you" (Doctrine and Covenants 68:6). I then realized that I had always been able to rely on Heavenly Father.

My calling as ward choir director kept my mind focused on the words of the hymns and the scriptures and the promises they offer. Singing and listening to the hymns gave me peace.

When our baby, Noah, got pneumonia, priesthood holders gave him a blessing of health and me a blessing of strength and comfort. I had great ministering sisters who helped me too. I also got together with other wives whose husbands were deployed. They helped me more than I helped them. Our neighbor even helped by mowing our lawn.

I'm thankful for the small and simple things that blessed our family. Heavenly Father always seemed to bless us through someone reaching out to us when we needed help the most. ■

A Promise of Healing and Sealing

Name withheld, Santa Catarina, Brazil

Through faithfulness in the gospel and seeking our ancestors, my mother and I were blessed in ways we couldn't have imagined.

Ever since I was baptized, I have been interested in family history and temple work. I loved the idea of being sealed to my family for eternity, but I didn't think this would ever happen because many of my family members, including my father, struggled with alcohol addiction.

I grew up in that environment, but the good advice of my dear mother helped me decide not to follow that path. She got baptized a year after I did.

When I turned 18, I decided to serve a mission and received a call to serve in Arizona, USA. This was one of the best experiences of my life. When I returned home, I discovered that my father's addiction was totally out of control. I remember

questioning if my service had been of any worth if things were now so bad at home.

During the April 2018 general conference, I heard Elder Dale G. Renlund of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles say, "As you . . . discover, gather, and connect your family . . . you will find healing for that which needs healing."¹

My mother continued to pray, read the scriptures, and seek for inspiration to help my father. Eventually, she convinced him to get help. He entered a treatment home for nine months. We could visit him only once a month. It wasn't easy, especially in the beginning, but month after month my mother and I continued to be faithful in the gospel and to seek for our ancestors. In

doing so, we were greatly blessed in ways we couldn't have imagined.

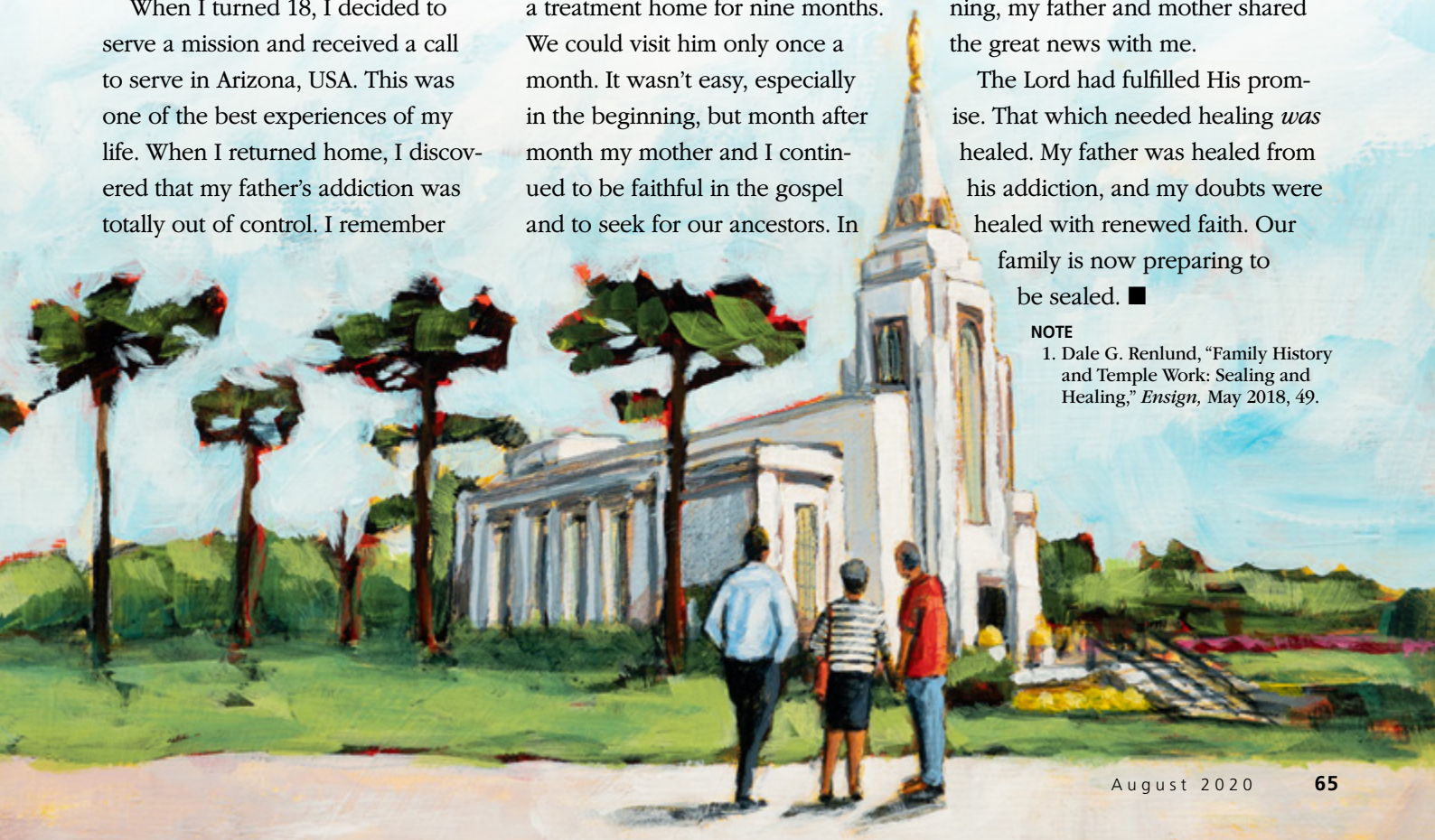
After my father's treatment, he returned home and has been sober ever since. He met with the missionaries but was not yet ready to commit to the gospel. My mother suggested that we go to the temple grounds and feel the Spirit there.

A short time later, the missionaries felt inspired to stop by our home and visit my father. He shared with them his desire to be baptized. That evening, my father and mother shared the great news with me.

The Lord had fulfilled His promise. That which needed healing *was* healed. My father was healed from his addiction, and my doubts were healed with renewed faith. Our family is now preparing to be sealed. ■

NOTE

1. Dale G. Renlund, "Family History and Temple Work: Sealing and Healing," *Ensign*, May 2018, 49.





Why Are We Here?

By Gregorio Rivera, Elqui Province, Chile

We quit our jobs, sold everything, and said goodbye to family and friends to move to a place we had never been before.

I worked days, and my wife, Elen, worked nights. We hardly saw each other. We weren't holding home evening or family prayer. We went to sacrament meeting, but we lacked commitment to the gospel.

We began to feel emptiness that came from focusing on the things of the world instead of the things of the Lord. We felt that Heavenly Father wanted more from us.

So we went to the Santiago Chile Temple for guidance on how we could improve. We both received the prompting that we needed to move with our little daughters from Santiago to the northern coastal area of Coquimbo.

We had never been there before, and we knew nothing about the area. But we quit our jobs, sold everything, and said goodbye to family, friends, and my university studies.

In Coquimbo, we didn't know anyone, and we didn't have any money. I found a job, but it barely paid the rent. We asked, "Why are we here?"

Elen wondered if there was something she could do to help pay the bills. One day she sewed a new cover for one of our old chairs. "I'm going

to put it up for sale and see if someone buys it," she said. Someone *did* buy it. Encouraged, Elen learned more about reupholstering furniture. She started advertising and began receiving work.

In 2016, I was called as bishop of our new ward. With my job, my resumed university studies, and my calling, once again I hardly saw my family.

"This isn't working," Elen said. "Why don't you work with me? I'll teach you how. You'll be home, and you'll also have more flexibility for your calling."

I worried about quitting my job, but Elen suggested that we pray to Heavenly Father and say: "Here's our business. We're going to do it together. Please illuminate for us how we can make it work while Gregorio serves as bishop."

Heavenly Father answered. Now, after years of hardly seeing each other, we're adjusting to *always* being together. Sometimes Elen jokingly says, "Don't you have some bishopric interviews to do? Come back in four hours!"

Here in Coquimbo, we have learned to have faith and live the gospel as a family, and we have been blessed. We moved to a city we did not know to serve people we had not met, and we have seen miracles we did not expect. ■

Ministering with Chicken Pot Pies

By Jacquie Fleming, Alberta, Canada

My friends helped me feel my Heavenly Father's love when I needed to feel it the most.

When my mom died unexpectedly at age 61, I felt completely blindsided. She was my source of love, gentleness, support, strength, and laughter. I felt that I had been robbed of my mother and that my three children had been robbed of their grandmother. I even felt anger toward Heavenly Father. How could He do this to us?

For a while, I would wake up in the middle of the night unable to fall back asleep. One morning, I woke up at 3:00 a.m. Hoping to distract myself from life without my mother, I looked on my phone and found a cooking video on my newsfeed. It was comfort food in all its glory: chicken pot pie. I thought how amazing it would be to have a chicken pot pie, but I didn't feel up to preparing any food for my family other than pouring milk into a bowl of cereal. For now, I would have to do without any comfort food, or so I thought.

Within one day of each other, two friends brought me chicken pot pies. I broke down and cried. I was incredibly touched by their kindness. I knew this wasn't a coincidence. It reaffirmed to me that God was mindful of me, that He loved me, and that He cared about my

seemingly insignificant desire for a chicken pot pie even when I had been angry with Him. I needed this reminder so much.

I'm grateful for those friends who brought me chicken pot pies. They ministered to me in ways they couldn't have imagined. They helped me feel my Heavenly Father's love when I needed to feel it the most.

This experience taught me the importance of recognizing and following through on promptings from the Holy Ghost. They very well could be the answer to a prayer by someone who is struggling.

We shouldn't let our insecurities or doubts get in the way of ministering to others. May we always strive to be an instrument in the Lord's hands and share His love with others. ■

ILLUSTRATION BY ALLEN GARNIS



Young Adults

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Learning to See Sexuality as a Sacred Gift

As members of the Church, we're taught that sexual intimacy within marriage is a wonderful part of the gospel plan. It can be a sacred, beautiful, joyful part of our lives that leads to greater unity with our spouse and God. But what about sexual feelings before marriage? Our sexual natures don't begin at marriage—**God has given us sexual feelings** that are a healthy and important aspect of being human. Yet sometimes our misunderstandings about those sexual feelings and nature cause us to feel bad, ashamed, or sinful.

Some of us weren't taught about the **positive aspects of sexuality**—only the negative consequences of violating the law of chastity. Or maybe we weren't taught anything about sexual purity at all. And with so much of what we learn about sexuality coming from media, those skewed messages, combined with a lack of understanding about God's view of sexuality, can contribute to unhealthy relationships, pornography use, and abusing others' agency, as in sexual assault. So **how can we learn to see sexuality as a sacred gift**, an essential part of our God-given nature? And how can we manage our sexuality in harmony with its ultimate purpose in God's eternal plan?

With these questions in mind, we've put together this month's section to help you **increase your understanding of God's view** of appropriate sexuality. We hope that with this positive view, you will feel more determined to live the law of chastity, **find purpose and hope** in your individual circumstances, be prepared to have a strong, fulfilling marriage, and invite the Savior's peace into your life. Through your efforts to keep God's commandments regarding sexuality, your "confidence [shall] wax strong in the presence of God" (Doctrine and Covenants 121:45).

All our best,

Ensign young adult section staff

Find these articles and more:

- At [ensign.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://www.ensign.ChurchofJesusChrist.org)
- In **YA Weekly** (under the Young Adults section in the Gospel Library)





Fostering a **Positive Perspective of Sexuality**

God has blessed us with divine, appropriate sexual feelings for a reason. As we better understand those feelings as single members of the Church, we will find greater peace and hope.

By *Ensign* staff

Editors' note: This article is part of a series in the August 2020 Ensign about having a positive view of sexuality, sexual intimacy, and the law of chastity. The term sexuality means different things to different people, but in this context, we are talking specifically about our sexual feelings and identity.

So much of the world today seems to be very confused regarding a healthy, positive understanding of sexuality.¹ And let's be honest, in some ways, some of us young adult members of the Church are too. So let's clear some things up.

First off, we should know where we as Latter-day Saints stand on our view of sexuality. Many years ago, Elder Parley P. Pratt (1807–57) taught: “Our natural affections are planted in us by the Spirit of God, for a wise purpose; and they are the very main-springs of life and happiness—they are the cement of all virtuous and heavenly society—they are the essence of charity, or love; . . .

“There is not a more pure and holy principle in existence. . . .

“The fact is, God . . . planted in [our] bosoms those affections which are calculated to promote [our] happiness and union.”²

And President John Taylor (1808–87) also explained: “We bring it [a natural desire] into the world with us, but that, like everything else, has to be sanctified. . . . A proper exercise of our functions leads to life, happiness, and exaltation in this world and the world to come.”³

Simply put: God created us to be able to have sexual feelings. It's part of who we are. And it can be a good, wonderful, joyful part of life—as long as we learn to use and channel them in ways He would approve of. As we manage those feelings in appropriate ways throughout our lives, the blessings we receive are incredible.

Through this gift, we have the potential to help fulfill Heavenly Father's plan and become like our heavenly parents.⁴ Sadly, in our world today, Satan has led so many to have a distorted view of appropriate, God-given sexuality—He wants us to misuse or misunderstand it and its sacred nature. He sometimes makes us confused about the difference between sacred and secret, causing us to feel ashamed of having appropriate sexual feelings, to let curiosity lead to things like pornography, or to use our own or others' bodies in ways that are outside the bounds He has set. But in reality, sexuality—used in the ways God intended—is a divine gift. If we have negative feelings about our sexuality, we just might need to understand it better.

How can I cultivate a positive view of sexuality?

So if our view of sexuality is distorted, how can we instead view our God-given innate sexuality in a positive light and learn to understand and channel our feelings properly, as we strive to become like the Savior? How can we be comfortable with who we are and accept the God-given sexual feelings we were created with? Here are some suggestions that can help:

1

Understand that everyone is both a spiritual and a physical being

You might think of sexuality as a purely physical thing, but it also has a lot to do with our minds and thoughts. Our thoughts affect our actions, and the way we use our body affects our spiritual selves as well. President Boyd K. Packer (1924–2015) taught, “Our spirit and our body are combined in such a way that our body becomes an instrument of our mind and the foundation of our character.”⁵

When you express it within the bounds of the law of chastity, our innate sexuality isn’t an impediment to spirituality. If you do have a skewed idea of sexuality as a negative thing, that is likely to carry over into your marriage. But Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught: “Sexual union [within marriage] is . . . a union not only of a man and a woman but very much the union of that man and woman with God. . . . *You will never be more like God at any other time in this life than when you are expressing that particular power.*”⁶ How could understanding that change your current perspective about sexuality or sexual intimacy—even while you’re single?

2

Learn about your body

If you haven’t already, learn about human anatomy. The more you understand the natural process of your body’s development, the more you’ll understand that appropriate sexual feelings are a normal part of life. Learning about human anatomy, calling the body parts by their name, and understanding their sexual and physical

functions helps to decrease the taboo nature of these parts. At the same time, we should also “eliminate degrading, vulgar, and sexually explicit words, jokes, and themes from [our] conversations.”⁷ As body parts and their purposes are understood, we become less susceptible to seeing them solely in a sexual context.

President Russell M. Nelson taught: “Each organ of your body is a wondrous gift from God”⁸—and obviously that includes sexual organs. They were created for a wise purpose, and it’s up to us to learn to employ them in the ways the Lord would want.

3

Don’t be afraid or ashamed

Learning more about your body will help you understand how sexual feelings are a normal aspect of our bodies. And while we are all trying to overcome the “natural man” in this life (see Mosiah 3:19), simply having appropriate sexual feelings isn’t something to be ashamed of. It is only a sin when you act on them inappropriately or entertain inappropriate or lustful thoughts. We don’t feel ashamed or guilty for feeling hungry! Just maybe when we gorge on our favorite food in response to our hunger or start obsessing over hunger. Allow yourself to recognize that appropriate sexual feelings and thoughts are part of our God-given nature and serve a useful purpose in the right place and time.

If you experience same-sex attraction, you might feel scared or ashamed of your feelings, but God doesn’t want you to feel this way. We can live a fulfilling life within the bounds that He has set for our benefit. We each have a unique journey in mortality, and if we will love Him and keep His commandments, there is no circumstance that Heavenly Father cannot turn to our eternal good (see Romans 8:28; John 14:15; Doctrine and Covenants 90:24). With His help, we can learn and grow and become like Him.

4

Create meaningful connections

Physical feelings are only part of sexuality. One of the real needs behind appropriate sexual feelings is connection. As humans, we crave closeness. Connecting with others through deep friendship, bonding, appropriate touch, love, and affection can help you see others as they truly are and express sexuality appropriately while still keeping the law of chastity.

Elder Marlin K. Jensen, emeritus General Authority Seventy, said: “The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that ‘friendship is one of the grand fundamental principles of [our religion].’ That thought ought to inspire and motivate all of us because I feel that friendship is a fundamental need of our world. I think in all of us there is a profound longing for friendship, a deep yearning for the satisfaction and security that close and lasting relationships can give.”⁹

5

Think about your own body as divine (because it is!)

Our bodies are amazing blessings from God. And yet so many of us often fall into the trap of criticizing our bodies. If we could remember how much bodies meant to us before we had them (and how much they’ll mean to us after we die [see Doctrine and Covenants 138:17, 50]), then we might feel more gratitude and less contempt for these amazing gifts.

President Nelson taught: “Your physical body is a magnificent creation of God. It is His temple as well as yours and must be treated with reverence. . . . A study of your body attests to its divine design.”¹⁰ And knowing how divine our bodies truly are will influence our actions for the better. President Nelson also explained: “When we truly know our divine nature, . . . we will focus our eyes on sights, our ears on sounds, and our minds on thoughts that are a credit to our physical creation as a temple of God. In daily prayer, we

will gratefully acknowledge Him as our Creator and thank Him for the magnificence of our own physical temple. We will care for it and cherish it as our own personal gift from God.”¹¹

Don’t forget that this is a lifelong journey

Understanding and cultivating a positive, healthy sense of appropriate sexuality isn’t something you start working on after marriage or something that you master overnight. It’s a lifelong journey—one that will bless you in many ways in your mortal and eternal life. And if your journey has included ups and downs, know that the healing and sustaining power of the Atonement of Jesus Christ is available to all who reach for Him (see Mosiah 4:1–3, 10–13).

Ultimately, whatever our circumstances or experiences, as we follow the example of our Savior, God will fulfill all His promised blessings to us, and we will realize that we each have a part to play in His plan (see Doctrine and Covenants 59:23). With His help, we will succeed in all our efforts to achieve a positive view of sexuality. ■

For three additional suggestions on cultivating a positive view of sexuality—including using media that portrays healthy relationships, treating everyone as children of God, and remembering your true identity—read the digital version of this article at [ensign.Church of Jesus Christ.org](https://www.ensign.churchofjesuschrist.org).

NOTES

1. The Apostle Paul saw that people today would be “led away with divers lusts” (2 Timothy 3:6).
2. *Writings of Parley Parker Pratt* (1952), 52–53.
3. John Taylor, *The Gospel Kingdom*, sel. G. Homer Durham (1943), 61.
4. See Dallin H. Oaks, “Apostasy and Restoration,” *Ensign*, May 1995, 84; see also “Sexual Purity,” in *For the Strength of Youth* (booklet, 2011), 35; Dale G. Renlund and Ruth Lybbert Renlund, “The Divine Purposes of Sexual Intimacy,” *Ensign*, Aug. 2020, 14–19.
5. Boyd K. Packer, “The Instrument of Your Mind and the Foundation of Your Character,” *Brigham Young University 2002–2003 Speeches* (2003), 2; see also M. Russell Ballard, “Giving Our Spirits Control over Our Bodies,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2019, 106–9.
6. Jeffrey R. Holland, “Of Souls, Symbols, and Sacraments” (Brigham Young University devotional, Jan. 12, 1988), 8, speeches.byu.edu; emphasis in original.
7. *Chastity* (missionary lesson pamphlet, 2007), 11.
8. Russell M. Nelson, “Your Body: A Magnificent Gift to Cherish,” *New Era*, Aug. 2019, 4.
9. Marlin K. Jensen, “Friendship: A Gospel Principle,” *Ensign*, May 1999, 64.
10. Russell M. Nelson, “Your Body: A Magnificent Gift to Cherish,” 4.
11. Russell M. Nelson, “Your Body: A Magnificent Gift to Cherish,” 6.

How I Learned to Understand God's View of Sexuality

Growing up, I didn't know how to handle sexual feelings, which led me down the wrong paths, but learning truths about sexuality and chastity changed my life for the better.

By Emma T.

I sank into my chair in shame as the teacher introduced the lesson on chastity. "Now, I know you girls don't have trouble with the law of chastity . . .," she started off. Little did she—or anyone else—know that it was something I had struggled with as a young woman.

Lessons in church made me feel that sexual feelings were only appropriate within marriage and that sexual feelings outside of marriage were bad. I felt ashamed, weak, and alone, which led me to resent the whole topic completely.

Growing up in the Church, I used to think that talking about sex—even in appropriate ways—or acknowledging sexual thoughts and feelings was taboo or wrong unless you were married. My thoughts were skewed to think that any curiosity or question about sexuality or even chastity should be repressed because it didn't follow God's plan. And because I thought my questions were too shameful to discuss with anyone, I looked for answers from sources that did not reflect sexuality the way Heavenly Father intends.

Stuck in Shame

I struggled with my feelings and behaviors for years. I knew they were wrong, but I didn't know who I could turn to for help. I carried the weight of sins and shame with me every day, but I still tried to do everything else right. I seemed to be stuck in an "in-between zone"—with half of me in the world and the other half in the gospel.

I wanted more than anything to put my whole self in the gospel. So I studied my scriptures, I prayed, I participated in Church activities, and I fulfilled my callings. The gospel seemed to be the only thing that brought me relief.

As I gradually learned more and came closer to the Savior, my desire to fully live the law of chastity grew stronger. After a lot of pondering and praying, I finally decided to talk with my bishop about my struggles.

Feeling the Savior's Healing Power

As I left my bishop's office, that weight I had carried on my shoulders for so many years seemed to disappear. I cried with relief. I already felt the Savior's healing power working in my life. Meetings with my bishop helped me, through the repentance process, to understand that my feelings were normal and that I wasn't alone in struggling with chastity. I learned there are others—like me—who have suffered in silence because of shame, fear, and misunderstanding.

My bishop helped me in the repentance process itself, but a friend of mine also made a big difference in how I felt about my challenge. He was a great example to me.



The weight I had carried on my shoulders for so many years seemed to disappear. I already felt the Savior's healing power.

One day he shared his past struggles with pornography. I was stunned—I never would have guessed we had similar struggles. I wrote him a letter about my experience in repenting for the same challenges and how helpful it was to know that I was not alone. At church on Sunday, he hugged me and told me he was proud of me for working with the bishop and that I would never be alone. He helped me feel the Savior's love more strongly.

Since then, I have been able to empathize with and encourage friends who've had similar struggles to help them understand the law of chastity more fully.

Ultimately, knowing that I wasn't alone, feeling love and understanding from my bishop and the Savior, and learning about the eternal importance of chastity helped me heal.

I know now that I had been so wrong. Both chastity *and* appropriate sexuality are part of God's plan of happiness. Sexual feelings are a normal part of mortality and can be wonderful when we learn to act on them appropriately.

Looking back, I feel sad that I had never felt safe enough to discuss the law of chastity with anybody before I talked to my bishop. I should have known that there's no shame in having questions about chastity or sexuality and that it's important to talk about them respectfully with the right people.

Eternal Truths Can Guide You

Because of my experiences, I can assure anyone who may be struggling with the law of chastity that your heart can be changed. There is hope,

healing, and eternal truths that can guide you. I've learned that the way the world views sexuality compared to how Heavenly Father views it is drastically different.

I'm thankful for the lessons I've learned. I now have a stronger testimony of the Lord's law of chastity, the importance of sexuality in our lives, and most importantly, the Savior's love and healing power. ■

Editors' note: This article is part of a series in the August 2020 Ensign about having a positive view of sexuality, sexual intimacy, and the law of chastity. The term sexuality means different things to different people, but in this context, we are talking specifically about our sexual feelings and identity.



Living the Law of Chastity
in a Dating World Full of
Gray Area



Living the law of chastity helps us recognize our shared divine potential and be more confident in our relationships.

By Eleanor Cain Adams and Allisa White
Church Magazines

Editors' note: This article is part of a series in the August 2020 Ensign about having a positive view of sexuality, sexual intimacy, and the law of chastity. The term sexuality means different things to different people, but in this context, we are talking specifically about our sexual feelings and identity.

When we young adults begin dating seriously, it might seem like there are some gray areas regarding the law of chastity—areas not clearly spelled out in the scriptures or in the *For the Strength of Youth* booklet. For example, what exactly constitutes “passionate kissing”?¹ Or, why should I set a curfew with the person I’m dating once I’m no longer a youth? There could be other quandaries about the law of chastity. And it can be confusing when the world encourages us to let our sexual feelings take priority over our commitment to treat those we date like a child of God.

When we find ourselves in these gray areas, we might be tempted to say, “The rules don’t say anything about this, so it’s fine.” Or, we could remember that Heavenly Father expects us to live His commandments by keeping them in our hearts and minds daily, including the law of chastity. Being chaste isn’t just about following a set of do’s and don’ts—it’s a way of living that can help us love and respect everyone, including those we date, more perfectly.

A Higher Way of Thinking

Jesus cited the law regarding chastity that had already been taught when He said, “Thou shalt not commit adultery” (Matthew 5:27). He also introduced a higher law: “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 5:28). Instead of listing do’s and don’ts regarding people’s actions about chastity, He asked them to shift their paradigm in how they approached personal responsibility for living the commandments. Jesus asked His followers to be chaste in their thoughts and intentions, not just their actions.

This higher law is meant to be lived because we trust the Savior and want to become like Him—not just because we want to avoid punishment but to be able to experience greater happiness (see Mosiah 2:41). Rather than view the law of chastity as a line not to cross, we are to both examine and take responsibility for the motives behind our actions when it comes to sexual purity. Being truly honest with ourselves in this way is an important step to experiencing true, lasting love. Perhaps that’s why Alma encouraged his son Shiblon to “bridle all your passions, that ye may be filled with love” (Alma 38:12; emphasis added). When we follow gospel teachings about chastity, we are blessed with happiness as well as a greater capacity to love others.

Recognizing Each Other as Children of God

Loving others starts with recognizing that we are all daughters and sons of God, and we all deserve to be treated as such. We’re divine (see Romans 8:16)—created in the very image of God! (see Moses 2:27). Simply put, we need to see “[people] as they really are” (Jacob 4:13)—and not just as a body—if we are to truly live the law of chastity.

Whether we’re single, dating, or married, we can’t disregard our shared divine nature as it relates to the law of chastity—intentionally or ignorantly. Subsequently, navigating any seemingly gray areas of the law of chastity requires making a conscious choice to respect and regard others as divine beings. Simply

believing we’re respectful in our relationships isn’t enough—what do “[our] works” show about who we are? (see Moroni 7:5).

Our behavior changes as we deepen our understanding of these principles. For example, when we intentionally see others as children of God and commit to live the law of chastity, **we do not:**

- Disrespect another person’s agency by assuming it’s OK to cross physical boundaries without consent, or even with consent if they are outside the bounds the Lord has set.
- Play games or manipulate others to serve our selfish interests or desires.
- Regard each other as dispensable objects in words or actions.

However, **we do:**

- Respect another person’s agency by always discussing what the boundaries of a relationship are—and *never* assuming them.
- Share intentions and motivations with honesty, even (and especially) if it’s awkward or difficult.
- Regard each other as children of God with feelings, hopes, and dreams.



When we view the law of chastity as a mandate to see each other in this authentic way, our actions better reflect our inner commitment to show our love and affection as God would have

Navigating any seemingly gray areas of the law of chastity requires making a conscious choice to respect and regard others as divine beings.

us show it in our dating relationships. After all, we all want to love and be loved. Elevating our understanding of chastity helps us avoid acting on selfish desires that ultimately lead us down a path of loneliness and regret. The world would have us use our bodies for self-gratification, deceitfully touting that selfishness

equals happiness. That couldn't be further from the truth.

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught that “[intimate relations] are not a conquest to be achieved or simply an act to be performed. Rather, they are in mortality one of the *ultimate expressions of our divine nature . . . and a way of strengthening emotional and spiritual bonds* between husband and wife.”² Being chaste deepens love (and happiness) throughout

eternity. Keeping that eternal perspective while dating will help us stay diligent in reserving sexual relations for marriage. And if we live the law of chastity, we've been promised marvelous blessings in this life and the life to come.

Blessings through the Savior's Atonement

Keeping the law of chastity is one of the things that qualifies us to receive eternal blessings in the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. If we commit to live it and fully rely on His grace when we encounter any seemingly gray areas, then we can be more confident and more happy in our relationships, including our relationship with God (see Doctrine and Covenants 121:45). And we can have the constant influence of the Holy Ghost that guides, warns, comforts, and encourages us along the path back to our heavenly home.

Believing that these promised blessings are available to us will help us have “a perfect brightness of hope” (2 Nephi 31:20) that, with God's help, we will overcome the sexual temptations in our lives and be able to repent fully of any sexual transgressions we may have made. That hope will lead us to have “faith unto repentance” (Alma 34:15) to change our lifestyle or our way of thinking about chastity if necessary. And once we have repented, we can change the very desires of our hearts (see Alma 41:3) to become “new creature[s]” in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Chastity helps us respect and love each other in the most pure, joyful, and godlike way possible. It helps us see each other as we really are—children of God. And ultimately, it illuminates a clear path that replaces any gray areas with clarity, any fear with faith, and any despair with determination to trust the Savior. In a dating world so full of gray areas, we really can't afford to live without the blessings of the law of chastity. ■

NOTES

1. *For the Strength of Youth* (2011, booklet), 36.
2. David A. Bednar, “We Believe in Being Chaste,” *Ensign*, May 2013, 42; emphasis added.



INSIGHTS

from YOUNG ADULTS



on the blessings of living the law of chastity

from CHURCH LEADERS

“It has helped me **avoid a lot of the heartache** that many of my friends have suffered.”

—Ilse Marie Ahlström,
Gothenburg, Sweden

“It gives me **more and more strength** to keep focusing on the gospel and Jesus Christ.”

—David Huang, Taiwan

“Freedom! Clear mind and conscience. **More focus on important things.**”

—Sicily Wilcock, Arizona, USA

“Peace of mind; **security** in my relationships.”

—Heidi Thorpe, Utah, USA

“We . . . are promised that, as we pursue the pathway of virtue, ‘the Holy Ghost shall be [our] constant companion’ (D&C 121:46). Thus, living the law of chastity invites some of the greatest blessings men and women can receive in mortality: appropriate spiritual confidence in the presence of family, friends, Church associates, and, ultimately, the Savior. Our innate longing to belong is fulfilled in righteousness as we walk in the light with hope.”

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “We Believe in Being Chaste,” *Ensign*, May 2013, 44.

SHARE YOUR INSIGHTS

What do you do to be a **good steward of the earth** that Heavenly Father has created for us? (see 1 Nephi 17:36).

Send us your response at [ensign.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://www.ensign.ChurchofJesusChrist.org) by Aug. 31, 2020.

Come, Follow Me Shareable Scriptures

Download these picture quotes from August's *Come, Follow Me* readings and share them on social media—or send them to those you minister to, your Sunday School class, or your family: [ChurchofJesusChrist.org/go/82081](https://www.ChurchofJesusChrist.org/go/82081).

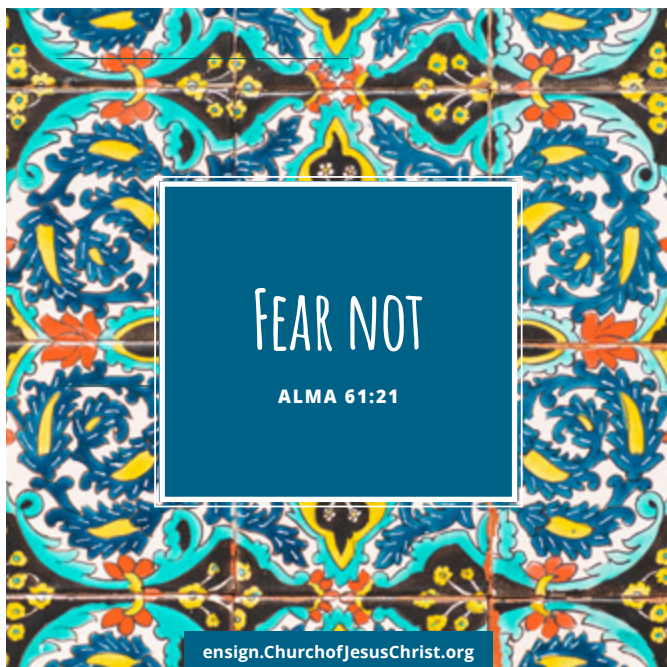
JULY 27–AUGUST 2



AUGUST 3–9



AUGUST 10–16



AUGUST 17–23



POSTERS

SAVING YOU IS THE PLAN

We hope that the poster included with this issue (pages 39–42) reminds you of God’s love. You can find other versions, each showing a different person with the Savior, in the digital edition of this issue at ensign.ChurchofJesusChrist.org or in the Gospel Library app.



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