
We Will Not Yield, We Cannot Yield

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Of the Seventy

Live by your standards. Stand up for what you believe in.



With each of you, I gratefully sustain God's will for His people. Thank you, President Monson, for the purity of your heart.

When young Joseph Smith told the truth about his sacred experience in the grove, he was persecuted and mistreated. The adversary used ridicule as a weapon against him. "I was an obscure boy, . . . yet men of high standing would take notice sufficient to excite the public mind against me, and create a bitter persecution."¹

Joseph grew in patience, temperance, and faith, notwithstanding the presence of enemies on every front. In Joseph's own words: "Evil and designing men have combined to

destroy the innocent, . . . yet the glorious Gospel in its fullness is spreading."² "No unhallowed hand can stop the work from progressing."³

Even today there are those who misunderstand our doctrine and challenge the unchanging values by which we are invited to live.

Ethan, a young friend of mine, approached his mother with a weighty question. Like most teenagers, Ethan wants to be independent, self-sufficient, and surrounded by good friends. He is trying to make good choices on his own. He is exceedingly valiant, works hard on his grades, and studies the scriptures daily. Like all young people, Ethan faces tremendous temptations. It comes in the halls of his school, on the Internet, in the movies and music. It can be heard in bad language and seen in provocative clothing. That which is wrong is often made to look right. Anxiety and fear of rejection are common among teenagers. Peer pressure is often overpowering. Ethan was feeling bombarded with opposing values.

This is the question he asked his mother: "Mom, do I need to lower my standards to keep my friends?"

It is a profound question for each of us to consider at all stages of life. Are we lowering our standards to fit into our neighborhoods? Are we altering our values to suit the situation in



the workplace or to be popular at school?

Ethan's loving mother answered him with a resounding no.

I, too, unequivocally answer, "Don't do it, Ethan. Never forget that you are a son of God. He loves you. Live by your standards. Stand up for what you believe in. Sometimes it is not easy, and you may be standing alone for awhile. Look for friends with integrity and character, then go to them and express appreciation for their examples. You might even find someone who has been feeling as lonely as you. Pray for guidance and protection from the Lord. He will sustain you. He will become a trusted friend, and you will discover that your

example will attract many friends who will take courage from your strength of character."

Nephi taught us a powerfully simple principle in recounting his father's dream of the tree of life. He described a strait and narrow path leading to a tree and a great and spacious building. This building was filled with people who were dressed in exceedingly fine and fashionable clothing. They were all in an attitude of mocking and pointing fingers toward those who were partaking of the fruit. They were trying to get people off the path and into the building. From all appearances, the people inside seemed to be having a great time. What an indelible image of temptation. In Elder Neal A.

Maxwell's words, "The laughter of the world is merely loneliness pathetically trying to reassure itself."⁴

"And great was the multitude that did enter into that strange building. . . . They did point the finger of scorn at me and those that were partaking of the fruit also; *but we heeded them not.*"⁵

There at the end of the verse is Nephi's powerful principle, an answer to unwanted peer pressure: "But we heeded them not."

President Boyd K. Packer has recently emphasized this guiding principle: "However out of step we may seem, however much the standards are belittled, however much others yield, we will not yield, we cannot yield."⁶

Do we recognize temptation when it is so well camouflaged?

Are we willing to fight the unpopular battle?

Paul clearly warned that we should not be "men-pleasers; but [be] the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart."⁷

The time has come when we must take an unyielding stand. We must shore up our spiritual underpinnings, listen to the prophets of God, and follow their counsel.

Said Paul to Timothy: "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord."⁸

It requires courage to make good choices, even when others around us choose differently. As we make righteous choices day by day in little things, the Lord will strengthen us and help us choose the right during more difficult times.

The teachings and values we cherish the most are not embraced by a secular world. To maintain a firm stance for ourselves and our children, the message of the restored gospel must be firmly planted in our hearts and taught in our homes.

Abinadi, a Nephite prophet, as recorded in just a few powerful pages in Mosiah, teaches us timeless lessons that perfectly meet the challenges of the 21st century.

Abinadi was a man of unwavering courage who stood for truth when it was unpopular to do so. As he courageously called the people to repentance, he knew his own life was in jeopardy. In your mind's eye, you can see the riveting scene of Abinadi, who has just had the death sentence pronounced upon him. He had an opportunity to save himself by denying his faith and testimony, but instead he fearlessly proclaimed, "I say unto you, I will not recall the words which I have spoken unto you concerning this people, for they are true."⁹

We may not have to lose our lives in defense of truth, but we can, just like Abinadi, draw ourselves to full stature, and with full heart and energy, valiantly proclaiming that Jesus Christ is our Savior. He was and is the Son of the Almighty. He lives and He loves us.

As we follow Him, we will be able to make sacrifices and keep our sacred covenants. The Lord has said to us: "Therefore, fear not, little flock; do good; let earth and hell combine against you, for if ye are built upon my rock, they cannot prevail. . . . Look unto me in every thought; doubt not, fear not."¹⁰

We must fortify ourselves. That sure spiritual fortification is found in two words—Jesus Christ. Of Him I humbly testify in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTES

1. Joseph Smith—History 1:22.
2. *History of the Church*, 2:22.
3. *History of the Church*, 4:540.
4. "Cleanse Us from All Unrighteousness," *Ensign*, Feb. 1986, 19.
5. 1 Nephi 8:33.
6. "The Standard of Truth Has Been Erected," *Liabona and Ensign*, Nov. 2003, 26.
7. Ephesians 6:6.
8. 2 Timothy 1:7–8.
9. Mosiah 17:9.
10. D&C 6:34, 36.