

I MISSED

The Message

By Michael R. Morris

Church Magazines

You are different from the rest of the world," Elder David B. Haight (1906–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles had told the young men a few months earlier during general conference. "You must not succumb."

Among the temptations Elder Haight had counseled us to avoid, he included "pornography, filthy literature and movies, vile language, and suggestive music." He warned, "They can destroy you."¹

At the time, the Internet was still in its infancy. The main source of pornography back then was magazines, not the World Wide Web.

I don't think stores even sold pornography in the small town where I took a job just after graduating from college.

Which is why I was surprised by what I found one morning between the front door and the screen door of my apartment.



When someone started leaving pornographic magazines on my doorstep and in my car, I knew what to do with them.

When I picked it up, I recognized immediately what it was—a pornographic magazine.

Without opening it, I threw the magazine in the trash bin next to the apartment complex parking lot. Someone had played a joke on me. Very funny.

Because I was new to the area, I was still making friends. The young adults I had met were all active members of the Church. Pornography wasn't something I had ever heard them laugh about. When I mentioned the magazine, they all denied having left it.

That summer I had renewed my efforts to live close to the Spirit. I was striving to keep the commandments and honor my priesthood. I was reading the Book of Mormon every day and had accepted a calling to teach Sunday School. I had earned a college

degree but hadn't found a wife, so I was trying to meet and date someone I could marry in the temple. And I stayed away from pornography.

I shrugged off the mysterious appearance of the magazine and forgot about it—for a few days anyway.

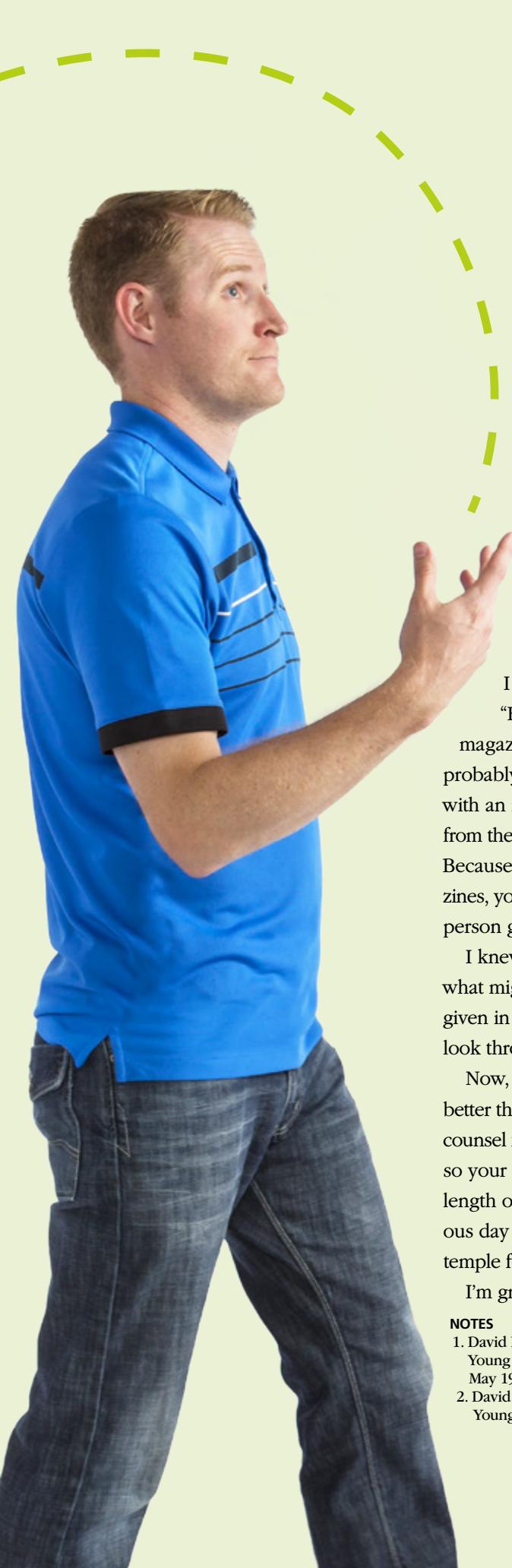
One morning about a week later, I grabbed my car keys and headed out the door to go to work. When I got to my car, which I had left unlocked, I saw something on the driver's seat. I opened the door, reached in, and grabbed . . . another pornographic magazine.

Immediately I had the feeling that somebody was watching me. I was parked next to the complex garbage bin, so I threw the magazine inside with the other trash.

I wasn't laughing. It was no longer a joke. I realized that somebody wanted me to have—and look at—the magazines. But why? And how many more magazines would the person leave?

As it turned out, the second magazine was the last. And nobody ever admitted responsibility.

I didn't figure out the mystery of the magazines until several years later, after my fiancée and I had been



married in the Mesa Arizona Temple.

"You missed the message," my wife said when I told her the story.
"What do you mean?"

I asked.

"Had you looked through the magazines," she explained, "you probably would have found a note with an invitation or a proposition from the person who gave them to you. Because you didn't look at the magazines, you missed the message, and the person gave up on giving you more."

I knew she was right. Who knows what might have happened had I given in to curiosity or temptation to look through the magazines?

Now, years later, I understand even better the importance of Elder Haight's counsel from his conference talk: "Live so your memories can bless the full length of your life. Live for that glorious day when you will go to the holy temple for eternal blessings and joy."²

I'm grateful I did. ■

NOTES

1. David B. Haight, "The Responsibility of Young Aaronic Priesthood Bearers," *Ensign*, May 1981, 41, 42.
2. David B. Haight, "The Responsibility of Young Aaronic Priesthood Bearers," 41.



AVOID THE TRAP

"My beloved friends, under no circumstances allow yourselves to become trapped in the viewing of pornography, one of the most effective of Satan's enticements. And if you have allowed yourself to become involved in this behavior, cease now. Seek the help you need to overcome and to change the direction of your life. Take the steps necessary to get back on the strait and narrow, and then stay there."

President Thomas S. Monson, "Until We Meet Again," *Ensign*, May 2009, 113.