

How can living modestly in language, behavior, and appearance help us radiate light and glorify God?

# If Your Eye Be Single to

By Katherine Nelson and Heidi McConkie

In the premortal Council in Heaven, when Jesus Christ volunteered to be our Savior, He said to the Father, “Thy will be done, and the glory be thine forever” (Moses 4:2).

The Lord has always set the example of glorifying the Father. During His mortal ministry, the Savior never drew attention to Himself but rather pointed His followers to the Father, teaching, “He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me” (John 12:44). In attitude, appearance, word, and deed, the Savior taught us about the importance of modesty.

In their dedication to follow the Savior, the young adults quoted in this article reflect on their inward and outward expressions of modesty and share how their commitment to glorify God has shaped their character and guided their actions.

## Glorify God and Radiate Light

We better recognize how modesty glorifies God when we understand

# My Glory

what modesty really is. *True to the Faith* explains: “Modesty is an attitude of humility and decency in dress, grooming, language, and behavior. If you are modest, you do not draw undue attention to yourself. Instead, you seek to ‘glorify God in your body, and in your spirit’ (1 Corinthians 6:20).”<sup>1</sup>

As we learn to exhibit modesty as the Savior did, we welcome the Spirit into our lives, fulfilling the promise that “if your eye be single to [God’s] glory, your whole [body] shall be filled with light” (D&C 88:67). As you read how other young adults understand modesty, you can consider how to increase your own spiritual light by making adjustments to improve your inward commitment to and outward expression of modesty.

## Be Modest in Language and Behavior

“Your words and actions can have a profound influence on you and on others. Express yourself through clean, positive, uplifting language and in actions that bring happiness to those around you. Your efforts to be modest in word and deed lead to increased guidance and comfort from the Holy Ghost.”<sup>2</sup>

Dar’ja Sergeevna Shvydko of Volgograd, Russia, explains that we are modest in our speech as we treat others with respect and use “softness of voice and calm expression of our thoughts without using coarse or inappropriate words.” Modest language is free from gossip, taunts, ridicule, and sarcasm. It never belittles others or



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inflates egos; it simply shows kindness to and recognizes the divinity of all of Heavenly Father's children.

Our speech should also show respect for the Godhead: "Avoid the filthy language and the casual, irreverent use of the Lord's name that are so common in the world. . . . The irreverent nature of such language . . . impairs [our] ability to receive the

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quiet promptings of the Holy Ghost."<sup>3</sup>

Just as immodest speech such as gossip and ridicule can damage relationships, modest speech cultivates a deeper commitment to God and, as Kelly Prue of Utah, USA, explains, "increases our capacity to build positive relationships with others. Our modest speech helps us bring out the very best in others."

Modesty in language and modesty in behavior go hand in hand. "It's

important to be modest in language and behavior because that shows who you are and what you value," says Mike Olsen of Utah. People notice when words and actions are not aligned.

Our language that uplifts others and glorifies God should be accompanied by complementary actions. Through acts of service and kindness, we demonstrate that our commitment to uplift others and honor God runs deeper than our words. Our examples of discipleship in word and deed can be an influence for good.

"I really appreciate modesty in behavior and speech," says Carrie Carlson of Colorado, USA. "There is something so delightful in someone who is humble and doesn't do things for the motivation of getting attention. Those who speak modestly become powerful vessels for the Lord."

### **Be Modest in Dress and Appearance**

"Modesty [in dress] helps bring out the best in us by helping us focus on the spiritual instead of the natural man," says Paul Cave of Utah. By dressing modestly, we encourage others to get to know us and appreciate us for our personality and character rather than how we look.

The way we dress not only signals to others how they should treat us, but it also affects how we view and treat ourselves. "We learn from the gospel that our body is a gift from God," says Luis Da Cruz Junior of Brazil. "Our bodies

help us progress and become as our Father is. For this reason it is important to dress modestly. By so doing, we show God and others that we have respect for this gift and for others."<sup>4</sup>

Carrie explains, "Immodest clothing is intended to portray the body as a physical object that is detached from a spirit with personality and character. Being modest, even though it has cost me more money sometimes and definitely more time, has helped me to learn that my body is the vessel of a precious spirit with divine potential and destiny, begotten and reared by Heavenly Parents. It deserves much more care and respect than the world would give it."

*True to the Faith* teaches: "In addition to avoiding [immodest clothing], you should avoid extremes in clothing, appearance, and hairstyle. In dress, grooming, and manners, always be neat and clean, never sloppy or inappropriately casual."<sup>5</sup> In the way we clothe and present ourselves, we communicate our respect for God, for ourselves, and for others.

### **Commit to Consistency**

As we try to follow gospel standards of modesty, we show our commitment through consistency: abiding by the Lord's commandments at all times rather than when it is convenient.

True commitment is always rooted in gospel principles. Anthony Roberts of Utah explains, "Modesty is a state

of mind, a desire to walk daily in an understanding of the gospel and the plan of salvation.” As we immerse ourselves in the gospel, our conversion can deepen and increase our desire to live gospel principles.

### Understand Your Divine Nature

Consistently practicing modesty helps us understand and appreciate



our birthright, and knowledge of our divine nature can inspire us to be more modest. Raffaella Ferrini of Florence, Italy, explains, “Modesty blesses my life because it helps me feel like a special daughter of my Heavenly Father, and that knowledge, in turn, makes me want to be modest.”

Allowing the world to define who we are can damage our self-esteem. Julianna Auna of Utah describes her experience: “Before I gained a

testimony of the principle of modesty, I was in an unhappy and spiritually unsafe place. Letting the world define me was depressing and spiritually crippling because the world’s obsession with temporal, physical things is cruel and relentless. Once I decided not to listen to the world and to let my relationship with God define me instead, life became easier, freer, and happier.” When we seek approval from Heavenly Father instead of the world, we will find greater joy in life and greater motivation to be modest.

### Live a Modest Life

“Modesty is expressed in everything that we do: our speech, our outward appearance, our conduct, and even the places we visit,” says Galina Viktorovna Savchuk of Novosibirsk, Russia. Modest living is closely connected to our commitment to the gospel and our relationship with God.

True modesty is a combination of both behavior and attitude. Working to improve either our behavior or our mindset will help us improve the other. Being modest in our behavior and appearance without developing a lifelong commitment prevents us from receiving the full blessings of living modestly. And believing ourselves to be modest people without following through with our actions is self-deception.<sup>6</sup>

In the context of modesty, to say our eyes are single to the glory of

God means that we are externally and internally committed to living modestly. Just as the eye must be pointed toward God, our outward appearance and actions must be consistent with the principles of modesty. But only directing the eye toward God does not make it single to His glory; it must be focused on Him. Likewise, modest dress and grooming must be accompanied by a vision of eternal principles.

As we turn our eyes toward God, we will be able to more easily focus our vision on Him. Likewise, as we focus our vision on God, our eyes will be naturally drawn in His direction.

As we strive to live modestly, we will feel the Spirit’s influence increase in our lives. Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught: “Modesty is fundamental to being worthy of the Spirit. To be modest is to be humble, and being humble invites the Spirit to be with us.”<sup>7</sup> With the Spirit guiding our thoughts and actions, our eyes will become single to the glory of God and we will be full of light. ■

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#### NOTES

1. *True to the Faith: A Gospel Reference* (2004), 106.
2. *True to the Faith*, 108.
3. *True to the Faith*, 108.
4. See *True to the Faith*, 107.
5. *True to the Faith*, 107.
6. See Lynn G. Robbins, “What Manner of Men and Women Ought Ye to Be?” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2011, 103.
7. Robert D. Hales, “Modesty: Reverence for the Lord,” *Ensign*, Aug. 2008, 34; *Liahona*, Aug. 2008, 18.