

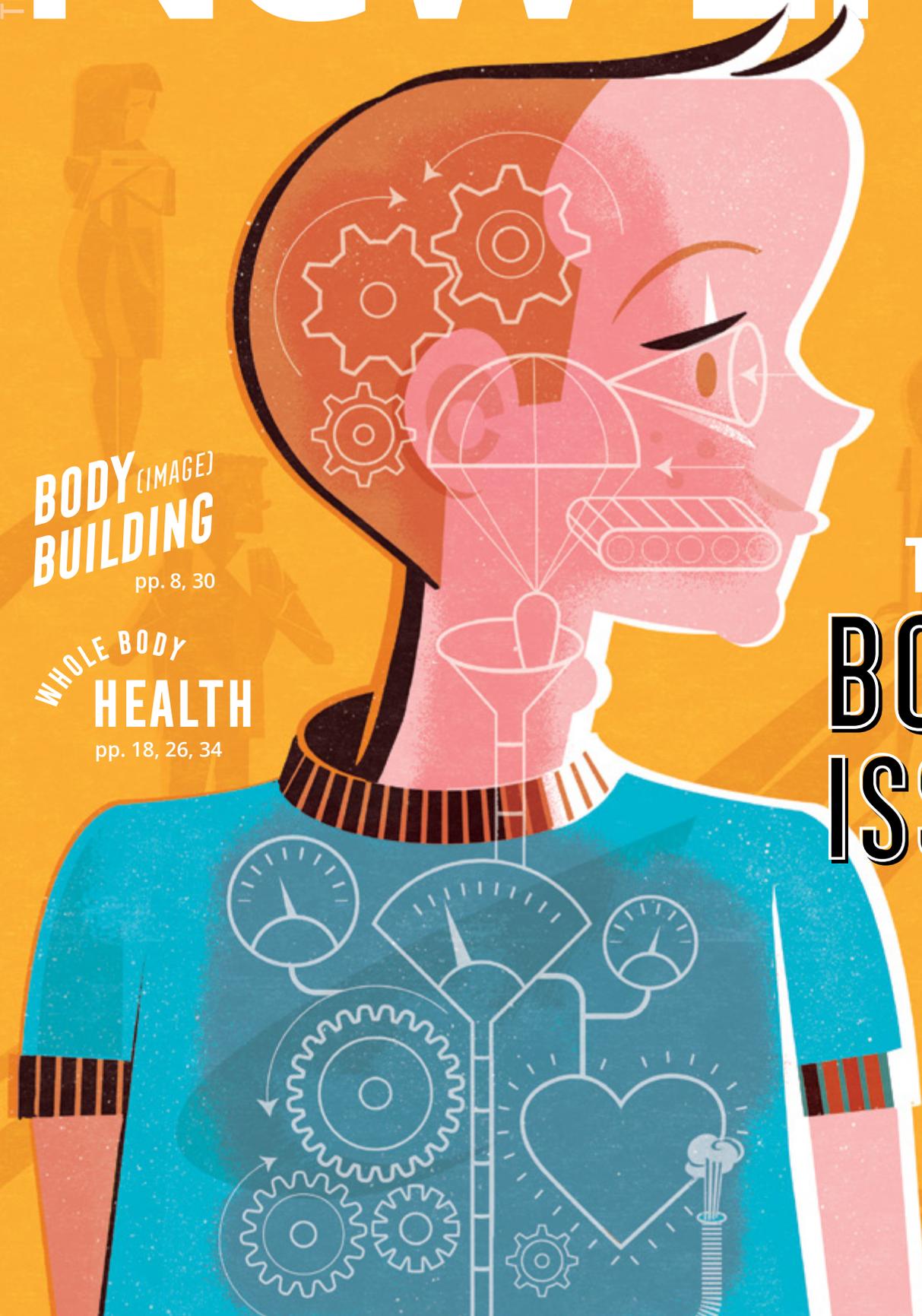
# THE New Era

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By President  
Russell M. Nelson

# YOUR BODY:

## *A Magnificent Gift to Cherish*

*Your body is a magnificent creation of God.*

**T**he longer I live, the more knowledge I gain. That knowledge helps me to understand that the gift of our physical bodies is a transcendent miracle. A unique body is given to each of us by our loving Heavenly Father. He created it as a tabernacle for our spirits, to assist each of us in our quest to fulfill the full measure of our creation. Our bodies allow each of us to experience the great plan of salvation that He has designed for all His precious children. He wants us eventually to become more like Him and return to live with Him. That great blessing would not be possible without our first receiving a physical body in this probationary estate.

God, the Father of our spirits,<sup>1</sup> has a glorified, perfected body of flesh and bones.<sup>2</sup> We lived with Him in heaven before we were born.<sup>3</sup> When He created us physically, we were created in the image of God, each with a personal mortal body.<sup>4</sup>

We are part of His divine purpose. “My work and my glory,” He said, is “to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man.”<sup>5</sup>



ILLUSTRATIONS BY SCOTTY REFSINDER



## WE ARE DUAL BEINGS

Each soul is composed of body and spirit,<sup>6</sup> both of which emanate from God. A firm understanding of body and spirit will shape our thoughts and deeds for the good.

Prior to our mortal existence here, each spirit son and daughter lived with God. The spirit is eternal; it existed in innocence in the premortal realm<sup>7</sup> and will exist after the body dies.<sup>8</sup> The spirit provides the body with animation and personality.<sup>9</sup> “All spirit is matter, but it is more fine or pure.”<sup>10</sup>

Development of the spirit is of eternal consequence. The attributes by which we shall be judged one day are those of the spirit.<sup>11</sup> These include the attributes of virtue, integrity, compassion, love, and more.<sup>12</sup> Your spirit, by being housed in your body, is able to develop and express these attributes in ways that are vital to your eternal progression.<sup>13</sup>

Spirit and body, when joined together, become a living soul of supernal worth. “The spirit and the body are the soul of man.”<sup>14</sup> Both are of great importance. Your physical body is a magnificent creation of God. It is His temple as well as yours and must

be treated with reverence. Scripture declares:

“What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

“For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.”<sup>15</sup>

Your body, whatever its natural gifts, is a magnificent creation of God. It is a tabernacle of flesh—a temple for your spirit. A study of your body attests to its divine design.

## YOUR BODY IS A MAGNIFICENT GIFT

The marvel of our physical bodies is often overlooked or underappreciated. Who has not encountered feelings of low self-esteem because of physique or appearance? Many people wish their bodies could be more to their liking. Some with naturally straight hair want it curly. Others born with curly hair want it straight.

Ponder the magnificence of what you see when you look in the mirror. Ignore the freckles, the unruly hair, or the blemishes, and look beyond to see the real you—a child of God, created by Him in His image.

When you sing “I Am a Child of God,”<sup>16</sup> think of His gift to you of your own physical body. The many amazing attributes of your body attest to your own “divine nature.”<sup>17</sup>

Each organ of your body is a wondrous gift from God. Each eye has an autofocusing lens. Nerves and muscles control two eyes to make a single three-dimensional image.



*Spirit and body, when joined together, become a living soul of supernal worth.*



*Ignore the freckles, the unruly hair, or the blemishes, and look beyond to see the real you—a child of God.*

The eyes are connected to the brain, which records the sights seen.

Your heart is an incredible pump.<sup>18</sup> It has four delicate valves that control the direction of blood flow. These valves open and close more than 100,000 times a day—36 million times a year. Yet, unless altered by disease, they can withstand such stress almost indefinitely.

Think of the body's defense system. To protect it from harm, it perceives pain. In response to infection, it generates antibodies. The skin provides protection. It warns against injury that excessive heat or cold might cause.

The body renews its own outdated cells. The body can heal its cuts, bruises, and broken bones. Its capacity for reproduction is another sacred gift from God.

The body constantly regulates the levels of countless ingredients, such as salt, water, sugar, protein, oxygen, and carbon dioxide. Regulatory controls are managed without our awareness of these amazing realities.

Please note: A perfect body is not required to achieve a divine destiny. In fact, some of the sweetest spirits are housed in frail frames. Great spiritual strength is often developed by

those with physical challenges—precisely because they are challenged. Such individuals are entitled to all the blessings that God has in store for His faithful and obedient children.<sup>19</sup>

Each mortal life is closed by death. Eventually the time will come when each “spirit and . . . body shall be reunited again in . . . perfect form; both limb and joint shall be restored to its proper frame.”<sup>20</sup> Then, thanks to Jesus Christ and His Atonement, we can become perfected in Him.<sup>21</sup> Anyone who studies the workings of the human body has surely “seen God moving in his majesty and power.”<sup>22</sup>

## **OUR SPIRITS SHOULD BE IN CHARGE OF OUR BODIES**

Remarkable as your body is, its prime purpose, as stated earlier, is of even greater importance—to serve as tenement for your eternal spirit.

Your spirit acquired your body and became a living soul to experience mortality and the associated trials and testing. Part of that testing is to determine if the appetites of your body can become mastered by the spirit that dwells within it.

When we understand our nature and our purpose on earth and that our bodies are physical temples of God, we will realize

that it is sacrilege to let anything enter that might defile the body. It is truly irreverent to let even the gaze of our precious eyesight or the sensors of our touch or hearing supply the brain with memories that are unclean or unworthy. We will cherish our chastity and avoid “foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown [us] in destruction and perdition.”<sup>23</sup> We will “flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, [and] meekness”<sup>24</sup>—traits that edify the whole soul.

Substances such as alcohol, tobacco, and harmful drugs are forbidden by the Lord. We have similarly been warned about the evils of pornography and unclean thoughts. Appetites for these degrading forces can become addictive. In time, physical or mental addictions enslave *both* the body and the spirit. Repentance from such shackles should be accomplished in this life while we still have the aid of a mortal body to help us develop self-mastery.

Our Creator put appetites in our bodies to perpetuate the human race and fulfill His great plan of happiness. Thus, we have appetites for food, for water, and for love.

Satan knows the power of our appetites. So, he tempts us to eat things we should not eat, to drink things we should not drink, and to desecrate the most intimate expressions of love by employing them outside the bounds of marriage.

When we truly know our divine nature, we will want to control such appetites. And 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.

## FOLLOW THE SAVIOR

To reach your highest destiny, emulate the Savior. He proclaimed, “What manner of men ought ye to be? . . . Even as I am.”<sup>25</sup> Our loftiest hope is to grow in spirit and attain “the stature of the fulness of Christ.”<sup>26</sup>

Remember, not a season of life passes without temptation, trial, or torment, whether spiritually or physically. But as you

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*We will focus our . . . minds on thoughts that are a credit to our physical creation as a temple of God.*

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*As great as our body is, it is not an end in itself. It is an essential part of God's great plan of happiness.*

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prayerfully develop self-mastery, the desires of the flesh may be subjected to your spiritual control. And when that has been achieved, you may have the strength to submit to the will of your Heavenly Father. Remember, Jesus said, "Not my will, but thine, be done."<sup>27</sup>

When deepening trials come your way, as they surely will, remember this glorious promise of the Savior: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."<sup>28</sup>

May we ever be grateful for the incredible blessing of a magnificent physical body, the supreme creation of our loving Heavenly Father. As great as our body is, it is not an end in itself. It is an essential part of God's great plan of happiness for our eternal progression. If we honor it as God has ordained, we will remain on that "strait and narrow path which leads to eternal life."<sup>29</sup>



Jesus Christ is our great Exemplar. I declare, as His special witness, that He is the Son of God. He "is the life and the light of the world."<sup>30</sup>

We are sons and daughters of Almighty God. He is our Father. We are His children. Our divine inheritance is the magnificence of humankind. Our inheritance is sacred. Our potential is unlimited. May we always honor His gifts and that heritage in all that we do and say. **NE**

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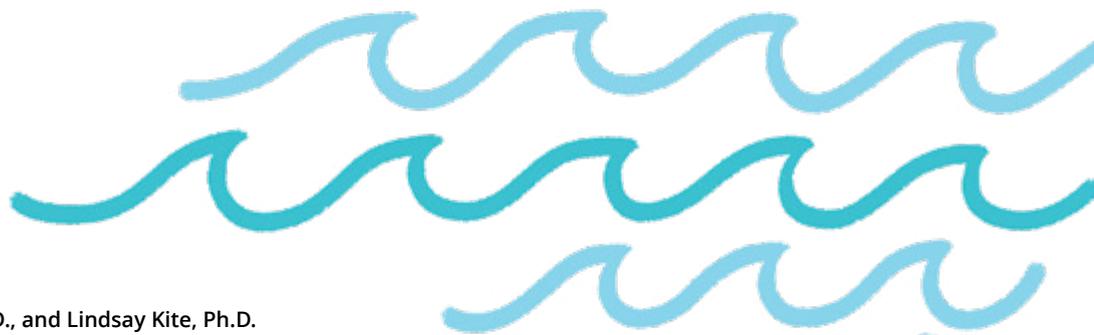
#### NOTES

1. See Acts 17:27–29.
2. See Doctrine and Covenants 130:22.
3. See Jeremiah 1:4–5; Hebrews 12:9; Moses 6:51; Abraham 3:22–23.
4. See Genesis 1:27; 2:7; 1 Corinthians 15:44; Moses 2:27; 3:7.
5. Moses 1:39.
6. See Doctrine and Covenants 88:15.
7. See Doctrine and Covenants 93:38.
8. See Alma 40:11; Abraham 3:18.
9. See Job 32:8.
10. Doctrine and Covenants 131:7.
11. The spirit, not the body, is the active, responsible component of the soul. Without the spirit, the body is dead (see James 2:26). It is the spirit, therefore, that chooses good or evil and will be held accountable for both the positive and negative attributes it possesses at the Final Judgment (see Alma 41:3–7).
12. Such as "faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, brotherly kindness, godliness, charity, humility, [and] diligence" (Doctrine and Covenants 4:6).
13. See 2 Nephi 2:11–16, 21–26; Moroni 10:32–33.
14. Doctrine and Covenants 88:15.
15. 1 Corinthians 6:19–20; see also Doctrine and Covenants 93:35.
16. "I Am a Child of God," *Hymns*, no. 301.
17. 2 Peter 1:4.
18. The heart pumps about 2,000 gallons (7,570 L) per day.
19. See Abraham 3:25–26.
20. Alma 11:43; see also Ecclesiastes 12:7; Alma 40:23; Doctrine and Covenants 138:17.
21. See Moroni 10:32.
22. Doctrine and Covenants 88:47.
23. 1 Timothy 6:9.
24. 1 Timothy 6:11. 1 Timothy 6:12 continues, "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life." That is our choice.
25. 3 Nephi 27:27.
26. Ephesians 4:13.
27. Luke 22:42.
28. Revelation 3:21.
29. 2 Nephi 31:18.
30. Alma 38:9; see also Doctrine and Covenants 11:28.



A negative body image may be holding you back, but **you have the power to change the LENS** you see yourself through.

More Than  
A Body:  
SEEING AS  
GOD SEES



By Lexie Kite, Ph.D., and Lindsay Kite, Ph.D.

**A**s identical twins, we've always had a lot in common. Growing up, we both loved swimming and joined a competitive swim team at six years old. The heart-racing feeling before each race was exhilarating. Unfortunately, that exciting feeling quickly turned to fear about how we looked in our swimsuits. For both of us, our appearance started to creep to the forefront of our every thought.

In middle school, we each filled journals with weight-loss goals, food logs, and our most beauty-obsessed thoughts—stacked on shelves next to teen magazines promoting the latest fashion and beauty fixes.

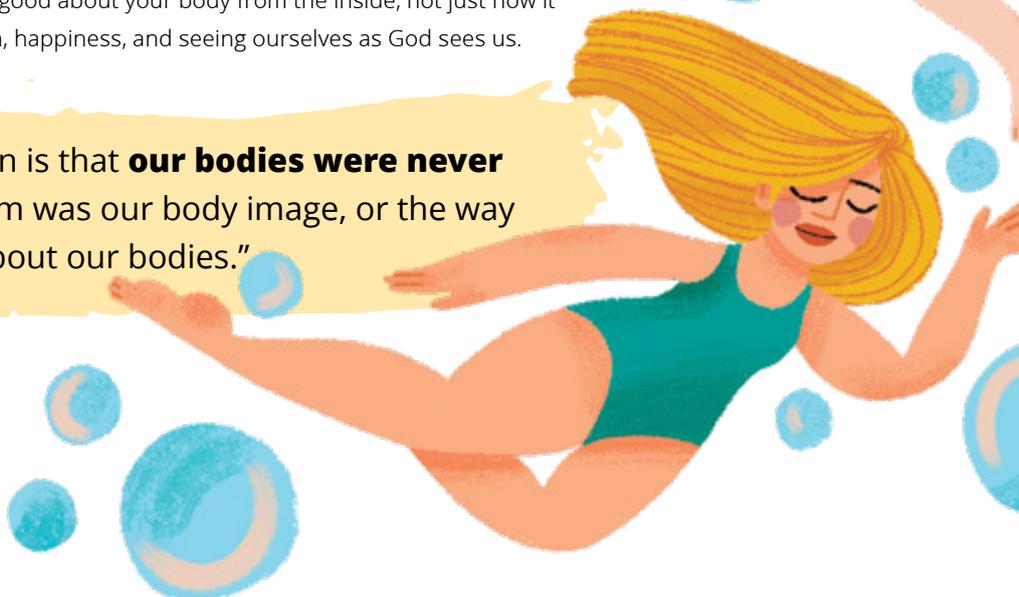
At age 15, we both quit swimming—not because we hated to swim but because we hated the way we looked in our swimsuits. Our years of relentlessly trying to “fix” our bodies simply hadn’t worked.

What we didn’t realize then is that our bodies were never the problem. The problem was our body image, or the way we viewed and thought about our bodies. It had been skewed by all kinds of influences, including movies, TV, magazines, and even friends and family who learned from all of these same sources.

After years of struggling, things changed. We even started swimming again. But it wasn’t dieting or makeovers that did the trick—it was learning how our skewed views of our bodies had held us back in every way. Our research has showed us that developing positive body image—or feeling good about your body from the inside, not just how it looks—is a key to health, happiness, and seeing ourselves as God sees us.



What we didn’t realize then is that **our bodies were never the problem.** The problem was our body image, or the way we viewed and thought about our bodies.”



# The Root of NEGATIVE BODY IMAGE

Our culture tends to objectify both women's and men's bodies. It teaches us to see people as bodies (or objects) first and people second, which leads us to judge and value people by how they

## Be More Accepting of Yourself

I plead with you young women to **PLEASE** be more accepting of yourselves, including your body shape and style, with a little less longing to look like someone else. We are **ALL DIFFERENT**. Some are **TALL**, and some are **SHORT**. Some are **ROUND**, and some are **THIN**. And almost everyone at some time or other wants to be something they are not! . . . Every young woman is a child of **DESTINY** and every adult woman a **POWERFUL FORCE** for good."

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Oct. 2005 general conference (*Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2005, 29).

look. This leads to negative body image because we are taught that our bodies are the most important things about us and that we need to "fix our flaws" in order to be happy.

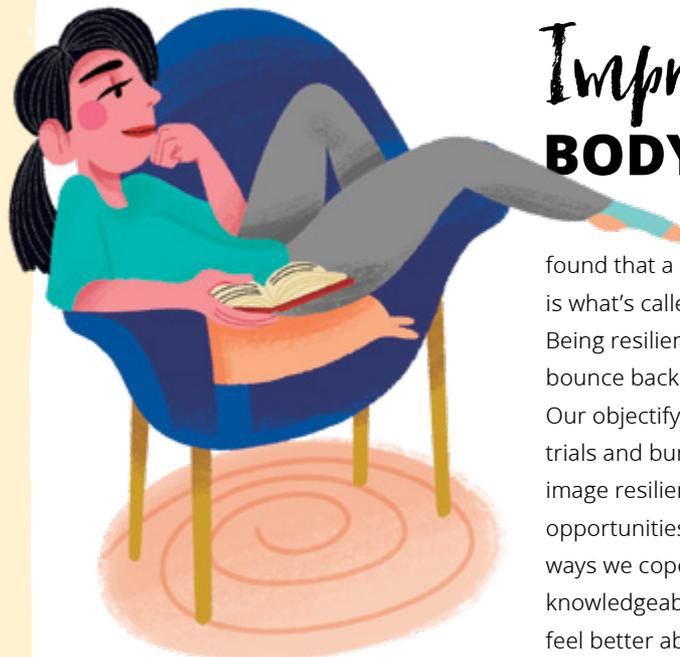
So many of us compare ourselves to social media influencers and celebrities who fit all of today's ideals. What we don't see is all the digital editing, styling, trainers, and cosmetic surgery that often goes into getting that look.

The objectifying messages in our culture tell us to think of our own bodies from an outside perspective, as though we were looking in at ourselves. This is called self-objectification. Studies show that when girls are self-conscious of their looks, they don't do as well on math,

reading, or physical fitness tests.

The pain of being objectified and thinking of yourself as an object often leads to eating disorders, anxiety, and depression and pushes people to cope in dangerous ways like self-harm, drug abuse, and unhealthy relationships. It causes people to stop participating in school and sports (like we did), serving others, and pursuing leadership opportunities.

Self-objectification is at the root of negative body image because it puts all the focus on how our bodies *look* rather than how we *feel* or what we can *do*. It prevents us from seeing ourselves as God sees us: as children of our Heavenly Parents with inherent, unchangeable value.



## Improving BODY IMAGE

In our research, we found that a key to improving body image is what's called "body image resilience." Being resilient means being able to bounce back from difficult experiences. Our objectifying culture might create trials and burdens for us, but with body image resilience, those trials can be opportunities to grow and improve the ways we cope. We can become more knowledgeable and compassionate and feel better about our bodies *because of*

how we respond to that pain, not *in spite* of it.

To develop body image resilience, we first need to recognize and reflect on the ways distorted messages about bodies have shaped our views of ourselves and others. We can then practice new strategies to grow in response to those views and painful experiences. One of those strategies is to understand our divine identities as children of loving Heavenly Parents.

# Seeing MORE CLEARLY

Let's start with recognizing and reflecting on the distorted ways we are tempted to think about bodies. How many times have you seen yourself in a picture or video taken by you or someone else? Think of the many lenses through which you might be watching yourself grow up: the lenses of family and friends' cameras, your own cellphones, filters, even beauty-enhancing apps.

The Apostle Paul taught, "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known" (1 Corinthians 13:12). The glass Paul described was like a cloudy or opaque mirror. We may also see ourselves "through a glass darkly" if we look at ourselves through mental lenses that have been distorted by our image-obsessed culture and determine our worth based on that warped and limited view.

But Paul's words could imply that we could one day see ourselves as God sees us. We are known to God and can learn more of who we really are through that loving lens. So how do we clean our lens so we see more like God does? Here are four things you can do.



## 4 Tips to Clean Your LENS

- 1 See your body as an instrument, not an ornament.** Think of your body as a tool for experiencing life the way God intends, not just something to be looked at. Focus on how you feel and what you can do.
- 2 Try a media cleanse or fast.** Try taking a break from media, and then take inventory of what you're viewing when you go back. Do the images you see or the accounts you follow spark your body anxiety or shame? Do they objectify people? If so, you have the power to unfollow, unsubscribe, and fill your feed with goodness.
- 3 Take responsibility for your own thoughts and actions.** Regardless of what anyone else wears or does, you can decide to view them as a person, not an object. Respect others' agency to make choices that are different from yours and treat them with dignity.
- 4 Join forces with others to see more and be more.** Ask friends and family to join you in rejecting objectifying media and conversation. Speak up about the importance of seeing ourselves and others as more than a body, and back it up by how you talk about yourself and others.

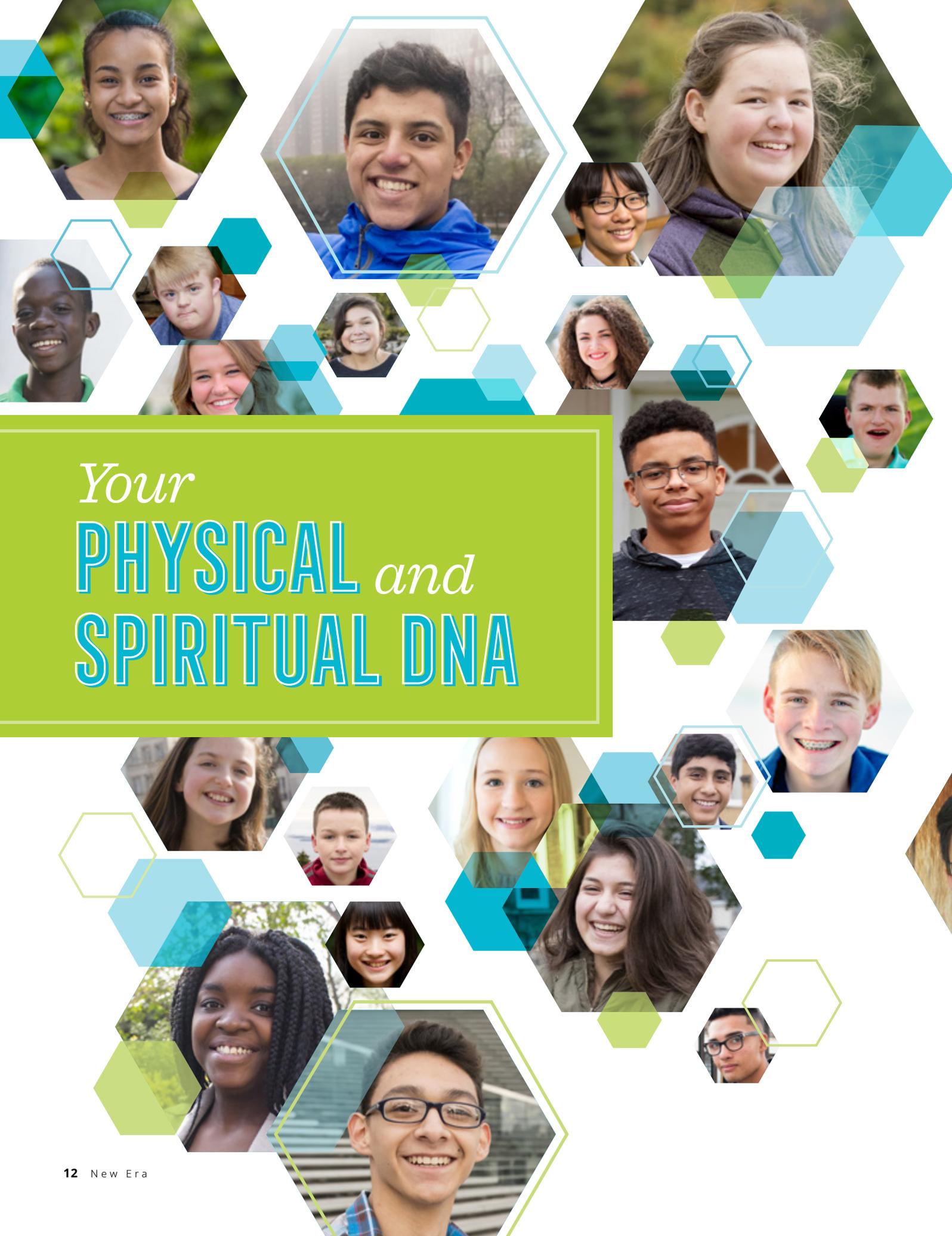
# Seeing AS GOD SEES

Our Heavenly Parents want you to be happy and understand your value, power, and potential in this world. The Holy Ghost can help us to see "things as they really are" (Jacob 4:13)—not through distorted lenses. You can contribute so much to this world that is in need of you—not just a pretty vision of you, but *all* of you—regardless of your physical ability or appearance. We are all more than a body, and when we can see more in ourselves and others, we can be more. **NE**

*The authors live in Utah, USA, and New York, USA, and run a nonprofit organization promoting positive body image.*



We are all more than a body, and when we can **see more in ourselves and others**, we can be more."



*Your*  
**PHYSICAL** *and*  
**SPIRITUAL DNA**



*In body and spirit, humankind is both united and diverse. This is part of the genius of Heavenly Father's plan.*



**By David A. Edwards**  
Church Magazines

**E**very person is unique. Just look around. It's hard to miss. Even identical twins have some differences—just ask them. So what causes all of this diversity, and what's its purpose?

## PHYSICAL DNA

As you probably learned in school, DNA is a molecule in all living organisms that carries the genetic code that helps them reproduce, grow, and function properly.

All humankind shares the same basic genetic makeup. But the specific genes you've inherited from your parents also give you the special blend of traits that make you biologically unique. It's what gives you your hair, skin, and eye color, your height, body type, facial features, and a thousand other outward characteristics. It also has some influence on your personality and your emotional and psychological makeup.

So DNA helps make you unique, and it makes humankind diverse. This makes life more interesting, since it would be pretty boring if we were all the same. But the reason for this diversity goes well beyond just variety or adaptation in a healthy gene pool.

God makes people genetically diverse for His purposes. President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, then of the First Presidency, taught that it belongs to "the genius of God" that He "created every man different from his brother, every son different from his father" ("Four Titles," Apr. 2013 general conference [*Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2013, 59]).

Part of this genius has to do with the test of this life—our quest to follow Jesus Christ and become more like our Heavenly Father. Living among different people can be challenging and uncomfortable. Yet our different talents—physical, intellectual, and otherwise—allow us to benefit one another and appreciate one another in different ways. Most importantly, our differences can help us learn divine qualities of patience, compassion, and love.

The Lord has said: "Let every man esteem his brother as himself" (Doctrine and Covenants 38:24) and "Love thy neighbour as thyself" (Leviticus 19:18; Matthew 22:39). To see everyone as of equal worth and to possess a Christlike love are vital qualities for us to strive for. And Christlike love is a gift from God that will allow us to obtain eternal life (see Moroni 7:47–48).

So in a way, through our diversity, we can learn more about what connects us and strive to "be one," as the Lord has commanded us to do (Doctrine and Covenants 38:27). His commandments remind us that we're all part of the same family—the human family or, more significantly, God's family.





## SPIRITUAL DNA

Our Heavenly Parents also passed along to us what we might call a “spiritual DNA.” Among other things, we’ve inherited the ability to know good from evil, to choose good or evil and act for ourselves, to recognize light and truth, to love, and to feel the Holy Ghost.

Like our physical DNA, our spiritual inheritance unites us as a family. It also helps us to know that, regardless of our circumstances in this life, our “spiritual DNA is perfect because one’s true identity is as a son or daughter of God” (Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Apr. 2016 general conference [*Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2016, 50]).

As you recognize your true identity, you also recognize your true potential. You can become more like Heavenly Father. What’s more, every person around you has that same potential—yes, every single one. When this truth really sinks in, you get a richer, nobler feeling about your fellow human beings. And you feel an even greater oneness with your brothers and sisters.

But just as we see diversity in our biological traits, we also know that our spirits are diverse. Some part of us has always existed (see Abraham 3:18; Doctrine and Covenants 93:29), and our spirit birth meant that we became literal sons and daughters of God and were able to progress as spirits in meaningful ways.

“You have the spiritual DNA of God,” said President Uchtdorf. “You have unique gifts that originated in your spiritual creation and that were developed during the vast span of your premortal life” (“Three Sisters,” Oct. 2017 general conference [*Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2017, 17]).

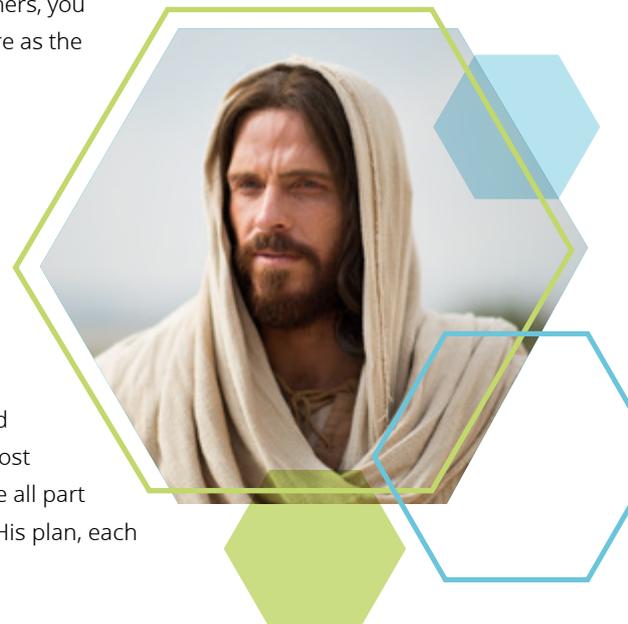
The uniqueness of our spirits is part of Heavenly Father’s plan. Each of us must choose, individually, to follow God’s plan by obeying His commandments, coming unto Jesus Christ, and making and keeping covenants. And each of us can make a unique contribution to God’s work by choosing to serve His children in ways that are individual to each of us—and to them.

As you use the unique gifts of your spiritual DNA to serve others, you can help them fulfill their true potential—a potential we all share as the spirit children of Heavenly Parents.

## CONCLUSION

There’s much we still don’t know about how physical DNA really works to produce all of the novelty and variety we see in living things. But when it comes to the family of man, we know the most important things: Despite our differences, we are all connected. We are all of equal worth. And we need to love one another.

Likewise, the details of our spirit birth haven’t been revealed to us. But when it comes to our spiritual DNA, we know the most important things: We are children of Heavenly Parents. We are all part of God’s family. Each of us is a unique spirit. And if we follow His plan, each of us can become more like Him. **NE**



# Let's Have a Modest CONVERSATION

↓  
CONFUSED ABOUT MODESTY?  
Let's clear things up!

## What Modesty Is (and Isn't)

When you hear the word *modesty*, what's the first thing that pops into your head? Probably a list of clothing "do's and don'ts" that you've been taught since you were little. But let's try thinking of modesty in a different way.

What does it really mean to be modest?

Modesty isn't only about what you wear; it's also about having an attitude of humility and dignity.<sup>1</sup> It's about respect: respect for ourselves, for others, and for God. How we dress is just one way to show that we know our true identities as sons and daughters of God. We can be modest in dress, behavior, and language.

"BRETHREN, are you more interested in dressing and grooming your body to appeal to the world than you are to please God? Your answer . . . sends a direct message to Him about your feelings regarding His transcendent gift to you. In this reverence for our bodies, brethren, I think we can do better and be better."

PRESIDENT RUSSELL M. NELSON, APR. 2019 GENERAL CONFERENCE (ENSIGN OR LIAHONA, MAY 2019, 68).

## Who It's For

Everyone! All of us are children of God, so He wants each of us to understand why and how to choose modesty. It can be as simple as choosing less revealing clothing, talking about others in a respectful way, or not participating in a degrading activity.

"ARE WE careful in our appearance and modest in our dress, especially in sacred places and circumstances?"

SISTER BECKY CRAVEN, SECOND COUNSELOR IN THE YOUNG WOMEN GENERAL PRESIDENCY, APR. 2019 GENERAL CONFERENCE (ENSIGN OR LIAHONA, MAY 2019, 10).

FROM THE LAST GENERAL CONFERENCE

## Why Modesty?

President Russell M. Nelson has taught, "The Lord needs you to look like, sound like, act like, and dress like a true disciple of Jesus Christ."<sup>2</sup>

The way we behave and what we choose to wear show we know our divine worth, identity, and potential. As we follow the standards for modesty, we can gain confidence in ourselves and in God's plan for us. **NE**

## NOTES

1. See "Modesty," Gospel Topics, topics.ChurchofJesusChrist.org; *For the Strength of Youth* (2011), 6–8.
2. Russell M. Nelson, "Hope of Israel" (worldwide youth devotional, June 3, 2018), 16, HopeofIsrael.ChurchofJesusChrist.org.

*Photo sharing can be fun, but how much is too much?*

**W**hen you want to keep your friends up-to-date on your latest amazing experiences, what do you do? If you're like a lot of people, you share photos or videos. It's so easy, and it really helps you and your friends feel like you're part of each other's lives.

But in recent years, some young people have engaged in some unhealthy sharing. The most extreme form of this is sexting, when people use technology to share images of themselves or others wearing little or no clothing, often in suggestive poses.

Studies show that among

SOME  
THINGS  
WE DON'T  
SHARE



12–17-year-olds, nearly 1 in 6 have sent sexts and more than 1 in 4 have received them. And those numbers are increasing over time.<sup>1</sup>

So, does someone just wake up one day and say, “I think I’ll start sexting”? Doubtful. It usually begins with people’s desire to feel good about themselves or fit in, which is a

normal thing—but easily misdirected.

They start sharing photos of themselves—some muscle flexing here, a new outfit there, a new pose. Likes and comments come. The validation feels good. But the more they thrive on the attention, the further their standards can slip.

This is how Satan often tempts us: he

starts small and gets people to ignore the Spirit’s warnings as they go down the path until they’ve gone further than they thought they would. When they’re sharing immodest photos, it’s gone too far. Time to stop and rethink. And that goes for people who deliberately follow accounts that share these kinds of photos, too.

## PRINCIPLES OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Latter-day Saints who share their own immodest photos or view others’ immodest photos have unfortunately lost sight of some basic principles taught by modern prophets in *For the Strength of Youth*:

- **“Your body is sacred.** Respect it” ([2011], 6).
- **“Never lower your standards of dress.** . . . When you dress immodestly, you send a message that is contrary to your identity as a son or daughter of God. You also send the message that you are using your body to get attention and approval” (6–7).
- **“Guard your safety and the safety of others** by taking great care about what . . . images you share through technology. Do not communicate anything over the Internet or through texting that would be inappropriate to share in person” (13).
- **“Treat others with respect,** not as objects used to satisfy lustful and selfish desires” (36).

## WHAT TO DO

If you or anyone you know has been involved in sexting or has been tempted or invited to do so:

1. Talk to a trusted adult about it. You may feel uncomfortable doing this, and other young people involved may not want you to do it, but if you have the courage to talk to someone, you will help bring about the best outcome for everyone. Hiding this activity will only make things worse.
2. If a trusted adult encourages you to do so, talk seriously with those involved about how wrong it is. Show love and concern, but be firm.

## A CLEAR PICTURE

Whether or not you’re involved in these kinds of activities or know someone who is, it’s important to be very clear about where you stand. Here are a few points to consider:

- **Sharing immodest and suggestive photos is wrong.** We should learn to “bridle all [our] passions” (Alma 38:12), not fuel them. Asking for these kinds of pictures, taking them, sending them, or looking at them violates the standards the Lord has set.
- **It shows a lack of respect.** Sexting shows a lack of respect for yourself, for others, and for God, who gave us the gift of our bodies. Keep the Lord’s high standards, and have the confidence to let others know you will not break them.
- **It is dangerous.** Once you’ve sent someone these kinds of pictures, you don’t control them anymore. You never know who else might somehow get their hands on them and do something with them that could threaten or harm you. Also, sending or storing these kinds of photos of minors is illegal in many places.
- **It will not increase feelings of true self-worth.** Sexting doesn’t make a person more desirable; it demeans them. And deep inside, that person knows that it demeans them. True self-worth comes from knowing you are a precious child of Heavenly Father. True confidence comes from virtue and the influence of the Holy Ghost in your life (see Doctrine and Covenants 121:45–46).
- **Anyone who would ask for such a thing is not a true friend.** Anyone who would ask someone to take an explicit picture of themselves does not have their best interests at heart and should probably be avoided. Such a person is being selfish and carnally-minded and needs to apologize and repent. **NE**

### NOTE

1. See Madigan S., and others, “Prevalence of Multiple Forms of Sexting Behavior among Youth: A Systematic Review and Meta-analysis,” *JAMA Pediatrics*, vol. 172, no. 4 (Apr. 2018), 327–335.

# BRAIN AND BODY: HOW THEY WORK TOGETHER

*When you take  
care of your  
temple, it takes  
much better  
care of you.*



By David Dickson  
Church Magazines

Imagine this scene: The date was going perfectly. He knew this was the night to declare his feelings.

"I love you!" he blurted out to the woman of his dreams. "I love you . . . from the bottom of my *temporal lobe!*"

Unless the woman was a med student, this statement would probably fall short of the intended effect. The thing is, though, he's spot on for accuracy, because the brain is the organ that processes emotions.

The ways in which you process emotions, think clearly, solve problems, direct your muscles, interact with others—all that and much more is tied to the complex and incredible organ in your skull.

## A SHARED TEMPLE

President Russell M. Nelson has taught: "Your physical body is a magnificent creation of God. It is His temple as well as yours and must be treated with reverence."<sup>1</sup>

There's something powerful about viewing your body as God's temple as well as yours. It makes you want to treat it with more reverence.

Your spirit, which resides within your body and gives it life (see James 2:26), makes choices that affect the health of your body, including your brain. Your health can, in turn, affect your spirit. So it's in your best interest to maintain good spiritual, mental, physical, and emotional health because they influence each other.

*For the Strength of Youth* says, "Do all you can to safeguard your physical and emotional health so that you can fulfill your divine potential as a son or daughter of God" ([2011], 27).

Physical and emotional health are closely connected. Choices you make each day can contribute to keeping your brain either stuck in the mud or running at its best. The cool part is, when you *do* take care of your brain, you're automatically taking great care of the rest of your body at the same time.

Here are a few strategies for safeguarding your temple, including the brain that helps regulate it. These suggestions can help the average person maintain general health. There are, however, certain mental and emotional challenges that would not necessarily be improved by these strategies. Those kinds of challenges would require professional diagnosis and treatment.



## SECRETS OF SLUMBER

Did you know that the scriptures give counsel on sleep as well as when to go to bed? Doctrine and Covenants 88:124 says to "retire to thy bed early, that ye may not be weary; arise early, that your bodies and your minds may be invigorated."

Most teens don't get enough sleep. Medical experts recommend around nine hours of sleep for teens each night.



(Yes, *nine*.) Getting enough sleep is super important for keeping your brain and body in top form.

You risk more than a bad case of brain fog if you lose sleep consistently. Here are a few of the possible side effects:

- Poorer emotional regulation, learning, and memory.
- A reduced immune system.
- Less ability to focus.

The good news is, the opposite is also true. You can boost your immune system, sharpen your mind, focus more clearly, and enhance your ability to regulate emotions—all from getting enough sleep. No matter how funny the cat videos are, it's not worth being a zombie the next day. Go to bed! The cats will still be there tomorrow.



## PREMIUM FUEL

The Word of Wisdom teaches you much more than what *not* to put in your body. In fact, the “do’s” outweigh the “don’ts.” For instance, the Word of Wisdom says you can use *all* healthy herbs (i.e., plants).

Loathe broccoli? Despise apples? No worries. Keep on spinning the Wheel of Fruits and Veggies until you find some you like.

Good nutrition plays a major role in your overall health, including the efficiency of your brain. It sometimes helps to think of your brain like the engine of an expensive car. While a high-performance car can run on low-quality fuel, it always runs best on premium fuel.

Eating healthy foods provides that premium fuel to your brain. Giving your brain the right fuel will help you feel better and think more clearly. Read section 89 of the Doctrine and Covenants for guidance on what to eat.

The rest of your body benefits from that good fuel, too. You’ll likely have more energy, get sick less often, and reap many other awesome benefits of good nutrition.



## TEMPLE MAINTENANCE

For years, scientists have noticed a link between exercise and mental health. Evidence continues to suggest that exercise—especially aerobic exercise—helps strengthen your brain and allows you to maintain a better handle on your emotions.<sup>2</sup>

But really, exercise is healthy for your *whole* body. Elder Jörg Klebingat of the Seventy taught: “Regularly give your body the exercise it needs and deserves. If you are physically able, decide today to be the master of your own house and begin a regular, long-term exercise program, suited to your abilities, combined with a healthier diet.”<sup>3</sup>

You don’t need to spend hours each day at the gym. Small amounts of exercise can fit into open slots throughout your week. Park at the back of the parking lot. Take a quick walk around the block after dinner. Use a bike instead of a car if you can get where you’re going in a reasonable amount of time.

Common guidelines for aerobic exercise are to aim for somewhere around 150 minutes of moderate exercise, or 75 minutes of

vigorous exercise, each week.<sup>4</sup>

If you want another guideline to shoot for, you might want to work up to walking 6 miles (8 km) a day, several days a week. This is similar to what’s expected of many missionaries. Start slow and build up.





## STRESS MANAGEMENT

Stress has a bad reputation, but it's actually not all bad. We need at least a little of it in our lives to stay productive and to keep improving. This type of good stress is sometimes called "eustress." It's what you might feel when learning a new skill or accomplishing something difficult yet rewarding.

Too much stress, though, can wear you out. One prime culprit here is often self-inflicted: overscheduling. Choosing to take music lessons might be a fine goal. But trying to do music lessons, dance lessons, soccer practice, honor classes, debate club, and karate all at the same time? That's a recipe for burnout.

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, then of the First Presidency, said, "We would do well to slow down a little, proceed at the optimum speed for our circumstances, focus on the significant, lift up our eyes, and truly see the things that matter most."<sup>5</sup>

## BRAIN HEALTH

Sometimes, despite our best efforts, health and wellness remain elusive. This can certainly be the case with mental health.

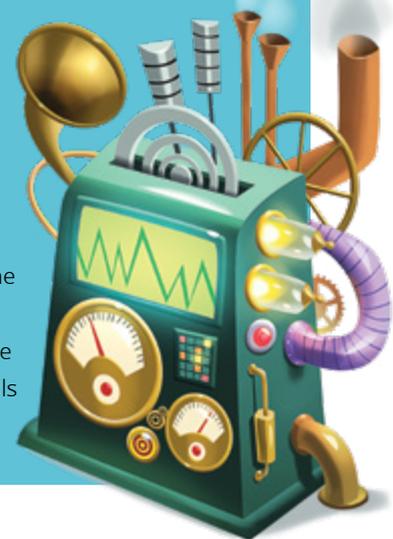
There's a world of difference between the sadness you feel after a disappointing day versus feeling so down that you struggle to even get out of bed every day for weeks.

*For the Strength of Youth* says: "Disappointment and occasional sadness are part of this mortal life. However, if you have prolonged feelings of sadness, hopelessness, anxiety, or depression, talk with your parents and your bishop and seek help" (27).

Part of seeking help—and encouraging others to seek help—involves removing the stigma often associated with mental illness. Nobody in good conscience would ask someone in a wheelchair to stop using the wheelchair, or insist that the wheelchair is an unnecessary "crutch." Yet sometimes emotional illness is viewed this way. "Just snap out of it," some might misguidedly say, or, "You just have to choose to feel better."

Mental health issues are serious and should not be fought alone.

If you or someone you know needs help, try visiting [mentalhealth.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](http://mentalhealth.ChurchofJesusChrist.org) to find ideas on where to begin. In the meantime, remember the following from Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: "Old sailing ships had periods when the wind did not blow. They were 'dead in the water.' But the wind will return. The sails will fill. You will come into port."<sup>6</sup>



## BE YOUR BEST YOU

In all your efforts to improve, please remember the following: if you must make comparisons, compare only your current self with your former self. We all have strengths, gifts, and talents. Yet no two of us are strong, gifted, or talented in precisely the same ways. So please, don't get caught up in the comparison trap.

Remember to safeguard your physical and emotional health as well as your spiritual health as you seek to become the best possible version of you.

And that person is good enough any day of the year. **NE**

## AND THAT PERSON IS GOOD ENOUGH ANY DAY OF THE YEAR.

### NOTES

1. Russell M. Nelson, "Your Body: A Magnificent Gift to Cherish," *New Era*, Aug. 2019, 4.
2. See [hopkinsmedicine.org/health/healthy-sleep/sleep-better/teenagers-and-sleep-how-much-sleep-is-enough](http://hopkinsmedicine.org/health/healthy-sleep/sleep-better/teenagers-and-sleep-how-much-sleep-is-enough).
3. Jörg Klebingat, Oct. 2014 general conference (*Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2014, 35).
4. See [heart.org/en/healthy-living/fitness/fitness-basics/aha-recs-for-physical-activity-in-adults](http://heart.org/en/healthy-living/fitness/fitness-basics/aha-recs-for-physical-activity-in-adults).
5. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "Of Things That Matter Most," Oct. 2010 general conference (*Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 21).
6. Jeffrey R. Holland's Facebook page, post from Mar. 17, 2016, [facebook.com/lds.jeffrey.r.holland](https://www.facebook.com/lds.jeffrey.r.holland); quoted at [ChurchofJesusChrist.org/mentalhealth](http://ChurchofJesusChrist.org/mentalhealth).



# HOW I FIGHT ILLNESS WITH FAITH

By Jesse Jamison

*When I was sick with leukemia, I prayed a lot. And when I prayed, I felt like it wasn't the end of the world.*



**W**hen I was seven years old, I saw a picture in a Bible of Jesus getting baptized. I thought it would be cool to get baptized too. One morning I told my mom, "Look at this picture of Jesus. He's getting baptized. Why am I not baptized?" After that, we started looking around at churches to join.

That same year, I got sick with leukemia. Doctors found a lymphoma on my chest, and I had to stay in the hospital for three weeks. After that, I would go to the hospital for four days and then go home for 10 days. I did that six times. Going through chemotherapy was really bad, but it made the tumor shrink. Later I got fungal pneumonia and had to spend more time in the hospital.

When my mom was young, she was an active member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. When I got sick, she started reading the Book of Mormon again. My family took the missionary discussions later, and we all started going to church. My dad got baptized first. After he got the priesthood, he baptized my brothers and me. My sisters weren't old enough yet. Getting baptized made me feel really good even though by then most of my hair had fallen out because of my chemotherapy.

During that time, I prayed a lot. When I prayed, I felt like it wasn't the end of the world. I got lots of priesthood blessings. They were really good and

helped me with my faith. Medicine helped me too.

For a while, I didn't feel like getting out of bed or doing much, but I told my mom I knew that Heavenly Father was going to protect me. I just had a feeling I would get better. I saw that the doctors were super confident. That made me confident too.

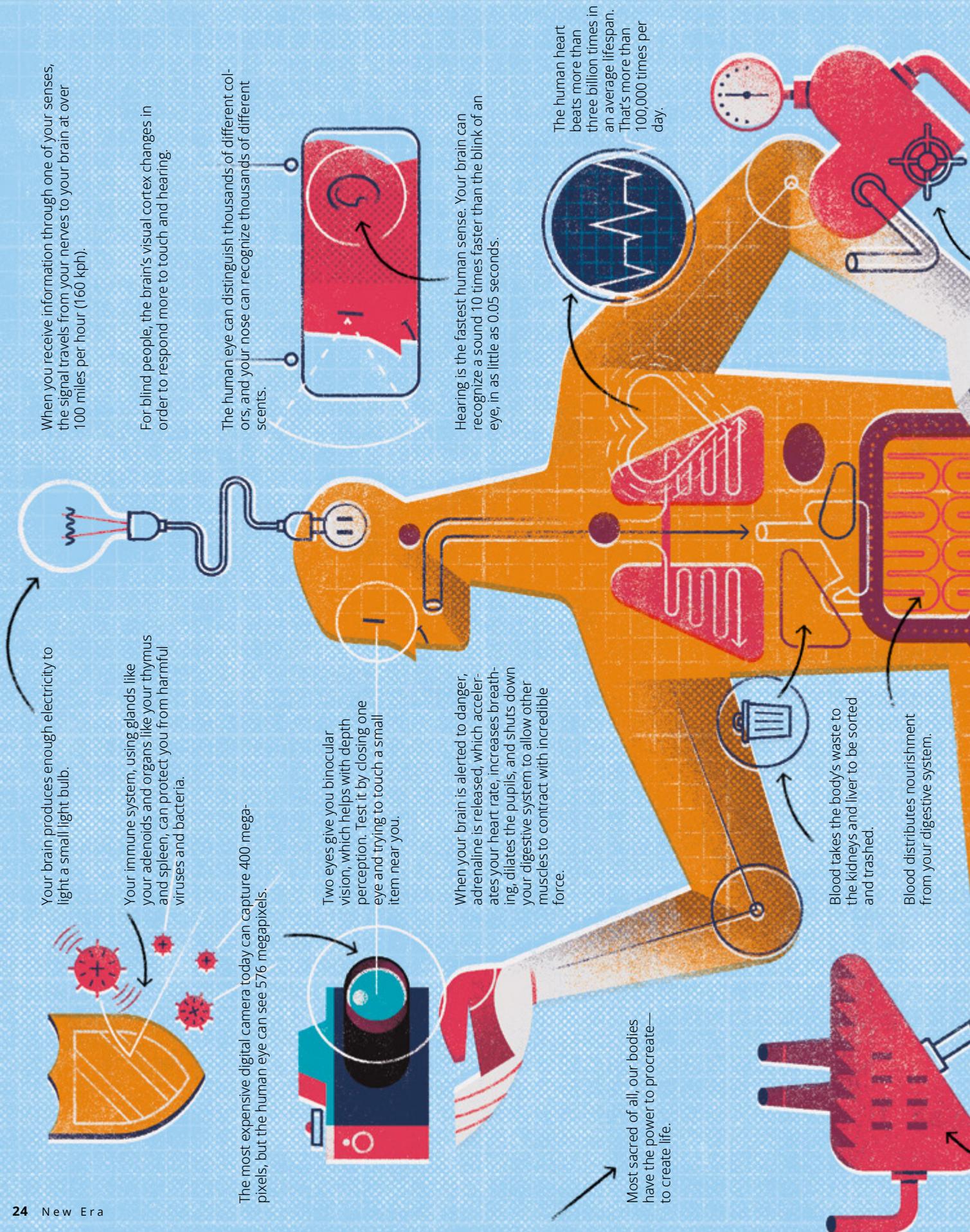
My brothers and sisters helped me feel better when I would come home from the hospital. It was nice to play with them. They had faith that I would get better.

I was still sick when I started tae kwon do. It's really fun, and it's what I like to do. I couldn't go to tae kwon do class during flu season because I had to watch my immune system. Tae kwon do helped me not think about being sick. I have my green belt now, and I want to get my black belt. That will take me a few more years.

In March 2019, I finished the chemotherapy and my last round of steroids. I feel really good about not having to do that anymore.

If someone is having a challenge or is really sick, I would say to read the Book of Mormon and have faith that Heavenly Father has a plan for us. That will help them. It's pretty bad if someone is sick and doesn't get better, but at least they will see Heavenly Father sometime soon. He knows what's best for us. **NE**

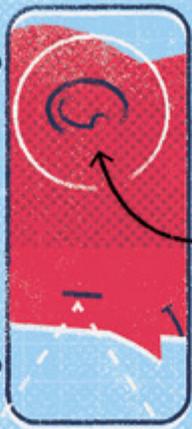
*The author lives in Alabama, USA.*



When you receive information through one of your senses, the signal travels from your nerves to your brain at over 100 miles per hour (160 kph).

For blind people, the brain's visual cortex changes in order to respond more to touch and hearing.

The human eye can distinguish thousands of different colors, and your nose can recognize thousands of different scents.



Hearing is the fastest human sense. Your brain can recognize a sound 10 times faster than the blink of an eye, in as little as 0.05 seconds.



The human heart beats more than three billion times in an average lifespan. That's more than 100,000 times per day.

Your brain produces enough electricity to light a small light bulb.

Your immune system, using glands like your adenoids and organs like your thymus and spleen, can protect you from harmful viruses and bacteria.

The most expensive digital camera today can capture 400 megapixels, but the human eye can see 576 megapixels.

Two eyes give you binocular vision, which helps with depth perception. Test it by closing one eye and trying to touch a small item near you.

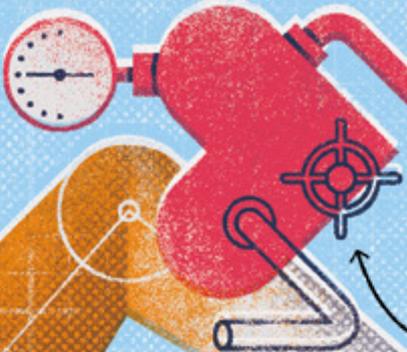
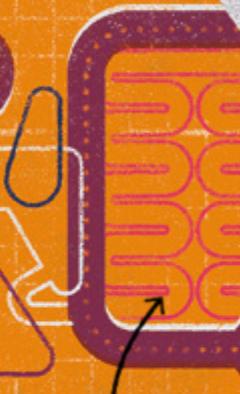


When your brain is alerted to danger, adrenaline is released, which accelerates your heart rate, increases breathing, dilates the pupils, and shuts down your digestive system to allow other muscles to contract with incredible force.

Most sacred of all, our bodies have the power to procreate—to create life.

Blood takes the body's waste to the kidneys and liver to be sorted and trashed.

Blood distributes nourishment from your digestive system.





The liver is responsible for more than 500 distinct processes. It is so important that if a person has two-thirds of his or her liver removed as a result of trauma or surgery, it will grow back to its original size in as little as four weeks.

Broken bones can heal.

Human bones are strong. The 26 small bones in your feet carry your body weight with every step you take.

**“Our physical body is the instrument of our spirit.”**

President Boyd K. Packer (1924–2015),  
President of the Quorum of the  
Twelve Apostles, *Let Not Your Heart Be  
Troubled* (1991), 211.

Your heart pumps 5.5 liters of blood per minute. So, during an average lifetime, it will pump nearly 1.5 million barrels of blood—enough to fill 200 train cars.

Blood supplies oxygen from the lungs to other organs. Blood removes carbon dioxide to the lungs to be breathed out.

The skin secretes antibacterial substances and serves as the first layer of defense for invading microorganisms. Most bacteria that land on the skin die quickly.

Your skin can be grafted from one part of your body to grow on another part. It is the human body's largest organ and is constantly renewing itself.

# AMAZING THINGS *the* Body Can Do

From head to toe, your body is an amazing creation. Because of it, you can paint, go hiking, play football, crochet, play the flute, and do many other enjoyable activities.

As the prophet explains on page 4, “Your body, whatever its natural gifts, is a magnificent creation of God. . . . Ponder the magnificence of what you see when you look in the mirror . . . a child of God, created by Him in His image.”



# THE WORD OF WISDOM:

*What It Is, What It Isn't*

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"Be different from the world. You and I know that you are to be a light to the world. Therefore, the Lord needs you to look like, sound like, act like, and dress like a true disciple of Jesus Christ. Yes, you are living in the world, but you have very different standards from the world to help you avoid the stain of the world."

President Russell M. Nelson, "Hope of Israel" (worldwide youth devotional, June 3, 2018), 16, [HopeofIsrael.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://www.HopeofIsrael.ChurchofJesusChrist.org).

## WHAT THE WORD OF WISDOM IS

A health law from the Lord for our physical and spiritual protection.

AVOID:	ENJOY:
Alcoholic drinks	Fruits
Tobacco	Vegetables
Tea and coffee	Meat (just not too much)
Anything harmful or addictive	Grains

See Doctrine and Covenants 89. See also the Word of Wisdom gospel topic at [topics.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/topics/word-of-wisdom).

## WHAT THE WORD OF WISDOM IS NOT

President Boyd K. Packer (1924–2015), President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, taught us what the Word of Wisdom is not:

1.

*A guarantee that you will always be healthy.*

“The Word of Wisdom does not promise you perfect health, but it teaches how to keep the body you were born with in the best condition and your mind alert to delicate spiritual promptings.”

2.

*A comprehensive list.*

“There are many habit-forming, addictive things that one can drink or chew or inhale or inject which injure both body and spirit which are not mentioned in the revelation.”

3.

*An excuse to be obsessive.*

“Learn to use moderation and common sense in matters of health and nutrition, and particularly in medication. Avoid being extreme or fanatical or becoming a faddist”<sup>1</sup> (a faddist is someone who follows every trend).

“Never let Satan or others deceive you into thinking that breaking the Word of Wisdom will make you happier, more popular, or more attractive.”<sup>2</sup> NE

## PROMISED BLESSINGS

Living the Word of Wisdom is a huge blessing! Here are some ways *For the Strength of Youth* mentions that you could be blessed:

- Freedom from harmful addictions
- More control over your life
- A healthier body
- A more alert mind
- Guidance from the Holy Ghost
- Greater ability to serve the Lord

### NOTES

1. Boyd K. Packer, “The Word of Wisdom: The Principle and the Promises,” Apr. 1996 general conference (*Ensign*, May 1996, 18).
2. *For the Strength of Youth* (2011), 25.



# VAPING, COFFEE, TEA, *and* MARIJUANA

Let's clear up a few items that you may be confused about when it comes to the Word of Wisdom.

## HERE ARE SOME FACTS ABOUT THE WORD OF WISDOM:

In Doctrine and Covenants 89:8-9, the Lord forbids our using tobacco and "hot drinks," which, Church leaders have explained, means tea and coffee.<sup>1</sup>

Modern prophets and apostles have frequently taught that the Word of Wisdom warns us against substances that can harm us or enslave us to addiction.<sup>2</sup>

So, with those facts in mind, let's try to clear up a few items that Latter-day Saint youth today may find a little confusing.



## VAPING, E-CIGARETTES, ETC.

Electronic vaporizers or e-cigarettes are devices people use to inhale mist, usually with various flavors. One study showed that nearly two-thirds of teen e-cigarette users thought that the pods they were vaping contained only flavoring.<sup>3</sup> That's way, way far from the truth. Most vaping pods contain nicotine, which is highly addictive, and all of them contain harmful chemicals.<sup>4</sup> Vaping is clearly against the Word of Wisdom.

## MOCHA, LATTE, MACCHIATO, ETC.

The word *coffee* isn't always in the name of coffee drinks. So, before you try what you think is just some new milkshake flavor, here are a couple of rules of thumb: (1) If you're in a coffee shop (or any other shop that's well-known for its coffee), the drink you're ordering probably has coffee in it, so either never buy drinks at coffee shops or always ask if there's coffee in it. (2) Drinks with names that include *café* or *caffé*, *mocha*, *latte*, *espresso*, or anything ending in *-ccino* are coffee and are against the Word of Wisdom.

## GREEN TEA, ICED TEA

Green tea and black tea are both made from the leaves of the exact same tea plant. The only difference is that the leaves in black tea are fermented and in green tea they're not. They're both tea and against the Word of Wisdom. Some drinks have tea in them but don't advertise that fact, so always check the ingredients. Also, iced tea is still tea.

## MARIJUANA, OPIOIDS

Marijuana may be legal for medicinal or even recreational use in a lot of places now, but that doesn't mean that *any* use is suddenly not against the Word of Wisdom. Medical uses are being studied, but just like many pain medications such as opioids, marijuana is an addictive substance. Such habit-forming substances should be avoided except under the care of a competent physician, and then used only as prescribed. **NE**

### NOTES

1. See *Handbook 2: Administering the Church*, 21.3.11.
2. See *For the Strength of Youth* (2011), 26-27.
3. See Johnston, L. D., and others, *Monitoring the Future national survey results on drug use, 1975-2015: Overview, key findings on adolescent drug use* (2016), 43.
4. See *Surgeon General's Advisory on E-cigarette Use among Youth* (2016), [e-cigarettes.surgeongeneral.gov](http://e-cigarettes.surgeongeneral.gov).

WHAT'S YOUR

BODY TYPE?

“Glorify God in your body, and  
in your spirit, which are God’s”  
(1 Corinthians 6:20).



All blessings, gifts, and attributes available in all states, territories, countries, and other habitable places. To receive blessings, terms and conditions apply (see Doctrine and Covenants 130:20–21). Any loss of blessings due to disobedience need not be permanent (see bishop for details). Some gifts may be conditioned on seeking them (see Doctrine and Covenants 46:8). Seeking Christlike attributes will result in greater joy and peace.



WILMA RUDOLPH

2-time Olympian  
3 gold medals  
Polio survivor



By Sister Michelle D. Craig  
First Counselor in the Young  
Women General Presidency

# WHAT VOICES WILL YOU LISTEN TO?

*We each have the potential for  
greatness and an inner beauty  
waiting to be revealed.*

***There are a lot of voices in the world that will try to tell you negative things:***

that you aren't good enough, that you're ugly or weak or incapable. There will always be voices that try to pull you down.

And so often we struggle because we listen to them. We feel unremarkable. We feel halting and slow. We feel ugly or worthless.

The question we have to ask is, what voice will we listen to? What will you choose to believe about who you are—and about your divine potential?

I love the following two stories. They teach us that no matter the physical challenges we face or the voices trying to bring us down, we each have the potential for greatness and an inner beauty waiting to be revealed.

### THE FASTEST WOMAN IN THE WORLD

In 1960 Wilma Rudolph became a track-and-field legend. She was running for the United States in the Olympics, which were being televised for the first time. In spite of the intense pressure, Wilma ran so quickly she was proclaimed “the fastest woman in the world.” By the end of the Olympics, she had won not just one gold medal but three—the first American woman ever to do so.

Wilma's incredible victory teaches us a powerful lesson about our true potential and identity. But her story is even more inspiring when you know how it began.

### THEY SAID SHE'D NEVER WALK

Wilma was born in Tennessee in 1940. She was the 20th of 22 children in her family. She was born prematurely and weighed under five pounds. In her early childhood she suffered from a slew of illnesses—pneumonia, scarlet fever, and then polio, which left her with limited use of her left leg. She required leg braces to stand. “My doctor told me I would never walk again. My mother told me I would,” Wilma said. “I believed my mother.”<sup>1</sup>

When she was nine years old, Wilma determined to prove the doctors wrong. She took

off her leg braces and began to walk, one slow step at a time. She fell, she got up and tried again, and again, and again. With grit, determination, and faith, Wilma continued to practice. Eventually, she even started to run. She ran a lot. And, after years of work, she ran fast—very fast. Fast enough to run in the 1956 Olympics and win a bronze medal at age 16. Then, four years later, she ran again to win those amazing three gold medals.



Winners of the women's 100-meter race at the 1960 Summer Olympics in Rome, Italy. Wilma Rudolph (center) is awarded the gold medal.

## THE HIDDEN BEAUTY WITHIN

Just like Wilma, you'll face voices telling you you're not good enough, you're too weak, or you're just not capable. They may tell you that you're different, ugly, or no good, or that you're not worth anything because you don't meet their physical standards.

Think about this next story.

In Thailand in 1955, a nearly 10-foot sculpture of a Buddha was being moved to a new building. Made of plaster and very heavy, it didn't appear all that remarkable.

But as the statue was being lifted from its pedestal, the ropes broke and the sculpture fell to the ground. The anxious movers quickly checked the statue for

damage, and to their dismay they discovered cracks in the plaster. Then a glint of color caught their attention.

Where the plaster was removed, they discovered that the sculpture was really made of gold! Apparently, hundreds of years earlier, the golden statue had been covered in plaster, perhaps to protect it from thieves, and over time the secret was forgotten until the fall revealed its true inner beauty. Today the gold alone is valued at \$250 million, and the statue is housed in a building of honor as a beautiful, historic, religious work of art.<sup>2</sup>



BUDDHA STATUE

9.8 feet tall  
Weighs 6.1 tons  
Worth \$250 million

The temple of Wat Traimit, Bangkok, Thailand



PHOTOGRAPHS BY CHRISTINA SMITH

## WHO WILL YOU LISTEN TO?

Many of us may feel like the plaster-covered Buddha statue, especially if we compare ourselves to others. Satan wants us to do just that—to compare our looks, our skills, our talents, our bodies to other people and to feel bad about our failings. If we listen, we may never realize the great inner beauty that God has granted each of us. Inside we are truly amazing.

As President Boyd K. Packer (1924–2015), President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, taught: “However many generations in your mortal ancestry, no matter what race or people you represent, the pedigree of your spirit can be written on a single line. You are a child of God!”<sup>3</sup> We have a divine nature and a beautiful eternal destiny! We are indeed sons and daughters of Heavenly Parents who love us, and we love Them!

The truth is, there are times when each of us struggles to break free of the figurative layers of plaster or leg braces that are holding us back and keeping our beautiful spirits and inner strength from shining through. What do we do in those moments? Do we listen to the voices that tell us we’re ugly or no good or we can’t measure up?

Or will we do as Wilma, who believed the encouraging words of her mother instead of alternate voices and then had the determination to get up each time she fell and try again?

Will you listen to the voice of our living prophet, President Russell M. Nelson, who tells you that you are among the spirits Heavenly Father held in reserve to come to the earth in these latter days—that “those noble spirits—those finest players, those heroes—are you?”<sup>4</sup>

Just as the golden Buddha covered in plaster and the young girl in leg braces, each one of us, as a child of God, has unlimited potential waiting to be developed and an inner beauty to be trusted and revealed. As we exercise faith in God and live as disciples of Jesus Christ, His Son, we can live with confidence, find joy, and reach our eternal potential. **NE**

### NOTES

1. Quoted in “Wilma Rudolph,” at [biography.com](http://biography.com).
2. See Jack Canfield, “The Golden Buddha,” in *Chicken Soup for the Soul*, ed. Jack Canfield and Mark Victor Hansen (1993), 69–71.
3. Boyd K. Packer, Apr. 1989 general conference (*Ensign*, May 1989, 54).
4. Russell M. Nelson, “Hope of Israel” (worldwide youth devotional, June 3, 2018), 8, [HopeofIsrael.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](http://HopeofIsrael.ChurchofJesusChrist.org).

*What I Learned  
from Having to*  
**LOSE WEIGHT**  
*for My Mission*

*As I focused on my physical health,  
I discovered some surprising things.*

By Jillian Pierson

I had just finished breakfast when my stake president called to tell me that my mission application had been denied. My heart sank as he told me why—I needed to lose a certain amount of weight before I would be able to serve. Missionaries have weight guidelines because of the physical endurance required of daily missionary service.

As he explained to me what I would need to do in order to resubmit my papers, the only thing I wanted to do was climb into my bed and hide.

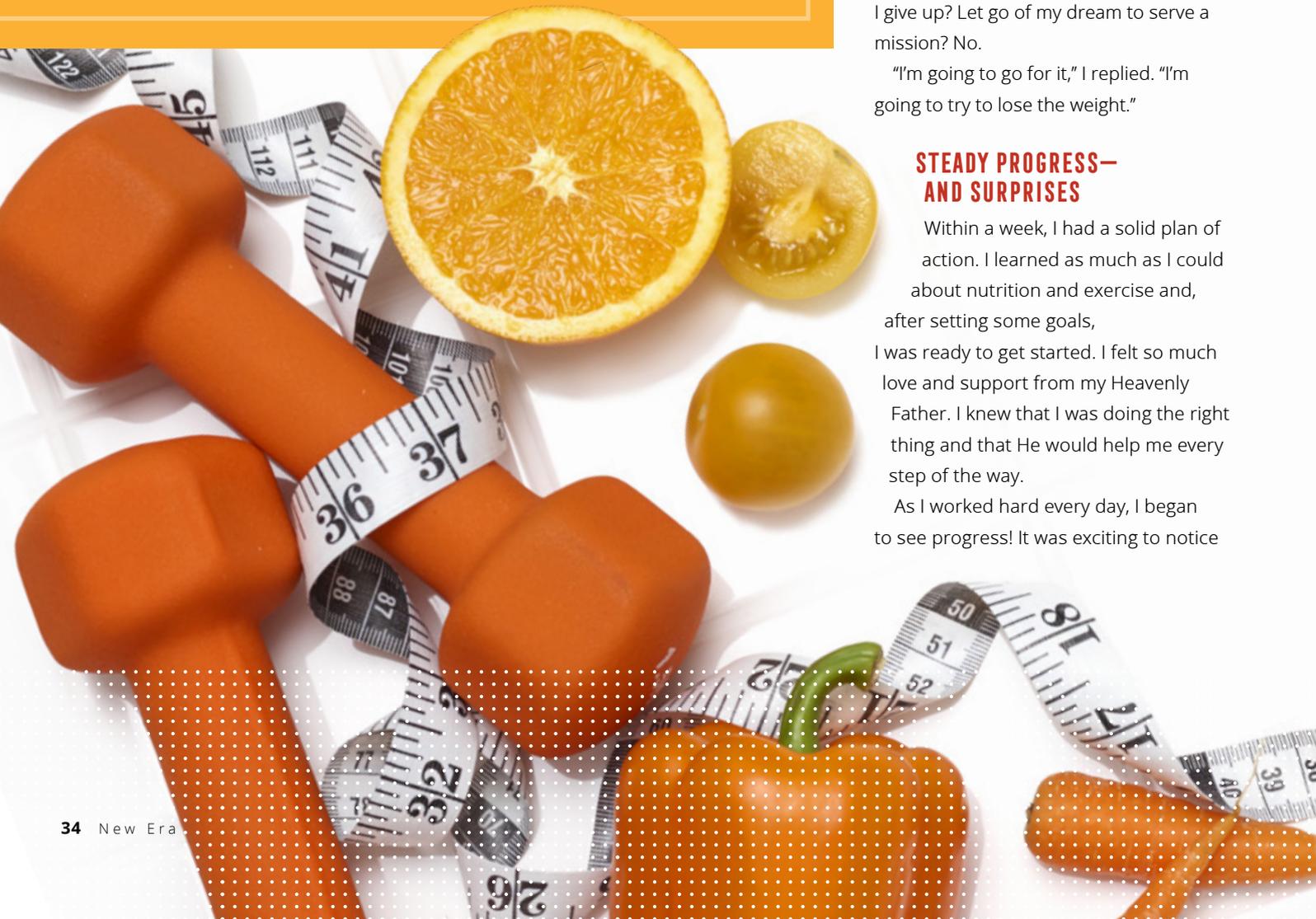
After the shock wore off, I called my dad at work and explained what had happened. He paused and then asked, “Well, what are you going to do?” Would I give up? Let go of my dream to serve a mission? No.

“I’m going to go for it,” I replied. “I’m going to try to lose the weight.”

**STEADY PROGRESS—  
AND SURPRISES**

Within a week, I had a solid plan of action. I learned as much as I could about nutrition and exercise and, after setting some goals, I was ready to get started. I felt so much love and support from my Heavenly Father. I knew that I was doing the right thing and that He would help me every step of the way.

As I worked hard every day, I began to see progress! It was exciting to notice



the physical effects of diet and exercise, but what surprised me most was the spiritual health I was gaining. I became more confident and self-aware as I developed into the person Heavenly Father wanted me to be.

I realized that as my spiritual health increased, it actually became easier for me to improve my physical health. The sacrament was so important in helping me stay focused on my goals. It became a sacred time of reflection for me as I thought about my Savior and how much He had helped me on this journey. I knew that He would stay by my side no matter what.

Prayer also made a big difference. There were so many times when I was running on the treadmill and would just start crying because I was so tired and my lungs hurt and I just wanted to go on a mission. I would say a prayer because I knew that someone in the mission field needed me, and I knew that I needed help to get there. After every workout, I thanked Heavenly Father for giving me the strength to go on.

## BODY AND SPIRIT

The gospel teaches us that our bodies and our spirits are one, but until this experience, I had never thought about how directly the health of my body could affect the health of my spirit. As I thought about my body as a temple, this connection between body and spirit began to make more sense. I knew that one reason we keep the temple so clean and beautiful is because it helps the Spirit to be there. So it makes sense that as I began to eat healthy and exercise more, I began to feel the Spirit even more.

I also noticed that I felt more energized and more willing to talk to and serve the people around me. I could feel the Spirit guide me as I put my trust in the Lord, and I discovered that I could turn to Him for help with any trial or hardship I might face.

## MOVING FORWARD

After months of hard work, I finally received my mission call! I was so excited I could hardly wait. And when I entered the Missionary Training Center, I felt prepared both physically *and* spiritually.

I feel so blessed to have had the opportunity to learn how to take care of both my body and my spirit. Working toward a meaningful goal gave me the motivation I needed to become a better version of myself. I learned that if I rely on the Lord as I try to accomplish my goals, He will help me every step of the way. **NE**

*The author lives in Utah, USA.*



*Until this experience, I had never thought about how directly the health of my body could affect the health of my spirit.*



LET'S GET SPECIFIC  
ABOUT THIS VERY SACRED  
COMMANDMENT.



## CHASTITY IS SEXUAL PURITY

In its simplest terms, living the law of chastity means you “do not have any sexual relations before marriage, and [you are] completely faithful to your spouse after marriage.”<sup>1</sup>

But being virtuous and chaste is about more than just sex. “Treat others with respect, not as objects used to satisfy lustful and selfish desires. Before marriage, do not participate in passionate kissing, lie on top of another person, or touch the private, sacred parts of another person’s body, with or without clothing. Do not do anything else that arouses sexual feelings. Do not arouse those emotions in your own body.”<sup>2</sup>

Note that the Lord’s standards don’t change just because two people really like each other and both agree to the behavior. When you respect other people, the Lord, and yourself, you’ll keep the commandments—and that means no sexual relationships or arousing sexual feelings outside of marriage, period.

The Lord really is serious about this. “The prophet Alma taught that sexual sins are more serious than any other sins except murder and denying the Holy Ghost (see Alma 39:3–5).”<sup>3</sup>

If you’re still wondering what “passionate kissing” means, or what it means to “arouse sexual feelings,” talk to your parents, bishop, or another trusted adult. Conversations with them can help you understand proper and improper behavior and help you live a life of sexual purity.

When it comes to making decisions, seek the Spirit. Pray regularly to Heavenly Father. If you’re spiritually in tune, it’ll be a lot easier to make the right choices.

If you’ve committed any sexual transgression, seek help from your bishop and your parents, who will help you gain strength and peace as you repent. It may not be an easy process, but it is definitely worth it!

# What Is THE LAW *of* CHASTITY?

By Joshua J. Perkey  
Church Magazines

When you hear the phrase “the law of chastity,” do you know what it means? You probably get a lot of mixed messages about it. All kinds of media, and sometimes even friends and family, have different opinions about it. And the world actively teaches things contrary to what the Lord teaches.

So what exactly does the law of chastity mean?

The law of chastity is the Lord’s term for His commandment to live a life of sexual purity and virtue.

Still not totally clear? Well, let’s get a little more specific with the help of *For the Strength of Youth*.

*Being virtuous  
and chaste  
is about more  
than just sex.  
It's also about  
respect.*

---

## FEELING ATTRACTION IS OK

You might wonder if it's wrong to think somebody is attractive. Don't get too anxious about it. That's normal. Seriously!

But you do have to be careful with your thoughts. The Savior warned us, "Whosoever looketh on a woman [or man] to lust after her [or him] hath committed adultery . . . already in his [or her] heart" (Matthew 5:28). That means you need to control your thoughts and feelings and not let desires get carried away.

Here's a key to help you: strive not to act selfishly. Don't lust after someone, think about them inappropriately, or do things that arouse sexual feelings in yourself or others.<sup>4</sup>

That's also why it's so important not to engage in pornography or other degrading media. Those things are always selfish, always drive away the Spirit, and always tempt you into things you shouldn't do.

But it doesn't mean that having feelings toward someone or feeling attracted to someone makes you a bad person. In fact, feeling attraction is part of God's plan and is a part of marriage. Husbands and wives who have healthy relationships feel strong attraction to each other and desire to serve and bless each other.

"Physical intimacy between husband and wife is beautiful and sacred. It is ordained of God for the creation of children *and* for the expression of love between husband and wife."<sup>5</sup>

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## PHYSICAL INTIMACY—AT THE RIGHT PLACE AND TIME

Physical intimacy is something to look forward to within your future marriage. It's sacred and beautiful.

As you strive to live a pure and virtuous life, you will feel closer to the influence of the Holy Ghost, you will feel better about yourself, and you will be prepared for wonderful blessings in the future. **NE**

### NOTES

1. *For the Strength of Youth* (2011), 35.
2. *For the Strength of Youth*, 36.
3. *True to the Faith: A Gospel Reference* (2004), 29.
4. For a little more clarity on this, read "Love versus Lust," *Ensign*, Oct. 2016, 58–63; *Liahona*, Oct. 2016, 30–35.
5. *For the Strength of Youth*, 35; emphasis added. For several inspiring discussions on marital intimacy, see Wendy Watson Nelson, "Love and Marriage" (worldwide devotional for young adults, Jan. 8, 2017), [broadcasts.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](http://broadcasts.ChurchofJesusChrist.org); Boyd K. Packer, Apr. 2015 general conference (*Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2015, 26–28); Jeffrey R. Holland, Oct. 1998 general conference (*Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 75–78).



## WHY

# CHASTITY?

*The reason for this law has to do with Heavenly Father's eternal plan for our souls.*

Heavenly Father has commanded us to be sexually pure. Many in the world would say that concept is outdated or silly and that there's really no reason for it. But Heavenly Father has given us the reasons. Those reasons are found in His plan to save each soul—both spirit and body.

## PREMORTAL LIFE



- We lived with our Heavenly Father as spirits, male and female, before we came to earth.
- We are His spirit children. He wants us to become like Him, and we want to become like Him.
- In His plan, we can come to earth, obtain a physical body, and gain earthly experience.
- We accepted this plan. Satan rebelled against it.

## MORTAL LIFE

### Commandments and Temptation

- We came to earth to receive a body and keep God's commandments.
- Because of Satan's rebellion, he and those who chose to follow him were denied the privilege of having a mortal body.

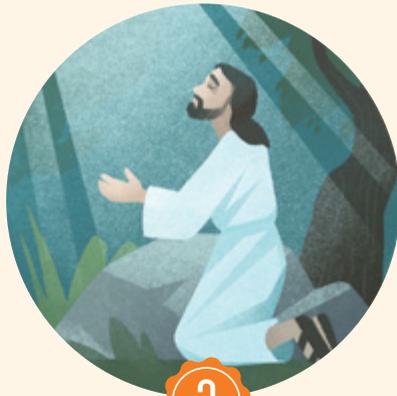


- "Because Satan is miserable *without* a body, he wants us to be miserable *because* of ours."<sup>1</sup>
- Satan entices us to break the law of chastity and tries to convince us that it's no big deal. But it is.
- "Violating the law of chastity is a grievous sin and a misuse of our physical tabernacles. To those who know and understand the plan of salvation, defiling the body is an act of rebellion (see Mosiah 2:36–37; Doctrine and Covenants 64:34–35) and a denial of our true identity as sons and daughters of God. As we look beyond mortality and into eternity, it is easy to discern that the counterfeit companionship advocated by the adversary is temporary and empty."<sup>2</sup>
- Heavenly Father considers chastity to be "dear and precious" (Moroni 9:9).

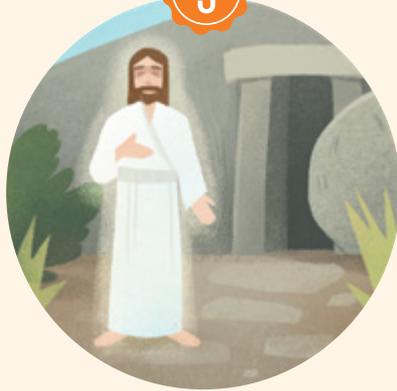
## THE ATONEMENT OF JESUS CHRIST



- “The spirit and the body are the soul of man” (Doctrine and Covenants 88:15).
- “One who uses the God-given body of another without divine sanction abuses the very soul of that individual, abuses the central purpose and processes of life. . . . In exploiting the body of another—which means exploiting his or her soul—one desecrates the Atonement of Christ, which saved that soul and which makes possible the gift of eternal life.”<sup>4</sup>



3



- Jesus Christ willingly atoned and suffered the pain for our sins (see Doctrine and Covenants 19:16–19).
- Breaking the law of chastity with the thought of repenting later shows irreverence for the Savior and His sacrifice for us.
- We are responsible to God for how we treat *our* body *and* spirit. “Ye are not your own,” the Apostle Paul taught, “Ye [have been] bought with a price: *therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s*” (1 Corinthians 6:19–20; emphasis added).
- If we fall into temptation and sin, we can be forgiven if we repent.



### Marriage and Family

- Physical intimacy between husband and wife is sacred. It’s a way to express love and enables a husband and a wife to have children and grow their families.
- “The power to create mortal life is the most exalted power God has given his children. . . .

“The expression of our procreative powers is pleasing to God, but he has commanded that this be confined within the relationship of marriage.”<sup>3</sup>

## EXALTATION



- One day we can receive a resurrected, glorified physical body.
- Only when our spirit and body are permanently united are we capable of becoming like Heavenly Father and receiving a fulness of joy (see Doctrine and Covenants 93:34; 130:22).
- If we have been obedient and made and kept covenants, we can obtain a celestial glory and become like our Heavenly Father, living in families, forever (see Doctrine and Covenants 88:15–29; 131:1–4).
- “The Savior’s way of life is good. His way includes chastity before marriage and total fidelity within marriage. The Lord’s way is the only way for us to experience enduring happiness.”<sup>5</sup>

#### NOTES

1. Russell M. Nelson, “We Can Do Better and Be Better,” Apr. 2019 general conference (*Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2019, 68).
2. David A. Bednar, Apr. 2013 general conference (*Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2013, 43).
3. Dallin H. Oaks, Oct. 1993 general conference (*Ensign*, Nov. 1993, 74).
4. Jeffrey R. Holland, Oct. 1998 general conference (*Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 76).
5. Russell M. Nelson, Oct. 2013 general conference (*Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2013, 108).



# YOUTH

## Like with hiking or running or any other sport, lifting weights takes endurance.

You have to have the drive to keep doing it. There are so many times when I feel tired, but I keep fighting and pushing to do my workout because it helps me grow stronger.

Spiritually, it's the same thing. There are so many temptations, but we have to do all we can to push through them. Even when we feel like giving up, we have to remember what we're fighting for and what we believe in. That makes us stronger too.

After I lift weights, it's much easier for me to want to eat healthy and take care of my body. It would seem like such a waste if you're spending all this time taking care of your body and trying to strengthen yourself but then destroy your body with drugs, alcohol, tobacco, or bad food.

Lifting has definitely helped me overcome normal teenage challenges. It has also helped me feel more confident.

If you're unhealthy, you won't have the drive to go ministering. If you're not confident, you won't feel comfortable socializing or want to go out teaching people. I definitely want to continue lifting weights and staying in shape. I want to be ready when I go on my mission in the next year or two.

**Zane H.,** 17, New Mexico, USA





**Bailee T., 17, Louisiana, USA**

I love hanging out with friends, but I've had to move a lot for my dad's work. After I left my friends in Oklahoma to go to Texas, I had a tough freshman year and separated myself from everybody. Then I attended seminary. My seminary teachers were like angels from heaven. I opened myself up more, made friends, and went on a temple trip. Seminary was the only place outside of home where I felt like I belonged.



**Brooklyn R., 13, Abu Dhabi, UAE**

Many people in the scriptures who went to the desert were humbled. When I moved to the United Arab Emirates, I thought my ward would be the same as my old one. The Church was the same, but my ward was different.

There were many people from other countries. The nearest temple was a long flight away. I've been humbled by this ward, from the sisters who stay late to clean the church to the brothers who check up on everyone. So I guess you could say I was humbled in the desert too.

PHOTOGRAPH BY LESLIE NILSSON

# FUN STOP

## The Incredible Human Body

Heavenly Father created your body in His own likeness (see Moses 6:9). Test your knowledge of this priceless gift in the quiz below.



1. How much blood does the average human heart pump a day?

- a. 50 gallons
- b. 250 gallons
- c. 1,000 gallons
- d. 2,000 gallons



4. True or false: Your bones, by weight, are stronger than concrete.

- a. True
- b. False



7. How many unique scents can your nose detect?

- a. One thousand
- b. One million
- c. One billion
- d. One trillion



2. Which of the following is true about teeth?

- a. You have more teeth than the average sloth.
- b. You have more teeth than the average dog.
- c. You have more teeth than the average horse.



5. True or false: Your brain generates enough electricity to power a lightbulb.

- a. True
- b. False



8. By weight, this is the strongest muscle in your body.

- a. Bicep
- b. Gluteus maximus
- c. Jaw muscle
- d. Quadriceps



6. What part of your body is mainly responsible for balance?

- a. Inner ear
- b. Lymph nodes
- c. Brain stem
- d. Fifth rib from the top, left side



3. Stretched out end to end, how far would the blood vessels in your body reach?

- a. A bit longer than the pioneer trek from Nauvoo, Illinois, to Salt Lake City, Utah.
- b. Between two and four times around the circumference of the earth.
- c. From Earth to the moon and back three times.
- d. From Earth to Pluto and halfway back again.



9. True or *true*: Your body is an incredible gift, no matter its size or shape.

- a. True
- b. True

ARIE VAN DE GRAAFF



Well, I can't find any reference to it in the Adam and Eve story either. I guess there really is no such thing as a forbidden vegetable.

## Scriptural Body Mix-Ups

Your sneaky seminary teacher wants to see how well you can identify the correct body parts from these scriptural passages. The **bolded** body parts have been mixed up. Look up the verses if you get stuck.

1. "The light of the body is the **heart**" (Luke 11:34).

**Should be :** \_\_\_\_\_

2. "Behold, O Lord; for I am in distress: my **feet** are troubled" (Lamentations 1:20).

**Should be :** \_\_\_\_\_

3. "Lord, I have trusted in thee, and I will trust in thee forever. I will not put my trust in the **ear** of flesh" (2 Nephi 4:34).

**Should be :** \_\_\_\_\_

4. "Therefore, let every man stand in his own office, and labor in his own calling; and let not the head say unto the **bowels** it hath no need of the **bowels**" (Doctrine and Covenants 84:109).

**Should be :** \_\_\_\_\_

5. "A new **arm** also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you" (Ezekiel 36:26).

**Should be :** \_\_\_\_\_

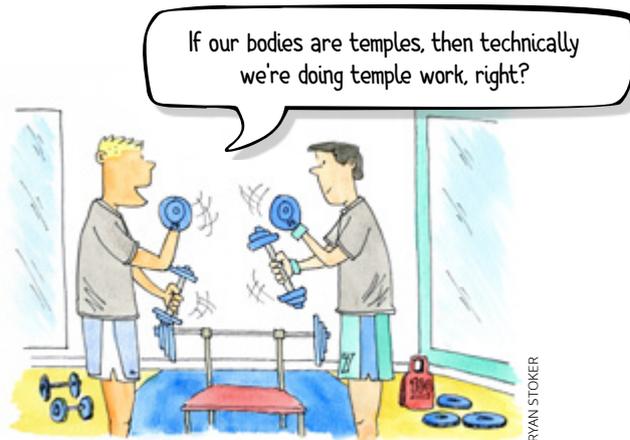
6. "Yea, and thou heardest not; yea, thou knewest not; yea, from that time thine **mouth** was not opened" (1 Nephi 20:8).

**Should be :** \_\_\_\_\_

7. "In the **eye** of two or three witnesses shall every word be established" (2 Corinthians 13:1).

**Should be :** \_\_\_\_\_

**HEART**      **EAR**  
**FEET**      **ARM**  
**MOUTH**      **EYE**      **BOWELS**

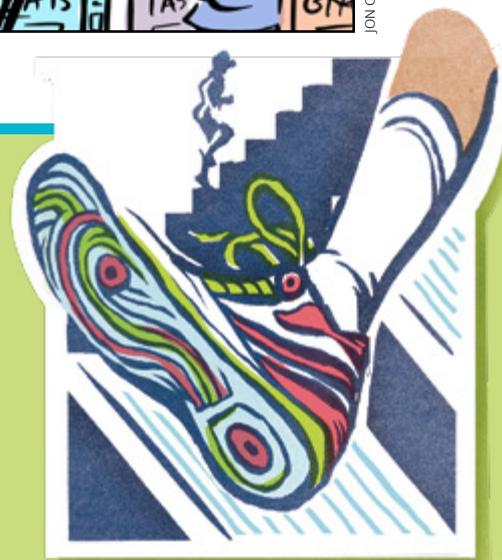


## Stair Challenge

When these five deacons heard how President Russell M. Nelson climbs stairs two at a time, they decided to start jogging stairs at their school's bleachers. Can you figure out how many stair flights each deacon could do that first Saturday morning?

### CLUES:

1. Jian did six more flights of stairs than Mason.
2. Garret did two more flights than Jian.
3. Mason did half as many flights as Hector.
4. No two friends did the same number of flights.



	# of Flights of Stairs				
	2	4	6	8	10
Garret					
Hector					
Jian					
Mason					
Sam					

### NOTE

1. See Sarah Jane Weaver, "Get to Know President Russell M. Nelson, a Renaissance Man," Jan. 16, 2018, news.ChurchofJesusChrist.org.

# What do I do if I don't like my body?



*"When you sing 'I Am a Child of God,' think of His gift to you of your own physical body. The many amazing attributes of your body attest to your own 'divine nature' [2 Peter 1:4]. . . .*

*". . . A perfect body is not required to achieve a divine destiny. In fact, some of the sweetest spirits are housed in frail frames."*

**President Russell M. Nelson,**  
*"Your Body: A Magnificent Gift to Cherish," New Era,*  
 Aug. 2019, 4, 5.



## Accept Your Body

Accept your body for what it is instead of what it's not. Every time I look at myself in the mirror, I say,

"Heavenly Father, I'm grateful with the progress You're making with me."

**Temperance B., 18, Victoria, Australia**

## Take Care of It

I take care of my body by exercising and eating healthy. Taking care of my body makes me more grateful for it. When I take care of the temple that Heavenly Father has blessed me with, my mood shifts and I better recognize and appreciate the wonderful blessing of having a body created by God.

**Camille A., 16, Florida, USA**



## Think about It as a Temple

Think about how your body is a temple (see 1 Corinthians 3) and also

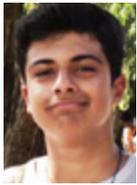
that the Lord looks on the heart (see 1 Samuel 16), not on the body!

**Vico W., 17, North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany**

## Remember You Are Loved

My friend struggled because he worried about what others think of him, and he lost his self-respect. What helped him the most was remembering that God, his friends, and his family were all there to love and support him.

**Matthew V., 16, Missouri, USA**



### You Are Loved

When I hear my friends say that they don't like something about their body or that they hate it,

I like to help them know that Heavenly Father loves them. I like to think that He loves me and that He wants me to be happy, no matter my physical questions. We should take care of and love our body because it is our temple.

**Ignacio P., 14, Argentina**

### It Doesn't Define You

Remember that your body doesn't define you. It's your body but not you as a person, as a spirit child of God.

**Sailor O., 18, New York, USA**

### Do Things You Enjoy

Being outside and doing activities I enjoy, like riding my bike or walking my dog, always helps me feel good about my body. It's even better when I do these things with my friends because it reminds me that I am surrounded by people who care about me and who don't care about what I look like.

**Itzcel O., 18, Arizona, USA**

*Responses are intended for help and perspective, not as official pronouncements of Church doctrine.*



## What are resurrected bodies like?

According to the scriptures and modern prophets, resurrected bodies are:

**Physical.** A resurrected body has flesh and bones (see Luke 24:36–39).

**Immortal.** “This mortal body is raised to an immortal body, . . . that they can die no more” (Alma 11:45).

**Perfect.** “The spirit and the body shall be reunited again in its perfect form” (Alma 11:43). “Deformity will be removed; defects will be eliminated, and men and women shall attain to the perfection of their spirits, to the perfection that God designed in the beginning” (Joseph F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine*, 5th ed. [1939], 23).

**Beautiful.** “There is nothing more beautiful to look upon than a resurrected man or woman” (*The Teachings of Lorenzo Snow*, ed. Clyde J. Williams [1996], 99).

**Beyond Satan's power.** Because Jesus Christ brought about the Resurrection, our spirits will not “become subject to . . . the devil, . . . to remain with the father of lies, in misery, like unto himself” (2 Nephi 9:8–9).\*

**Capable of receiving a fulness of joy.** Without resurrection, the joy of celestial glory is not possible. “Spirit and element, inseparably connected, receive a fulness of joy” (Doctrine and Covenants 93:33).

\*Except for sons of perdition (see Doctrine and Covenants 76:30–38).

### Tell Us What You Think:

“I often play on my phone instead of doing homework or scripture study. How can I find the right motivation?”

**Send your answer and photo by September 15, 2019.**

Go to [newera.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](http://newera.ChurchofJesusChrist.org), and click “Submit Your Work.” Sign in with your Church Account and then select “New Era” under “Choose Magazine.” Click “Add File” to select your file and photos, and then click “Submit” to upload and send us your file.

Responses may be edited for length or clarity.



## SUSPENSION AND REPENTANCE

**A COUPLE OF YEARS AGO** I got into drinking. I drank as kind of an experiment. Around here there isn't a lot to do, so my friends all drink and party. I wanted to be like them, I guess. After I started drinking, I felt almost hopeless. At first I thought I was happy, that I was having fun, but I realized I was miserable. I thought, what's the point in trying to change? I just didn't feel worthy.

I really love football, and one day after practice I came home to find my mom sitting there. We talked about my drinking, and she called the school. I was suspended for a couple of games.

.....  
"The invitation to repent is rarely a voice of chastisement but rather a loving appeal to turn around and to 're-turn' toward God."

Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Oct. 2009 general conference (*Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2009, 40).

That was a really big kick in the head for me—I realized I needed to change.

My family and some people in my ward helped me and made me feel loved. As I went through the repentance process, I gained a strong testimony of the Atonement of Jesus Christ. It's so amazing to feel how much Heavenly Father loves us. It's just crazy to me that He would send His Son to die for me when I mess up so much. You can always call upon Heavenly Father no matter what, and He will be there for you if you are willing to try and change.

I'm so much happier now than I was when I was drinking and partying. The gospel just brings you so much happiness if you turn to God and strive to improve yourself. It's totally worth it.

*Jens P., 18, Illinois, USA*

—  
**What are some of the benefits of sincere repentance?**

1. Joy replaces our pain (see Alma 36:20).
2. We gain a fresh view about God, ourselves, and the world (see Bible Dictionary, "Repentance").
3. We are forgiven (see Moroni 6:8).
4. Christ receives us (see Alma 5:33).

## MY BAD BACK

**A FEW YEARS AGO** my back started hurting. I was kind of worried, so I went to see our family chiropractor. He took some X-rays, saw something weird going on, and recommended me to a specialist.

I was right. There was something wrong. The specialist told me I have a condition called ankylosing spondylitis. It's a form of arthritis where your spinal joints get inflamed and your spine tries to fuse itself together.

My prescription was to exercise and stretch four or five days a week for about 20 to 30 minutes. If I don't, my back starts to hurt again. Ankylosing spondylitis can also lead to other serious health problems.

Someday I may have to treat my condition with drugs, but for now, I stretch every day. I also go to the gym several times a week. Recently, I went for a checkup. The doctor told me that because I was diligent with stretching, my spine is in a lot better shape than many people my age.

I'm thankful for my body despite its limitations. I try not to focus on my health problems and just use my body the best I can. A few months ago, I found out that the lead singer of one of my favorite rock bands also has ankylosing spondylitis. Rather than complain, he said a lot of the great things in his life have come from struggling.

I try to remember the fact that Jesus Christ suffered every pain for us. He knows the mental and physical pain of any condition, including ankylosing spondylitis. He is the most equipped to help us, and He has helped me be grateful for my body and its abilities.

*Samuel M., 21, Utah, USA*



## MODEL BEHAVIOR

**A FEW MONTHS AGO**, I was invited to go up to a cabin with a few other girls. One of the girls brought about 10 gorgeous dresses for us to model so she could photograph them and rent them out. There was only one problem: all but one of the dresses were immodest, and the only modest one didn't fit me. Dread washed over me. I started thinking, "Oh, it's only once. It's only for her Instagram. No one will know." I soon realized that wasn't true.

When we were preparing to model the dresses, I started making up reasons to not wear one. Everyone kept finding solutions to all of my excuses. At last I decided to take the photographer aside and explain, "I just don't feel comfortable wearing something immodest."

All the other girls put on a dress and went outside to start modeling. I stood watching them, feeling stronger spiritually than I had in a long time. Even though I was alone, I never felt alone; I felt the Spirit surrounding me, encouraging me, and building me up. I knew without a doubt I had done the right thing.

*Sarah C., 20, Idaho, USA*



# Respecting the Gift of Our Bodies

**By Elder D. Todd Christofferson**  
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

*From an October 2010 general conference address (Ensign or Liahona, Nov. 2010, 16–17).*

**T** rue success in this life comes in consecrating our lives—that is, our time and choices—to God’s purposes (see John 17:1, 4; Doctrine and Covenants 19:19). In so doing, we permit Him to raise us to our highest destiny.

A consecrated life respects the incomparable gift of one’s physical body, a divine creation in the very image of God. A central purpose of the mortal experience is that each spirit should receive a physical body and learn to exercise moral agency as a dual being of both body and spirit. A physical body is also essential for exaltation, which comes only in the perfect combination of the physical and the spiritual, as we see in our beloved, resurrected Lord. In this fallen world, some lives will be painfully brief; some bodies will be malformed, broken, or barely adequate to maintain life; yet life will be long enough for each spirit, and each body will qualify for resurrection.

Those who believe that our bodies are nothing more than the result of evolutionary chance will

feel no accountability to God or anyone else for what they do with or to their body. We who have an eternal perspective, however, must acknowledge that we have a duty to God with respect to how we treat our bodies. In Paul’s words:

“What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

“For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Corinthians 6:19–20).

Acknowledging these truths and the direction of modern prophets, we would certainly not deface our body, as with tattoos; or debilitate it, as with drugs; or defile it, as with fornication or immodesty. As our body is the instrument of our spirit, it is vital that we care for it as best we can. We should consecrate its powers to serve and further the work of Christ. Said Paul, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God” (Romans 12:1). **NE**

## YOUR BODY IS LIKE A TEMPLE

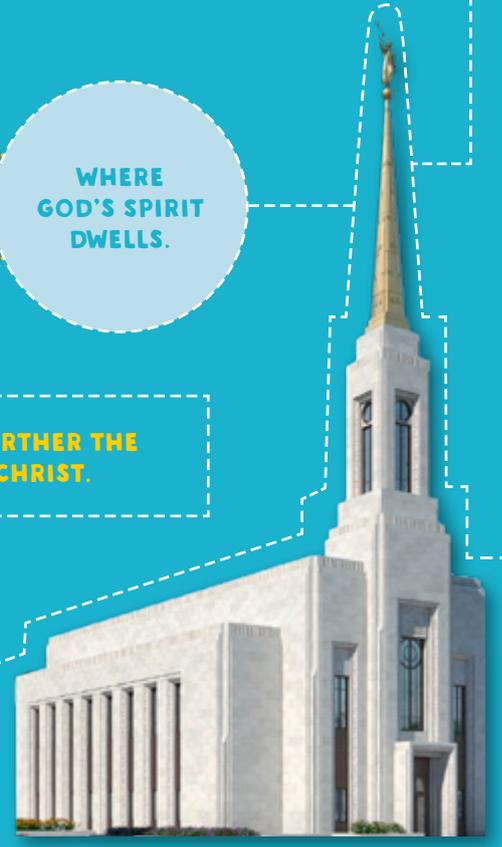
Elder Christofferson taught that our bodies are a gift and “a divine creation in the very image of God.” Like temples, our bodies are sacred and we should care for them as best we can. Here are some ways temples and our bodies take part in Heavenly Father’s plan.

PROVIDES OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN AND PROGRESS.

HOUSES OUR SPIRIT.

WHERE GOD’S SPIRIT DWELLS.

SERVE AND FURTHER THE WORK OF CHRIST.



THROUGH THE RESURRECTION, OUR BODIES CAN BE ETERNAL.

TEMPLE BLESSINGS ARE ETERNAL.

SACRED

HELPS US RETURN TO HEAVENLY FATHER

A GIFT FROM GOD

WE CAN STAND IN HOLY PLACES.

THE TEMPLE IS A HOLY PLACE.

# THE COOL THINGS YOU CAN DO

## DID YOU KNOW

there's a guy in a wheelchair who can do a double flip—in his wheelchair? That's pretty amazing. You can check it out here:



→ **BUT THE TRUTH IS**, no matter who you are, everybody can do something cool. What cool things can you do? Hold your breath for three minutes? Bake an awesome cake? Tell stories? Play the violin? Walk on your hands up the stairs backwards? We want to know!

Send us **YOUR STORY** and a photo, and maybe we'll use it in an upcoming article! Send it to [newera@ChurchofJesusChrist.org](mailto:newera@ChurchofJesusChrist.org).



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OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS