



# The Sanctity of Womanhood

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would speak of the sanctity of womanhood. President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) eloquently captured what the Lord has repeatedly inspired His servants to say of His precious daughters:

“Woman is God’s supreme creation. Only after the earth had been formed, after the day had been separated from the night, after the waters had been divided from the land, after vegetation and animal life had been created, and after man had been placed on the earth, was woman created; and only then was the work pronounced complete and good.

“Of all the creations of the Almighty, there is none more beautiful, none more inspiring than a lovely daughter of God who walks in virtue with an understanding of why she should do so, who honors and respects her body as a thing sacred and divine, who cultivates her

mind and constantly enlarges the horizon of her understanding, who nurtures her spirit with everlasting truth.”<sup>1</sup>

Then President Hinckley warned us, “God will hold us accountable if we neglect His daughters.”<sup>2</sup>

## Satan’s Campaign against Womanhood


So many of our sisters are disheartened, even discouraged, and disillusioned. Others are in serious trouble because of the choices they make. Satan has unleashed a seductive campaign to undermine the sanctity of womanhood, to deceive the daughters of God and divert them from their divine destiny. He well knows women are the compassionate, self-sacrificing, loving power that binds together the human family. He would focus their interests solely on their physical attributes and rob them of their exalting roles as wives and mothers. He has convinced many of the lie that they are third-class citizens in the kingdom of God. That falsehood has led some to trade their divinely given femininity for male coarseness.

The growing success of Lucifer’s efforts was emblazoned on my mind when in Salt Lake City I turned my car in front of a pickup truck loaded with attractive young women. Their vehicle then swerved in front of me, cutting



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dangerously close. The girls vented their displeasure with multiple vulgar comments and obscene gestures. They were dressed predominantly in male attire, yet some had immodest clothing that left little to the imagination. My heart sank. These are daughters of God. I resolved that if I ever had the chance, I would enlist the righteous priesthood of God to help such misguided young women.

### **Help Young Women Overcome Worldly Trends**

We can and must help them. Each of us absolutely must help each daughter of God we can to realize what sacred characteristics Father in Heaven has given her. Many are being cheated of the rich, full life and the blessings God would have them receive. Will you help them understand what they are sacrificing as they are led as innocent, blind sheep by those who, for personal gain and self-justification, would rob them of their priceless womanhood?

Because it is their nature to give and please others, many women do not realize their intrinsic worth. That loss makes them vulnerable to those who would convince them that their major role is to be physically appealing.

So many of our own young women sacrifice their God-given endowment of femininity, deep spirituality, and a caring interest in others on the altar of popular, worldly opinion. Young men, let such young women know that you will not seek an eternal companion from those that are overcome by worldly trends. Many dress and act immodestly because they are told that is what you want. In sensitive ways, communicate how distasteful revealing attire is to you, a worthy young man, and how it stimulates unwanted emotions from what you see against your will.

Those young women who do embrace conservative dress standards and exhibit the

attributes of a devoted Latter-day Saint are often criticized for not being “with it.” Encourage them by expressing gratitude for their worthy example. Thank them for doing what is pleasing to the Lord and in time will bless their own husband and children. Many young women have returned to righteousness because of the example and understanding support of a worthy priesthood bearer. Perhaps a group of you could frankly discuss your concern in an appropriate setting such as a Sunday School or seminary class. Will you begin a private crusade to help young women understand how precious they are to God and attractive to you as they magnify their feminine traits and divinely given attributes of womanhood? You might even help mold the character and devotion of your own future eternal companion.

As a brother, you can have a powerful, positive influence in your sister’s life. Compliment her when she looks especially nice. She may listen to you more than to your parents when you suggest that she wear modest clothing. Simple courtesies like opening the door for her and building her self-esteem will encourage her to find her real worth.

As we honor womanhood, each daughter of God will be encouraged to do likewise.

### **Sacred Expressions of Love**

Now I would speak of something that is most sacred. When we were created, Father in Heaven put in our body the capacity to stir powerful emotions. Within the covenant of marriage, when properly used in ways acceptable to both and to the Lord, those emotions open the doors for children to come to earth. Such sacred expressions of love are an essential part of the covenant of marriage.

There is a great difference between love and lust. Pure love yields happiness and engenders trust. It is the foundation of eternal joy. Lust will destroy that which is enriching and beautiful.



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### **Destructiveness of Pornography**

One of the most damning influences on earth, one that has caused uncountable grief, suffering, heartache, and destroyed marriages, is the onslaught of pornography in all of its vicious, corroding, destructive forms. Whether it be through the printed page, movies, television, obscene lyrics, the telephone, or on a flickering personal computer screen, pornography is overpoweringly addictive and severely damaging. This potent tool of Lucifer degrades the mind, heart, and the soul of any who use it. All who are caught in its seductive, tantalizing web and remain so, will become addicted to its immoral, destructive influence. For many, that addiction cannot be overcome without help.

The tragic pattern is so familiar. It begins with a curiosity that is fueled by its stimulation and is justified by the false premise that when done privately, it does no harm to anyone else. Lulled by this lie, the experimentation goes deeper, with more powerful stimulations, until the web closes and a terribly immoral, addictive habit is formed.

How can a man, particularly a priesthood bearer, not think of the damage emotionally and spiritually caused to women from such abhorrent activity? The participation in pornography in any of its lurid forms is a manifestation of unbridled selfishness.

Well did inspired Nephi declare, "And [the devil] will . . . pacify, and lull them away into carnal security, . . . and thus [he] cheateth their souls, and leadeth them away carefully down to hell."<sup>3</sup>

Stake presidents and bishops invite any captured by this evil to come to them for help.

### **"Be Ye Clean"**

To each of you I solemnly declare as a servant of Jesus Christ that despite what is taught in the world, the violation of the law of chastity is a very grievous sin. Be ye clean. If there is even the slightest tendency to participate in immorality, eliminate it from your life. Where there has been any violation, talk to a bishop or stake president and clean up your life. Make it pure and righteous. I testify that the Redeemer will help you. If you seek it, He will lead you to that help so that through full repentance, the Lord can forgive you.

### **Express Love for Daughters of God**

I know what it is to love a daughter of God who with grace and devotion served with the full feminine splendor of her righteous womanhood. Tell your mother how you love her. It will give her great joy. Let us be grateful to our Father in Heaven for His precious daughters.

Let us help them as much as we can. Then let us encourage every woman who questions her value to turn to her Heavenly Father and His glorified Son for a supernal confirmation of her immense individual worth. I testify that as each woman seeks it in faith and

obedience, the Savior will continually prompt her through the Holy Ghost. That guidance will lead her to fulfillment, peace, and a consuming joy through magnifying her divinely

appointed, sacred womanhood. I know the Savior will do that. I testify that He lives.

*From an April 2000 general conference address.*

#### **NOTES**

1. "Our Responsibility to Our Young Women," *Ensign*, Sept. 1988, 11.
2. *Ensign*, Sept. 1988, 11.
3. 2 Nephi 28:21.

