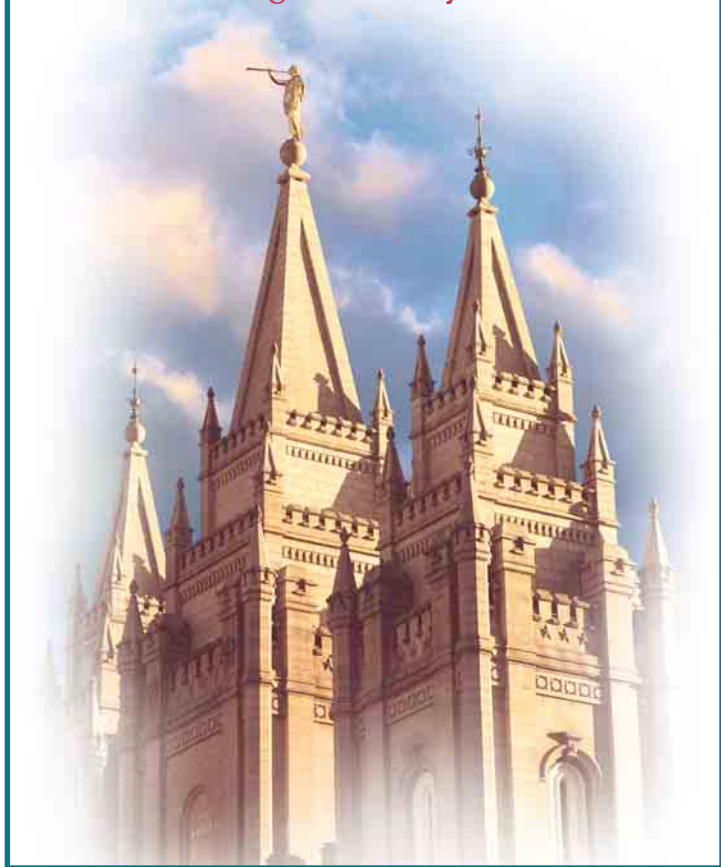
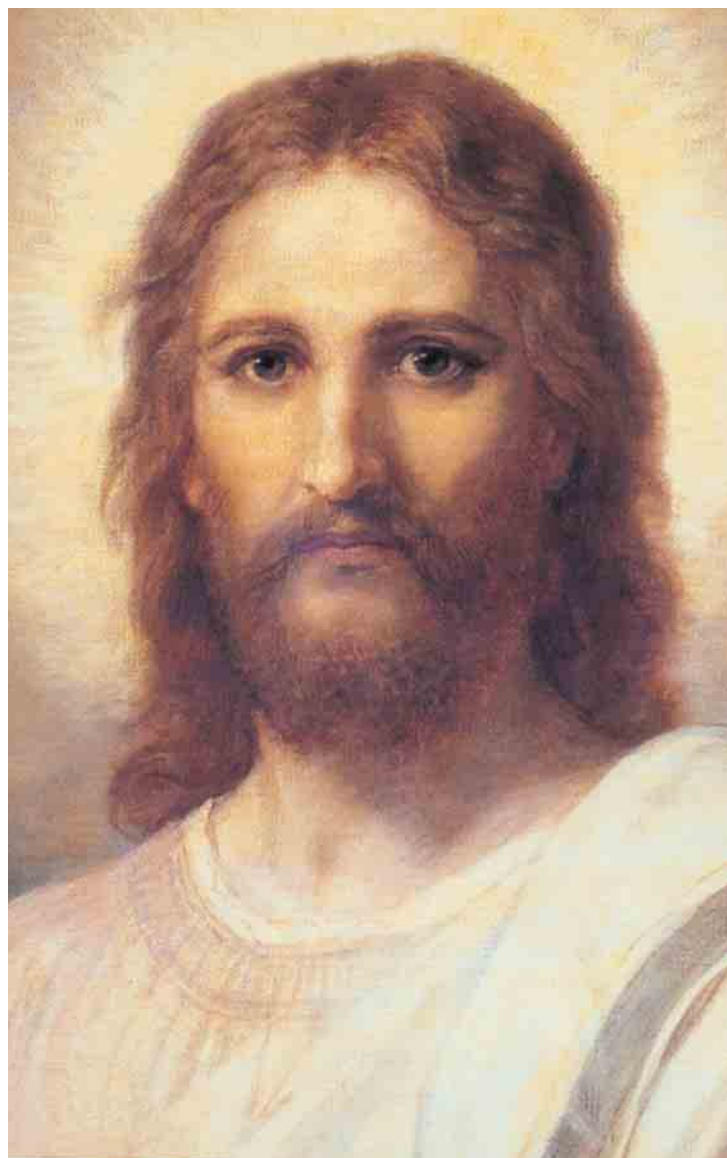


For the
Strength of Youth

Fulfilling Our Duty to God





Page 7: *"There Came a Leper and Worshipped Him,"* by Harry Anderson
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**M E S S A G E F R O M
T H E F I R S T P R E S I D E N C Y**

**OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS**

*O*ur beloved young men and women, we have great confidence in you. You are choice spirits who have come forth in this day when the responsibilities and opportunities, as well as the temptations, are the greatest. You are at the beginning of your journey through this mortal life. Your Heavenly Father wants your life to be joyful and to lead you back into His presence. The decisions you make now will determine much of what will follow during your life and throughout eternity.

Because the Lord loves you, He has given you commandments and the words of prophets to guide you on your journey. Some of the most important guidelines for your life are found in this pamphlet. We testify that these principles are true.

We promise that as you keep these standards and live by the truths in the scriptures, you will be able to do your life's work with greater wisdom and skill and bear trials with greater courage. You will have the help of the Holy Ghost. You will feel good about yourself and will be a positive influence in the lives of others. You will be

worthy to go to the temple to receive holy ordinances. These blessings and many more can be yours.

We pray for each of you. May you keep your minds and bodies clean from the sins of the world so you can do the great work that lies before you. We pray that you will be worthy to carry on the responsibilities of building the kingdom of God and preparing the world for the Second Coming of the Savior.

The First Presidency

A G E N C Y A N D A C C O U N T A B I L I T Y

“Wherefore, men . . . are free to choose liberty and eternal life, through the great Mediator of all men, or to choose captivity and death” (2 Nephi 2:27).

*Y*our Heavenly Father has given you agency, the ability to choose right from wrong and to act for yourself. You have been given the Holy Ghost to help you know good from evil. While you are here on earth, you are being proven to see if you will use your agency to show your love for God by keeping His commandments.

While you are free to choose for yourself, you are not free to choose the consequences of your actions. When you make a choice, you will receive the consequences of that choice. The consequences may not be immediate, but they will always follow, for good or bad. Wrong choices delay your progression and lead to heartache and misery. Right choices lead to happiness and eternal life. That is why it is so important for you to choose what is right throughout your life.

You are responsible for the choices you make. You should not blame your circumstances, your family, or your friends if you choose to disobey God's commandments. You are a child of God with great strength. You have the ability to choose righteousness and happiness, no matter what your circumstances.

You are also responsible for developing the abilities and talents Heavenly Father has given you. You are accountable to Him for what you do with your abilities and how you spend your time. Do not idle away your time. Be willing to work hard. Choose to do many good things of your own free will.

📖 *Matthew 25:14–29*



GRATITUDE

“He who receiveth all things with thankfulness shall be made glorious” (D&C 78:19).

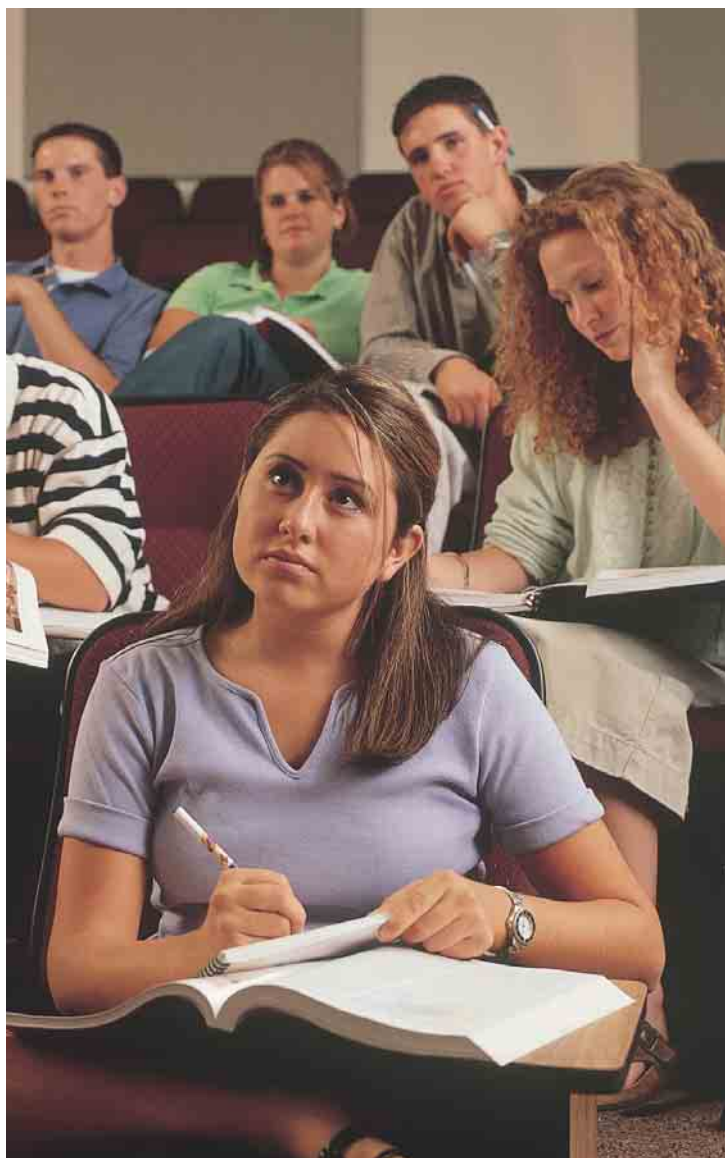
The Lord wants you to have a spirit of gratitude in all you do and say. Live with a spirit of thanksgiving and you will have greater happiness and satisfaction in life. Even in your most difficult times, you can find much to be grateful for. Doing so will strengthen and bless you.

In your prayers, before you ask for blessings, pour out your heart to God in thanks for the blessings you have already received. Thank Him for your family, for friends and loved ones, for leaders and teachers, for the gospel, and for His Son, Jesus Christ.

You can also express gratitude to the Lord by the way you live. When you keep His commandments and serve others, you show that you love Him and are grateful to Him. Express appreciation to everyone who helps you in any way.

 *Luke 17:12–19*





E D U C A T I O N

“Learn wisdom in thy youth” (Alma 37:35).

The Lord wants you to educate your mind and improve your skills and abilities. Education will help you to be an influence for good in the world. It will help you better provide for yourself, your loved ones, and those in need.

Be willing to work diligently and make sacrifices to obtain learning. Education is an investment that brings great rewards. You live in a competitive world where a good education opens the doors of opportunity that may otherwise be closed to you.

Maintain an enthusiasm for learning throughout your life. Find joy in continuing to learn about yourself, other people, and the world around you. Study the words of the Lord, and continue learning about your Heavenly Father’s plan. Make seminary an important part of your total education.

 *Doctrine and Covenants 88:77–80*

F A M I L Y

“Happiness in family life is most likely to be achieved when founded upon the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ. Successful marriages and families are established and maintained on principles of faith, prayer, repentance, forgiveness, respect, love, compassion, work, and wholesome recreational activities” (“The Family: A Proclamation to the World”).

Being part of a family is a great blessing. Your family can provide you with companionship and happiness, help you learn correct principles in a loving atmosphere, and help you prepare for eternal life. Not all families are the same, but each is important in Heavenly Father’s plan.

Do your part to build a happy home. Be cheerful, helpful, and considerate of others. Many problems in the home are created because family members speak and act selfishly or unkindly. Concern yourself with the needs of other family members. Seek to be a peacemaker rather than to tease, fight, and quarrel. Remember that the family is the most sacred unit of the Church.

Honor your parents by showing love and respect for them and by being obedient. Be willing to help in the home with chores that need to be done. Participate in family activities and traditions, including family prayer,

family home evenings, and family scripture reading. These traditions strengthen and unify families. Set a good example for other family members.

Strengthen your relationships with your brothers and sisters. They can become your closest friends. Support them in their interests and help them with problems they may be facing.

📖 *Ephesians 6:1–3*



F R I E N D S

“Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me” (Matthew 25:40).

Choose your friends carefully. They will greatly influence how you think and act, and even help determine the person you will become. Choose friends who share your values so you can strengthen and encourage each other in living high standards. A true friend will encourage you to be your best self.

To have good friends, be a good friend yourself. Show interest in others and let them know you care about them. Treat everyone with kindness and respect. Go out of your way to be a friend to those who are shy or do not feel included.

Invite your friends of other faiths to your Church meetings and activities, where they can learn about the gospel. Help them feel welcome and wanted. Many people have joined the Church through the example

and fellowship of their friends. Don't be offended if your friends decline your invitation to learn more about the gospel. Just continue to be their friend.

Make a special effort to reach out to new converts and to those who are less active. Help them feel welcome among your group of friends. You can strengthen them by sharing your testimony and by setting a good example.

 *Alma 17:1–2*



DRESS AND APPEARANCE

“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? . . . The temple of God is holy, which temple ye are” (1 Corinthians 3:16–17).

*Y*our body is God’s sacred creation. Respect it as a gift from God, and do not defile it in any way. Through your dress and appearance, you can show the Lord that you know how precious your body is. You can show that you are a disciple of Jesus Christ.

Prophets of God have always counseled His children to dress modestly. The way you dress is a reflection of



what you are on the inside. Your dress and grooming send messages about you to others and influence the way you and others act. When you are well groomed and modestly dressed, you invite the companionship of the Spirit and can exercise a good influence on those around you.

Never lower your dress standards for any occasion. Doing so sends the message that you are using your body to get attention and approval and that modesty is important only when it is convenient.

Immodest clothing includes short shorts and skirts, tight clothing, shirts that do not cover the stomach,



and other revealing attire. Young women should wear clothing that covers the shoulder and avoid clothing that is low-cut in the front or the back or revealing in any other manner. Young men should also maintain modesty in their appearance. All should avoid extremes in clothing, appearance, and hairstyle. Always be neat and clean and avoid being sloppy or inappropriately casual in dress, grooming, and manners. Ask yourself, "Would I feel comfortable with my appearance if I were in the Lord's presence?"

Someday you will receive your endowment in the temple. Your dress and behavior should help you prepare for that sacred time.

Do not disfigure yourself with tattoos or body piercings. If girls or women desire to have their ears pierced, they are encouraged to wear only one pair of modest earrings.

Show respect for the Lord and for yourself by dressing appropriately for Church meetings and activities, whether on Sunday or during the week. If you are not sure what is appropriate, ask your parents or leaders for help.

 *Alma 1:27*

E N T E R T A I N M E N T A N D T H E M E D I A

*“If there is anything virtuous, lovely,
or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things”
(Articles of Faith 1:13).*

Whatever you read, listen to, or look at has an effect on you. Therefore, choose only entertainment and media that uplift you. Good entertainment will help you to have good thoughts and make righteous choices. It will allow you to enjoy yourself without losing the Spirit of the Lord.

While much entertainment is good, some of it can lead you away from righteous living. Offensive material is often found in web sites, concerts, movies, music, videocassettes, DVDs, books, magazines, pictures, and other media. Satan uses such entertainment to deceive you by making what is wrong and evil look normal and exciting. It can mislead you into thinking that everyone is doing things that are wrong.

Do not attend, view, or participate in entertainment that is vulgar, immoral, violent, or pornographic in any way. Do not participate in entertainment that in any way presents immorality or violent behavior as acceptable.

Pornography in all its forms is especially dangerous and addictive. What may begin as a curious indulgence can become a destructive habit that takes control of your life. It can lead you to sexual transgression and



even criminal behavior. Pornography is a poison that weakens your self-control, changes the way you see others, causes you to lose the guidance of the Spirit, and can even affect your ability to have a normal relationship with your future spouse. If you encounter pornography, turn away from it immediately.

Depictions of violence often glamorize vicious behavior. They offend the Spirit and make you less able to respond to others in a sensitive, caring way. They contradict the Savior's message of love for one another.

Have the courage to walk out of a movie or video party, turn off a computer or television, change a radio station, or put down a magazine if what is being presented does not meet Heavenly Father's standards. Do these things even if others do not. Let your friends and family know that you are committed to keeping God's standards. You have the gift of the Holy Ghost, which will give you strength and help you make good choices.

 *Moroni 7:12–19*

MUSIC AND DANCING

*“Praise the Lord with singing, with music,
with dancing” (D&C 136:28).*

*M*usic is an important and powerful part of life. It can be an influence for good that helps you draw closer to Heavenly Father. However, it can also be used for wicked purposes. Unworthy music may seem harmless, but it can have evil effects on your mind and spirit.

Choose carefully the music you listen to. Pay attention to how you feel when you are listening. Don't listen to music that drives away the Spirit, encourages immorality, glorifies violence, uses foul or offensive language, or promotes Satanism or other evil practices.



Dancing can be fun and can provide an opportunity to meet new people. However, it too can be misused. When dancing, avoid full body contact with your partner. Do not use positions or moves that are suggestive of sexual behavior. Plan and attend dances where dress, grooming, lighting, lyrics, and music contribute to a wholesome atmosphere where the Spirit of the Lord may be present.

 *Doctrine and Covenants 25:12*



L A N G U A G E

“Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good” (Ephesians 4:29).

*H*ow you speak says much about who you are. Clean and intelligent language is evidence of a bright and wholesome mind. Use language that uplifts, encourages, and compliments others. Do not insult others or put them down, even in joking. Speak kindly and positively about others so you can fulfill the Lord’s commandment to love one another. When you use good language, you invite the Spirit to be with you.

Always use the names of God and Jesus Christ with reverence and respect. Misusing their names is a sin. Profane, vulgar, or crude language or gestures, as well as jokes about immoral actions, are offensive to the Lord and to others. Foul language harms your spirit and degrades you. Do not let others influence you to use it.



Choose friends who use good language. Help others around you use clean language by your example and by good-naturedly encouraging them to choose other words. Politely walk away or change the subject when others around you use bad language.

If you have developed the habit of swearing, you can break it. Begin by making a decision to change. Pray for help. If you start to use words you know are wrong, keep quiet or say what you have to say in a different way.

📖 *James 3:2–13*



D A T I N G

“The Lord has made us attractive one to another for a great purpose. But this very attraction becomes as a powder keg unless it is kept under control. . . . It is for this reason that the Church counsels against early dating”
(President Gordon B. Hinckley).

*I*n cultures where dating or courtship is acceptable, dating can help you develop lasting friendships and eventually find an eternal companion. Date only those who have high standards and in whose company you can maintain your standards. A young man and a young woman on a date are responsible to help each other maintain their standards and to protect each other's honor and virtue. You must honor the sanctity of the priesthood and of womanhood.

Do not date until you are at least 16 years old. Dating before then can lead to immorality, limit the number of other young people you meet, and deprive you of experiences that will help you choose an eternal partner.

Not all teenagers need to date or even want to. Many young people do not date during their teen years because they are not yet interested, do not have opportunities, or simply want to delay forming serious relationships. However, good friendships can and should be developed at every age.

When you begin dating, go in groups or on double dates. Avoid going on frequent dates with the same person. Make sure your parents meet those you date. You may want to invite your dates to activities with your family. Plan dating activities that are positive and inexpensive and that will help you get to know each other. Do things that will help you and your companions maintain your self-respect and remain close to the Spirit of the Lord.

📖 *2 Corinthians 6:14*



SEXUAL PURITY

“The sacred powers of procreation are to be employed only between man and woman, lawfully wedded as husband and wife” (“The Family: A Proclamation to the World”).

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. God has commanded that sexual intimacy be reserved for marriage.

When you obey God’s commandment to be sexually pure, you prepare yourself to make and keep sacred covenants in the temple. You prepare yourself to build a strong marriage and to bring children into the world as part of a loving family. You protect yourself from the emotional damage that always comes from sharing physical intimacies with someone outside of marriage.

Do not have any sexual relations before marriage, and be completely faithful to your spouse after marriage. Satan may tempt you to rationalize that sexual intimacy before marriage is acceptable when two people are in love. That is not true. In God’s sight, sexual sins are extremely serious because they defile the power God has given us to create life. The prophet Alma taught that sexual sins are more serious than any other sins except murder or denying the Holy Ghost (see Alma 39:5).

Before marriage, do not do anything to arouse the powerful emotions that must be expressed only in 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 allow anyone to do that with you. Do not arouse those emotions in your own body.

In cultures where dating or courting is acceptable, always treat your date with respect, never as an object to be used for your lustful desires. Stay in areas of safety where you can easily control your physical feelings. Do not participate in talk or activities that arouse sexual feelings.



Homosexual activity is a serious sin. If you find yourself struggling with same-gender attraction, seek counsel from your parents and bishop. They will help you.

Victims of rape, incest, or other sexual abuse are not guilty of sin. If you have been a victim of any of these crimes, know that you are innocent and that God loves you. Seek your bishop's counsel immediately so he can help guide you through the process of emotional healing.

If you are tempted to commit sexual transgressions, seek help from your parents, your bishop, and friends you can trust. Pray to the Lord, who will help you resist temptation and overcome inappropriate thoughts and feelings.

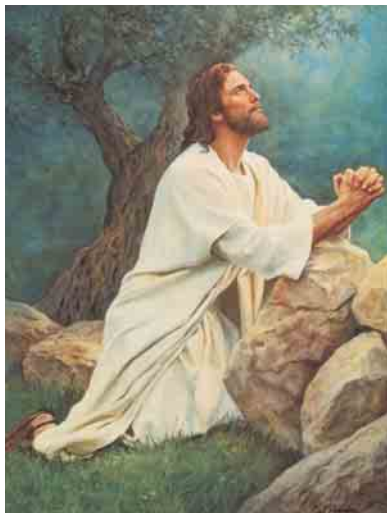
If you have committed sexual transgressions, begin the process of repentance now so you can find inner peace and have the full companionship of the Spirit. Seek the Lord's forgiveness. Talk with your bishop. He will help you obtain the forgiveness available to those who truly repent.

 *Genesis 39:1–12; Doctrine and Covenants 38:42*

RE P E N T A N C E

“He who has repented of his sins, the same is forgiven, and I, the Lord, remember them no more” (D&C 58:42).

*T*he Savior gave His life for us and suffered for our sins. This great sacrifice is called the Atonement. Through the Atonement, you can receive forgiveness and be cleansed from your sins when you repent. When you do what is necessary to receive forgiveness, you will know for yourself the power of the Atonement and the love God has for you. You will feel the peace of the Lord Jesus Christ, which will bring you great strength.



Satan wants you to think that you cannot repent, but that is absolutely not true. The Savior has promised you forgiveness if you will do what is required. The sooner you repent, the sooner you will find the blessings that come from forgiveness.

Some people knowingly break God's commandments, expecting to repent before they go to the temple or serve a mission. Such deliberate sin mocks the Savior's Atonement and invites Satan to influence your life. Repentance for such behavior is difficult and can take a long time. If you sin in this way, you may lose years of blessings and spiritual guidance. You may become trapped in the sinful behavior, making it difficult to find your way back.

You always need to confess your sins to the Lord. You should also confess your sins to those you have wronged. If you have committed serious sins, such as immorality, you need to confess them to your bishop.

 *Alma 36:6–24*

H O N E S T Y

*“Thou shalt not steal.
Thou shalt not bear false witness”
(Exodus 20:15–16).*

Be honest with yourself, others, and the Lord. When you are honest in every way, you build strength of character that will allow you to be of great service to God and others. You will be blessed with peace of mind and self-respect. When you are honest, you will be trusted by the Lord and by those around you.

Dishonesty hurts you and usually hurts others as well. When you lie, steal, shoplift, or cheat, you damage your spirit and become less able to do good things. Be honest in your job, giving a full amount of work for your pay.

Don't rationalize that wrong is right, even though many people around you may think there is no harm in being dishonest. Being honest requires courage and commitment to do what you know is right.

 *Alma 27:27*

S A B B A T H D A Y O B S E R V A N C E

*“Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy”
(Exodus 20:8).*

The Lord has given the Sabbath day for your benefit and has commanded you to keep it holy. Observing the Sabbath will bring you closer to the Lord and to your family. It will give you needed rest and rejuvenation.

Many uplifting activities are appropriate for the Sabbath. Worship the Lord, attend church, spend quiet time with your family, study the gospel, write letters, write in your journal, do family history work, and visit the sick or homebound. Your dress before, during, and after church meetings should show respect for the Sabbath.

When seeking a job, share with your potential employer your desire to attend your Sunday meetings and keep the Sabbath day holy. Many employers value

employees with these personal convictions. Whenever possible, choose a job that does not require you to work on Sundays.

Sunday is not a holiday or a day for recreation or athletic events. Do not seek entertainment or spend money on this day. Let your friends know what your standards are so they will not try to persuade you to participate in activities that are not appropriate for the Sabbath.

📖 *Doctrine and Covenants 59:9–13*



TITHES AND OFFERINGS

*“Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, . . . and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it”
(Malachi 3:10; 3 Nephi 24:10).*

The law of tithing is an important commandment that you should obey throughout your life. A tithe is one-tenth of your income.

Paying tithing shows your gratitude for all that God has given you. It is a way to help build God’s kingdom on earth. Tithing is used to build temples and meeting-houses, translate and publish the scriptures, provide Church materials to members, do missionary work, perform temple and family history work, and support seminaries and institutes.

Your attitude is important in paying tithing. Pay it because you love the Lord and have faith in Him. Pay it willingly with a thankful heart. Pay it first, even when you think you don’t have enough money to meet your other needs. Doing so will help you overcome selfishness and be more receptive to the Spirit.

At the end of each year, schedule a time for tithing settlement with your bishop. This is a meeting in which you review your contribution records and declare whether you have paid a full tithing.

Obey the law of the fast by fasting once each month (if health permits), usually on the first Sunday of the month. A proper fast day observance includes not eating or drinking for two consecutive meals and giving a generous fast offering to help care for those in need. Begin and end your fast with prayer, asking for special help with a specific need.

📖 *Doctrine and Covenants 119:3–4*



PHYSICAL HEALTH

“All saints who remember to keep and do these sayings . . . shall receive health in their navel and marrow to their bones; and shall find wisdom and great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures; and shall run and not be weary, and shall walk and not faint” (D&C 89:18–20).

The Lord has commanded you to take good care of your body. To do this, observe the Word of Wisdom, found in Doctrine and Covenants 89. Eat nutritious food, exercise regularly, and get enough sleep. When you do all these things, you remain free from harmful addictions and have control over your life. You gain the blessings of a healthy body, an alert mind, and the guidance of the Holy Ghost.

Never use tobacco products, such as cigarettes, snuff, chewing tobacco, cigars, and pipe tobacco. They are very addictive and will damage your body and shorten your life. Also, do not drink coffee or tea, for these are addictive and harmful.

Any form of alcohol is harmful to your body and spirit. Being under the influence of alcohol weakens your judgment and self-control and could lead you to break the law of chastity or other commandments. Drinking can lead to alcoholism, which destroys individuals and families.

Any drug, chemical, or dangerous practice that is used to produce a sensation or “high” can destroy your physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. These include hard drugs, prescription or over-the-counter medications that are abused, and household chemicals.

Never let Satan or others lead you to think that breaking the Word of Wisdom will make you happier or more attractive.

📖 *Daniel 1:3–20*



S E R V I C E T O O T H E R S

“By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:35).

Service to others is one of the most important characteristics of a disciple of Jesus Christ. A disciple is willing to bear other people’s burdens and to comfort those who need comfort (see Mosiah 18:8–9). Often Heavenly Father will meet the needs of others through you.

When serving, look to the Savior as your example. Although He came to earth as the Son of God, He humbly served those around Him.

There are many ways to serve others. You can serve in your Church assignments and in your home, school, and community. Seek daily the guidance of the Holy Ghost to know whom to serve and how to help meet their needs. Often the most important service is expressed through simple, everyday acts of kindness.

As you devote yourself to serving others, you will draw closer to Heavenly Father. Your heart will be filled with love. Your capacities will increase, and your life and the lives of those around you will be blessed.

 *Luke 10:25–37*



G O F O R W A R D W I T H F A I T H

*T*he standards presented in this pamphlet will help you make correct choices. Review them often and ask yourself, “Am I living the way the Lord wants me to live?”

To help you become all that the Lord wants you to become, get on your knees each day and express to Him the desires of your heart. He is the source of all wisdom, and you need His help. He will hear and answer you.

Read the scriptures daily. They are a powerful source of personal revelation and a constant strength to your testimony.

Remember and keep the covenants you made when you were baptized and that you renew each week when you partake of the sacrament. You young men should keep the covenants you made when you received the priesthood. Keeping these covenants now will help you prepare for the temple covenants you will make in the future.

Be true to the Lord and to His Church in all circumstances. The authorities of the Church will lead you in paths of happiness. Be grateful for your membership in God’s great kingdom.

Be humble and willing to listen to the whisperings of the Spirit. Place the wisdom of the Lord above your own wisdom.



When you do these things, the Lord will make much more out of your life than you can by yourself. He will increase your opportunities, expand your vision, and strengthen you. He will give you the help you need to meet your trials and challenges. You will find true joy as you come to know your Father in Heaven and His Son, Jesus Christ, and feel their love for you.

 *2 Nephi 31:16–21*

THE LIVING CHRIST

THE TESTIMONY OF THE APOSTLES
THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

As we commemorate the birth of Jesus Christ two millennia ago, we offer our testimony of the reality of His matchless life and the infinite virtue of His great atoning sacrifice. None other has had so profound an influence upon all who have lived and will yet live upon the earth.

He was the Great Jehovah of the Old Testament, the Messiah of the New. Under the direction of His Father, He was the creator of the earth. "All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made" (John 1:3). Though sinless, He was baptized to fulfill all righteousness. He "went about doing good" (Acts 10:38), yet was despised for it. His gospel was a message of peace and goodwill. He entreated all to follow His example. He walked the roads of Palestine, healing the sick, causing the blind to see, and raising the dead. He taught the truths of eternity, the reality of our premortal existence, the purpose of our life on earth, and the potential for the sons and daughters of God in the life to come.

He taught the sacrament as a reminder of His great atoning sacrifice. He was arrested and condemned on spurious charges, convicted to satisfy a mob, and sentenced to die on Calvary's cross. He gave His life to atone for the sins of all mankind. His was a great vicarious gift in behalf of all who would ever live upon the earth.

We solemnly testify that His life, which is central to all human history, neither began in Bethlehem nor concluded on Calvary. He was the Firstborn of the Father, the Only Begotten Son in the flesh, the Redeemer of the world.

He rose from the grave to "become the firstfruits of them that slept" (1 Corinthians 15:20). As Risen Lord, He visited among those He had loved in life. He also ministered among His "other sheep" (John 10:16) in ancient America. In the modern world, He and His Father appeared to the boy Joseph Smith, ushering in the long-promised "dispensation of the fulness of times" (Ephesians 1:10).

Of the Living Christ, the Prophet Joseph wrote: "His eyes were as a flame of fire; the hair of his head was white like the pure snow; his countenance shone above the brightness of the sun; and his voice was as the sound of the rushing of great waters, even the voice of Jehovah, saying:

"I am the first and the last; I am he who liveth, I am he who was slain; I am your advocate with the Father" (D&C 110:3-4).

Of Him the Prophet also declared: "And now, after the many testimonies which have been given of him, this is the testimony, last of all, which we give of him: That he lives!

"For we saw him, even on the right hand of God; and we heard the voice bearing record that he is the Only Begotten of the Father—

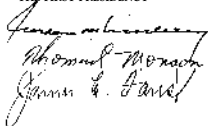
"That by him, and through him, and of him, the worlds are and were created, and the inhabitants thereof are begotten sons and daughters unto God" (D&C 76:22-24).

We declare in words of solemnity that His priesthood and His Church have been restored upon the earth—"built upon the foundation of . . . apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone" (Ephesians 2:20).

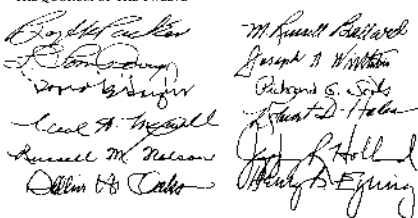
We testify that He will someday return to earth. "And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together" (Isaiah 40:5). He will rule as King of Kings and reign as Lord of Lords, and every knee shall bend and every tongue shall speak in worship before Him. Each of us will stand to be judged of Him according to our works and the desires of our hearts.

We bear testimony, as His duly ordained Apostles—that Jesus is the Living Christ, the immortal Son of God. He is the great King Immanuel, who stands today on the right hand of His Father. He is the light, the life, and the hope of the world. His way is the path that leads to happiness in this life and eternal life in the world to come. God be thanked for the matchless gift of His divine Son.

THE FIRST PRESIDENCY



THE QUORUM OF THE TWELVE



A PROCLAMATION TO THE WORLD

THE FIRST PRESIDENCY AND COUNCIL OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES
OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

WE, THE FIRST PRESIDENCY and the Council of the Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, solemnly proclaim that marriage between a man and a woman is ordained of God and that the family is central to the Creator's plan for the eternal destiny of His children.

ALL HUMAN BEINGS—male and female—are created in the image of God. Each is a beloved spirit son or daughter of heavenly parents, and, as such, each has a divine nature and destiny. Gender is an essential characteristic of individual premortal, mortal, and eternal identity and purpose.

IN THE PREMORTAL REALM, spirit sons and daughters knew and worshiped God as their Eternal Father and accepted His plan by which His children could obtain a physical body and gain earthly experience to progress toward perfection and ultimately realize his or her divine destiny as an heir of eternal life. The divine plan of happiness enables family relationships to be perpetuated beyond the grave. Sacred ordinances and covenants available in holy temples make it possible for individuals to return to the presence of God and for families to be united eternally.

THE FIRST COMMANDMENT that God gave to Adam and Eve pertained to their potential for parenthood as husband and wife. We declare that God's commandment for His children to multiply and replenish the earth remains in force. We further declare that God has commanded that the sacred powers of procreation are to be employed only between man and woman, lawfully wedded as husband and wife.

WE DECLARE the means by which mortal life is created to be divinely appointed. We affirm the sanctity of life and of its importance in God's eternal plan.

HUSBAND AND WIFE have a solemn responsibility to love and care for each other and for their children. "Children are an heritage of the Lord" (Psalms 127:3). Parents have a

sacred duty to rear their children in love and righteousness, to provide for their physical and spiritual needs, to teach them to love and serve one another, to observe the commandments of God and to be law-abiding citizens wherever they live. Husbands and wives—mothers and fathers—will be held accountable before God for the discharge of these obligations.

THE FAMILY is ordained of God. Marriage between man and woman is essential to His eternal plan. Children are entitled to birth within the bonds of matrimony, and to be reared by a father and a mother who honor marital vows with complete fidelity. Happiness in family life is most likely to be achieved when founded upon the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ. Successful marriages and families are established and maintained on principles of faith, prayer, repentance, forgiveness, respect, love, compassion, work, and wholesome recreational activities. By divine design, fathers are to preside over their families in love and righteousness and are responsible to provide the necessities of life and protection for their families. Mothers are primarily responsible for the nurture of their children. In these sacred responsibilities, fathers and mothers are obligated to help one another as equal partners. Disability, death, or other circumstances may necessitate individual adaptation. Extended families should lend support when needed.

WE WARN that individuals who violate covenants of chastity, who abuse spouse or offspring, or who fail to fulfill family responsibilities will one day stand accountable before God. Further, we warn that the disintegration of the family will bring upon individuals, communities, and nations the calamities foretold by ancient and modern prophets.

WE CALL UPON responsible citizens and officers of government everywhere to promote those measures designed to maintain and strengthen the family as the fundamental unit of society.

This proclamation was read by President Gordon B. Hinckley as part of his message at the General Relief Society Meeting held September 23, 1995, in Salt Lake City, Utah.