

Haight, Neal A. Maxwell, Russell M. Nelson, Dallin H. Oaks, M. Russell Ballard, Joseph B. Wirthlin, Richard G. Scott, Robert D. Hales, Jeffrey R. Holland, and Henry B. Eyring. Those in favor, please manifest it. Any opposed.

It is proposed that we sustain the counselors in the First Presidency and the Twelve Apostles as prophets, seers, and revelators. All in favor, please manifest it. Contrary, if there be any, by the same sign.

With gratitude for their service as members of the First Quorum of the Seventy, we extend an honorable release to Elders Angel Abrea, William R. Bradford, and Cree-L Kofford and designate them as emeritus General Authorities. All who wish to join with us in doing so, please manifest it.

We extend an honorable release to Elders Duane B. Gerrard, J. Kent Jolley, and D. Lee Tobler as members of the Second Quorum of the Seventy and to the following as Area Authority Seventies: Henry F. Acebedo, Blair S. Bennett, Craig A. Bullock, Raimondo Castellani, Christopher N. Chukwurah, Lawrence R. Fuller, Rubén G. Gápiz, Harvey L. Gardner, Francisco G. Giménez, John A. Grincer, Shih An Liang, Emmanuel O. Opare Sr., Alain A. Petion, Claudio D. Signorelli, R. Lloyd Smith, Tomás Valdés, Chung Hei (Patrick) Wong. Those who wish to join in an expression of appreciation, please indicate by the uplifted hand.

It is proposed that we release with a vote of thanks Elders Glenn L. Pace and Spencer J. Condie as counselors in the Young Men general presidency. All in favor, please signify by the uplifted hand.

It is proposed that we sustain José A. Castro, William K. Jackson, Paul V. Johnson, and Jay L. Sitterud as Area Authority Seventies. All in favor, please manifest it. Any opposed.

It is proposed that we sustain Elders Lynn G. Robbins and Donald L. Hallstrom as counselors in the Young Men general presidency. All in favor, please manifest it. Any opposed.

It is proposed that we sustain the other General Authorities, Area Authority Seventies, and general auxiliary presidencies as presently constituted. Those in favor, please manifest it. Those opposed may manifest it.

It appears that the sustaining has been unanimous in the affirmative. Thank you, brothers and sisters, for your faith and prayers.

### **President Monson**

We shall now be pleased to hear from President Boyd K. Packer, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. He will be followed by Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, after which we shall hear from Elder Shirley D. Christensen of the Seventy.

## **President Boyd K. Packer**

### **The source of our high standards**

It is my purpose to explain to the youth and young adults, and to their parents, why we hold so rigidly to high standards of moral conduct; why we avoid addictive drugs and tea, coffee, alcohol,

and tobacco; why we teach standards of modesty in dress, grooming, and speech.<sup>1</sup> You need to know where our standards came from and why we cannot loosen up and follow what the world does.

You have agency—“moral agency.”<sup>2</sup> You are free to choose your standards.

You will understand better if I speak of scripture and doctrine rather than about behavior.

### Standards revealed in the Restoration

The church you belong to, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, is the restored Church.<sup>3</sup> When you know what *restored* means, you will understand why standards of conduct are as they are.

Following the Crucifixion of Christ, an apostasy occurred. Leaders began to “teach for doctrines the commandments of men.”<sup>4</sup> They lost the keys of authority and closed themselves off from the channels of revelation. That lost authority could not just be repossessed. It had to be restored by those who held the keys of authority anciently.<sup>5</sup>

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is not a remodeled version of another church. It is not an adjustment or a correction or a protest against any other church. They have their “form of godliness”<sup>6</sup> and their goodness and value.

John the Baptist returned through the veil to confer the Aaronic Priesthood, “which holds the keys of the ministering of angels, and of the gospel of repentance, and of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins.”<sup>7</sup> A companion ordinance—confirmation and the conferral of the gift of the Holy Ghost—required a greater authority.<sup>8</sup>

Soon thereafter, Peter, James, and John, Apostle companions of the Lord, restored the higher or Melchizedek Priesthood<sup>9</sup>—“the Holy Priesthood, after the Order of the Son of God.”<sup>10</sup>

The Restoration did not come all at once. In a series of visitations, other prophets came to restore the keys of the priesthood.<sup>11</sup>

With the authority restored, the organization was revealed. Apostles were ordained, and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and First Presidency were organized as they had been anciently.<sup>12</sup> The

ordinances were revealed and authority given to perform them.

The Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ was translated and published. In it is “the fulness of [the] everlasting gospel.”<sup>13</sup>

Other revelations were published—the Doctrine and Covenants and the Pearl of Great Price. From those books of scripture, we learned why the earth was created and who created it.<sup>14</sup> There was opened to the early leaders of the Church the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ and the *standards* He requires of His disciples.

### Standards part of the plan of happiness

We learned about the plan of redemption—“the great plan of happiness.”<sup>15</sup> We came to earth to be tested and to gain experience, with a promise that “through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel.”<sup>16</sup>

Before we came into mortal life, we lived as spirit children of our Father in Heaven.<sup>17</sup> “All human beings—male and female—are created in the image of God. Each [of you] is a beloved spirit son or daughter of heavenly parents, and, as such, [you have] a divine nature and destiny. Gender [male and female] is an essential characteristic of individual premortal, mortal, and eternal identity and purpose.”<sup>18</sup>

The great plan of happiness enables family relationships to last beyond the grave. Sacred ordinances and covenants, available only in the temple, make it possible for individuals to return to the presence of God and for families to be united eternally. Marriage, the family, and the home are the foundation of the Church.<sup>19</sup> Nothing is more important to the Church and to civilization itself than the family!

For some, all is not complete in mortal life, for marriage and a family of their own have passed them by. But the great plan of happiness and the laws which govern it continue after death. Watched over

by a kind and loving Heavenly Father, they will not, in the eternal pattern of things, be denied blessings necessary for their exaltation, including marriage and family. And it will be sweeter still because of the waiting and the longing.

### **Standards of morality**

We learned from the revelations that we do not have to tell you young people what is right and what is wrong with regard to morality and marriage. The prophet Lehi taught his youthful children that “men are instructed sufficiently that they know good from evil.”<sup>20</sup>

Because the power to create a mortal body is essential to our happiness and exaltation, the Lord has decreed severe penalties for the immoral use of that power to begot life.<sup>21</sup>

Satan knows that if he can corrupt the process of mating and cause men and women to degrade it in immoral acts, he will, to that degree, for them disrupt the plan of happiness.

### **Be on guard; pray for strength**

Paul taught, “God . . . will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.”<sup>22</sup>

I do not wish to offend the delicate feelings of you wonderful young people, but in your world awash with iniquity, you must be on guard.

There are words we would rather not say. They describe things we would rather not think about. But you are inescapably exposed to temptations in connection with fornication, adultery, pornography, prostitution, perversion, lust, abuse, the unnatural, and all that grows from them. Only with difficulty can you escape the degrading profanity and wicked, joking humor that accompanies them. It is all paraded before you in unworthy entertainment—

music, print, drama, film, television, and, of course, the Internet.

Remember the First Vision, when young Joseph knelt in the grove. Immediately thick darkness gathered around him. He was seized by the power of the enemy, an actual being from the unseen world. He did what every one of you can do. He called upon God, and the evil power left him.<sup>23</sup>

There is great power in prayer. As a son or a daughter of God, you can, as Joseph did, pray to God in the name of Jesus Christ for strength.<sup>24</sup>

Satan, with his angels, will try to capture your thoughts and control what you do. If he can, he will corrupt anything that is good.<sup>25</sup> To him the Internet is just that—a net to ensnare you into a wicked addiction with pornography. Unhappiness will follow.<sup>26</sup>

### **We cannot yield to changing standards**

Some work through political, social, and legal channels to redefine morality and marriage into something unrestrained, unnatural, and forbidden. But they never can change the design which has governed human life and happiness from the beginning. The deceiver preys on some passion or tendency or weakness. He convinces them that the condition cannot be changed and recruits them for activities for which they never would volunteer.

But sooner or later that spark of divinity in each of them will ignite. They can assert their agency as sons and daughters created in the image of God<sup>27</sup> and renounce the destroyer. That which they had been led to believe could not be changed, will be changed, and they will feel the power of the redemption of Christ.<sup>28</sup> Their burden will be lifted and the pain healed up.<sup>29</sup> That is what the Atonement of Christ is all about.

They can claim their inheritance as children of heavenly parents and, despite

the tortured, agonizing test of mortal life, know that they are not lost.

In the Church, one is not condemned for tendencies or temptations. One is held accountable for transgression.<sup>30</sup> If you do not act on unworthy persuasions, you will neither be condemned nor be subject to Church discipline.

We do not set the standards, but we are commanded to teach them and maintain them. The standard remains abstinence before marriage and total fidelity in marriage. However out of step we may seem, however much the standards are belittled, however much others yield, we will not yield; we cannot yield. Obedience to the moral standard and observance of the Word of Wisdom will remain as requirements for ordination to the priesthood, for a mission, and for a temple recommend.

### **Let the Holy Ghost guide you**

You had conferred upon you the gift of the Holy Ghost. There will be whisperings of approval or warning when you have decisions to make.<sup>31</sup> The Holy Ghost can guide you away from evil and bring you back if you have wandered and lost your path. Never forget that you are sons and daughters of God. Satan cannot forever imprison you. You always hold the key of repentance to unlock the prison door.

### **Millions stand with you**

If you, our youth, feel alone, remember there are millions of you in the Church now. Tens of thousands of you at this moment serve missions. You are a visible example, a testimony of the Restoration, even to those who will not listen to your message. Wherever you are—in school, at work or play, or in the military—you are never alone.

Now, words can be used as weapons against you. If they throw the word *diversity* at you, grab hold of it and say, “I am already diverse, and I intend to stay di-

verse.” If the word is *tolerance*, grab that one too, saying, “I expect you to be tolerant of my lifestyle—obedience, integrity, abstinence, repentance.” If the word is *choice*, tell them you choose good, old-fashioned morality. You choose to be a worthy husband or wife, a worthy parent.

The whole Church may stand alone in defense of these standards. But we are not the first. Moroni, the last of his people, said: “I even remain alone. . . . I fulfil the commandment of my father.”<sup>32</sup> Do not be afraid.<sup>33</sup>

When I was young and very new in my calling, I was sent east to meet with powerful, prominent officials who were blocking our work. As I left for the airport, I stopped to see President Harold B. Lee and asked, “Do you have any parting counsel?”

“Yes,” he said, “just remember this isn’t 1830, and there aren’t just six of us.”

That erased fear. I pled our cause. The problem was resolved.

Society is on a course that has caused the destruction of civilizations and is now ripening in iniquity. Civilization itself is at stake. You, our wonderful youth, are an example to untold millions of good people worldwide.

I think of the joy and happiness that await you in this life and the work you are to do, and I cannot be discouraged.

### **The standard of truth has been erected**

Peter, the Apostle who stood next to the Lord, said of you, “Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.”<sup>34</sup>

Remember this great prophecy: “The Standard of Truth has been erected; no unhallowed hand can stop the work from progressing; . . . the truth of God will go forth boldly, nobly, and independent, till it has penetrated every continent, visited

every clime, swept every country, and sounded in every ear, till the purposes of God shall be accomplished, and the Great Jehovah shall say the work is done.”<sup>35</sup>

### True to the faith

When we were young, we often used to sing these words:

Shall the youth of Zion falter  
In defending truth and right?  
While the enemy assaileth,  
Shall we shrink or shun the fight? No!

True to the faith that our parents have  
cherished,  
True to the truth for which martyrs  
have perished,  
To God’s command, Soul, heart, and  
hand,  
Faithful and true we will ever stand.

While we know the pow’rs of darkness  
Seek to thwart the work of God,  
Shall the children of the promise  
Cease to grasp the iron rod? No! . . .

We will work out our salvation;  
We will cleave unto the truth;  
We will watch and pray and labor  
With the fervent zeal of youth. Yes! . . .

We will strive to be found worthy  
Of the kingdom of our Lord,  
With the faithful ones redeemed  
Who have loved and kept his word. Yes!

True to the faith that our parents have  
cherished,  
True to the truth for which martyrs  
have perished,  
To God’s command, Soul, heart, and  
hand,  
Faithful and true we will ever stand.<sup>36</sup>

God bless you millions of youth in our Church who worthily follow the patterns of the gospel and have within you a deep testimony—the testimony that all of us share and bear. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### NOTES

1. See *For the Strength of Youth* (pamphlet, 2001).
2. Doctrine and Covenants 101:78.
3. See Doctrine and Covenants 115:4.
4. Joseph Smith—History 1:19; see also Matthew 15:9.
5. See Doctrine and Covenants 27:12–13.
6. Joseph Smith—History 1:19.
7. Doctrine and Covenants 13:1.
8. See Doctrine and Covenants 20:41; 33:15.
9. See Doctrine and Covenants 27:12–13; Joseph Smith—History 1:72.
10. Doctrine and Covenants 107:3.
11. See Doctrine and Covenants 110.
12. See Doctrine and Covenants 18:9; 20:1–2; 107:22, 29.
13. Doctrine and Covenants 27:5.
14. See Moses 1:30–39.
15. Alma 42:8; see also 2 Nephi 11:5; Alma 12:25; 17:16; 34:9; 41:2; 42:5, 11–13, 15, 31; Doctrine and Covenants 101:22; Moses 6:62.
16. Articles of Faith 1:3.
17. See Numbers 16:22; Ecclesiastes 12:7; Hebrews 12:9.
18. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102.
19. See “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102.
20. 2 Nephi 2:5.
21. See Jacob 3:12; Doctrine and Covenants 42:24; 104:8–9.
22. 1 Corinthians 10:13.
23. See Joseph Smith—History 1:15–16.
24. See James 4:7.
25. See Doctrine and Covenants 10:22; see also Luke 22:3; 2 Nephi 2:17–18, 27; 3 Nephi 18:18; Doctrine and Covenants 50:3.
26. See Alma 41:10.
27. See Genesis 1:26–27; Moses 2:26–27; 6:9; Abraham 4:26–27.
28. See 2 Nephi 2:1–6.
29. See Alma 7:11–12.
30. See Doctrine and Covenants 101:78; Articles of Faith 1:2.
31. See Doctrine and Covenants 8:2–3; 9:7–9.

32. Mormon 8:3.

33. See 2 Timothy 1:7; Doctrine and Covenants 68:6.

34. 1 Peter 2:9.

35. Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 4:540.

36. "True to the Faith," *Hymns*, no. 254.

## Elder Robert D. Hales

### How to gain a testimony

As Church leaders we are often asked, "How do I receive a testimony of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ?"

Gaining a testimony and becoming converted begins with study and prayer, then living the gospel with patience and persistence and inviting and waiting upon the Spirit. The life of Joseph Smith and the pattern of the Restoration are excellent examples of this process. As you listen to my message today of the events of the Restoration, look for the steps that lead to testimony: desiring to know the truth, pondering in our hearts, then feeling and obediently following the promptings of the Holy Ghost.

### The Great Apostasy leads to confusion

Joseph Smith was born on December 23, 1805, in Sharon, Vermont. He came into a family that prayed and studied the Bible. In his youth he became interested in religion and discovered a "great confusion" over the doctrines of Christ, with "priest contending against priest, and convert against convert."<sup>1</sup>

This confusion was not unique to his community. It began centuries earlier in what has been called the Great Apostasy. The day of Christ "shall not come," said the Apostle Paul, "except there come a falling away first."<sup>2</sup>

A few decades after Christ's Resurrection, His Apostles were killed, His teachings were corrupted, and the priesthood was taken from the earth. But Paul, seeing our day, prophesied "that in the dispensation of the fulness of times [God would]

gather together in one all things in Christ."<sup>3</sup> He would restore Christ's true Church to the earth once more.

Over the centuries, the world was prepared for that restoration. The Bible was translated and published. A new land was discovered. The spirit of reformation swept through the Christian world, and a nation was founded on the principles of freedom.

### Joseph prays to find the true church

Joseph Smith was born in that nation and, at the age of 14, found himself caught in a "tumult of [religious] opinions." Often he asked himself, "If any one of [these churches] be right, which is it, and how shall I know it?"<sup>4</sup>

Joseph turned to the Bible for answers. "If any of you lack wisdom," he read in the Epistle of James, "let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."<sup>5</sup>

Following James's direction, Joseph went to a grove of trees near his home and prayed. As he called upon God, "a pillar of light . . . descended," brighter than the noonday sun, and "two Personages" appeared. "One of them spake . . . , calling [Joseph] by name and said, pointing to the other—*This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!*"<sup>6</sup>

God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, conversed with Joseph. They answered his question. They taught him that the true Church of Christ had been lost from the earth. Joseph learned that these members of the Godhead were separate and distinct beings, They knew him by name, and They were willing to answer his