

This admonition by the Lord's prophet points our way through these turbulent times. To all who suffer, our hearts reach out to you. May Heavenly Father, in His infinite mercy, make light your burdens and fill your lives with that peace which "passeth all understanding."²¹ You are not alone. Our love and faith and prayers are joined with yours. Press forward in righteousness, and all will be well.

In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES

1. Quoted in Evan Thomas, "The Lost City," *Newsweek*, Sept. 12, 2005, 44.
2. Doctrine and Covenants 1:17, 37.
3. See also Joseph Smith—Matthew.
4. See Doctrine and Covenants 45; 88; 101; 133.
5. "Father in Heaven, We Do Believe," *Hymns*, no. 180.
6. Mosiah 4:3.
7. See Matthew 8:25–27; Mark 4:39.
8. 2 Nephi 2:26–27; italics added.
9. *History of the Church*, 5:134–35.
10. Doctrine and Covenants 38:9.
11. See Doctrine and Covenants 78:13–14; *Providing in the Lord's Way: A Leader's Guide to Welfare* (welfare handbook, 1990), 5.
12. Doctrine and Covenants 68:28.
13. David O. McKay, in Conference Report, Oct. 1969, 8; or *Improvement Era*, Dec. 1969, 31.
14. Gordon B. Hinckley, "Standing Strong and Immovable," *Worldwide Leadership Training Meeting*, Jan. 10, 2004, 21.
15. Doctrine and Covenants 104:17.
16. Doctrine and Covenants 38:15.
17. Doctrine and Covenants 6:12.
18. *Discourses of Brigham Young*, sel. John A. Widtsoe (1954), 89.
19. Romans 13:12–14.
20. In Conference Report, Oct. 1995, 95; or *Ensign*, May 1995, 71; see also Conference Report, Apr. 2005, 3; or *Ensign*, May 2005, 4.
21. Philippians 4:7.

The choir and congregation sang
"Guide Us, O Thou Great Jehovah."

Sister Susan W. Tanner

Eternal importance of our bodies

I have just returned from a visit where I welcomed into the world our newest little granddaughter, Elizabeth Claire Sandberg. She is perfect! I was awestruck, as I am each time a baby is born, with her fingers, toes, hair, beating heart, and distinctive family characteristics—nose, chin, dimples. Her older brothers and sister were equally excited and fascinated by their tiny, perfect little sister. They seemed to sense a holiness in their home from the presence of a celestial spirit newly united with a pure physical body.

In the premortal realm we learned that the body is part of God's great plan of happiness for us. As it states in the family proclamation, "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 Family: A Proclamation to the World," *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102). In fact, we "shouted for joy" to be part of this plan (Job 38:7).

Why were we so excited? We understood eternal truths about our bodies. We knew that our bodies would be in the image of God. We knew that our bodies would house our spirits. We also understood that our bodies would be subject to pain, illness, disabilities, and temptation. But we were willing, even eager, to accept these challenges because we knew that only with spirit and element inseparably connected could we progress to be-

come like our Heavenly Father (see D&C 130:22) and “receive a fulness of joy” (D&C 93:33).

With the fulness of the gospel on the earth, we are again privileged to know these truths about the body. Joseph Smith taught: “We came to this earth that we might have a body and present it pure before God in the Celestial Kingdom. The great principle of happiness consists in having a body. The Devil has no body, and herein is his punishment” (*The Words of Joseph Smith*, ed. Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook [1980], 60).

Satan’s deceptions about the body

Satan learned these same eternal truths about the body, and yet his punishment is that he does not have one. Therefore he tries to do everything he can to get us to abuse or misuse this precious gift. He has filled the world with lies and deceptions about the body. He tempts many to defile this great gift of the body through unchastity, immodesty, self-indulgence, and addictions. He seduces some to despise their bodies; others he tempts to worship their bodies. In either case, he entices the world to regard the body merely as an object. In the face of so many satanic falsehoods about the body, I want to raise my voice today in support of the sanctity of the body. I testify that the body is a gift to be treated with gratitude and respect.

Treating our bodies as temples

The scriptures declare that the body is a temple. It was Jesus Himself who first compared His body to a temple (see John 2:21). Later Paul admonished the people of Corinth, a wicked city teeming with all manner of lasciviousness and indecency: “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are” (1 Corinthians 3:16–17).

What would happen if we truly treated our bodies as temples? The result would be a dramatic increase in chastity, modesty, observance of the Word of Wisdom, and a similar decrease in the problems of pornography and abuse, for we would regard the body, like the temple, as a sacred sanctuary of the Spirit. Just as no unclean thing may enter the temple, we would be vigilant to keep impurity of any sort from entering the temple of our bodies.

Likewise, we would keep the outside of our bodily temples looking clean and beautiful to reflect the sacred and holy nature of what is inside, just as the Church does with its temples. We should dress and act in ways that reflect the sacred spirit inside us.

Modesty shows respect for our bodies

A short while ago as I visited one of the great tourist-filled cities of the world, I felt an overwhelming sadness that so many people in the world had fallen prey to Satan’s deception that our bodies are merely objects to be flaunted and displayed openly. Imagine the contrast and my joy when I entered a classroom of modestly and appropriately dressed young women whose countenances glowed with goodness. I thought, “Here are eight beautiful girls who know how to show respect for their bodies and who know why they are doing it.” In *For the Strength of Youth* it says:

“Your 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. . . . The way you dress is a reflection of what you are on the inside” ([2001], 14–15).

Modesty is more than a matter of avoiding revealing attire. It describes not only the altitude of hemlines and necklines but the attitude of our hearts. The word *modesty* means “measured.” It is related to

moderate. It implies “decency, and propriety . . . in thought, language, dress, and behavior” (in Daniel H. Ludlow, ed., *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 5 vols. [1992], 2:932).

Physical pleasure must not be our god

Moderation and appropriateness should govern all of our physical desires. A loving Heavenly Father has given us physical beauties and pleasures “both to please the eye and to gladden the heart” (D&C 59:18), but with this caution: that they are “made to be used, with judgment, not to excess, neither by extortion” (D&C 59:20). My husband used this scripture to teach our children about the law of chastity. He said that the “word *extortion* . . . literally means to ‘twist out [or against].’ Our use of . . . the body must not be twisted [against] the divinely ordained purposes for which [it was] given. Physical pleasure is good in its proper time and place, but even then it must not become our god” (John S. Tanner, “The Body as a Blessing,” *Ensign*, July 1993, 10).

The pleasures of the body can become an obsession for some; so too can the attention we give to our outward appearance. Sometimes there is a selfish excess of exercising, dieting, makeovers, and spending money on the latest fashions (see Alma 1:27).

Selflessness is true beauty

I am troubled by the practice of extreme makeovers. Happiness comes from accepting the bodies we have been given as divine gifts and enhancing our natural attributes, not from remaking our bodies after the image of the world. The Lord wants us to be made over—but in His image, not in the image of the world, by receiving His image in our countenances (see Alma 5:14, 19).

I remember well the insecurities I felt as a teenager with a bad case of acne. I

tried to care for my skin properly. My parents helped me get medical attention. For years I even went without eating chocolate and all the greasy fast foods around which teens often socialize, but with no obvious healing consequences. It was difficult for me at that time to fully appreciate this body which was giving me so much grief. But my good mother taught me a higher law. Over and over she said to me, “You must do everything you can to make your appearance pleasing, but the minute you walk out the door, forget yourself and start concentrating on others.”

There it was. She was teaching me the Christlike principle of selflessness. Charity, or the pure love of Christ, “envieth not, and is not puffed up, seeketh not her own” (Moroni 7:45). When we become other-oriented, or selfless, we develop an inner beauty of spirit that glows in our outward appearance. This is how we make ourselves in the Lord’s image rather than the world’s and receive His image in our countenances. President Hinckley spoke of this very kind of beauty that comes as we learn to respect body, mind, and spirit. He said:

“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” (“Our Responsibility to Our Young Women,” *Ensign*, Sept. 1988, 11).

Oh, how I pray that all men and women will seek the beauty praised by the prophet—beauty of body, mind, and spirit!

The spiritual and physical are linked

The restored gospel teaches that there is an intimate link between body, mind,

and spirit. In the Word of Wisdom, for example, the spiritual and physical are intertwined. When we follow the Lord's law of health for our bodies, we are also promised wisdom to our spirits and knowledge to our minds (see D&C 89:19–21). The spiritual and physical truly are linked.

I remember an incident in my home growing up when my mother's sensitive spirit was affected by a physical indulgence. She had experimented with a new sweet roll recipe. They were big and rich and yummy—and very filling. Even my teenage brothers couldn't eat more than one. That night at family prayer my father called upon Mom to pray. She buried her head and didn't respond. He gently prodded her, "Is something wrong?" Finally she said, "I don't feel very spiritual tonight. I just ate three of those rich sweet rolls." I suppose that many of us have similarly offended our spirits at times by physical indulgences. Especially substances forbidden in the Word of Wisdom have a harmful effect on our bodies and a numbing influence on our spiritual sensitivities. None of us can ignore this connection of our spirits and bodies.

We will receive a perfected body

These sacred bodies, for which we are so grateful, suffer from natural limitations. Some people are born with disabili-

ties, and some suffer the pains of disease throughout their lives. All of us as we age experience our bodies gradually beginning to fail. When this happens, we long for the day when our bodies will be healed and whole. We look forward to the Resurrection that Jesus Christ made possible, when "the soul shall be restored to the body, and the body to the soul; yea, and every limb and joint shall be restored to its body; yea, even a hair of the head shall not be lost; but all things shall be restored to their proper and perfect frame" (Alma 40:23). I know that through Christ we can experience a fulness of joy that is available only when spirit and element are inseparably connected (see D&C 93:33).

Our bodies are our temples. We are not less but *more* like Heavenly Father because we are embodied. I testify that we are His children, made in His image, with the potential to become like Him. Let us treat this divine gift of the body with great care. Someday, if we are worthy, we shall receive a perfected, glorious body—pure and clean like my new little granddaughter, only inseparably bound to the spirit. And we shall shout for joy (see Job 38:7) to receive this gift again for which we have longed (see D&C 138:50). May we respect the sanctity of the body during mortality so that the Lord may sanctify and exalt it for eternity. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin

Fishermen gave warnings of the tsunami

On December 26, 2004, a powerful earthquake struck off the coast of Indonesia, creating a deadly tsunami that killed more than 200,000 people. It was a terrible tragedy. In one day, millions of lives were forever changed.

But there was one group of people who, although their village was destroyed, did not suffer a single casualty.

The reason?

They knew a tsunami was coming.

The Moken people live in villages on islands off the coast of Thailand and Burma (Myanmar). A society of fishermen, their lives depend on the sea. For hundreds and