

I pray that we may eliminate any inappropriate music from our lives and follow the counsel of the First Presidency: “Brothers and sisters, let us use the hymns to invite the Spirit of the Lord into our congregations, our homes, and our personal lives. Let us memorize and ponder them, recite and sing them, and partake of their spiritual nourishment. Know that the song of the righteous is a prayer unto our Father in Heaven, ‘and it shall be answered with a blessing upon [your] heads.’”<sup>18</sup> Of these truths I testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

#### NOTES

1. *Hymns*, ix.
2. *Hymns*, no. 27.
3. *Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley* (1997), 399.

4. *Hymns*, ix.
5. In Conference Report, Oct. 1936, 111.
6. *Hymns*, no. 301.
7. *Hymns*, ix.
8. In Conference Report, Oct. 1991, 29; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1991, 22.
9. *Hymns*, no. 27.
10. *Hymns*, no. 30.
11. *Hymns*, no. 319.
12. *Hymns*, no. 19.
13. *Hymns*, no. 6.
14. Just as hymns are essential to Sabbath and family worship, so are hymns and carols to Christmas (see *Hymns*, nos. 201–14).
15. “I Stand All Amazed,” *Hymns*, no. 193.
16. “How Great the Wisdom and the Love,” *Hymns*, no. 195.
17. *Hymns*, x.
18. *Hymns*, x.

## Elder John B. Dickson

### Message to youth: Commit now

Good morning, brothers and sisters. I would like to address the youth of the Church this morning as Sister Dickson and I would counsel our own family.

We know that you are an exceptionally bright generation of youth that will soon take our place as leaders in the home, the workplace, the community, and the Church.

Your Heavenly Father loves each of you and has sent you to earth with a purpose. He has revealed a plan of happiness that, if followed, will ultimately bring you home to His presence, having triumphed over the trials and challenges of this world. Committing yourself now to live by the pattern the Lord has set will give you great strength in the proper use of your moral agency. The sincere commitments you make to yourself and to the Lord will be vital. We learn from the book of Psalms to “commit thy way unto the Lord; . . . and he shall bring it to pass” (Psalm 37:5).

You have come into this world at a time that has been anticipated from the beginning—a time prior to the Second Coming of the Lord, in which, on one hand, the gospel of Jesus Christ has been restored in its fulness and, on the other, there is great turmoil, confusion, and wickedness. The proving ground that you were born into is wonderful, affording great opportunities, but at the same time there is danger in abundance, even danger to one’s very soul. Now is the time to commit yourself to the Lord as to what you will become during this mortal probation. Along with your parents, living prophets, and the scriptures, the Holy Ghost will help you distinguish between right and wrong so correct decisions can be made.

Hopefully you will prayerfully study the pamphlet *For the Strength of Youth* and review and carry with you, in your wallet or purse, the abbreviated copy of the pamphlet. Great happiness will come to you in this life and eternally if you decide now to live after the pattern that is set forth in its pages.

### **Commitment to live the Word of Wisdom**

Let me help you understand how this pattern of making early commitments can help you by relating the experience of one Church leader. As a young man he decided that he would always keep the Word of Wisdom and never use alcohol or tobacco. He does not remember what prompted him to make that important commitment at the time, but a crucial victory was won in his heart, and on his knees he made a commitment with the Lord to always keep that commandment. Over the years there were invitations to use these substances, but he learned that “No, thank you” was a good answer. There was no personal battle over the Word of Wisdom, because years before he had made a commitment in his heart, and he had sincerely made a commitment to the Lord to obey that law.

As you seek to receive Heavenly Father’s blessings regarding the Word of Wisdom, include a commitment to never touch the illegal drugs that are prevalent in today’s society. The adversary will have very little power to tempt you with things that you have never touched.

### **“Beware concerning yourselves”**

As members of the Church we have been baptized and have made a covenant to take upon us the name of Jesus Christ and keep God’s commandments. If mistakes are made, the gospel allows us to sincerely repent and be forgiven. Your commitment can begin from where you are presently, whether young or old, including repenting and forsaking sin where mistakes have already been made.

The Lord promises great, eternal blessings to His righteous, repentant children, but knowing there is great danger here in this life, He has commanded us, saying, “Beware concerning yourselves, to give diligent heed to the words of eternal life” (D&C 84:43). Because He loves us and wants us back, this commandment to

“beware concerning [ourselves]” prompts us to be careful concerning everything about us—the type of social settings we enter, what we see and read, the media and entertainment we choose, the music we listen to, and more.

Setting a pattern of early commitment is very important. For example, to receive the blessings promised to those who pay tithes and offerings, you should commit now to pay tithing on all earnings. Paying tithing helps us become less selfish and more like our Heavenly Father, who wants to share all that He has with His righteous children. Making that decision will be extremely important. It is interesting to note that, like tithing, every commandment is designed for your eternal happiness and to help you become more like your Father in Heaven. Decide now to be like Nephi of old, who was absolutely determined to “go and do the things which the Lord [had] commanded” (1 Nephi 3:7).

### **Commit to standards**

Let us now consider other commitments that will bless your lives. Wouldn’t it be wonderful if, in spite of what others at school might be doing, from this moment forward you would be known for your absolute integrity and clean language? Decide now that you will never cheat; that your language will be pure; that as long as you live, vulgar words or jokes will never come from your lips. These are commitments you can make in the quiet of your room and upon your knees. Success will come to you as you earnestly, prayerfully, and humbly approach the Lord. The scriptures teach, “Be thou humble; and the Lord thy God shall lead thee by the hand, and give thee answer to thy prayers” (D&C 112:10).

You would also want to make commitments regarding modesty of dress and how to act while dating. Keeping the Lord’s standards is always easier when you have already determined how you will

act when faced with decisions in the presence of a date, friends, or peers. Some individuals may not understand your standards as you follow righteous principles and keep your commitments, but they will truly respect and admire you and wish that they were more like you.

Other standards to ponder and commit to are absolute moral cleanliness and sexual purity, Sabbath observance, preparation for missions and the temple, and a determination to always partake of the sacrament worthily.

President Hinckley loves the youth and has constantly encouraged you to follow the standards the Lord has set. Follow-

ing a living prophet's encouragement and counsel will lead you on a path to eternal or everlasting happiness.

As you commit now to do the will of the Lord, He will help and strengthen you. Your faith, trust, and desire to follow Him will be your greatest key to success. I know our Heavenly Father loves each of you and that He truly sent His Only Begotten Son to help you and that you can gloriously succeed as you sincerely commit to follow Him. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

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The choir and congregation sang  
 "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet."

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## Elder Jeffrey R. Holland

### The power of words

The Prophet Joseph Smith deepened our understanding of the power of speech when he taught, "*It is by words . . . [that] every being works when he works by faith.* God said, 'Let there be light: and there was light.' Joshua spake, and the great lights which God had created stood still. Elijah commanded, and the heavens were stayed for the space of three years and six months, so that it did not rain. . . . All this was done by faith. . . . *Faith, then, works by words; and with [words] its mightiest works have been, and will be, performed.*"<sup>1</sup> Like all gifts "which cometh from above," words are "sacred, and must be spoken with care, and by constraint of the Spirit."<sup>2</sup>

It is with this realization of the power and sanctity of words that I wish to caution us, if caution is needed, regarding how we speak to each other and how we speak of ourselves.

There is a line from the Apocrypha which puts the seriousness of this issue better than I can. It reads, "The stroke of the whip maketh marks in the flesh: but the stroke of the tongue breaketh the bones."<sup>3</sup> With that stinging image in mind,

I was particularly impressed to read in the book of James that there was a way I could be "a perfect man."

### "Offend not in word"

Said James: "For in many things we offend all. *[But] if any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man,* and able also to bridle the whole body."

Continuing the imagery of the bridle, he writes: "Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body.

"Behold also . . . ships, which though they be . . . great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm."

Then James makes his point: "The tongue is [also] a little member. . . . *[But] behold, how great a [forest (Greek)] a little fire [can burn]!*

". . . So is the tongue [a fire] among our members, . . . it defileth the whole body, . . . it is set on fire of hell.

"For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea . . . hath been tamed of mankind: