

# Anchors of Testimony

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Strengthen your faith by following this pattern of prayer, study, and obedience to the commandments.

When I lived in Asia, I saw many ponds covered with beautiful flowering water lilies. They added a serene beauty and sweet fragrance to otherwise muddy, stagnant ponds. The leaves of the water lily floated on the water's surface, and a long, firm stalk anchored its position in the pond. The continued growth of the stalk ensured the flower's stability, even when torrential rains raised the level of the water in the pond.

My dear young sisters, you are much like this beautiful flower. Your freshness, purity, and beauty add much goodness to our lives and to the lives of your family. You live in a challenging world polluted with temptations and trials, yet your testimony of Jesus Christ can be your anchor. Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ will strengthen and help your testimony grow, and you will be able to rise above the evils of the world and maintain your position of righteousness.

An anchor is defined as something “that provides stability or confidence in an otherwise uncertain situation.”<sup>1</sup> Your testimony will be your anchor and will give you the confidence to stand “steadfast and immovable”<sup>2</sup> in keeping the Lord's commandments in an uncertain world.

Right now, your testimony is growing, like the stalk of the water lily. Your faith will help it grow and keep it strong, even when you face challenges and temptations of a world polluted with drugs, immorality, pornography, and immodesty.

“Faith is a gift from God, but you must nurture your faith to keep it strong. ... You can nurture the gift of faith by praying to Heavenly Father in the name of Jesus Christ. ... You can strengthen your faith by keeping the commandments. ... You can also develop your faith by studying the scriptures and the words of latter-day prophets.”<sup>3</sup>

I know some young women who had questions about modest clothing. To find answers to their questions, they followed this exact pattern: they prayed to Heavenly Father, they studied the scriptures and the words of our latter-day prophets, and they were obedient in living the standard of modesty. As they received answers to their questions, their faith increased and their testimonies were strengthened. I would invite each of you to follow this pattern.

First, pray to your Heavenly Father. Ask Him for help in finding answers to your questions.

Our prophet, President Thomas S. Monson, said in his first news conference:

“Sometimes the best answers that young people can [get] to the questions of life are found there upon their knees calling upon our Heavenly Father.

“If they will remember that the Lord is mindful of them and will answer their prayers, they will be able to meet every challenge that comes to them.”<sup>4</sup> Prayer will strengthen your faith and anchor your testimony.

In addition to prayer, study the scriptures about faith. Alma 32:27 is a great place to begin learning the process of increasing your faith: “But behold, if ye will awake and arouse your faculties, even to an experiment upon my words, and exercise a particle of faith, yea, even if ye can no more than desire to believe, let this desire work in you, even until ye believe in a manner that ye can give place for a portion of my words.”

Are you willing to try Alma’s experiment to increase your faith? Can you exercise even a particle of faith? Do you have a desire to believe?

As you learn from the scriptures, I know the Lord will bless you with His Spirit, and like the young women we heard from tonight, your understanding will be enlightened. The scriptures will increase your faith and help anchor your testimony.

Studying the words of our latter-day prophets will also increase your faith. “You can always trust the living prophets. Their teachings reflect the will of the Lord”<sup>5</sup> and will help anchor your testimony.

President Spencer W. Kimball, one of our latter-day prophets, counseled youth to drive down stakes to help them be “steadfast and immovable” when he taught: “Our young people should drive down stakes early. ... The stakes are of two kinds: ‘This I *will do*’ and ‘This I *will not do*.’ ... Very early, youth should have been living by a plan. ... When such a course is charted and the goal is set, it is easier to resist the many temptations and to say ‘no’ to the first cigarette, ‘no’ to the first drink, ... ‘no’ to the first improper advances which lead eventually to immoral practices.”<sup>6</sup>

We have a great tool to help us drive down those stakes. It is *For the Strength of Youth*. In this little book you will find the words of our latter-day prophets. The “stakes” that President Kimball described are in this book: the things “I *will do*” and the things “I *will not do*.”

It’s not enough, however, to just read the words of the prophets. You must follow the final step in our pattern and “keep these standards and live by the truths in the scriptures.”<sup>7</sup> This is the challenging part, but by planning ahead what you will and will not do and then living by that plan, you can do it!

Faith is a principle of action. Let me tell you about some young women who studied the words of the prophets in *For the Strength of Youth*, then took action. They made a plan, decided what they would and would not do, and then lived by that plan.

One of the guidelines in *For the Strength of Youth* states: “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.”<sup>8</sup>

After studying these words, one young woman realized that perhaps some of her clothes were not completely modest. Through prayer and study of the scriptures, she was reminded that she was a disciple of Jesus Christ and that, as His representative, she needed to make some changes. She didn’t want to have anything in her wardrobe that was a temptation, so she went through her closet and drawers and got rid of anything that wasn’t modest.

She said, “I would be smart if I didn’t even try on anything in stores that I knew I shouldn’t wear. Why be tempted?” That firm resolve showed the Lord that she respected her body, and she drove down a deep stake for modesty.

Another young woman in the class recognized that her choices in clothing were affecting the way her little sister was dressing. A line in *For the Strength of Youth* states: “Your dress and grooming send messages about you to others and influence the way you and others act.”<sup>9</sup> She decided to make some changes in her clothing, realizing that she had a responsibility to be a good example to her little sister. She drove her stake down more deeply and influenced her sister’s clothing choices.

The standard of “Entertainment and the Media” teaches us to “choose only entertainment and media that uplift you. Good entertainment will help you to have good thoughts and make righteous choices.”<sup>10</sup> I know of a young woman and her sister who were listening to a CD when they realized that the words were not uplifting and did not help them have good thoughts. They both looked at each other and knew through the Spirit that they shouldn’t be listening to this kind of music. The older sister got a hammer, and together they took the CD, and they smashed it into bits. Earlier they had driven down stakes regarding music. They knew what they would and would not listen to and were able to live their plan by following the promptings of the Spirit. This small act strengthened them and gave them confidence to obey in more challenging situations.

Another young woman decided that one of the stakes in her life was to observe the Sabbath, regardless of her circumstances. One year after she was baptized a member of the Church with her family, her ward was divided. Her family was assigned to the newly formed ward, and she was the only young woman in the new ward. Her parents resisted the change and stopped attending church, but she wanted to follow the guidelines in *For the Strength of Youth* on “Sabbath Day Observance.” She decided to go to church in the new ward whenever she could, even though it meant attending all of her meetings alone.

On Sundays she read her scriptures and worked on Personal Progress. Her decision to be “steadfast and immovable” in observing the Sabbath encouraged her mother and younger sister to begin attending church again. Her mother testified that her daughter’s steadfast example of living the gospel and her goodness helped them return to activity.

“You express your faith through action—by the way you live.”<sup>11</sup> The lives of these young women expressed their faith. And note that their faith and exemplary lives resulted in good works. Sisters blessed sisters, and a daughter helped her mother return to Church activity.

Some of you may feel that you can’t rise above the polluted pond, that your circumstances are too difficult, your trials too hard, your temptations too great. But remember Alma’s promise: “Whosoever shall put their trust in God shall be supported in their trials, and their troubles, and their afflictions, and shall be lifted up at the last day.”<sup>12</sup> Remember, the stalk of the water lily grows in adversity, and as the stalk lifts the water lily, your faith will support and lift you.

My dear young sisters, your testimony of Jesus Christ is your anchor. Strengthen your faith by following this pattern of prayer, study, and obedience to the commandments. Drive down stakes by deciding now what you will and will not do, and then act on your plan.

I testify that the Lord loves each of you and will bless you in your efforts to be “steadfast and immovable.” The

gospel of Jesus Christ is true, and your knowledge and testimony of Jesus Christ will keep you well anchored, and you will be able to maintain your position as you stand for truth and righteousness. Of this I humbly testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

1. Apple Computer Inc. Dictionary, version 1.0.1, “anchor.”
2. Mosiah 5:15.
3. *True to the Faith: A Gospel Reference* (2004), 55.
4. “16th President Fields Questions from Media,” *Church News*, Feb. 9, 2008, 15.
5. *True to the Faith*, 129.
6. *The Miracle of Forgiveness* (1969), 236.
7. *For the Strength of Youth* (pamphlet, 2001), 2.
8. *For the Strength of Youth*, 14.
9. *For the Strength of Youth*, 15.
10. *For the Strength of Youth*, 17.
11. *True to the Faith*, 54.
12. Alma 36:3.

