

# Jesus Christ Is the Strength of Youth

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Put your trust in Jesus Christ. He will lead you the right way. He is your strength.

In preparing for this message today, I have felt strong promptings to address the young women and young men.

I am also speaking to those who used to be young, even to those who can't really remember it anymore.

And I speak to all who love our young people and want them to succeed in life.

For the rising generation, I have a message especially for you from our Savior, Jesus Christ.

## The Savior's Message to You

My dear young friends, if the Savior were here right now, what would He say to you?

I believe He would start by expressing His deep love for you. He might say it with words, but it would also flow so strongly—just from His presence—that it would be unmistakable, reaching deep into your heart, filling your whole soul!

And yet, because we're all weak and imperfect, some concerns might creep into your mind. You might remember mistakes you've made, times you gave in to temptation, things you wish you hadn't done—or wish you had done better.

The Savior would sense that, and I believe He would assure you with words He has spoken in the scriptures:

“Fear not.”

“Doubt not.”

“Be of good cheer.”

“Let not your heart be troubled.”

I don't think He would make excuses for your mistakes. He wouldn't minimize them. No, He would ask you to repent—to leave your sins behind, to change, so He can forgive you. He would remind you that 2,000 years ago He took those sins upon Himself so that you *could* repent. That is part of the plan of happiness gifted to us from our loving Heavenly Father.

Jesus might point out that your covenants with Him—made when you were baptized and renewed each time you partake of the sacrament—give you a special connection with Him. The kind of connection the scriptures describe as being yoked together so that, with His help, you can carry any burden.

I believe the Savior Jesus Christ would want you to see, feel, and know that He is your strength. That with His help, there are no limits to what you can accomplish. That your potential is limitless. He would want you to see yourself the way He sees you. And that is very different from the way the world sees you.

The Savior would declare, in no uncertain terms, that you are a daughter or son of the Almighty God. Your Heavenly Father is the most glorious being in the universe, full of love, joy, purity, holiness, light, grace, and truth. And one day He wants you to inherit all He has.

It is the reason why you're on the earth—to learn, grow, and progress and become everything your Father in Heaven has created you for.

To make this possible, He sent Jesus Christ to be your Savior. It's the purpose behind His great plan of happiness, His Church, His priesthood, the scriptures—all of it.

*That is your destiny. That is your future. That is your choice!*

## Truth and Choices

At the heart of God's plan for your happiness is your power to choose. Of course, your Heavenly Father wants you to choose eternal joy with Him, and He will help you to achieve it, but He would never force it upon you.

So He allows you to choose: Light or darkness? Good or evil? Joy or misery? Eternal life or spiritual death?

It sounds like an easy choice, doesn't it? But somehow, here on earth, it seems more complicated than it ought to be.

The problem is that we don't always see things as clearly as we would like to. The Apostle Paul compared it to looking "through a glass, darkly." There's a lot of confusion in the world about what is right and wrong. Truth gets twisted to make evil seem good and good seem evil.

But when you earnestly seek the truth—eternal, unchanging truth—your choices become much clearer. Yes, you still have temptation and trials. Bad things still happen. Puzzling things. Tragic things. But you can manage when you know who you are, why you are here, and when you trust God.

So where do you find truth?

It is contained in the gospel of Jesus Christ. And the fulness of that gospel is taught in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Jesus Christ said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

When you have important choices to make, Jesus Christ and His restored gospel are the best choice. When you have questions, Jesus Christ and His restored gospel are the best answer. When you feel weak, Jesus Christ is your strength.

He gives power to the weary; and to those who feel powerless, He increases strength.

They who wait upon the Lord will be renewed by His strength.

## *For the Strength of Youth*

To help you find the Way and to help you make Christ's doctrine the guiding influence in your life, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has prepared a new resource, a revised version of *For the Strength of Youth*.

For over 50 years, *For the Strength of Youth* has been a guide for generations of Latter-day Saint youth. I always keep a copy in my pocket, and I share it with people who are curious about our standards. It has been updated and refreshed to better cope with the challenges and temptations of our day. The new version of *For the Strength of Youth* is available online in 50 different languages and will also be available in print. It will be a significant help for making choices in your life. Please embrace it as your own and share it with your friends.

This new version of *For the Strength of Youth* is subtitled *A Guide for Making Choices*.

To be very clear, the best guide you can possibly have for making choices is *Jesus Christ*. Jesus Christ *is* the strength of youth.

So the purpose of *For the Strength of Youth* is to point you to Him. It teaches you eternal truths of His restored gospel—truths about who you are, who He is, and what you can accomplish with His strength. It teaches you how to make righteous choices based on those eternal truths.

It's also important to know what *For the Strength of Youth* does not do. It doesn't make decisions for you. It doesn't give you a "yes" or "no" about every choice you might ever face. *For the Strength of Youth* focuses on the foundation for your choices. It focuses on values, principles, and doctrine instead of every specific behavior.

The Lord, through His prophets, has always been guiding us in that direction. He is pleading with us to "increase [our] spiritual capacity to receive revelation." He is inviting us to "hear Him." He is calling us to follow Him in higher and holier ways. And we are learning in a similar way every week in *Come, Follow Me*.

I suppose the guide could give you long lists of clothes you shouldn't wear, words you shouldn't say, and movies you shouldn't watch. But would that really be helpful in a global church? Would such an approach truly prepare you for a lifetime of Christlike living?

Joseph Smith said, "I teach them correct principles, and they govern themselves."

And King Benjamin told his people in the Book of Mormon, "I cannot tell you all the things whereby ye may commit sin; for there are divers ways and means, even so many that I cannot number them."

King Benjamin went on to say, "But this much I can tell you, ... watch *yourselves*, and your thoughts, and your words, and your deeds, and observe the commandments of God, and continue in the faith of ... our Lord, even unto the end of your lives."

Is it wrong to have rules? Of course not. We all need them every day. But it is wrong to focus only on rules instead of focusing on the Savior. You need to know the whys and the hows and then consider the consequences of your choices. You need to put your trust in Jesus Christ. He will lead you the right way. He is your strength.

## The Power of True Doctrine

*For the Strength of Youth* is bold in declaring the doctrine of Jesus Christ. It is bold in inviting you to make choices based on Christ's doctrine.

And it is bold in describing the blessings Jesus Christ promises those who follow His Way.

President Russell M. Nelson taught: “When your greatest desire is to let God prevail [in your life], ... many decisions become easier. ... Many issues become nonissues! You know how best to groom yourself. You know what to watch and read, where to spend your time, and with whom to associate. You know what you want to accomplish. You know the kind of person you ... want to become.”

## A Higher Standard

Jesus Christ has very high standards for His followers. And the invitation to earnestly seek His will and live by His truths is the highest standard possible!

Important temporal and spiritual choices should not only be based on personal preference or what is convenient or popular. The Lord is **not** saying, “Do whatever you want.”

He is saying, “Let God prevail.”

He is saying, “Come, follow me.”

He is saying, “Live in a holier, higher, more mature way.”

He is saying, “Keep my commandments.”

Jesus Christ is our perfect example, and we strive with all the energy of our soul to follow Him.

My dear friends, let me repeat, if the Savior were standing here today, He would express His endless love for you, His complete confidence in you. He would tell you that you can do this. You can build a joyful, happy life because Jesus Christ is your strength. You can find confidence, peace, safety, happiness, and belonging now and eternally, because you will find all of it in Jesus Christ, in His gospel, and in His Church.

Of this I bear my solemn witness as an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ and leave you my heartfelt blessing in deep gratitude and love for you, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.