

**President Hugh B. Brown**

Bishop Victor L. Brown of the Presiding Bishopric has just spoken to us.

Elder Boyd K. Packer, Assistant to the Council of the Twelve, will now speak to us.

**ELDER BOYD K. PACKER***Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles*

I have appreciated, my brethren and sisters, the marvelous counsel given throughout this conference to parents with regard to their children. I wonder, would you object, would it be in order if I ignored you for the next few minutes and spoke directly to children about their obligation to their parents?

No age is quite so carefree, so restless, so potential as high school years. Notwithstanding the outward turmoils and nonconformity, these are years of quiet inner growth. These are years of silent, restless maturing. And it is to our youth of high school years that I speak.

**Lending Your Treasures**

A few days ago I visited a large automobile dealership and looked at many new automobiles. One in particular caught my eye—a convertible sports model with all of the fancy equipment you could imagine. It had push-button everything and more horsepower than a division of cavalry. And it can be purchased for only \$7,100. How I would have enjoyed a car like that when I was in high school! It occurred to me that you may be interested in owning such a car.

Do you have an imagination? Imagine with me that I am your benefactor; I have decided to present to a typical teenager a car such as this, and you are the one who has been chosen. On the evening of the presentation, I see that you are not quite financially able to run such a car, so I generously include free gas, oil, maintenance, tires, anything your car will use; all of this, and the bills come to me.

How you will enjoy that car! Think of driving it to school tomorrow. Think of all the new friends you will suddenly acquire.

Your parents may be hesitant to let you use this car freely, so I will visit with them. I am sure they will be reluctant, but because of my position as one of the leaders of the Church, they will consent.

Let us imagine, then, that you have your car, everything to run it, freedom to use it.

Suppose that one evening you are invited to attend a church social. "There are just enough of you to ride in my station wagon," your teacher says. "You may leave your car home." When they come to take you to the party, you suddenly remember your new convertible parked at the curb with the top down. You hastily go back in the house and give the keys to your father, asking that he put it in the garage, for it looks as if it may rain. Your father, of course, obediently agrees. (It is interesting how obedient parents have become these days.)

Later you come home and notice your car is not at the curb. "Dear old dad," you muse, "always willing to help out." But as the station wagon pulls into the driveway and the lights flash into the garage, you see it stands empty.

You rush into the house, find father, and ask that very urgent question.

"Oh, I loaned it to someone," he responds.

Then imagine, seriously imagine, a conversation such as this.

"Well, who was it?"

"Oh, that boy who comes by here regularly."

"What boy?"

"Oh, that . . . well, I have seen him pass here several times on his bicycle."

"What is his name?"

"Well, I'm afraid I didn't find out."

"Where did he take the car?"

"That really wasn't made clear."

"When will he bring it back?"

Monday, April 5, 1965

Second Day

"Well, there really wasn't any agreement on that."

Then suppose that your father should say to you, with some impatience, "Now you calm down. He rushed in here. He needed a car. You weren't using it. He seemed to be in a frantic hurry over something, and he looked like an honest boy so I gave him the keys. Now relax. Go to bed. Calm down."

I suppose under the circumstances you would look at your father with that puzzled expression and wonder if some important connection had slipped loose in his thinking mechanism.

It would take a foolish father to lend such an expensive piece of equipment on an arrangement such as that—particularly one that belonged to you.

#### Parents Lend Their Treasures

I am sure that you have anticipated the moral of this little illustration, you of high school age. It is in these years that dating begins—this custom of two sets of parents lending their teenagers to one another for the necessary and the important purpose of their finding their way into maturity and eventually into marriage. Perhaps for the first time you notice and you begin to resent the interest of your parents in and their supervision of your activities.

Dating leads to marriage. Marriage is a sacred religious covenant and in its most exalted expression may be an eternal covenant. Whatever preparation relates to marriage, whether it be personal or social, concerns us as members of the Church.

#### Parents Owe Guidance in Dating

Now, I speak very plainly to you, my young friends. If you are old enough to date, you are old enough to know that your parents have not only the right but the sacred obligation, and they are under counsel from the leaders of the Church to concern themselves with your dating habits.

If you are mature enough to date, you are mature enough to accept without childish, juvenile argument their authority as parents to set rules of conduct for you.

No sensible father would lend your

new convertible to anybody, to go anywhere, to do anything, to come back any time.

#### Some Dating Guide Lines

If you are old enough to date, you are old enough to see the very foolishness of parents who would lend their children on any such an arrangement. Don't ask your parents to permit you, their most precious possession, to go out on such flimsy agreements.

Actually the loan of the car would not be so serious as you suppose; for should it be completely destroyed, it could be replaced. There are some problems and some hazards with dating for which there is no such fortunate solution.

#### How to Appreciate

When you are old enough, you ought to start dating. It is good for young men and young women to learn to know and to appreciate one another. It is good for you to go to games and dances and picnics, to do all of the young things. We encourage our young people to date. We encourage you to set high standards of dating.

#### Group Dating

When are you old enough? Maturity may vary from individual to individual, but we are rather of the conviction that dating should not even begin until you are well into your teens. And then, ideal dating is on a group basis. None of this steady dancing, steady dating routine. Steady dating is courtship, and surely the beginning of courtship ought to be delayed until you are almost out of your teens.

#### Supervision

Dating should not be premature. You should appreciate your parents if they see to that. Dating should not be without supervision, and you should appreciate parents who see to that.

#### Church Guide Lines

Young people sometimes get the mistaken notion that the religious attitude and spirituality interfere with

youthful growth. They assume that the requirements of the Church are interferences and aggravations which thwart the full expression of young manhood and young womanhood.

How foolish is the youth who feels that the Church is a fence around love to keep him out. Oh, youth, if you could know! The requirements of the Church are the highway to love and to happiness, with guard rails securely in place, with guideposts plainly marked, and with help along the way. How unfortunate to resent counsel and restraint. How fortunate are you who follow the standards of the Church, even if just from sheer obedience or habit. You will find a rapture and a joy fulfilled.

#### Parents Love You

Be patient with your parents. They love you so deeply. They are emotionally involved with you, and they may become too vigorous as they set their guidelines for you to follow. But be patient. Remember, they are involved in a big do-it-yourself child-raising project, and this is their first time through. They have never raised a child just like you before.

#### Accept Discipline—the Reliable Maturer

Give them the right to misunderstand and to make a mistake or two. They have accorded you that right. Recognize their authority. Be grateful for their discipline. Such discipline may set you on the path to greatness.

An example of what a little discipline can do is found in the comment President McKay made at Merthyr Tydfil in 1963. "I was reminded," he said, "of a visit I made home when I was in college. Mother was sitting on my left, where she always sat at dinner, and I said, 'Mother, I have found that I am the only one of your children whom you have switched.' She said, 'Yes, David O., I made such a failure of you, I didn't want to use the same method on the other children.'" (*Church News*, Sept. 7, 1963, p. 10.)

Be open with your parents. Communicate with them. Discuss with

them your problems. Have prayer with them before a dating event.

Stay in group activities. Don't pair off. Avoid steady dating. The right time to begin a courtship is when you have emerged from your teens.

Heed the counsels from your bishop, from your priesthood and auxiliary teachers, from your seminary teacher.

One further thought. When we talked about my giving you an automobile, that was make-believe. First, of course, at that price it had to be. But even if I could, while you are in high school, I wouldn't because I think too much of you. Your parents would be very wise to know what car ownership in high school contributes to school dropout, to broken hearts, and to broken lives.

We have a son who is driving now. We have talked about a car for him. (That means he has talked, and we have listened.) We have put this off by suggesting that if he has a car of his own he must earn it. If it looks as though he may, I suppose we will have to pray that he has some kind of depression or another. In the meantime we will try as parents to be very generous with the use of the family car. We will try to see that he is not handicapped.

#### Honor Father and Mother

Young people, "honour thy father and thy mother": which is the first commandment with a promise, "that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." (Exod. 20:12.)

I bear witness that God lives. You are old enough now to be told that we, your parents, are children also, seeking to follow the authority and to relate to the discipline of Him. We love you, our youth. But more than this, we respect you. In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

#### President Hugh B. Brown

We have just listened to Boyd K. Packer, Assistant to the Council of the Twelve. The chorus and congregation will now join in singing, "How Firm A Foundation." After the singing Elder