

Elder Boyd K. Packer

Of the Council of the Twelve

Surely all of us have been conscious of the fact that there has been a very powerful spirit with us in this session this morning. Few times, I suppose, have I desired so much the sustaining power of the Spirit as I discuss a very delicate and difficult subject.

Why stay morally clean

There are many young people in our audience today. It is to them, particularly to the teenagers, that I speak. The subject should be of great interest to you: Why stay morally clean.

I approach the subject with deepest reverence. This may surprise some, for this subject is the most talked about, sung about, and joked about of any subject. Almost always it is talked about immodestly.

I intend to sustain modesty, not to offend it, as I venture to speak on this delicate subject.

Young people, my message is of very deep importance to you. It concerns your future happiness. Some things that I say may be new to you who have not read the scriptures.

Plan for mortal life

In the beginning, prior to your mortal birth, you lived with our Heavenly Father. He is real. He actually lives. There are those living upon the earth who bear witness of his existence. We have heard his servants do so in this session. He lives, and I bear testimony of it.

He knew you there. Because he loved you, he was anxious for your happiness and for your eternal growth. He wanted you to be able to choose freely and to grow through the power of correct choice, so that you may become much as he is. To achieve this, it was necessary for us to leave his presence. Something like going away

to school. A plan was presented, and each agreed to leave the presence of our Heavenly Father to experience life in mortality.

Two great things were in store for us as we came into this world. One, we would receive a mortal body, created in the image of God. Through it, by proper control, we might achieve eternal life and happiness. Two, we would be tried and tested in such a way that we could grow in strength and in spiritual power.

Now this first purpose is wonderfully important, for this body given us will be resurrected and will serve us through the eternities.

Under the accepted plan, Adam and Eve were sent to the earth as our first parents. They could prepare physical bodies for the first spirits to be introduced into this life.

Power of creation

There was provided in our bodies—and this is sacred—a power of creation, a light, so to speak, that has the power to kindle other lights. This gift was to be used only within the sacred bonds of marriage. Through the exercise of this power of creation, a mortal body may be conceived, a spirit enter into it, and a new soul born into this life.

This power is good. It can create and sustain family life, and it is in family life that we find the fountains of happiness. It is given to virtually every individual who is born into mortality. It is a sacred and significant power, and I repeat, my young friends, that this power is good.

You who are teenagers, like every other son and daughter of Adam and Eve, have this power within you.

The power of creation—or may we say procreation—is not just an incidental part of the plan: it is essential to it.

Without it the plan could not proceed. The misuse of it may disrupt the plan.

Use of creative power

Much of the happiness that may come to you in this life will depend on how you use this sacred power of creation. The fact that you young men can become fathers and that you young women can become mothers is of utmost importance to you.

As this power develops within you, it will prompt you in the search for a companion and empower you to love and to hold him.

I repeat, this power to act in the creation of life is sacred. You can some day have a family of your own. Through the exercise of this power you can invite children to live with you—little boys and little girls who will be your very own—created, in a way, in your own image. You can establish a home, a dominion of power and influence and opportunity. This carries with it great responsibility.

This creative power carries with it strong desires and urges. You have felt them already in the changing of your attitudes and your interests.

Strong and constant feelings

As you move into your teens, almost of a sudden a boy or a girl becomes something new and intensely interesting. You will notice the changing of form and feature in your own body and in others. You will experience the early whispering of physical desire.

It was necessary that this power of creation have at least two dimensions: one, it must be strong; and two, it must be more or less constant.

This power must be strong, for most men by nature seek adventure. Except for the compelling persuasion of these feelings, men would be reluctant to accept the responsibility of sustaining a home and a family. This power must be constant, too, for it becomes a binding tie in family life.

You are old enough, I think, to look

around you in the animal kingdom. You soon realize that where this power of creation is a fleeting thing, where it expresses itself only in season, there is no family life.

It is through this power that life continues. A world full of trials and fears and disappointments can be changed into a kingdom of hope and joy and happiness. Each time a child is born, the world somehow is renewed in innocence.

Importance of marriage

Again I want to tell you young people that this power within you is good. It is a gift from God our Father. In the righteous exercise of it as in nothing else, we may come close to him.

We can have, in a small way, much that our Father in heaven has as he governs us, his children. No greater school or testing place can be imagined.

Is it any wonder, then, that in the Church marriage is so sacred and so important? Can you understand why your marriage, which releases these powers of creation for your use, should be the most carefully planned, the most solemnly considered step in your life? Ought we to consider it unusual that the Lord directed that temples be constructed for the purpose of performing marriage ceremonies?

Enticements of evil one

Now there are other things that I will tell you as a warning. In the beginning there was one among us who rebelled at the plan of our Heavenly Father. He vowed to destroy and to disrupt the plan.

He was prevented from having a mortal body and was cast out—limited forever from establishing a kingdom of his own. He became satanically jealous. He knows that this power of creation is not just an incident to the plan, but a key to it.

He knows that if he can entice you to use this power prematurely, to use

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it too soon, or to misuse it in any way, you may well lose your opportunities for eternal progression.

He is an actual being from the unseen world. He has great power. He will use it to persuade you to transgress those laws set up to protect the sacred powers of creation.

Changed tactics

In former times he was too cunning to confront one with an open invitation to be immoral. But rather, sneakily and quietly he would tempt young and old alike to think loosely of these sacred powers of creation. To bring down to a vulgar or to a common level that which is sacred and beautiful.

His tactics have changed now. He describes it as only an appetite to be satisfied. He teaches that there are no attendant responsibilities to the use of this power. Pleasure, he will tell you, is its sole purpose.

His devilish invitations appear on billboards. They are coined into jokes and written into the lyrics of songs. They are acted out on television and at theaters. They will stare at you now from most magazines. There are magazines—you know the word, pornography—open, wicked persuasions to pervert and misuse this sacred power.

You grow up in a society where before you is the constant invitation to tamper with these sacred powers.

Words of counsel

I want to counsel you and I want you to remember these words.

Do not let anyone at all touch or handle your body, not anyone! Those who tell you otherwise proselyte you to share their guilt. We teach you to maintain your innocence.

Turn away from any who would persuade you to experiment with these life-giving powers.

That such indulgence is widely accepted in society today is not enough! For both parties to willingly consent to such indulgence is not enough!

To imagine that it is a normal ex-

pression of affection is not enough to make it right.

The only righteous use of this sacred power is within the covenant of marriage.

Never misuse these sacred powers.

And now, my young friends, I must tell you soberly and seriously that God has declared in unmistakable language that misery and sorrow will follow the violation of the laws of chastity. ". . . wickedness never was happiness." (Al. 41:10.)

These laws were set up to guide all of his children in the use of this gift.

He does not have to be spiteful or vengeful in order that punishment will come from the breaking of the moral code. The laws are established of themselves.

Crowning glory awaits you if you live worthily. The loss of the crown may well be punishment enough. Often, very often, we are punished as much by our sins as we are for them.

Cleansing power

I am sure that within the sound of my voice there is more than one young person who already has fallen into transgression. Some of you young people, I am sure, almost innocent of any intent, but persuaded by the enticements and the temptations, already have misused this power.

Know then, my young friends, that there is a great cleansing power. And know that you can be clean.

If you are outside the Church, the covenant of baptism itself represents, among other things, a washing and a cleansing.

For those of you inside the Church there is a way, not entirely painless, but certainly possible. You can stand clean and spotless before Him. Guilt will be gone, and you can be at peace. Go to your bishop. He holds the key to this cleansing power.

Righteous family life

Then one day you can know the full and righteous expression of these

powers and the attendant happiness and joy in righteous family life. In due time, within the bonds of the marriage covenant, you can yield yourselves to those sacred expressions of love which have as their fulfillment the generation of life itself.

Someday you will hold a little boy or a little girl in your arms and know that two of you have acted in partnership with our Heavenly Father in the creation of life. Because the youngster belongs to you, you may then come to love someone more than you love yourself.

This experience can come, insofar as I know, only through having children of your own or perhaps through fostering children born of another and yet drawn close into family covenants.

Some of you may not experience the blessings of marriage. Protect nonetheless these sacred powers of creation, for there is a great power of compensation that may well apply to you.

Meaning of fatherhood

Through this loving one more than you love yourself, you become truly Christian. Then you know, as few others know, what the word *Father* means when it is spoken of in the scriptures. You may then feel something of the love and concern that he has for us.

It should have great meaning that of all the titles of respect and honor and admiration that could be given him, God himself, he who is the highest of all, chose to be addressed simply as Father.

Key to Happiness

Protect and guard your gift. Your actual happiness is at stake. Eternal family life, now only in your anticipations and dreams, can be achieved because our Heavenly Father has bestowed this choicest gift of all upon you—this power of creation. It is the very key to

happiness. Hold this gift as sacred and pure. Use it only as the Lord has directed.

My young friends, there is much happiness and joy to be found in this life. I can testify of that.

I picture you with a companion whom you love and who loves you. I picture you at the marriage altar, entering into covenants that are sacred. I picture you in a home where love has its fulfillment. I picture you with little children about you and see your love growing with them.

I cannot frame this picture. I would not if I could, for it has no bounds. Your happiness will have no ends if you obey his laws.

I pray God's blessings upon you, our youth. May our Heavenly Father watch over you and sustain you, that in the expression of this sacred gift you may draw close to him. He lives. He is our Father. Of this I bear witness in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen. □

Following Elder Packer's remarks, the Choir sang "The Voice of God Again Is Heard" without announcement.

President N. Eldon Tanner

We express our appreciation to the General Authorities who have spoken to us, and to the Tabernacle Choir for their inspirational music.

We are grateful to the owners and managers of over 300 television and radio stations for offering their facilities as a public service to make the proceedings of this conference available to millions throughout many areas of the world.

This session has been carried from the Tabernacle over direct oceanic cables to a large number of members and friends assembled in chapels throughout Great Britain, Germany, France, Holland, Belgium and Austria.