

Warn our neighbors

And so, my brothers and sisters and friends, the main purpose of area conferences, the main purpose of general conferences, the main purpose of *this* conference, is to sound the voice of warning. You who hear and are warned must warn your neighbors. If we fail to heed the warnings given, or fail to warn our neighbors, we all may be lost.

In this day when so many have turned away their hearts and their ears from the word of the Lord, it behooves all who yet believe to be more diligent and more faithful and more anxious to proclaim the principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ. I bear testimony that God lives, that Jesus is the Christ, and that this is his church which he directs through our prophet, Spencer W. Kimball. Let us so live that we, with our families and loved ones, may be saved from the destruction which is inevitable unless we turn again to God and keep his commandments.

That we may all be engaged in works of righteousness, and with love in

our hearts and a testimony of the truth on our lips, heed the warning voice of our prophet, and in turn warn our neighbors, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Following President Tanner's address, the Choir sang without announcement the number, "Lead, Kindly Light."

President Marion G. Romney

We have heard from President N. Eldon Tanner, First Counselor in the First Presidency of the Church, followed by the Tabernacle Choir singing, "Lead, Kindly Light."

To those of the television and radio audience who have just tuned in on this conference, we wish to extend our sincere greetings.

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder Marvin J. Ashton of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder Marvin J. Ashton

Of the Council of the Twelve

A successful football coach recently described his best player as an athlete possessing an extra special dimension. Besides being a great team man, I was told he performs well for himself. He possesses all of the necessary physical and mental ingredients for success. He has personal pride and a good self-image. He has the bearing and self-conduct patterns that prompt his fellow team members and friends to say, "He's well balanced. He knows where he is going and how to get there."

Proper self-management

Proper self-management is a great virtue, which can lead to personal pride.

Personal pride is a great motivator. It is a virtue to understand who we are and to conduct ourselves accordingly. To be created in God's image is a tremendous blessing with accompanying choice responsibilities.

"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"

"If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." (1 Cor. 3:16-17.)

Appropriate personal pride prohibits shabby performance. Proper self-image is a basic ingredient of pride in one's self. It is necessary if individual

discipline is to be purposeful and effective. May I suggest a few thoughts for our consideration in the basic areas of self-management?

Self-image

Generally the cover or jacket of a book is designed to sell what is inside. We will not have to die to be judged by the cover of the book of life. To those who would say, "It's what you really are inside that counts, not the length of the hair or beard," I would say, "If this is true, and I agree it is, why run the risk of looking like something you're not?" In working with others in regard to personal appearance, change can usually be brought about more quickly by courteously appealing to pride, impression, and image.

Self-image is often enhanced by the clothing worn. Appropriate, modest, flattering, and comfortable apparel helps a person feel good about himself. To be over-dressed or immodestly dressed may create wrong impressions and improper identification. Improper clothing may also lead to wrong actions. I have always had a special amount of admiration and respect for blind friends who, even though they were unable to see themselves or others, yet appeared neat, well dressed, and well groomed. The individual or someone in that person's life is trying to help the blind person feel good about himself. We do ourselves and others a great injustice when we appear to be what we are not.

Reasonable questions to ask oneself could well be, "Can I be proud of my appearance? Do my clothes properly introduce me?" What better example of proper personal appearance can we have than that glorious introduction shared with us by the Prophet Joseph Smith when he declared, "I saw two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description." (Joseph Smith 2:17.)

Taking the time to prepare oneself to look one's best for all occasions is

grooming at its best. I am reminded of the mother who said, "It began to annoy me that the children would say, 'Where are you going, Mom?' whenever I took time out to tend to my hair, apply a little lipstick, or slip into a clean dress. Didn't I have the right to dress up at home? Then I started to realize how seldom I actually did dress up just to stay home and do housework. In fact, I rarely changed from my working clothes except when I ran to shop or visit. I had made myself too busy to bother with good grooming except for special occasions, for visiting, for going to church. No wonder the children got confused at the rare times I made myself more presentable for no apparent reason at all."

Know oneself

One of life's eternal pursuits is learning to know oneself. Dr. Thomas Harris shares this worthy thought with us: "Most people never fulfill their human promise and potential because they remain perpetually helpless children overwhelmed by a sense of inferiority. The feeling of being okay does not imply that the person has risen above all his faults and emotional problems. It merely implies that he refuses to be paralyzed by them. He is determined to accept himself as he is but also to assume more and more control of his life."

Getting better acquainted with oneself and realizing God has given to every person gifts and talents is a worthy challenge. "For there are many gifts, and to every man is given a gift by the Spirit of God.

"To some is given one, and to some is given another, that all may be profited thereby." (D&C 46:11-12.)

To be aware of one's limitations and potentials on a continuing basis will help in improved self-esteem. We need to be constantly aware of the fact that we are children of God. He knows us. He hears us. He loves us. Proper self-image will help us keep our habits,

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lives, and souls directed in happy paths. How proud we should be in the knowledge we have godlike attributes. It was Abraham Lincoln who said, "It is difficult to make a man miserable when he feels he is worthy of himself and claims kindred to the great God who made him." (Address on colonization to a Negro deputation at Washington, Aug. 14, 1862.)

Our obligation is to avoid self-pity, self-judgment, and self-indulgence. If we properly understand our relationship to God and His to us, we will not have moments, days, or lives spent in wondering, "What have I done to deserve this?" "What does God have against me?" or, "Why wasn't I born with the talents of my friends?"

There needs to be a willingness and ability on the part of all of us to properly relate to others in families, neighborhoods, and organizations. Courtesy and self-respect are necessary ingredients. We need the humble approach in dealing with others. Proper self-management will permit us to be a team member first, a coach, captain, or superstar second. In this relationship and way of life, the truth "If ye are not one ye are not mine" (D&C 38:27) takes on new significance.

Self-discipline

Another important part of meaningful self-management is self-discipline, and the only discipline that really works is self-discipline. What can give greater satisfaction in life than mastery in self-conduct? Good health habits, integrity, bearing, mannerisms, conversation, and self-control can be powerful assets in one's personal balance sheet. These traits outwardly reflect the views of the management. Integrity within oneself makes it possible for honesty with God, family, and all other daily associates. A person who has integrity within himself will also have it in his relationship with all others. A person walks uprightly only when he is

moving in the right direction. He needs to know where he is going at all times and under all conditions. One avoids the appearance of evil as he treads paths that lead up and on rather than down and out. Being anxiously engaged in worthy causes and seeking first the kingdom of God are external evidences of proper self-management and a proper application of personal resources.

To teach self-discipline, the emphasis should be on self-respect and esteem rather than the use of ridicule, embarrassment, and tears for conduct-improvement tools. One of the great tragedies that can come in a human's life is the destruction of self-respect. This destruction is often self-inflicted. Elevated expressions of human feelings, example, and courtesy build self-respect. People are lifted when they are treated as if they already were what they could be. It is my experience that most thinking people respond better to friendly persuasion than to threats or abuse.

Even personal health habits are generally improved by proper emphasis on temporal and eternal values rather than on condemnation and disgust. Overweight people should be encouraged concerning appearance and health advantages of appropriate diet and trimness. Most will respond to honest appreciation expressed for what has been done or honestly attempted rather than caustic slurs.

Often self-discipline in personal health is weak or missing because we allow ourselves to become lost in revenge or spiteful attitudes. Recently I was talking to a young man on drugs. To the question, "Why do you use drugs?" he responded with, "To get even with my mom." From an attractive wife and young mother presently caught up in the habit of drinking cocktails: to my query, "Why are you involved in the use of alcohol?" she said, "That father-in-law of mine isn't going to tell me what to do!" If there are good reasons

to be on drugs and alcohol, and at the present I don't know of any, there must be better reasons than those offered by these two friends. God and men glory in intelligent self-management.

As important to our self-image and general conduct as appropriate dress, grooming, and hair standards are moderation of voice, use of worthy language, good manners, respect for others' rights, and courtesy.

Act with propriety

In any community or personal situation, it is refreshing and uplifting to see men and women who think, speak, and act with propriety. Good manners are necessary for the decency and peace of community living and should be a matter of grave concern to all, yet we hear and read less about their cultivation than we do about dieting and "daily dozens" to enhance our personal acceptance and development. Courtesy is at its best when it is least obvious. Courtesy is not the invention of a past generation; rather, it is but a long-standing manner of life. We need to be reminded of the fact that Moses did more than bring down the Ten Commandments from the Mount, he in unmistakable terms prescribed the conduct of a gentleman—civility to friends and strangers; respect for the blind, the deaf, the aged, the weary, the unsuspecting; and the abstention from tale-bearing.

Courtesy is not unusual conduct to be reserved for a special circle of friends or circumstances. It is not a veneer to be put on for special social occasions or people. It is a way of life of tremendous significance, whether it be in the home, in the office, or on the highway. It cushions the unexpected and eases our jolts wonderfully. We cannot justify or condone discourtesy regardless of friendship or situation. Our best manners learned and used in the home will appropriately surface in our association with all men.

Patience and punctuality

Being on time to appointments and meetings is a phase of self-discipline and an evidence of self-respect. Punctuality is a courteous compliment the intelligent person pays to his associates. Punctuality or the lack thereof oftentimes is the only introduction one will ever have to new groups and friends. Serenity and poise are not the companions of those who lack the courtesy and judgment to be on time.

He is well disciplined who develops patience in his dealings with his fellowmen. In conversation he is considerate and knows how to listen. A courteous conversationalist is not a boaster, a babbler, or a boor. Wise is the man who says what needs to be said, but not all that could be said.

We are children of God

My hope and prayer today is that we will look to ourselves with new responsibility, new self-appreciation, higher self-image, and greater self-respect. We are children of God. We do possess God-given attributes. We do have the opportunity and obligation to learn to be leaders. Let us so live that it may be said of us, "He's well balanced. He knows where he is going and how to get there. He's a good manager of himself." By doing this it will be possible to better serve in the kingdom and have a greater appreciation for Lorenzo Snow's thrilling declaration, "As man now is, God once was. As God now is, man may be." (See *Improvement Era*, June 1919, p. 656.) This is what proper self-management is all about.

I leave you these thoughts and my testimony in the name of Him, the perfect example, even Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Tabernacle Choir sang without announcement, "How Wondrous and Great" following Elder Marvin J. Ashton's address.

President Marion G. Romney

We have just listened to Elder Marvin J. Ashton of the Council of the Twelve, followed by the Choir singing, "How Wondrous and Great."

The Choir and Congregation will now join in singing, "Hope of Israel," following which we shall hear from Elder M. Russell Ballard, Jr. of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The Choir and congregation sang the hymn, "Hope of Israel."

President Romney

To those of the television and radio, audience who have just joined us, we are convened in the historic Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, in this Sixth Session of the 146th Semi-Annual Conference of the Church.

We shall now hear from Elder M. Russell Ballard, Jr., a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy and President of the Canada Toronto Mission. He will be followed by Elder Joseph Anderson of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder M. Russell Ballard, Jr.

Of the First Quorum of the Seventy

My brothers and sisters, my coming to conference while serving as a full-time mission president makes me feel somewhat like an army field commander who has been summoned home from the front lines to report on conditions of the war to the commander in chief, joint chiefs of staff, and other general officers.

Struggle for righteousness

The war is not a hot one where there are guns and armaments; but the struggle between the forces of righteousness and of evil for the souls of our Heavenly Father's children is intense, and the conflict is very real.

From my front-line position in the mission field I can personally testify that the enemy is well trained in the arts of eternal warfare. The army of the devil exploits all kinds of sinful practices, and promotes his cause through every kind of printed, audio, and visual means. Perhaps the most cunning of all their methods is the spirit

of apathy and indifference that they use to penetrate the minds and the hearts of mankind, to dull their feelings towards God, His Son Jesus Christ, and His church.

The great prophet Mormon taught: "Wherefore, all things which are good cometh of God; and that which is evil cometh of the devil; for the devil is an enemy unto God, and fighteth against him continually, and inviteth and enticeth to sin, and to do that which is evil continually." (Moro. 7:12.)

Prepare

Based on my experience, I believe that if the Saints and missionaries are to build up the Church at the much faster rate that President Kimball has called for, we must all strive to prepare ourselves to become better gospel teachers. I often see the great joy that comes into the life of the new member of the Church when he is baptized. At each baptismal service I am reminded of the tremendous amount of individual