

minister during England's darkest days of war. Among other things, he said the following:

"It is no use saying, 'We are doing our best.' You have got to succeed in doing what is necessary" (in *Reader's Digest*, July 1964, p. 247).

Also, "We have before us an ordeal of the most grievous kind. . . .

"You ask, what is our policy? I will say: It is to wage war, by sea, land, and air, with all our might and with all our strength that God can give us. . . . That is our policy.

"You ask, What is our aim? I can answer in one word: It is victory, victory at all costs, victory in spite of all the terror; victory, however long and hard the road may be" (quoted by Louis L. Snyder, *The War: A Concise History, 1939-1945* [New York: Julian Messner, Inc., 1961], p. 89).

Young people, bearers of the priesthood, God wants us to be victorious. He wants you to triumph over all of your foes. Stalwart and brave we must stand. God is at the helm. There is no reason for defeat.

Stand strong in all circumstances

It should be inspiring to all of us to constantly review and reread the message of the Prophet Joseph Smith given in Doctrine and Covenants, section 121, verses 7 and 8:

"My son, peace be unto thy soul; thine adversity and thine afflictions shall be but a small moment;

"And then, if thou endure it well, God shall exalt thee on high; thou shalt triumph over all thy foes."

Here was God conveying to the noble prophet the importance of carrying

on under all circumstances and situations.

"Thy God shall stand by thee"

We promise the youth of today with the same conviction the Lord shared with the Prophet Joseph in Doctrine and Covenants, section 122, verse 4, "Thy God shall stand by thee forever and ever." As we carry on today, this promise is in force and is everlasting.

I am proud that we have a President, even Ezra Taft Benson, who loves and encourages the youth of the noble birthright to work, carry on, and live close to God. The youth programs of the Church today are stronger because of his influence presently and over the past years.

Jesus is the Christ. He is our Redeemer, our Lord and Savior and friend. We constantly give thanks through deeds and prayer for his unmatched example of carrying on under circumstances that caused him to bleed from every pore and anguish in the misunderstanding and misconduct of his associates. Joy and happiness come through determination and the practice of carrying on under all conditions. May God help us to so do and reap the rewards in this present day, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

We have heard Elder Marvin J. Ashton of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder Robert L. Backman of the Presidency of the Quorums of the Seventy will now speak to us. He will be followed by Elder Benjamin B. Banks, who was sustained as a member of the Seventy at April conference.

Elder Robert L. Backman

Chastity is not outdated

One day I sat with a handsome, young, prospective missionary as he poured out his sad story through sobs of

sorrow, anguish, and remorse. I wanted to cry with him. Pressured by his so-called friends, he found himself at a party where liquor was served. Against every-

thing he knew to be right, he succumbed to the taunts and jeers of all those present, became drunk, and before the evening was over lost his virtue.

Unable to resist the peer pressure he faced, his resolution to stay chaste being dissipated by the circumstances he found himself in, he had seen his lifelong dream of a mission and a temple marriage change to a nightmare — and now he felt ashamed, unclean, unworthy.

“Have I forfeited my opportunity for a mission, for marriage in the temple?” he asked. “How can my Father in Heaven forgive me for what I have done? I wish the earth would open up and swallow me!” My heart ached for him.

Almost overriding my sympathy for him was the anger I felt toward those who had led him down that “primrose path,” seemingly oblivious to the pain they had caused, listening to Satan’s siren song that chastity is outdated.

“Thou shalt not commit adultery,” Jehovah commanded, “and he that committeth adultery, and repenteth not, shall be cast out” (D&C 42:24).

My beloved young brethren, despite what the world would have us believe, God has never changed that law.

Immorality brings punishments

The First Presidency of the Church, in another time of moral crisis, declared:

“To the youth of the Church we . . . plead with you to live clean, for the unclean life leads only to suffering, misery, and woe physically, — and spiritually it is the path to destruction. How glorious and near to the angels is youth that is clean. . . . Sexual purity is youth’s most precious possession; it is the foundation of all righteousness. . . .

“Times approach when we shall need all the health, strength, and spiritual power we can get to bear the afflictions that will come upon us” (in James R. Clark, comp., *Messages of the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 6 vols. [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965–75], 6:150).

“You youths of Zion, you cannot associate in non-marital, illicit sex relationships, which is fornication, and escape the punishments and the judgments which the Lord has declared against this sin. The day of reckoning will come just as certainly as night follows day” (in *Messages of the First Presidency*, 6:176).

The full force of his actions was obvious to my tearful friend, who understood, at last, the reality of Alma’s words, “Wickedness never was happiness” (Alma 41:10).

Cleanliness leads to eternal life

As I shared those sad moments with that sorrowing young man, I could not help contrasting his feelings with those of another whose sealing I had performed in the house of the Lord.

There, in the presence of their families, the happy couple expressed their joy at the solemn covenants they had made with God and with each other as they knelt at that sacred altar, looking into each other’s souls with complete trust and confidence, approaching their marriage clean and worthy of the celestial blessings pronounced on their heads.

Their happiness was unrestrained.

My beloved Aaronic Priesthood brethren, with all you are learning as you progress toward virile manhood, I pray that you will get understanding of the vital truth that chastity is the ultimate and perfect standard underlying all spiritual progression.

Righteousness is happiness.

The Lord has declared, “And no unclean thing can enter into his kingdom; therefore nothing entereth into his rest save it be those who have washed their garments in my blood, because of their faith, and the repentance of all their sins, and their faithfulness unto the end” (3 Nephi 27:19).

I challenge you to be *clean*, be *worthy*, be *strong*, be *happy*! How? What can you do to withstand “the fiery darts of the wicked [one]” (D&C 27:17), to resist temptation and walk uprightly before the Lord?

Be patient

First, be patient. Don't be too anxious to grow up. Bask in the pleasure of anticipating what it will be like to be an adult. Remember, you are only young once, and you are going to be old for a long time.

Our impatience often causes us to flirt with the forbidden, forgetting the consequences of our foolish experimenting. President Harold B. Lee painted a vivid picture of the pain suffered through flirting, then succumbing to temptation:

"I've seen beautiful young human butterflies playing with the tempting fires of sin. . . .

"Many of these beautiful human butterflies winged for heavenly flight have fallen with wings singed and badly seared because of their curiosity about the forbidden. The more I see of life, the more I am convinced that we must impress you young people with the awfulness of sin rather than to content ourselves with merely teaching the way of repentance. I wish that someone could warn you of the night of hell that follows the committing of a moral sin . . . , as one who has sinned has described it in these words: 'No one knew anything about it. You told no one, and no one found out, no one condemned. But your face flushed, your heart beat against your ribs. Perspiration broke out upon your brow. You went to bed that night, you tied a bandage around the eyes of your soul, you built a little shelter in which to hide, you tried to sleep, but no sleep came. You said to yourself, "Other people do it," or "I had to do it," or "No one else can ever find it out.'" But there were hands from the unseen world that came through the darkness and tore the bandage from the eyes of the soul, and smashed down the little shelter you had made for your cowering spirit" (*Youth and the Church* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1970], pp. 87-88).

My young friends, please be patient.

Focus on your eternal destiny

Second, focus on your eternal destiny. The Lord has promised the faithful, "All that my Father hath shall be given

unto him" (D&C 84:38). Think what that means to you as a son of God.

Brethren, set limits to your actions — bounds you will not pass — far from the line which separates good from evil. Be prepared for the experiences that lie ahead. Plan in advance how you will face temptations — weigh the consequences, now and forever. Be sure you understand the situation confronting you. If someone, perhaps a friend, asks you to do something you are not sure about, restate what he has said, "You want me to do what?"

Next, ask yourself, "Will doing what my friend says break my rules, or the law, or hurt someone I respect or love, or make someone distrust me?" Then look at both sides of the question. What good things will happen if you do this, and what bad things will happen? Now that you have assessed all the results, you are prepared to make a decision. If everything is positive, you will probably want to go along with your friend; if not, you have the responsibility to say No. (Adapted from John W. Larsen, *Youth's Frontier, Making Ethical Decisions* [Irving, Texas: Boy Scouts of America, 1985] p. 14.)

Get tough with yourself. President Spencer W. Kimball gave us a powerful example in a talk to the youth of Stockholm, Sweden. Describing his own boyhood, he said:

"As I was out alone, milking the cows, or putting up the hay, I had time to think. I mulled it over in my mind and made this decision: 'I, Spencer Kimball, will never taste any form of liquor. I, Spencer Kimball, will never touch tobacco. I will never drink coffee, nor will I ever touch tea — not because I can explain why I shouldn't, except that the Lord said not to.' He said those things were an abomination. There are many other things that are, too, that are not in the Word of Wisdom. But I made up my mind.

"That's the point I am trying to make. I made up my mind then, as a little boy: 'I will never touch those things.' And so, having made up my mind, it was easy to follow it, and I did not yield.

There were many temptations that came along, but I did not even analyze it; I did not stop and measure it and say, 'Well, shall I or shall I not?' I always said to myself: 'But I made up my mind I would not. Therefore, I do not.'

"I'm a little older than any of you here tonight, and I want to just say that I will soon go into another year and that I have never tasted tea, nor coffee, nor tobacco, nor liquor of any kind, nor drugs. Now that may sound very presumptuous and boasting to you, but I am only trying to make this point: that if every boy and girl — as he or she begins to grow a little more mature and becomes a little more independent of his friends and his family and all — if every boy and girl would make up his or her mind, 'I will not yield,' then no matter what the temptation is: 'I made up my mind. That's settled.'" (in Conference Report, Stockholm Sweden Area Conference 1975, pp. 86–87).

Stand by your convictions

Third, stand by your convictions. Take control of your life. It is *your* body — the clothing of *your* spirit — you are dealing with. Don't become a slave to your appetites or passions. Be mature enough to have your spirit control your body. Self-control is vital when you are resisting what you know is wrong, especially when a friend insists. This self-control comes with practice, so it's important to build your inner strength. Constantly remind yourself that you are a son of God with great things to do.

Winston Churchill, that courageous World War II statesman, gave sound advice to all of us. He thundered his conviction: "Never give in, never give in, never, never, never — in nothing, great or small, large or petty — never give in except to convictions of honor and good sense" (in John Bartlett, comp., *Familiar Quotations*, 15th ed. [Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1980], p. 745).

Repent of your mistakes

Fourth, repent. Some of us are held back in our development by mistakes

we have made, sins we have committed, regrets that we let weigh on our consciences until they burden us down to the breaking point.

In the comic strip *Peanuts*, Charlie Brown told Lucy about his New Year's resolutions. He said, "You're going to be proud of me, Lucy. . . . I've decided that this next year is going to be my year of decision! This is a list of things in my life that I'm going to correct. . . . I'm going to be a better person!"

Lucy's reply was, "Not me. . . . I'm going to spend this whole year regretting the past. . . . It's the only way, Charlie Brown. . . . I'm going to cry over spilt milk, and sigh over lost loves. . . . It's a lot easier. . . . It's too hard to improve. . . . I tried it once. . . . It drove me crazy. . . . 'Forget the future' is my motto. . . . Regret the past! Oh, how I regret the past! Why did I do this? Why did I do that? Why? I regret it all! Oh, what regrets! What remorse! What anguish! What . . ." Charlie Brown sighs and throws away his resolutions. (Ellipses in the original.)

Our loving Father in Heaven is only interested in what you are going to do with your future, conditioned on your repentance from your past sins. Coming back to the questions posed by my distraught young friend and to those of you who may have transgressed as he did, I assure you that you are still dearly loved by your Father in Heaven and by the Lord's church. The second principle of the gospel is repentance, that beautiful saving principle without which all of us imperfect people would be lost. The Lord has made the promise, "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isaiah 1:18).

Isn't that a glorious promise? And it is conditioned only on your repentance. Though the roadway may be long and difficult, though the pain and sorrow may be acute, though the Church may have to take loving action to balance justice and mercy, the repentance process can cleanse your soul, and you can walk in the light of the Holy Spirit again — the transgression forgiven, the soul purified and sanctified.

You know the steps! Don't delay. Forget the past — except to use it to build a better life. Begin now to be worthy of the eternal blessings God has promised the faithful and the true.

My precious young brothers, may you understand that chastity is the source

of virile manhood, the crown of beautiful womanhood, the foundation of a happy home, and the ultimate and perfect standard underlying all spiritual progression. May we who have been called be worthy to be chosen, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior, amen.

Elder Benjamin B. Banks

To prospective missionaries

I would like to address my remarks this evening to you young men of the Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthoods who are planning on or contemplating serving a mission, and to those young men of the Aaronic or Melchizedek priesthoods who perhaps might be struggling as to whether or not they want to serve a mission.

Preparing for a bicycle trip

I would like to share with you the following story. Nine years ago this spring, my son Ben came to me and said, "Dad, we are going to hold our family reunion this summer at Flaming Gorge recreation area" (a distance of 220 miles east of Salt Lake City). "Why don't you, myself, and any of the boys in our family that would like to leave a few days early, ride our bikes to Flaming Gorge, and meet the rest of the family there?"

I said, "That sounds great, but we have only one motorcycle!"

Ben said, "No, Dad, you misunderstand. I mean pedal bicycles." I thought he was kidding. He said, "I will outline and prepare a training schedule for us. We'll get up early Saturday mornings and for three hours we'll go out and ride over the courses I will outline, so that when the time comes we will be prepared to go."

I said, "Okay," not really knowing what I was in for. I didn't own a bicycle and knew I would have to use my daughter's old, heavy, ten-speed bicycle with what seemed like bent wheels and a seat that was terribly hard. I also knew that

getting up early on Saturday mornings was not one of my favorite things. But knowing that some of my sons wanted me to go with them, I said, "Okay."

As the time for training and preparation came, I found all kinds of excuses not to go on the training rides. However, one Saturday I rode with them to the top of Parleys Canyon and back. It was hard, but I thought I would be okay. Little did I know!

The time for the trip came. I joined my boys the second day of the trip, as I had meetings the first day. The journey that second day took us from Heber City to Roosevelt (approximately one hundred miles).

As we checked into the motel that evening, I called my wife at home and told her I had never hurt so badly in my life. Every muscle, bone, and fiber in my body hurt from my head to my feet. I implored her, "When you come tomorrow with the rest of the family, please bring all the ointment and lotion you can find."

She said, "Honey, you sound terrible."

I told her, "I look and feel worse than I sound."

The next day I hated to see the dawn come, knowing what it would be like to sit on that hard seat and pedal all day once again to reach our destination — especially the stretch from Vernal to Flaming Gorge, which would include approximately thirty-six-plus miles with grades up to 9 percent and ninety-degree-plus temperatures. Needless to say, for me the whole trip was a very trying and arduous task. But for my sons, who spent a lot of