

Father, who is also the Father of the spirits of us all, similarly has a tangible body of flesh and bones. I also testify that Jesus Christ is the head of the church to which we belong, and which bears his holy name, and that Joseph Smith, of whom I have spoken, was the prophet through whom the true church of Jesus Christ was restored to the earth by the ministering of angels many centuries after the Apostasy, and to whom was given the priesthood keys and authority necessary to direct the Savior's earthly church.

Finally, I testify that through an unbroken chain, the prophetic keys and authority received by the Prophet Joseph Smith have been transmitted through intervening generations and

are held intact by today's prophet, Ezra Taft Benson, who stands as the earthly head of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, possessing all the keys and authority necessary to help bring about the exaltation of God's children. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### President Hinckley

Elder Francis M. Gibbons of the Seventy has spoken to us.

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder Richard G. Scott of the Council of the Twelve, who will be followed by Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin, also of the Council of the Twelve.

## Elder Richard G. Scott

### Counsel to young men and women

I speak primarily to the young men and women of the Church throughout the world. Your circumstances and personal challenges vary tremendously, yet each of you is in that period of life when you make decisions that will affect the entire course of your life. I come to you as a friend with a sincere desire to help each one of you obtain the greatest and most lasting benefit from this critical period of testing. I speak as I would to a son or daughter to communicate what I *know* to be true.

I pray that you will understand the importance of three principles we will discuss. May there come promptings to you from the Lord through the Holy Ghost regarding their application in your life.

I recognize that many of you will understand what I say because of decisions already made. I pray that others will be prompted to make the same personal commitments, for this counsel

will have limited value until that is done. I will explain with an example.

### Be like an automatic watch

My parents gave me a beautiful watch for high school graduation. I looked at it frequently because of the love it communicated. Each night I carefully cleaned and wound it. As years passed, I often neglected to wind the watch. Consequently, it stopped being useful, often when I most needed it.

Today I use an automatic watch. It is consistent and always gives me the correct time. It is totally dependable. I never need to worry whether I can count on it or not.

I realize that as with watches, there are differences in youth. Some need to be wound up, while others are automatic because of important decisions already made.

I commend you who are automatic, who have committed to be true to the Lord and to live by faith when you cannot see the end from the begin-

ning. When faced with choices, you select the path consistent with the teachings of the Savior. I know you are sometimes criticized by those who call you fanatical, who cannot understand why you don't do what the crowd does. Hold fast to your principles.

You cannot today remotely imagine what that decision to be unwaveringly obedient to the Lord will allow you to accomplish in life. Your quiet, uncompromising determination to live a righteous life will couple you to *inspiration* and *power* beyond your capacity now to understand. To others, if an honest evaluation of your life reveals a continuing dependency on individuals or things that are not good, please listen. I sincerely want to help you. If you understand and use the principles we now review, they will bring you great reward.

#### **Place the Savior at the center**

The first principle: *Place the Savior, His teachings, and His church at the center of your life. Make sure that all decisions comply with this standard.*

This principle will see you through periods of testing and growth. Upward growth occurs in cycles that build upon each other in an ascending spiral of capacity and understanding. They are often not easy, but they are always beneficial. As you walk the path of righteousness, you will grow in strength, understanding, and self-esteem. You will discover hidden talents and unknown capacities. The whole course of your life may be altered for your happiness and the Lord's purposes.

#### **Recognize the source of happiness**

The next principle: *Recognize that enduring happiness comes from what you are, not from what you have.*

Real joy comes from righteous character, and that is built from a pat-

tern of consistent righteous decisions. When the things that you acquire are used as tools to help others, they won't rule your life. Your righteous decisions determine who you are and what is important to you. They make doing the right things easier. For happiness now and throughout your life, steadfastly obey the Lord no matter what pressure you feel to do otherwise.

#### **Stay morally clean**

And now the last principle: *Stay morally clean.*

Any sexual intimacy outside of the bonds of marriage—and I emphasize that means any involvement of the sacred, private parts of the body—is a sin and is forbidden by God. While the world has other standards, you must stay morally clean. There are many reasons. Chief among them is that it is a commandment of God, the violation of which He considers to be serious sin that will bring great suffering. To ensure you keep this sacred commandment, in moments of quiet reflection when you feel the influence of the Holy Ghost, set specific personal standards of what you will do and what you will not do when temptation comes—for it surely will. Then, when you find yourself in the battlefield of life, don't change your standards; don't abandon them no matter how you feel, no matter what pressure is applied.

Satan will use rationalization to destroy you. That is, he will twist something you know to be wrong so that it appears to be acceptable and thus progressively lead you to destruction. Love, as defined by the Lord, elevates, protects, respects, and enriches another. It motivates one to make sacrifices for another. Satan promotes counterfeit love, which is lust. It is driven by a hunger to appease personal appetite. One who practices this deception cares little for the pain and

destruction caused another. While often camouflaged by flattering words, its motivation is self-gratification. You know how to be clean and live a righteous life. We trust you to do it. The Lord will bless you richly and will help you keep clean and pure.

### How to keep your resolve

How can you keep your resolve to live worthily? How can you be sure that your resolve will not be eroded by the pressures around you?

*Choose good friends*, those who have made similar decisions in their lives, those like yourself who are wise enough to live a life of order and restraint. When one gets off track, it is generally because the other kind of friends were chosen. Be surrounded by true friends who accept you the way you are and leave you better because of their association.

*Consistently live the truth you already know.* Much of the disappointment and tragedy that youth encounter comes from misuse of the increased freedom to act that is necessary for you to grow. Now, when you have increasing responsibility for the decisions you make in life, you will make them wisely because of your unwavering determination to obey the Lord. You will learn that the restraints provided by the teachings of the Lord actually form a platform to greater freedom. If they are hurriedly dismantled in the misuse of increased personal choice, there will result binding chains of transgression.

*Don't be found in compromising circumstances.*

*Seek counsel from those who are worthy.*

*Pray in faith for help.* Go to your Father in Heaven. He wants to help you, but because of your agency you need to take the first step. Important lessons will be learned as you are on your knees. Some will distill in your

mind and heart as you seek to establish the right balance in your life. Powerful personal development will come through urgent prayer offered in faith from a foundation of righteousness.

When all the challenges pour down on you, you will have a quiet inner feeling of support. You will be prompted to know what to do. You can live in a world of turmoil and great challenge and be at peace. You will be inspired to *know* what to do and to have the power or capacity to do it. Remember this promise of the Lord as clarified by President Harold B. Lee: "Ye are to be taught from on high. Sanctify yourselves [that is, keep my commandments] and ye shall be endowed with power" (D&C 43:16).

I know that the principles we have discussed are true. They have been proven in my own personal life. With my companion, Jeanene, who excels me in every worthwhile quality, I have walked the path shared with you today. I know these truths are correct. I pray that somehow there will come a reinforcement through the Spirit to your mind and heart of their great worth when they are challenged in your life (see D&C 8:2-5).

Test your daily thoughts and acts against the principles we have reviewed. Are you making progress toward them, or have you begun to wander down destructive paths? Life is a workshop where you can test the correctness of the principles you have chosen to guide your life.

### Set your course

Now is the time to set your course, to establish fundamental priorities. You will learn to select from many good and bad things those that are righteous and most important. Young women, use the inspiring Young Women Values and the referenced scriptures to help you do this. Young

men, use the scriptures regarding priesthood to give your life focus. I encourage both to use the pamphlet *For the Strength of Youth*. It will bless you in your resolve to be pure.

As the mighty eagle, you can rise to glorious heights. You can discover truths that will ignite your spirit. Do you believe that? I know you can. As you combine positive experiences of life with eternal doctrinal truths, you will discover what it means to be a divine child of a Father in Heaven who is perfect. As you apply His truths, they will generate vision in your mind and commitment in your heart. You will be inspired and can have power beyond your own capacity. You can qualify through that divine power to be instruments in the hands of God to accomplish what you could not do alone.

You will learn to make reality of your worthy dreams for the future. You will be led to see a vision of your true potential and then, through obedience to correct principles and the consistent, appropriate use of moral agency, begin to convert that potential into reality.

We love you. We need you. We pray for you. You are the instruments the Lord will use in the future. Please pray about what I have said to gain your own witness until you know that it can happen. And then, as you are righteous, it will happen to you.

### **Be a saving influence**

As you live high standards publicly and privately, and even under great pressure adhere to them, you raise the vision of others, helping them realize more of their divine capacity. Like a worthy magnet, you will draw others to a higher standard of life.

The power of your worthy example is increased as you help others caught in the web of transgression and guide them into a harbor of safety

where there is parental strength and priesthood inspiration, where they can repair through repentance the strained and damaged parts of their character. Many yearn to overcome transgressions that bind them to a path they really don't want. While public actions denounce any desire to change, privately they want to change but don't know where to begin. Be that saving influence in their lives. Help them.

### **Live in the light of truth**

In closing, I return to my automatic watch. It is powered by a solar cell and to function must be exposed to light. We are like that. We operate on light and need a constant renewal of that light. If we drift into a path where there is darkness, it can be extraordinarily difficult to come back. You will not have that challenge because you will live in the light of truth.

There is one more blessing that will come from your decision to obey. Of all, it is the most beautiful but the most difficult to talk about. As you stay morally clean and consistently obey the teachings of the Lord, your love for your Savior will deepen, your understanding of your Father in Heaven will broaden, and you will love them more and more, until all you really want to do is to know their will and, with their power, do it.

I know they love you. They know each one of you personally. They know every detail of your life, every thought, every desire to strengthen yourself and to change. Be obedient to them, and they will bless you with the power to be obedient to their teachings. I so testify in love for you, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### **President Hinckley**

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Council of the Twelve has just addressed us.