

Jesus, true to His premortal promise, still gave all the glory to the Father (see D&C 19:18–19; Moses 4:2).

### Be men of Christ

The Prophet's life was thus one of high achievement amid deep disappointment. Brethren, how will we endure our own peaks and valleys? Will we so submit individually, or will we be "stiff and refractory"?

Joseph became fully consecrated and grew in a "spiritual crescendo." Will we do the same, brethren, by witnessing to our families, friends, and flocks—not only through our verbal testimonies but also by our developmental examples? We can do this by becoming ever more visibly the men of Christ!

Or will we be like those who were decent but who lacked the courage to declare openly for Jesus and who were afraid of losing their places in the synagogue? (see John 12:42–43). There are so many equivalent situations today, and some Church members are reluctant to risk losing their places! Each day we decide the degree of our discipleship. Each day we answer the question, "Who's on the Lord's side? Who?"

Now, my brethren, "these are [your] days" (Helaman 7:9) in the history of the Church. Mark well what kind of days they will be, days when, with special visibility, the Lord will "make bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations" (D&C 133:3). God will also "hasten" His work (D&C 88:73). He will also "shorten" the last days "for the elect's sake" (Matthew 24:22); hence, there will be a compression of events (see Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:20). Furthermore, "all things shall be in commotion" (D&C 88:91). Only those in the process of becoming the men and women of Christ will be able to keep their spiritual balance. Brethren, may we "walk by faith" and, if necessary, even on our knees! In the name of the Lord of the universe, even Jesus Christ, amen.

### President Monson

We have heard from Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder Carlos E. Asay, a member of the Presidency of the Seventy, will now speak to us, and he will be followed by Elder Vaughn J. Featherstone of the Seventy.

## Elder Carlos E. Asay

A young man of deacon age reported:

"I feel a lot of pressure from my friends to smoke and steal and things like that. . . . My best friends are really pushing me to do it. They call me a *pansy* and a *Momma's boy* if I don't. I really don't like the idea of smoking but my good friend Steve told me in front of some of my friends, 'Kevin, you're *an idiot* and a *chicken* wrapped up in one little body'" (in John W. Santrock, *Child Development* [New York: William C. Brown, 1987], p. 408; italics added).

An eighteen-year-old priest recounted:

"On one occasion, I was persuaded to join a group on a weekend excursion. I was told that the [plans] for the day included . . . sightseeing, a lunch, and a movie. I was promised that there would be no [inappropriate activities]. All . . . knew that I was a Latter-day Saint and . . . deeply committed to the moral standards of the Church.

"Upon reaching the city, we visited a place or two of historical significance and ate lunch. Then the inevitable hap-

pened—the group turned toward a bar and a house of [prostitution]. I refused to enter these dens of iniquity, and I openly expressed my anger over the broken promises of my associates.

“As I walked away . . . , my companions taunted me by shouting, ‘When are you going to grow up?’ ‘When will you stop being a sissy and a religious fanatic?’ ‘When are you going to be a man?’” (Carlos E. Asay, *In the Lord’s Service* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1990], p. 46).

### Who is a man?

It seems that everyone at some time or another is invited by peers to smoke, drink, steal, or engage in other immoral acts, all under the pretense of manhood. And when someone refuses to participate, he is often ridiculed and called names like pansy, mamma’s boy, idiot, chicken, sissy, and religious fanatic. Such names are used by peers who equate manliness with the ability to drink liquor, blow tobacco smoke out of all the facial cavities, sow one’s wild oats like some animal on the street, and break moral laws without a twinge of conscience.

We see colorful advertisements on billboards, in magazines, and on the television screen promoting cigarettes, beer, and other vices. Those who use cunning tactics to peddle their wares disregard the souls of young people and love only their money. They would have us believe that a person with a cigarette or alcoholic beverage in hand is a man, when in reality he is nothing more than a slave to a destructive substance. They would have us believe that a person who engages in illicit sex is a man, when in reality he is nothing more than an abuser of those who are “tender and chaste and delicate” (Jacob 2:7). They would have us believe that brute force, or crude behavior, uncontrolled temper, foul language, and dirty appearance make a man, when in reality these characteristics are animalistic

at best and the opposite of manhood at worst.

We who bear the priesthood must be on guard; we must not be influenced by barbarian voices in our quest to become men (see 1 Corinthians 14:8–11). We must remember that “God created man in his own image” and that man is expected to keep that image engraven upon his countenance (Genesis 1:27; see also Alma 5:14, 19).

“What is man?” asked the psalmist (Psalm 8:4). The answer: “[God] made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour” (8:5). It is, therefore, our responsibility to climb ever upward and to wear God-given crowns honorably. Young men, especially those of a “chosen generation” and “royal priesthood,” must understand that they are the spiritual offspring of God and that no one becomes in truth a man until he reverences the Father of spirits and allows inner powers to control his thoughts, words, and actions (see 1 Peter 2:9; Acts 17:28; Hebrews 12:9).

### What makes a man a man?

What makes a man a man? This is a question used in a popular beer ad. The suggestion of that advertisement is that by drinking the beer the consumer becomes a man. How devious and how very stupid! Those who try to get you to drink alcoholic beverages and use drugs have total disregard for you, you who are the “temples of God.” Hence, they would have you defile your body and offend the Spirit of God that dwells within you (see 1 Corinthians 3:16–17).

What makes a man a man? Let’s turn to the Book of Mormon and Father Lehi for an answer. A short time before his death, Lehi gave this charge to his sons:

“Arise from the dust, . . . and be men” (2 Nephi 1:21; italics added).

“Awake from a deep sleep, yea, even from the sleep of hell, and shake

off the awful chains by which ye are bound" (1:13).

"Be determined in one mind and in one heart, united in all things" (1:21).

"Put on the armor of righteousness. . . . Come forth out of obscurity. . . . Rebel no more" (1:23-24).

• The challenge to "*arise from the dust*" means to overcome evil behaviors that destroy character and ruin lives. Physical appetites must be controlled.

• "*Awake from a deep sleep*, . . . even from the sleep of hell," suggests a process of learning and becoming aware of God's holy purposes. No sleep is deeper or more deadly than the sleep of ignorance.

• "*Shake off the awful chains by which ye are bound*" indicates the need to overcome bad habits, even the seemingly little habits that grow into strong "chains of hell" (see 2 Nephi 26:22; Alma 5:7).

• "*Be determined in one mind and in one heart, united in all things*" requires full commitment to righteousness and a singleness of purpose so that one's will is made compatible with the will of God.

• "*Put on the armor of righteousness*" reminds us of the need to wear the helmet of salvation, pick up the sword of truth, use the shield of faith, and accept the full protective coverings of the Lord (see Ephesians 6:11-18).

• "*Come forth out of obscurity*" instructs one to model goodness and serve as a light to others. True men are living light fountains which are pleasant to be near (Thomas Carlyle; see also D&C 103:9-10).

• "*Rebel no more*" makes it perfectly clear that ignoring or willfully breaking commandments is a wasteful effort.

### A vicious lie

There is a lie—a vicious lie—circulating among the Latter-day Saints

and taking its toll among the young. And it is that a "balanced man" is one who deliberately guards against becoming too righteous. This lie would have you believe that it is possible to live successfully and happily as a "double-minded man" with one foot in Babylon and one foot in Zion (see James 1:8).

I love this story of two young men who had been schooled in a monastery. One morning as they sought adventure, they passed a cathedral. The more righteous of the two remembered that they had not prayed that morning and said, "How can [we] hope for [God's] blessing upon the day?"

The less righteous one responded, "My friend, I have prayed so much during the last two months . . . that I feel that I have [somewhat] over-prayed myself."

"How can a man have too much religion?" asked the first. "It is the one thing that availeth. A man is but a beast as he lives from day to day, eating and drinking, breathing and sleeping. *It is only when he raises himself, and concerns himself with the immortal spirit within him, that he becomes in [very] truth a man.* Bethink ye how sad a thing it would be that the blood of the Redeemer should be spilled to no purpose" (*Works of A. Conan Doyle* [New York: Cosmopolitan Book Corporation, 1988], pp. 58-59; italics added).

Can a man be too righteous? Too Christlike? Impossible! Can the so-called "balanced man" walk successfully the beam between good and evil? No. Each step is shaky, and eventually he will teeter and fall and break himself against the commandments of God.

Fleshliness never was manliness, and it never will be. A real man is one who yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit and seeks to acquire Christlike virtues. A real man is one who allows the Spirit to direct the course and to call the cadence in his life. "Remember, to be carnally-minded is death,

and to be spiritually-minded is life eternal" (2 Nephi 9:39).

### **Ezra Taft Benson's example of manliness**

A man of Christ stood on October 1, 1959, before a crowd of 1,500 people in a church within the shadow of the Kremlin and boldly referred to Jesus as the great Redeemer. He said in an emotion-filled voice:

"I believe very firmly in prayer. . . . It is possible to reach out and tap that Unseen Power which gives us such strength and such an anchor in time of need. . . . Be unafraid, keep His commandments, love one another, pray for peace and all will be well. . . . Truth will endure. Time is on the side of truth" (Ezra Taft Benson, *Cross Fire: The Eight Years with Eisenhower* [Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Co., 1962], pp. 486-87).

People wept openly on that occasion, including newsmen who had reluctantly attended the worship service. One newsman, a former marine, ranked the experience as one of the two most spiritual and memorable of his life.

There was a man in that cathedral in Russia on that special day. His name, Ezra Taft Benson—he who now presides as the President, prophet of the Church.

### **Joseph Smith's example of manliness**

Parley P. Pratt provides us with a description of a real man in his account of his imprisonment in Richmond, Missouri, with Joseph Smith and others. On one of those awful nights in jail, Brother Pratt and his associates were exposed to the filthy language of their guards as they bragged of their deeds of rape, murder, robbery, and other crimes committed against the Mormons. When the Prophet Joseph Smith could bear it no more, he rose to his feet and spoke with a voice of thunder:

"SILENCE, ye fiends of the infernal pit. In the name of Jesus Christ I rebuke you, and command you to be still; I will not live another minute and hear such language. Cease such talk, or you or I die THIS INSTANT!" (*Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1975], p. 211).

Said Elder Pratt: "I have seen the ministers of justice, clothed in magisterial robes . . . in the Courts of England; I have witnessed a Congress in solemn session . . . ; I have tried to conceive of kings . . . and of emperors assembled to decide the fate of kingdoms; but dignity and majesty have I seen but *once*, as it stood in chains, at midnight, in a dungeon in an obscure village of Missouri" (*Autobiography*, p. 211).

There was a man! Joseph Smith, the prophet of the Restoration.

### **The Savior's example of manliness**

The Savior, the perfect model of manliness, stood before his tormentors having been scourged, beaten, spat upon, and platted with a crown of thorns. Pilate admitted, "I find no fault in him." Then he pronounced those irrefutable and piercing words: "Behold the man!" (John 19:4-5).

Jesus, our Savior, was *the* man among men, for he "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man" (Luke 2:52); he subjected the flesh to the Spirit and yielded not to temptation (see Mosiah 15:1-8); he learned obedience by the things which he suffered (see Hebrews 5:8); he grew from grace to grace (see D&C 93:12-14); and, in the words of Shakespeare:

His life was gentle, and the elements  
So mix'd in him that Nature might  
stand up  
And say to all the world "This was a  
man!"

[*Julius Caesar*, cited in David O. McKay, *Gospel Ideals* (Salt Lake City: Improvement Era, 1953), p. 353]

Thus he, the only sinless and perfect man who ever walked this earth, is qualified to state: "What manner of men ought ye to be? Verily I say unto you, even as I am" (3 Nephi 27:27).

King David instructed his son Solomon,

"Be thou strong . . . and shew thyself a man;

"And keep the charge of the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, and his commandments, . . . that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest" (1 Kings 2:2-3; italics added).

I echo this charge: Be men! Be men of Christ! Be men of God! For this I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

## Elder Vaughn J. Featherstone

### The need for mature couples

Brethren, I would talk tonight to the generation who are moving into their mature years, many of whom have served God, country, and fellowman—a strong, principled, and committed generation, which did great things but had the wisdom not to talk about them much. There is another need for us now.

The cause to which I speak is of missionary work as couples. It was of such great consequence that the Savior, in his final instructions to his disciples, charges them with it: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. . . . I have chosen you . . . that ye should go . . . and that your fruit should remain" (John 15:13, 16).

There has never been a greater need than now for an army of mature couples to go out into every far corner of this earth and retain the fruit of the harvest. The harvest is truly great, and the laborers are few. Remember the words of Ammon:

"Our brethren, the Lamanites, were in darkness, yea, even in the darkest abyss, but behold, how many of them are brought to behold the marvelous light of God! And this is the blessing which hath been bestowed upon us, that we have been made instruments in the hands of God to bring about this great work" (Alma 26:3).

Imagine what thousands of couples could do this year, followed by hosts more in succeeding years. We could move into the fields of harvest, and we could nurture, care for, and gather them "into the garners, that they are not wasted. Yea, they shall not be beaten down by the storm at the last day" (Alma 26:5-6).

### Sacrifices to serve a mission

I think we will not be tested in the way the pioneers were tested. They were called to leave all worldly possessions, homes, even family and loved ones to cross the prairies to dry and desolate, forbidding lands. They buried their babies, children, and companions on the Great Plains in shallow, unmarked graves. Physically, they suffered beyond belief, nor can tongue tell the sad, pitiful story. Out of the ashes of sacrifice of so noble a people this kingdom has emerged to become the most powerful force for good on the face of the earth today.

There is a need—not to leave homes forever, but for a time—then return and reap the rich harvest of the faithful labor. Your children and grandchildren will be blessed. The power of good will go out from Zion. "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings; that publisheth peace" (Mosiah 12:21).