

problems later on. Be a courageous young man by living straight. Create happy memories for yourselves and those around you.

Get an education

Fourth checklist item: Education. Make good use of your schooling. The scriptures tell us that there is a time for every purpose under heaven (see Ecclesiastes 3:1–8). Now is the time of your preparation. The direction you are flying as a young man will determine where you will land as an adult. Are you headed in the direction that you want to be flying?

Those of us who are older remember that not all that goes on in school and work is pleasant, nor does it all seem useful and necessary. Yet most of what you learn is helpful. Be excited about your schooling and develop the habit of going the extra mile (see Matthew 5:41; 3 Nephi 12:41). This habit will assist you in crossing continents successfully when you are older. Through study and hard work, you prepare for a life of spiritual, emotional, and economic self-reliance. Build a foundation now that will support your future (see Matthew 7:24–25). Feel the excitement of accomplishing difficult tasks.

Hardworking young men of a few years ago are the productive and respected leaders of today. Many of them worked several jobs when they were young and saved part of their income for a mission and for their education. They have been blessing others ever since. Your parents are not obligated to

provide everything you want. The Lord instructed us not to be idle! (see D&C 42:42; 60:13; 75:3; 88:124).

Serve a mission

Fifth checklist item: A mission. While serving as an aide-de-camp to a major general in an army reserve unit, I found myself in many conversations with that remarkable military leader. He was not of our faith. "Pinnock," he once said, "do you know how fortunate you Mormons are?" I replied by saying something like, "Yes, sir, but what are you thinking about?" He said, "A mission, Pinnock; that's what it's all about. Your young men are encouraged to go to serve others. They become stronger, more wise, and more dependable because of a mission."

The prophet has asked you young men to serve, the world desperately needs you to serve, and you need to feel the power and growth from serving and teaching others. And if for some unusual reason you are not called to serve a mission, there will be other opportunities to serve the Lord.

So there you have it: a checklist that can keep you flying in the right direction. A pilot must have the support of a skilled ground crew to succeed, and your parents, bishops, quorum leaders, and solid friends all will help support your flight through these key years of your life. A wonderful future is yours if you stick to your personal checklist. We pray for you, care about you, and stand by to help you. To these truths I testify in the name of our Savior, Jesus Christ, amen.

Elder H. Burke Peterson

"Touch not . . . the unclean thing"

My brethren, with tender feelings I greet you in the spirit of love and respect. My thanks for all the good you do

in behalf of our Father's children all over the world. This evening I hope you can understand the concern this assignment has given me. Expecting that this will be my last opportunity to stand at

this pulpit and speak to you brethren of the priesthood, my thoughts have been led to address a subject that some may find discomfoting. As King Benjamin of old said, so plead I for each one of us. I quote:

“Open your ears that ye may hear, and your hearts that ye may understand, and your minds that the mysteries of God may be unfolded to your view” (Mosiah 2:9).

It is my hope that we will be taught by the Spirit tonight.

In Moroni 10:30 we read, “And again I would exhort you that ye would come unto Christ, and lay hold upon every good gift, and *touch not the evil gift, nor the unclean thing*” (italics added).

My thoughts will center on our sometimes innocent involvement in one of the terrible, unclean things referred to by this ancient prophet. Satan, the very devil and the father of all lies, has slyly and slowly lowered the social norms of morality to a tragic and destructive level. In magazines and books, on CDs and tapes, on our television and theater screens is portrayed more and more often a lifestyle that might even rival the excesses of those who lived in Sodom and Gomorrah. The screens, music, and printed materials are filled with a profusion of sex, nudity, and vulgarity.

Consequences of evil entertainment

One of the great tragedies is that too many men and boys who hold the priesthood of God are watching and listening to this type of so-called entertainment. Some do it only casually at first. They think they are spiritually strong and will be immune to its influence. This trash is nothing more nor less than pornography dressed in one of its many imitation robes of splendor—one of the master counterfeiter’s best products.

Part of the tragedy I speak of is that many men and boys do not recognize they are trapped or soon will be. Unfor-

tunately, I fear even some within the sound of my voice have an addiction and do not realize it. They see this as a form of entertainment that serves as a relief from the troubles of the day. In point of fact and in reality, *it is only relieving them of their spirituality* and their capacity to draw on the powers of heaven in times of need.

We must come to understand fully the consequences of having an appetite for such entertainment. Fathers and mothers must warn their children and make them aware of the eternal penalty. No man or boy of us here tonight can look at, read about, or listen to such explicit vulgarity, even in its mildest form, without bringing sorrow to a loving God and a terrible injury to one’s own spirit. We cannot look at or listen to these unholy depictions in our own living rooms or wherever they are shown without suffering the consequences—and those consequences are very real.

We must remember, our rewards for righteous living are only partially enjoyed in this mortal life. Likewise, our miseries for breaking the commandments of God will not all be realized fully as we live here on the earth. Eternity is a long, long time.

Stay away from evil media

Brethren, I plead with you to leave it alone. Stay away from any movie, video, publication, or music—*regardless of its rating*—where illicit behavior and expressions are a part of the action. Have the courage to turn it off in your living room. Throw the tapes and the publications in the garbage can, for that is where we keep garbage.

The Doctrine and Covenants gives a warning and a promise. The promise says that “if your eye be single to my glory, your whole bodies shall be filled with light, and there shall be no darkness in you; and that body which is filled with light comprehendeth all things” (D&C 88:67).

In an application of this scripture today, it is my understanding that anytime we look at or listen to the kind of material we have been speaking of—even in its mildest form—the light inside of us grows dimmer because the darkness inside increases. The effect of this is that we cannot think as clearly on life's challenges—be they business, church, school, family, or personal—because the channel to the source of all light for the solving of problems is cluttered with various unclean images. Our entitlement to personal revelation on any subject is severely restricted. We don't do as well in school or at work. We are left more on our own, and as a result we make more mistakes and we are not as happy.

Remember, our mind is a wonderful instrument. It will record and keep whatever we put into it, both trash and beauty. When we see or hear anything filthy or vulgar, whatever the source, our mind records it, and as it makes the filthy record, beauty and clean thoughts are pushed into the background. Hope and faith in Christ begin to fade, and, more and more, turmoil and discontent become our companions.

Brothers, sisters, and parents are not as happy together as they used to be. We find less peace and contentedness in our hearts and homes. We do things that later we wish we had not done. Contention looms its vicious head, and when contention is present, the Spirit of Christ departs from us.

Again I say, leave it alone. Turn it off, walk away from it, burn it, erase it, or destroy it. I know it is hard counsel we give when we say movies that are R-rated, and many with PG-13 ratings, are produced by satanic influences. Our standards should not be dictated by the rating system. I repeat, because of what they *really* represent, these types of movies, music, and tapes serve the purposes of the author of all darkness.

We are men and boys of the covenant

Brethren, let's consider again why we cannot be involved in Satan's program of entertainment and be held guiltless. Why? Because *we are men and boys of the covenant*, and that makes us different from all others. When we've made a covenant with the Lord, we are special—not ordinary, but special. He loves all of his sons, *but those of the covenant have a special responsibility*.

The Lord has told us in holy writ that before we ever came to this earth we were all called to hold his priesthood and bear up his work here. It isn't a small, insignificant task we have. He *will* hold us responsible for our portion of the labor.

A plan for cleansing the spirit

Now, if you have this problem we speak of, let me give you hope and a plan of attack. If you are young, go to your parents or your bishop for help. Both young and older must go to the Lord. Stopping the activity and cleansing the spirit of the impurities of which we've been speaking will not be easy, and it will not be quick, but it can be sure. I quote from a talk given at this pulpit several years ago:

"The secret to cleansing our spirit of whatever the impurity is not very complicated. It begins with [sincere, heartfelt] prayer every morning and ends with prayer every night. This is the most important step I know in the cleansing process. It may simply be a prayer for strength to turn from bad habits" or a prayer that sin will be distasteful to you (H. Burke Peterson, in Conference Report, Oct. 1980, p. 57; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1980, p. 39).

Meanwhile, remember that not all prayers are answered the same day or even the next day. Sometimes it takes a long time. But "with this step in place, I have seen hundreds of miracles take place. Without it, there is continued frustration, unhappiness, ineffectiveness,

and despair" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1980, p. 57; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1980, p. 39).

If you have tried and have given up, I plead with you to try again and again and again. Our Heavenly Father will not forsake your efforts if you persist.

The second step in this plan of attack is to gain an added measure of spiritual strength through a daily study of the scriptures. Your study need not be long, but it should be every day. If I were you, I would read the scriptures tonight and never let a day pass without reading in them, even if only for a few minutes. There is an added measure of inspiration promised to those who read the scriptures regularly (see Conference Report, Oct. 1980, p. 57; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1980, p. 39).

The scriptures will assist us to overpower darkness with light.

The third step that I would counsel is, when necessary, to receive the blessing that comes in the confession process. Too many are harboring the inner feeling of guilt resulting from unrepented mistakes. Part of the repentance process is confession. If you happen to be one of those who has this need, I plead with you to go see your bishop before the sun sets tomorrow.

Come unto Christ

I testify that the Savior is at the head of this work. May I echo the words that the great prophet Moroni offered in his farewell address:

"Yea, come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness; and if ye shall deny yourselves of all ungodliness, and love God with all your might, mind and strength, then is his grace sufficient for you, that by his grace ye may be perfect in Christ; and if by the grace of God ye are perfect in Christ, ye can in nowise deny the power of God" (Moroni 10:32).

Of him I testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

We've heard from Elders Hugh W. Pinnock and H. Burke Peterson.

We'll now all stand and sing "Ye Elders of Israel," following which we shall hear from Elder Carlos H. Amado of the Seventy.

The choir and congregation sang "Ye Elders of Israel."

Elder Carlos H. Amado

Called to serve

Servant and *service* are common words in the restored church.

Someone said, "The one who doesn't live to serve doesn't serve to live"—wise words which are applied to each priesthood holder. Another word to describe the priesthood is *service*; literally, every man who receives the priesthood is "called to serve." The Apostle Peter said about you, "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people" (1 Peter 2:9). I will illustrate with one story.

María Coj gives the gift of sight

María Coj was a seventeen-year-old member of the Church, the oldest of eight children. She was sick with cysticercosis, a parasitic infection that comes from eating contaminated food, that with time spread to her brain, causing terrible headaches and then blindness. To give her relief from the pain, it was necessary to move her from her home in Sololá to Guatemala City. Because of convulsions caused by the advances of the illness, her condition worsened, and it was only with life-