

Share home and family responsibilities

8. Be a true partner in home and family responsibilities. Don't be like the husband who sits around home expecting to be waited on, feeling that earning the living is his chore and that his wife alone is responsible for the house and taking care of the children. The task of caring for home and family is more than one person's responsibility.

Remember that you are in this partnership together. Barbara and I have discovered that we can make our bed every morning in less than a minute and it's done for the day. She says that she lets me do it to help me feel good about myself all day, and I guess there may be something to that.

Find time to study the scriptures together, and follow this sound counsel from President Kimball: "When a husband and wife go together frequently to the holy temple, kneel in prayer together in their home with their family, go hand in hand to their religious meetings, keep their lives wholly chaste, mentally and physically, . . . and both are working together for the upbuilding of the kingdom of God, then happiness is at its pinnacle" (*Marriage and Divorce* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1976], p. 24).

Elder Neal A. Maxwell

Sustaining new leaders

I join in welcoming Elder Henry B. Eyring to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, who are so ably presided over by President Boyd K. Packer. Elder Eyring is a special blend of brightness and sweetness. I am delighted to sustain President James E. Faust, my seatmate of fourteen years and for over thirty years a companion in various civic chores and Church assignments. I have been blessed with five wonderful sisters but no broth-

In summary:

- Remember the central importance of your marriage.
- Pray for its success.
- Listen.
- Avoid "ceaseless pinpricking."
- Keep your courtship alive.
- Be quick to say, "I'm sorry."
- Learn to live within your means.
- Be a true partner in home and family responsibilities.

I testify that Jesus is the Christ, that the tomb was empty on that third day, and that "as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Corinthians 15:22). Thus with gratitude for the sealing power within the restored gospel of Jesus Christ, we can confidently say with the poet, "I shall but love thee better after death" (Elizabeth Barrett Browning, *Sonnets from the Portuguese*, no. 43, line 14). In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder Joe J. Christensen has spoken to us.

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Quorum of the Twelve.

ers. President Faust has been that kind of brother to me for many years.

I renew my appreciation and sustaining vote for President Thomas S. Monson, who, over that same span of time, has given me opportunities, has tutored me, and has encouraged me. He is sometimes best known for feats of memory, but his quiet acts of kindness are much more important.

In 1935 a returning missionary, Elder Gordon B. Hinckley, was asked to visit with the First Presidency because of his

special work in the British Isles. His fifteen-minute appointment soon stretched to nearly an hour and a half. Impressed, the First Presidency requested him to help with missionary work, and he has scarcely left the Church Administration Building since then. Only now he sits, humbly, in the center chair in the First Presidency Council Room to which he came humbly sixty years ago!

President Hinckley is a special blend of the practical and the spiritual, possessing a keen mind furnished with fixed principles. When we rightly describe him as having good judgment, good humor, goodwill, and as being a good listener, the common adjective is *good*. Goodness is thus the key to so much of what makes up President Hinckley, whom I am delighted to sustain as our President, prophet, seer, and revelator, the high calling which has come after such unusual preparation of this exceptional disciple of Christ.

Deny yourselves of all ungodliness

Jesus' instructions concerning discipleship involve both substance and sequence: "If any man will come after me, let him *deny* himself, and *take up* his cross daily, and *follow me*" (Luke 9:23; italics added). Elsewhere, Moroni declared the need for us to deny ourselves "all ungodliness" (Moroni 10:32), thus including both large and small sins. While boulders surely block our way, loose gravel slows discipleship too. Even a small stone can become a stumbling block.

King Benjamin and Paul both stressed the congenital weakness of the natural man, who is turned away from God and who regards spiritual things as "foolishness" (see Mosiah 3:19; 1 Corinthians 2:13-14; Colossians 3:9). Thus, putting off the views and appetites of the natural man is such a large part of denying oneself, a process sometimes accompanied by scalding shame and the reflux of re-

gret (see Joseph Smith Translation, Luke 14:28).

Even so, in today's world, individual appetites, far from being denied, are actually celebrated! As one writer noted, this mantra has its own incessant "beat," and it goes "Me . . . Me . . . Me . . . Me!" (Tom Wolfe, "The Me Decade and the Third Great Awakening," in *The Purple Decades* [New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1982], p. 293).

Yet sensory happiness is illusory happiness. Even legitimate pleasure is as transitory as the things which produce it, while joy is as lasting as the things which produce it!

Of all today's malevolent "isms," hedonism takes the greatest toll. It is naive to say that hedonists merely march to the beat of a different drummer. So did the Gadarene swine!

The moral crisis of sexual immorality

A quarter of a century ago historian John Lukacs perceptively warned that sexual immorality was not merely a marginal development but, instead, was at the center of the moral crisis of our time (see *The Passing of the Modern Age* [New York: Harper and Row, 1970], p. 169). Some thought Lukacs was overstating it, but consider the subsequent and sobering tragedy of children having children, of unwed mothers, of children without parents, of hundreds of thousands of fatherless children, and of rampant spousal infidelity. These and related consequences threaten to abort society's future even before the future arrives! Yet carnalists are unwilling to deny themselves, even though all of society suffers from an awful avalanche of consequences!

Consider this sobering forecast: "About 40 percent of U.S. children will go to sleep in homes in which their fathers do not live" (David Blankenhorn, "Life without Father," *USA Weekend*, 26 Feb. 1995, pp. 6-7).

Some estimate this will rise to 60 percent. This same commentator has written, "Fatherlessness is the engine driving our most urgent social problems, from crime to adolescent pregnancy to domestic violence" (Blankenhorn, p. 7). Such outcomes, brothers and sisters, unfortunately constitute America's grossest national product, produced in the slums of the spirit created by spreading secularism!

The scourge of hedonism

In Proverbs we read, "For the commandment is a lamp" (Proverbs 6:23). Once darkened, a society loses its capacity to distinguish between right and wrong and the will to declare that some things are wrong *per se*. Without the lamp, our world finds itself desperately building temporary defenses, drawing new lines, forever falling back, unwilling to confront. A society which permits anything will eventually lose everything!

Therefore, recognized or not, the public has an enormous stake in private morality! Yet today there is so much hedonism and shouted justification with so little quiet shame. Bad deeds are viewed as nobody's fault and everything as excusable on one basis or another.

Amid such inversions, no wonder victims are often neglected and the guilty sometimes glorified. Likewise, in place of real confessions there are fluid variations of "I hope I can forgive myself." In contrast, the inquiring Apostles knew the direction in which they faced; all anxiously asked Jesus of the impending betrayal, "Lord, is it I?" (Matthew 26:22).

Gross sins arise ominously and steadily out of the swamp of self-indulgence and self-pity. But the smaller sins breed there too, like insects in the mud, including the coarsening of language. But why should we expect those who "mind the things of the flesh" to mind their tongues? (Romans 8:5).

For some, their god "is their belly," as are other forms of anatomical alle-

giance! (Philippians 3:19). A few hedonists actually glory in their shame, and there is even a "greediness" in their "uncleanness" (Ephesians 4:19). Sadly too, a few envy the wicked. Still others complain that the wicked seem to get away with it! (see Proverbs 23:17; Malachi 3:14-15).

Ironically, in all their eagerness to experience certain things, hedonists become desensitized. People who wrongly celebrate their capacity to feel finally reach a point where they lose much of their capacity to feel! In the words of three different prophets, such individuals become "past feeling" (see 1 Nephi 17:45; Ephesians 4:19; Moroni 9:20).

When people proceed "without principle," erelong they will be "without civilization," "without mercy," and "past feeling" (see Moroni 9:11-20). Such individuals do not experience real joy, such as being quietly and deeply grateful to a generous God, or of helping to restore those who "droop in sin" (2 Nephi 4:28), or of gladly forgoing praise and recognition so that it might flow, instead, to parched souls.

Our physical as well as our familial environment is likewise threatened by selfishness. But some worry only about holes in the ozone layer, while the fabric of many families who lack the lamp resembles Swiss cheese.

The need for self-denial

Of course we can't wave a wand and fix families instantly. Some levees and sandbags must be placed downstream. But the real problem lies at the family fountainhead. Many things will not get better until we have better families, but this will require much more self-denial, not less. Most major social and political problems simply cannot be solved without large doses of self-denial; ironically, this is a quality best developed in loving families where the lamp is lit.

Meanwhile, mortals remain free to choose between the things of the mo-

ment and the things of eternity (see 2 Nephi 2:27). Given the choices made by some, we all end up with more protected pornography than protected children. Of course better self-restraint than censorship, but urging self-restraint on hedonists is like discouraging Dracula from hanging around the blood bank!

No wonder most of the Ten Commandments are self-denying "Thou shalt nots." Heavenly Father loves his children perfectly, but he knows our tendencies perfectly too. To lie, steal, murder, envy, be sexually immoral, neglect parents, break the Sabbath, and bear false witness—all occur because one mistakenly seeks to please himself for the moment regardless of divine standards or human consequences. As prophesied, ethical relativism is now in steep crescendo: "Every man walketh in his own way, and after the image of his own god, whose image is in the likeness of the world" (D&C 1:16).

Distortions caused by self-indulgence

Without the lamp's perspective, gross distortion results (see Jacob 4:13–14). I remember reading that one Nazi leader used to listen to Haydn's music while watching Jewish people being gassed. He was probably proud of his music appreciation.

Mussolini is said to have made Italy's trains run on time, a genuine convenience to passengers, but scarcely compensation for the awful consequences of his totalitarian rule and the tens of thousands of lives lost thereby.

We all admire young David for taking on the mocking Goliath. But David's act of earlier bravery cannot compensate for his later adultery with the wife of Uriah. All things considered, brothers and sisters, to whom did David deal the greater blow, Goliath or Uriah? Or himself?

In the same vein, God's second commandment, love thy neighbor, clearly

leaves no room for racism. Yet it is not enough to be free of racism if one is simultaneously enslaved by other appetites. Jesus emphasized the need for proportion, saying there are "weightier matters" even among good things (Matthew 23:23). To the commandment-keeping young man, Jesus responded, "One thing thou lackest," referring to an errant attachment to material possessions (Mark 10:21). Most of us lack more than just one thing. As we come closer to the Lord, He has promised to "show unto [us our] weakness" (Ether 12:27). Hence, general goodness is no excuse for failing to work on those things which we yet lack.

Dangers of "small sins"

Any list of our present personal indulgences is actually an index—but a reverse index to joys—joys we will not experience until we do deny ourselves certain things. Meanwhile, the absence of gross sins in our lives can lull us into slackness concerning seemingly small sins. The failure to visit and care for parents is a failure to honor one's father and mother. In its lesser form, the lack of self-restraint causes unkind comments to a spouse, but in the extreme it can bring domestic abuse and even murder. The tendency to strike back whenever we are offended makes us brusque and rude, as if others were functions, not brothers and sisters. Thus, excess of ego is like a spreading, toxic spill from which flow all the deadly sins (see Proverbs 6:16–19). Young parents know how a mere half cup of spilled milk seems to cover half a kitchen floor. Small sins spread like that too.

Self-denial precedes full joy in Christ

With His perfect, spiritual symmetry, Jesus really is "the way, the truth, and the life," His way being in such sharp contrast to the world's ways (John 14:6).

Jesus' perfect character is thus not only holy, but wholly complete and finished. Without Jesus' supernal character, He could not have accomplished the astonishing atonement! And He has asked us to become much more like Him (see Matthew 5:48; 3 Nephi 12:48; 27:27). Though heavy, discipleship's burden can be made light (see Matthew 11:30). The Lord can "ease the burdens," and our shoulders can be made strong enough that we "may be able to bear it" (Mosiah 24:14; 1 Corinthians 10:13).

So it is that real, personal sacrifice never was placing an animal on the altar. Instead, it is a willingness to put the animal in us upon the altar and letting it be consumed! Such is the "sacrifice unto the Lord . . . of a broken heart and a contrite spirit," (D&C 59:8), a prerequisite to taking up the cross, while giving

"away all [our] sins" in order to know God (Alma 22:18); for the denial of self precedes the full acceptance of Him. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "I Know My Father Lives."

President Hinckley

Elder Neal A. Maxwell has just addressed us, and the choir has sung "I Know My Father Lives."

Following my remarks, the Tabernacle Choir will sing "Our Savior's Love." The benediction will then be offered by Elder Kwok Yuen Tai of the Seventy, who comes from Hong Kong. This conference will then be adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

My beloved brothers and sisters wherever you may be, my dear friends and associates in this great work, as you can well understand, this for me is a most solemn and sacred occasion. Humbly I seek the direction of the Holy Spirit as I struggle to share with you the feelings of my heart. If in the circumstances I speak unduly much in a personal vein, I hope you will excuse me. I shall then try to put the first person singular behind me.

The passing of President Hunter

We have mourned in recent days the passing of our beloved friend and leader, Howard William Hunter, the fourteenth President of the Church and prophet to the people. His tenure in office was brief, but the impression for good that he left was tremendous. Mild of manner, quiet in his ways, he was nonetheless a man whose strong convictions of the truth of

this work made him powerfully persuasive in his advocacy of the Christlike life.

He suffered much in his body before he was finally taken from us on the morning of March 3, 1995. More than 25,000 men, women, and children passed by his bier as his body lay in state in the beautiful rotunda of the Church Administration Building. With measured step they came one by one, reverently and with love for the man they had sustained only a few months before.

On Wednesday, March 8, 1995, his funeral services were held in this historic tabernacle and broadcast far and wide. Those services were a fitting memorial to a man of goodness and greatness who now belongs to the ages. Our hearts reach out with love and sympathy to his bereaved widow and to his sons and their families, now spanning three generations. May they be comforted,