

# Creating Places of Security

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A righteous woman's strength and influence are great. Her opportunities to create safe havens for struggling souls are abundant.

Greetings, sisters. We have looked forward to meeting with you this evening.

I want to thank you for your many cards and letters, and most of all, I want to thank you for your prayers in our behalf. We gratefully, humbly acknowledge the guiding, teaching hand of great priesthood leaders and of our Father in Heaven.

Recently I took my three-year-old granddaughter to a sacrament meeting where a young man was speaking prior to leaving for a mission. I had brought the usual books and things to encourage her to be reverent, but she's a bright and energetic little girl, so at one point I stood her beside me on the bench so she could see the missionary who was speaking. Then I whispered in her ear, "This young man is going on a mission, and that means he is going to live far away from home and go around telling people all about Jesus." She looked all around the chapel filled with people and said, "Well, where is Jesus anyway?" She had seen His picture in Primary, but she could not find Him in the audience.

I cannot tell you how glad I was that I could tell her where Jesus is. As she can understand, I will tell her who He is, what He has done for her and for me, and what He can mean in her life. I was reminded on that occasion what a great opportunity we as women have to influence the lives of those around us. I love my children and my grandchildren, and I desire to keep them safe. Sometimes this world is a frightening place to be. I believe, however, that women have unique opportunities and special gifts and talents to protect, nurture, and influence others. We can create places of security where marriages, children, and families can thrive and avoid the evil of the world.

In 1978, speaking to a general women's meeting, President Spencer W. Kimball said: "To be a righteous woman is a glorious thing in any age. To be a righteous woman during the winding up scenes on this earth, before the second coming of our Savior, is an especially noble calling. The righteous woman's strength and influence today can be tenfold what it might be in more tranquil times. She has been placed here to help enrich, to protect, and to guard the home—which is society's basic and most noble institution. Other institutions in society may falter and even fail, but the righteous woman can help to save the home, which may be the last and only sanctuary some mortals know in the midst of storm and strife" ("Privileges and Responsibilities of Sisters," *Ensign*, Nov. 1978, 103).

In 1996 President Gordon B. Hinckley said: "You sisters are the real builders of the nation wherever you live, for you have created homes of strength and peace and security. These become the very sinew of any nation" ("Women of the Church," *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 68).

This is a marvelous time to live on the earth. Ours is a day seen in vision by many of the prophets down through the ages of time. It was to be called the dispensation of the fulness of times because the gospel was to be fully

restored that the lives of those who live in this day might be blessed. All who will hear the glad tidings may have the privilege of full access to the saving and exalting ordinances of the gospel of Jesus Christ and the peace and the happiness they bring to individuals and families.

And yet, as Father Lehi taught, “It must needs be, that there is an opposition in all things” (2 Ne. 2:11). As the prophets foresaw and prophesied regarding this day of gladness, they also warned that it would be a day of wickedness (see 2 Tim. 3:1–9, 13), a day of tribulation (see Matt. 24:21), and an evil day (see D&C 27:15) when “all things shall be in commotion” (D&C 88:91).

Sisters, I do not believe that you and I are here at this unique time by accident. I believe that, like Esther of old, we are “come to the kingdom for such a time as this” (Esth. 4:14), when our influence, our example, our strength, and our faith may stand as a bulwark against the rising tide of evil that threatens to engulf our homes, our families, and our loved ones.

There is an exciting story in the Book of Mormon beginning in chapter 48 of Alma. It is a time of peril and commotion for the Nephite nation. Their enemies have sworn to defeat them and take them into bondage. Against what appears to be all odds, Captain Moroni must find a way to defend his people—to create places of security for them. He directs his people to dig deep ditches and build up huge banks of earth around the cities. Later he improves upon his earlier defenses by adding works of timber topped with a frame of pickets and eventually towers to overlook the pickets. So effective is his strategy that the Lamanite armies are astonished and rendered powerless, even though they greatly outnumber the Nephites. The Nephites are safe within their cities and repel the Lamanite attacks.

While his enemies gained power through fraud and deceit, Moroni empowered the Nephites by teaching them to be faithful to God (see Alma 48:7). How do we, like Captain Moroni, create places of security for those around us in these sometimes frightening and perilous times? We can begin by following the admonition found in 1 Timothy 4:12 [1 Tim. 4:12]: “Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.”

When I was 10 years old, I sat in a sacrament meeting and watched my beautiful mother as she stood at the pulpit and told of her experiences as a young missionary in the Southern States Mission. She likened bringing someone to baptism to the thrill of giving birth and bringing a new child into the world. She bore her testimony with strength and conviction. She didn’t need to tell me that missionary work was important; her example said it all. She didn’t need to tell me what a testimony was because I felt it that day as I heard her share hers with the ward and with me. There are people all around us who need the benefit of our good example. President Gordon B. Hinckley said, “The most persuasive gospel tract is the exemplary life of a faithful Latter-day Saint” (“Five Million Members—A Milestone and Not a Summit,” *Ensign*, May 1982, 45).

In Primary we sing, “Keep the commandments! In this there is safety; in this there is peace” (*Children’s Songbook*, 146). Above all, Captain Moroni showed his people the Lord would guide their efforts if they followed His commandments. A woman who keeps the commandments is using our Heavenly Father’s blueprint to build a place of security for herself and her family. Those around her know they can trust her. They can feel safety and peace within her influence. Adherence to the Lord’s commandments is the foundation of her fortress.

To provide safety for those around us, we as sisters need to expand our knowledge of all things spiritual. We need to learn and progress in understanding and teach our children those things that will make them less

vulnerable to deceit and to the designs of those who conspire against righteousness. Ignorance is not bliss; it is dangerous.

In the 68th section of the Doctrine and Covenants, parents have been commanded to teach their children the simple, lifesaving truths of the restored gospel. Our homes should be the great centers of gospel learning. Elder Neal A. Maxwell said: “When parents fail to transmit testimony and theology along with decency, those families are only one generation from serious spiritual decline, having lost their savor. The law of the harvest is nowhere more in evidence and nowhere more relentless than in family gardens” (“Take Especial Care of Your Family,” *Ensign*, May 1994, 90). Like the stripling warriors in the Book of Mormon, our children can be motivated, blessed, and, most of all, protected by the faith and wise counsel of righteous mothers.

Sincere prayer can be more effective in protecting our families than the earthen walls Moroni erected around the Nephite cities. It’s impossible to kneel down and take your problems to the Lord without having your heart softened. The changes prayer effects in our homes are multiple. It restores peace and gives hope. It lightens heavy hearts and heals the wounds of sin. It restores perspective, allowing us to recognize our blessings even in the midst of our trials. Finally, it guides us in making decisions. It was in prayer that the Prophet Joseph Smith began the glorious restoration of the true gospel in these latter days. He had been taught to pray by the great example of his mother, Lucy Mack Smith.

On a Monday evening not long ago, I was walking past a playground where a young family was choosing up sides for a game. I overheard one of the children call out, “Mom, choose me.” As I walked on, these words rang in my ears. Life in today’s world places a multitude of demands on a woman’s resources of time and energy. We can choose to apply our talents in more arenas than ever before, but there are only a few of those places in which our influence is irreplaceable. I can imagine children the world over saying, “When you decide where to spend the time and the gifts that God has given you, Mom, choose me.” Then I thought of elderly grandmothers who might be lonely or too frail to enjoy going out alone saying, “Granddaughter, when you’re looking for a friend to take to a movie or out to lunch, choose me.” I thought of single mothers who might appreciate the chance to have their children be influenced by a righteous priesthood bearer saying, “Neighbor, when you’re looking for someone to invite over for family home evening, choose me and mine.”

These choices, sisters, create places of security not only for our own homes but for our neighborhoods, our wards, and our communities.

Joseph Smith compared life to a wheel around which we move. He said: “There are times when we are up [at the top of the wheel] and someone else is down. But in due time it [will be] the other way around” (quoted in Truman G. Madsen, *The Highest in Us*, 26). That is why we need each other. There are times when we are on top and can lift others. But our turn to be lifted will inevitably come!

One year ago in October conference, President Hinckley petitioned us, saying: “There are widows who long for friendly voices and that spirit of anxious concern which speaks of love. There are those who were once warm in the faith, but whose faith has grown cold. Many of them wish to come back but do not know quite how to do it. They need friendly hands reaching out to them. With a little effort, many of them can be brought back to feast again at the table of the Lord” (“Reach with a Rescuing Hand,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 86).

Anytime we lift someone else we are in essence creating places of security for them. President Kimball was right. A righteous woman’s strength and influence are great. Her opportunities to create safe havens for struggling

souls are abundant.

I want you to know of my knowledge that our Father in Heaven is real. He lives and He loves us beyond our ability to understand. He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to atone for our sins. Through Joseph Smith, He restored the true gospel to the earth. He guides and directs our prophet today. Let us be like Captain Moroni in using all available resources to protect that which is precious to us and to our Heavenly Father. That we might do so with wisdom, devotion, and renewed commitment is my prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

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