

6. In Conference Report, Oct. 1967, 97;
or *Improvement Era*, Dec. 1967, 89.
7. James 1:5.

President Hinckley

Our beloved friend President Thomas S. Monson has just spoken to us.

Prior to the Tabernacle Choir broadcast tomorrow morning, there will be a brief cornerstone ceremony for the Conference Center at 9:00 A.M. mountain daylight time. *Music and the Spoken Word* will follow from 9:30 to 10:00 A.M. The Sunday morning session of conference will immediately follow that.

In preparation for the special dedicatory session, which will take place tomorrow morning in the opening session, we invite those in attendance and participating everywhere to have available a white handkerchief.

As you leave this priesthood meeting tonight, please drive carefully and go with caution. There are so very many of us.

We express gratitude to this great chorus of young men and to those who have led them.

Following my remarks, this session will conclude with the chorus singing "Carry On." The benediction will then be offered by Elder H. Bryan Richards of the Seventy.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

Counsel to fathers

It now becomes my pleasure to speak to you, and I hope I get through on time. I haven't timed this. The young men here tonight have received some wonderful counsel. I hope they have listened well and that their lives will be touched for good as a result.

I have chosen to speak to the fathers. You already know what I am going to talk about. Your wives have reminded you that this will be my subject tonight. I told them so at the Relief Society conference two weeks ago. I may say some of the same things to you that I said to them. I remind you that repetition is a law of learning.

Now, this is a subject which I take very seriously. It is a matter with which I am deeply concerned. I hope you will not take it lightly. It concerns the most precious asset you have. In terms of your happiness, in terms of the matters that make you proud or sad, nothing—I repeat, nothing—will have so profound an

effect on you as the way your children turn out.

You will either rejoice and boast of their accomplishments, or you will weep, head in hands, bereft and forlorn, if they become a disappointment or an embarrassment to you.

Many of you are in this meeting with your sons. I compliment you most warmly. I also compliment them. Both of you are in the very best of company. I am so proud of so many of our youth—both boys and girls. They are bright. They are self-disciplined. They take the long view. They have their heads on straight. Tonight they are in the place where they ought to be. Some are singing in this choir. They are seated in congregations across the world. They are serving missions. They are struggling through school, forgoing present pleasures for future opportunities. I admire them. I love them. And so do you. They are our sons and daughters.

I hope, I pray, I plead that they will continue on the path they are now following.

But sad to say, I am confident there are some of our young men who have slipped and are slipping into the foggy swamp of immorality, drugs, pornography, and failure. I hope they are a minority among their peers, but even the loss of one is too many.

“Bad things happen after 11:00”

Fathers, you and their mothers have a responsibility you cannot escape. You are the fathers of your children. Your genetic pattern is forever etched in their genetic code.

While we are in this meeting, some of them, I am satisfied, are out cruising the town. They or their friends have cars to drive. In many cases their fathers bought them. They have handed them the keys and told them to have a good time.

They want to do something exciting. They think that wish is not satisfied with wholesome entertainment. They are drifters, looking to do something that will make them feel macho.

My officer friend told me recently of two young men in the backseat of a police car, handcuffs about their wrists. They had started out innocently enough that evening. Four of them in a car went about looking for excitement. They found it. Soon there was a fight. Then the police cars converged. The boys were detained and handcuffed.

These were good young men. They were not of the kind that go to the jailhouse periodically. The mother of one of them had said to him before he left home, “Bad things happen after 11:00.”

He had quickly learned the meaning of that statement. He was embarrassed. He was ashamed to face his mother.

Dangerous practices

I told the Relief Society of secret underground drug parties that go by the name of Rave. Here, with flashing lights

and noisy music, if it can be called that, young men and women dance and sway. They sell and buy drugs. The drugs are called Ecstasy. They are a derivative of methamphetamine. The dancers suck on babies’ pacifiers because the drug makes them grind their teeth. The hot music and the sultry dancing go on until 7:30 of a Sunday morning. What does it all lead to? Nowhere. It is a dead end.

Now there has developed another practice in this search for something new and different and riskier. They choke one another. Boys choke girls until they pass out. At a local school the other day a girl with a health problem was choked until she was unconscious. Only the speedy action of paramedics saved her life.

Are boys involved in such ridiculous practices aware of the fact that their prank may lead to a charge of manslaughter? If that should happen, their lives would be ruined forever.

Stay away from pornography

If they want to get involved in pornography, they can do so very easily. They can pick up the phone and dial a number with which they are familiar. They can sit at a computer and revel in cyberspace filth.

I fear this may be going on in some of your homes. It is vicious. It is lewd and filthy. It is enticing and habit forming. It will take a young man or woman down to destruction as surely as anything in this world. It is foul sleaze that makes its exploiters wealthy, its victims impoverished.

I regret to say that many fathers themselves like to hear the siren song of those who peddle filth. Some of them also work the Internet for that which is lewd and lascivious. If there be any man within the sound of my voice who is involved in this or who is moving in this direction, I plead with you to get it out of your life. Get away from it. Stay away

from it. Otherwise it will become an obsession. It will destroy your home life. It will destroy your marriage. It will take the good and beautiful out of your family relationships and replace these with ugliness and suspicion.

To you young men, and to the young women who are your associates, I plead with you not to befoul your minds with this ugly and vicious stuff. It is designed to titillate you, to absorb you into its net. It will take the beautiful out of your life. It will lead you into the dark and ugly.

A recent magazine article contains the story of a 12-year-old girl who got hooked on the Internet. In a chat room she met an admirer. One thing led to another until the discussion became sexually explicit. As she conversed with him, she thought he was a boy of about her own age.

When she met him, she found "a tall, overweight gray-haired man." He was a vicious predator, a scheming pedophile. Her mother, with the help of the FBI, saved her from what might have been a tragedy of the worst kind (see Stephanie Mansfield, "The Avengers Online," *Reader's Digest*, Jan. 2000, 100-104).

Youth need help in resisting temptation

Our youth find this tempting stuff all about them. They need the help of their parents in resisting it. They need a tremendous amount of self-control. They need the strength of good friends. They need prayer to fortify them against this flood tide of filth.

The problem of parental direction of sons and daughters is not new. It is perhaps more acute than it has ever been, but every generation has faced some aspect of it.

The Lord's rebuke of Joseph Smith

In 1833 the Lord Himself rebuked Joseph Smith and his counselors and the Presiding Bishop. To the Prophet Joseph

He said in language clear and unmistakable, as He had said to others:

"You have not kept the commandments, and must needs stand rebuked before the Lord;

"Your family must needs repent and forsake some things, and give more earnest heed unto your sayings, or be removed out of their place" (D&C 93:47-48).

Specifically what brought about these rebukes, I do not know. But I do know that the situation was serious enough and its future fraught with sufficient danger for the Lord Himself to speak with clarity and warning.

Listen, be patient, and be prayerful

I think He likewise speaks to us with clarity and warning. My heart reaches out to our youth, who in many cases must walk a very lonely road. They find themselves in the midst of these evils. I hope they can share their burden with you, their fathers and mothers. I hope that you will listen, that you will be patient and understanding, that you will draw them to you and comfort and sustain them in their loneliness. Pray for direction. Pray for patience. Pray for the strength to love even though the offense may have been serious. Pray for understanding and kindness and, above all, for wisdom and inspiration.

Teach children the ways of the Lord

I believe this to be the most marvelous age in all the history of the world. For some reason you and I have been permitted to come on the scene at this time when there is such a great flowering of knowledge. What a tragedy it is, what a bleak and terrible thing to witness a son or daughter on whom you counted so much walk the tortuous path that leads down to hell. On the other hand, what a glorious and beautiful thing it is to see the child of your dreams walk with head

up, standing tall, unafraid, and with confidence, taking advantage of the tremendous opportunities that open around him or her. Isaiah said, "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children" (Isaiah 54:13).

So lead your sons and daughters, so guide and direct them from the time they are very small, so teach them in the ways of the Lord, that peace will be their companion throughout life.

What to teach sons and daughters

I mentioned to the Relief Society women several specific things that they ought to teach their sons and daughters. I repeat them briefly, perhaps in different language.

The first is to encourage them to develop good friendships. Every boy or girl longs for friends. No one wishes to walk alone. The warmth, the comfort, the camaraderie of a friend mean everything to a boy or girl. That friend can be either an influence for good or an influence for evil. The street gangs which are so vicious are an example of friendships gone awoul. Conversely, the association of young people in church and their mingling in school with those of their own kind will lead them to do well and to excel in their endeavors. Open your homes to the friends of your children. If you find they have big appetites, close your eyes and let them eat. Make your children's friends your friends.

Teach them the importance of education. The Lord has enjoined upon this people the responsibility to train their minds that they may be equipped to serve in the society of which they will become a part. The Church will be blessed by reason of their excellence. Furthermore, they will be amply rewarded for the effort they make.

I read from a clipping I made the other day:

"The latest Census information . . . indicated the annual wage for someone

without a degree and no high school diploma stood at little more than \$16,000 nationally [in 1997]. The jump wasn't much higher for a high school diploma—\$22,895 annual average income. As the level of education increases, however, so does the span. The holder of a bachelor's degree earned, on average, \$40,478 that year. Finally, the holder of an advanced degree typically bumped up their annual earnings by more than \$20,000 to a nationwide average of \$63,229, according to [these] Census figures" (Nicole A. Bonham, "Does an Advanced Degree Pay Off?" *Utah Business*, Sept. 2000, 37).

Teach your children self-respect. Teach them that their bodies are the creation of the Almighty. What a miraculous, wonderful, and beautiful thing is the human body.

As has been said here tonight, Paul, in writing to the Corinthians, declared:

"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"

"If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are" (1 Corinthians 3:16–17).

Now comes the craze of tattooing one's body. I cannot understand why any young man—or young woman, for that matter—would wish to undergo the painful process of disfiguring the skin with various multicolored representations of people, animals, and various symbols. With tattoos, the process is permanent unless there is another painful and costly undertaking to remove it. Fathers, caution your sons against having their bodies tattooed. They may resist your talk now, but the time will come when they will thank you. A tattoo is graffiti on the temple of the body.

Likewise the piercing of the body for multiple rings in the ears, in the nose, even in the tongue. Can they possibly think that is beautiful? It is a passing fancy, but its effects can be permanent.

Some have gone to such extremes that the ring had to be removed by surgery. The First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve have declared that we discourage tattoos and also "the piercing of the body for other than medical purposes." We do not, however, take any position "on the minimal piercing of the ears by women for one pair of earrings"—one pair.

Teach them to stay away from drugs.

That's been spoken of eloquently here. I have already spoken about Ecstasy. Do you wish your children to have the peace of which Isaiah spoke? They will not know peace if they get involved with drugs. These illegal substances will take away their self-control, will seize upon them to a point where they will do anything, within or outside the law, to get another dose.

Teach them the virtue of honesty.

There is no substitute under the heavens for the man or woman, the boy or girl who is honest. No false words besmirch his or her reputation. No act of duplicity colors his or her conscience. He or she can walk with head high, standing above the crowd of lesser folk who constantly indulge in lying, cheating, and who excuse themselves with statements that a little lying hurts no one. It does hurt, because small lying leads to large lying, and the prisons of the nation are the best proof of that fact.

Teach them to be virtuous. There is no peace to be had through sexual impurity. Our Heavenly Father placed within us the desires that make us attractive to one another—boys and girls, men and women. But with that urge must be self-discipline, rigid and strong and unbending.

Teach them to look forward to the time when they may be married in the house of the Lord as those who come to the altar free from taint or evil of any kind. They will be grateful all of the days of their lives that they were married in

the temple, worthily, under the authority of the holy priesthood.

Parenthetically, a word to you men.

Watch the tides of your lives, that you do not become enmeshed in situations which lead to sorrow, regret, and, eventually, divorce. Divorce has become so common all around us. There are so many who violate the solemn covenants they have made before God in His holy house.

Brigham Young once said:

"When people are married, instead of trying to get rid of each other, reflect that you have made your choice, and strive to honor and keep it, do not manifest that you have acted unwisely and say that you have made a bad choice, nor let anybody know that you think you have. You made your choice, stick to it, and strive to comfort and assist each other" (*Deseret News*, 29 May 1861, 98).

A divorce, when all is said and done, represents a failed marriage.

So many men become chronic critics. Rather, if they would look for the virtues in their wives instead of looking for their failings, love would bloom and the home would be secure.

Teach your children to pray. There is no other resource to compare with prayer. To think that each of us may approach our Father in Heaven, who is the great God of the universe, for individual help and guidance, for strength and faith is a miracle in and of itself. We come to Him by invitation. Let us not shun the opportunity which He has afforded us.

God bless you, dear fathers. May He bless you with wisdom and judgment, with understanding, with self-discipline and self-control, with faith and kindness and love. And may He bless the sons and daughters who have come into your homes, that yours may be a fortifying, strengthening, guiding hand as they walk the treacherous path of life. As the years pass—and they will pass ever so quickly—may you know that "peace . . . which

passeth all understanding" (Philippians 4:7) as you look upon your sons and daughters, who likewise have known that sacred and wonderful peace. Such is my humble prayer in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "Carry On."
Elder H. Bryan Richards offered the benediction.

SUNDAY MORNING SESSION

The fourth session of the 170th Semiannual General Conference convened in the Conference Center at 10:00 A.M. on Sunday, October 8, 2000. President Gordon B. Hinckley conducted this session.

Music was provided by the Tabernacle Choir. Craig Jessop directed the choir, and John Longhurst was the organist. To begin the session, the choir sang "The Morning Breaks." President Hinckley then made the following remarks.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

My beloved brethren and sisters, we welcome you to this, the fourth general session of the 170th Semiannual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

We extend our greetings to those of you who are participating by radio, television, cable, the Internet, or satellite transmission. We are grateful to the owners and operators of the facilities who are broadcasting this conference.

We acknowledge the presence this morning of government, education, and civic leaders, and members of the Church

who have assembled to worship together in many places.

The music for this session will be by the Tabernacle Choir, under the direction of Craig Jessop, with John Longhurst at the organ.

The choir opened this session by singing "The Morning Breaks" and will now favor us with "Sabbath Day." Following the singing, the invocation will be given by Elder James O. Mason of the Seventy.

The choir sang "Sabbath Day."
Elder James O. Mason offered the invocation.

President Hinckley

The choir will now sing "The Lord Is My Shepherd." Following the singing, President James E. Faust, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, will address us.

The choir sang "The Lord Is My Shepherd."

President James E. Faust

Testimony—the cornerstone of my life

My beloved brothers and sisters and friends, I have lived a long time. As I look back over my life, I recognize one source of singular strength and blessing.

It is my testimony and knowledge that Jesus is the Christ, the Savior and Redeemer of all mankind. I am profoundly grateful that all of my life I have had a simple faith that Jesus is the Christ. That witness has been confirmed to me hun-