



I Lost My Phone Number, Can I Have Yours?



A MUST-HAVE
GUIDE TO
guy-girl
relationships

Pick-up
Lines That
Don't Work,
Scriptural
Advice
That Does!

John Hilton III

How can I set firm moral standards?

What have Church leaders said about kissing?

What can I do now to prepare for an eternal marriage?

How can I help a friend who is breaking the law of chastity?

President Gordon B. Hinckley, speaking to youth and young adults, said that relationships with peers of the opposite sex are “the most common and most difficult of all problems for young men and young women to handle” (*Ensign*, January 2001).

In this book, popular speaker John Hilton III addresses the topic of guy-girl relationships by helping youth and young adults liken the scriptures to both serious and casual relationships. Using the scriptural accounts of David and Bathsheba, Samson and Delilah, Amnon and Tamar, Joseph and Potiphar’s wife, and many others, John shows that the scriptures contain the principles needed to succeed in relationships with members of the opposite sex.

Packed with quotations from Church leaders, this book contains answers to many commonly asked questions about dating and courtship, as well as dozens of application ideas and resources for additional study.

John writes directly and with humor, and he backs up what he says with scripture and the teachings of General Authorities. Whether you are just beginning to think about guy-girl relationships, starting to date, or preparing for serious courtship, this book contains timely and important advice.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

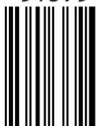
John Hilton III used scriptural advice to win his wife Lani’s heart. They are the parents of three children and live in Miami, Florida. John is a religious educator and has degrees from Brigham Young and Harvard Universities. He is also the author of two talks on CD, *Dating and the Plan of Happiness* and *The Dog Ate My Scriptures: Excuses, Agency, and Responsibility*.



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I Lost My Phone Number, Can I Have Yours?

PICK-UP LINES THAT DON'T WORK
SCRIPTURAL ADVICE THAT DOES

John Hilton III



SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH

Thank you to all of those who have contributed to the content of this book and who have helped me grow and develop. This book is dedicated with love to Lani.

Note: In nearly every story in this book, names have been changed, and in a few cases, details of the story have been modified to protect innocent parties.

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Introduction

Pick-Up Lines and Scriptural Advice

I've never been very successful at using pick-up lines. But sometimes they work! My college roommate Joseph used the following pick-up line to meet the woman he eventually married. He was standing in line at the grocery store trying to think of a way to get to know the woman in front of him.

He found out her name was Leslie and talked with her for a few moments as the clerk rang up her groceries. As she was getting ready to leave, Joseph knew he had to act fast. He asked Leslie if he could see her grocery list. "You've got some good stuff," he said. "Strawberries, flour . . . hmmm, you forgot something."

Joseph took out a pen, wrote his email address on her shopping list, and gave it back to her. The next day he received an email from Leslie—and the rest is history.

You can try that pick-up line on somebody if you want, but I doubt it will work. Joseph was probably just lucky! I've heard of many other pick-up lines. The following are three of my

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favorites. I can't take credit (or blame) for these—others told them to me.

Guy: "Could I look at your shirt?"

Girl: "Sure."

[Guy looks at the tag of the shirt.]

Guy: "Just what I thought—made in heaven!"

Girl: Do you have a map?

Guy: No. Why do you need one?

Girl: Because I get lost in your eyes.

Guy: Do you have a phone I could use?

Girl: Sure. Who do you need to talk to?

Guy: My mom. She said to call when I met the woman of my dreams.

(If you want to read more pick-up lines, see appendix A.)

Pick-up lines are fun, but if your goal is to have successful guy-girl relationships, they won't be enough—you'll need the scriptures. As Nephi wrote, "Feast upon the words of Christ; for behold, the words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do" (2 Nephi 32:3). The words of Christ will help you in *all* areas of your life, including guy-girl relationships. In fact, the scriptures played a key role for me in winning over the girl of my dreams—Lani Olsen.

One day in December, about four months after I got home from my mission, I was walking home from school when I ran into one of my friends, Ethan. "John!" he said. "We haven't hung out for a long time. Why don't you come with me to a leadership class I'm taking and we can do something afterwards."

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I went with him to the class and immediately noticed the teacher. She was beautiful, but there was more. I can't really describe it except to say that I could sense that she was a really good person. During the class I felt the vibes going between me and her. I don't think she felt anything, but I sure did! Ethan could feel it too; after class he came up to me and said, "John, I can tell that Lani is perfect for you! We can hang out another time. You'd better talk to her."

So I stayed after class; we talked for about five minutes, but I couldn't get up enough courage to ask her out. After I left, I went straight to Ethan's house and said, "Why didn't you set me up with her sooner?"

For the next twenty-four hours the only thing I could think about was Lani. I found her number on BYU's online directory (hooray for the Internet!) and called her the next day.

"Lani, this is John, the guy who visited your student leadership class yesterday. How's it going?"

"Great, thanks."

"I was wondering if you'd like to go out tonight?"

"No."

Well, she didn't exactly say no. She said, "I'm sorry, but I already have other plans."

"That's okay," I said. "Maybe some other time."

"Okay. Thanks for calling."

"Bye."

As soon as I hung up, I realized how stupid I was. Of course she already had plans! She probably had tons of guys pursuing her. For the next few days I could not get Lani off my

I asked her, "I was wondering if you'd like to go out tonight?"

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mind. The next time I called her, I had a plan. Instead of asking her out for a specific day (when she might already have a date lined up), I said, “I’d love to go out with you. When are you free?”

“Saturday afternoon,” Lani said.

Once she agreed to the date, I needed to decide what we would do. Fortunately, my good friend Jared gave me tickets for a matinee performance of *A Christmas Carol* just a couple of blocks from Lani’s house.

But because there’s not a lot of interaction watching a play, I thought we should do more. I planned that we would bake cookies together first. I was excited (and a bit nervous)!

The date got off to a rocky start. Lani lived with her family in Orem. When I knocked on her door, a guy (later I found out it was her little brother) answered.

The date got off to a rocky start. When I knocked on her door a guy answered. “Is Lani here?” I asked. “I don’t know,” he said. Then he shut the door.

“Is Lani here?” I asked.

“I don’t know,” he said. Then he shut the door.

Are you going to find out? I wondered.

I waited—for one minute, two minutes, three minutes—but he didn’t come back. I knocked again. This time Lani’s sister answered. She was a lot nicer, and finally Lani came to the door. As we were walking to the car, we ran into another guy (I thought it was one of her neighbors, but I found out later it was a different brother). This guy gave me a goofy smile and said, “Lani, are you going out with *another* guy?” I felt two inches tall.

I opened the door for Lani. Then we got into the car and

Pick-Up Lines and Scriptural Advice

drove off. From that point on, the date went great! We talked as we made cookies, and I found that we had tons of things in common. The play was marvelous. The whole time we were together, I was impressed by the kind of person Lani was. It sounds cheesy, but she was everything I had ever dreamed of in a girl.

When I dropped her off, I asked her if she wanted to go out to lunch the next week. She said yes!

But as I was driving home, I began feeling uneasy. I couldn't quite put my finger on why. I got home about 6:00 P.M. (remember, it was an afternoon date). I had planned to do homework that night, but I couldn't concentrate. I had this terrible feeling that would not go away. I went to bed early, but the next morning I still felt bad, and as I thought about it, I realized why.

I felt bad because I knew I wasn't good enough for Lani. She seemed practically perfect, and I had a lot of faults. She was doing many good things with her life, and although I wasn't wicked, I knew I wasn't at the same level Lani was. It really hurt! My whole life I'd been waiting to meet the woman of my dreams; now I had finally met her, but I felt I wasn't good enough for her.

I needed help. I knelt down and prayed hard. I told the Lord what I was feeling: that I wanted to spend more time with Lani but didn't feel good enough for her. I asked if I should keep pursuing her. I knew that the scriptures could help me with any problem, so I grabbed my scriptures and prayed that I would be guided to a verse that could help me. I opened my scriptures to page 421 and saw 3 Nephi 3:21.

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In order to understand this verse, some background might be helpful. At this point in the Book of Mormon all of the righteous were gathered together, and the wicked Gadianton robbers were in the wilderness and mountains preparing to attack the righteous. Some of the righteous people came to Gidgiddoni, the leader of the army, and asked if they could go into the mountains and attack the robbers. But in verse 21 Gidgiddoni said to the people,

The Lord forbid; for if we should go up against them the Lord would deliver us into their hands; therefore we will prepare ourselves in the center of our lands, and we will gather all our armies together, and we will not go against them, but we will wait till they shall come against us; therefore as the Lord liveth, if we do this he will deliver them into our hands.

I felt as if Gidgiddoni was speaking to me. When he said, “The Lord forbid,” I felt as if he was saying, “Don’t go out with Lani anymore . . . yet.” Instead, I felt I should prepare myself in “the center” areas of my life—meaning I should focus on myself and making myself a better person. If I did this, things would work out.

I told Ethan that I wasn’t going to see Lani again. “You’re crazy!” he said. But I was determined to do what I had felt when reading 3 Nephi 3:21. I called Lani, cancelled our date, and didn’t see her for the next four months. Later in this book I’ll describe what happened during those months; for now, I just want to point out that I did my best to follow the direction I felt as I studied the scriptures.

Four months later, I was about to take a class that Lani had

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taken. She was the only person I knew who had taken the class. I emailed Lani a question about the class, but instead of emailing me back, she called me and asked if I wanted to talk about it over lunch. That verse I'd read, 3 Nephi 3:21, said, "We will wait till they shall come against us," and when Lani asked if I wanted to have lunch with her, I felt that she was coming to me! We had lunch, and to make a long story short, as it says in verse 21, "if we do this [wait until they come up against us] he will deliver them into our hands." We were married a year later.

Let me make something clear: I'm not recommending waiting for the other person to come to you as a dating strategy. I do recommend that when you need help—whether in dating, schoolwork, or any other situation—that you turn to the scriptures. I'm sure that when Mormon wrote the words of 3 Nephi 3:21 he was not thinking about my dating relationships. But when we read the scriptures, we put ourselves in a position for the Holy Ghost to teach us what we need to know at that moment. It was studying the scriptures, combined with the insight from the Spirit, that taught me what I needed to do.

The scriptures teach us many principles about guy-girl relationships. One purpose of this book is to illustrate how principles from the scriptures can be likened to relationships today. Guys and girls are attracted to each other now, and they were attracted to each other in the scriptures, too! We can learn powerful lessons from studying scriptural guy-girl relationships. Another important thing you can gain from this book is the understanding that the scriptures *really do* apply to us in our day. You can gain this understanding as you liken the scriptures

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to yourself and connect the principles in this book to your personal life.

Pick-up lines are funny and fun, but there's no guarantee that they will work. The scriptures are the words of Christ, and there *is* a guarantee that they will help you in all areas of your life. They certainly have helped me.

Make It Real

To help liken the scriptures to yourself, at the end of each chapter there is a section called "Make It Real." In this section I'll ask you two questions:



1. How have you seen this principle applied (or not applied) in your life and the lives of people you know? In other words, what situations have you or your friends and family been in that relate to the topic of the chapter?

2. What goal(s) will you set for yourself to more fully live this principle?

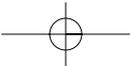
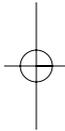
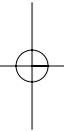
I have also included some suggested articles you could read to learn more about the topic of the chapter. Most of these articles come from the *New Era* or *Ensign* magazines. You can find these articles by going to <http://lds.org> and clicking on "Gospel Library," "Church Publications," and then "Magazines."

You might think it's odd to have questions and additional reading at the end of each chapter. I include this section because, as President Spencer W. Kimball said,

Pick-Up Lines and Scriptural Advice

"We learn to do by doing" (*The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, 530). Think about it—if you are studying for a math test, one of the most important things you can do is practice the type of problems that will be on the test. In the same way, thinking about how the principles in this book relate to your life, setting goals to do better, and doing additional study will increase your power to live these principles. Even though it might be tempting to skip this section and go on to the next chapter, will you please take time to "make it real"?

Last tip: To get the most out of this book, have your scriptures close by. When you find verses quoted in this book that you like, mark them in your scriptures. Take a moment to think about how they apply to you personally.



1

Honor the Relationships at Home First

*Your most important friendships should be with your own
brothers and sisters and with your father and mother
(President Ezra Taft Benson, Ensign, November 1986, 81)*

This book is about guy-girl relationships—primarily guys liking girls, and girls liking guys. But long before guys and girls are attracted to each other, there are other guy-girl relationships, like a daughter and her father, a son and his mother, and brothers and sisters. In the eternal scheme of things, your relationships with your parents and siblings may be more important than any others you will have, with the exception of your future spouse.

The scriptures give us a pretty clear principle to guide us in our relationships with our parents. It is one of the Ten Commandments: “Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee” (Exodus 20:12).

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What does it mean to honor your parents? President Ezra Taft Benson explained,

To honor and respect our parents means that we . . . love and appreciate them and are concerned about their happiness. . . . We treat them with courtesy. . . . We seek to understand their point of view. Certainly obedience to parents' righteous desires and wishes is a part of honoring.

Furthermore, our parents deserve our honor and respect for giving us life itself. . . . May we ever be grateful to them and show that gratitude.

Let us be forgiving of our parents, who . . . almost always did the best they knew how. May we ever forgive them as we . . . wish to be forgiven by our children for mistakes we make (*Ensign*, November 1989, 6–7).

The Savior gives us a perfect example of “honoring” by being completely obedient to his Father. He said, “I do *always* those things that please him” (John 8:29, emphasis added).

He also honored His mother, Mary. In John 2, Jesus was at a wedding with His mother and His disciples. Partway through the wedding feast, Mary approached Jesus and told him they were out of wine. The Savior said, “Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come” (John 2:4).

At first glance that might not seem very respectful. It kind of sounds like “Hey! Why are you talking to me? It’s not my time to help you!” But notice the Joseph Smith Translation of this verse: “Woman, what wilt thou have me do for thee? that will I do; for mine hour is not yet come.” That changes things! Now he is saying, “Woman—what do you want me to do for

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you? Whatever it is, I will do it, because my time to focus solely on my ministry isn't here yet."

But what about the word "Woman"? I don't know what you think of when you hear that word, but if I addressed my mother by calling her "Woman!" it would be pretty disrespectful. Elder James E. Talmage (1862–1933) of the Quorum of the Twelve taught what the word "woman" meant in the days of the Savior:

The noun of the address, "woman," as applied by a son to his mother may sound to our ears somewhat harsh, if not disrespectful; but its use was really an expression of opposite import. [Farrar, in his work *The Life of Christ* says] "The address 'Woman' was so respectful that it might be, and was, addressed to the queenliest" (*Jesus the Christ*, 144).

So let's picture the scene again. Jesus is at a party with his friends and his mother. Mary comes to Jesus and says they have no wine. Notice that Mary doesn't ask Jesus to help her; she doesn't say, "Will you make some wine for us?" The Savior *volunteered* to serve his mother. He said (in our language), "Dear mother, what do you want me to do for you? Whatever it is, I'll do it."

What would happen if the next time your mom or dad called for you, you quickly ran over to where they were and said, "Dear mother (or

What would happen if the next time your mom or dad called for you, you quickly ran over to where they were and said, "Dear Mother (or Father), what do you want me to do for you? Whatever it is, I'll do it!"?

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father), what do you want me to do for you? Whatever it is, I'll do it!"? Try it. See what happens!



YES MOM!

"Remember that your mother is your mother. She should not need to issue orders. Her wish, her hope, her hint should provide direction that you would honor. Thank her and express your love for her. And if she is struggling to rear you without your father, you have a double duty to honor her" (Elder Russell M. Nelson, *Ensign*, May 1999, 38).



We see another example of the Savior's love for his mother when he was on the cross. Imagine the terrible pain the Savior was enduring. He had suffered for our sins in the Garden of Gethsemane, been beaten by the Jews and the Romans, and was now hanging on a cross. The scriptures say, "Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother. . . . When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and [John, the Apostle], he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour [John] took her unto his own home" (John 19:25-27).

In other words, while he was on the cross, Jesus was concerned about what would happen to his mother after he died. Even though he was in extraordinary pain, he focused on his mother and made sure her needs were met.

It can be easy to treat family members with less love and respect than they deserve. Some might try to justify being rude

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to family members by saying, “I’m having a bad day!” Jesus Christ set an example for us in honoring our parents—even when he was in extreme pain.

What are some specific things you can do to honor your parents? The *For the Strength of Youth* pamphlet says, “Honor your parents by showing love and respect for them and by being obedient. Be willing to help in the home with chores that need to be done. Participate in family activities and traditions, including family prayer, family home evenings, and family scripture reading. . . . Set a good example for other family members” (10–11).



THE GOLDEN RULE

The Savior said, “All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them” (3 Nephi 14:12). In other words, “Do unto others as you would have others do to you.” When it comes to honoring your parents, think about this—how do you want your future children to treat you?

Treat your parents accordingly.



In addition to relationships with your parents, you may be blessed with brothers and sisters. President Ezra Taft Benson said, “Your most important friendships should be with your own brothers and sisters and with your father and mother” (*Ensign*, November 1986, 81). You can strengthen your relationships with your family by showing genuine interest in their activities and helping them with the challenges they face.

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I know a young woman whose parents were not active in the Church. She took responsibility for organizing daily scripture study with her younger siblings as a way to strengthen her family spiritually. Another young woman would make sure her younger siblings felt included in her activities. Older siblings can have a powerful effect on their younger brothers and sisters.

Young men have a priesthood responsibility to honor and respect young women, particularly their sisters. Elder Richard G. Scott said, “As a brother, you can have a powerful, positive influence in your sister’s life. Compliment her when she looks especially nice. She may listen to you more than to your parents when you suggest that she wear modest clothing. Simple courtesies like opening the door for her and building her self-esteem will encourage her to find her real worth” (*Ensign*, May 2000, 37).

Another part of honoring relationships at home is giving parents and siblings the important priority they deserve. When Lani was in high school, she was very involved in a school service organization called Key Club. Her senior year she was a regional officer and was responsible for helping club leaders in several states. One weekend there was a training meeting in another state that Lani was very excited to attend.

The weekend of the regional training meeting was the same weekend Lani’s family had planned to hike Mount Whitney.

Lani had a choice to make—go with her family or go to the meeting.

But that same weekend Lani’s family was going to hike Mount Whitney, the highest mountain in

Honor the Relationships at Home First

the continental United States. Lani had a choice to make—go with her family or go to the meeting.

Lani decided to climb the mountain with her family and go to the meeting a day late. Looking back on that experience she said, “I thought my responsibilities in Key Club were so important. But I don’t remember a single thing that happened at that meeting. On the other hand, I have relived the memories of hiking Mt. Whitney with my family over and over again. I’m so glad I made my family activity a top priority.”

Hanging out with the family may not always be the number-one priority. But it probably should be. Find ways to honor your parents and your brothers and sisters.

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Make It Real



How have you seen the principle "Honor the relationships at home first" applied (or not applied) in your life and the lives of people you know? In other words, what situations have you or your friends and family been in that relate to the topic of the chapter?

Possible Goals:

1. For one week, any time your parents ask you to do something, respond by saying, "Dear Mom (or Dad), what do you want me to do? Whatever it is, I'll do it." (And then do it!)
2. Go to one of your siblings' sporting events or other activities and cheer him or her on.
3. Write a loving note to one or more of your family members.
4. Take a younger sibling out to do something fun, or simply have a heartfelt talk with him or her.
5. Your own idea:

Honor the Relationships at Home First

What goal(s) will you set to more fully “honor the relationships at home first”?

Additional Reading

For the Strength of Youth, 10–11. Church leaders give important counsel on how to treat your family.

The Family: A Proclamation to the World. The First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve solemnly proclaim to the world the importance of the family. It can be found in the back of *For the Strength of Youth*.

Elder Russell M. Nelson, “Our Sacred Duty to Honor Women,” *Ensign*, May 1999, 38–40. Elder Nelson teaches the importance of honoring women, particularly family members.

2

Get Out of Bad Situations

“But he refused.”

(Genesis 39:8)

One of my favorite scriptural accounts involves Joseph and Potiphar’s wife. This is the Joseph that had the coat of many colors and was sold by his brothers into Egypt. A man named Potiphar purchased Joseph to be his servant. Joseph was an excellent servant and was soon promoted to take charge of all of Potiphar’s affairs.

Take a moment and read this account—you might want to mark these verses in your own scriptures, beginning in Genesis 39:1:

1. And Joseph was brought down to Egypt; and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him of the hands of the Ishmeelites . . .

7. And it came to pass after [Joseph had been put in charge of Potiphar’s affairs], that [Potiphar’s] wife cast her eyes upon Joseph; and she said, Lie with me.

Get Out of Bad Situations

8. But he refused, and said unto his master's wife, Behold, my master [knoweth] not what is with me in the house, and he hath committed all that he hath to my hand;

9. There is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?

10. And it came to pass, as she spake to Joseph day by day, that he hearkened not unto her, to lie by her, or to be with her.

11. And it came to pass about this time, that Joseph went into the house to do his business; and there was none of the men of the house there within.

12. And she caught him by his garment, saying, Lie with me: and he left his garment in her hand, and fled, and got him out.

Let's take a close look at these verses. In verse 7 we read that after Joseph took charge, Potiphar's wife "cast her eyes upon Joseph; and . . . said, Lie with me."

That's a pretty strong pick-up line! (Don't use it.) Notice the next three words: "But he refused" (Genesis 39:8). What great advice for anyone faced with temptation! *But he refused.*

What was it that gave Joseph the courage to choose the right? I think at least part of the answer to that question is in verse 9. Joseph said, "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" Joseph was more focused on doing God's will than on what might have seemed attractive in the moment.

One might think that after Joseph had refused Potiphar's

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wife's invitation that the story would end—but it does not. In verse 10 we read that “day by day” (regularly) Potiphar's wife tempted Joseph to be with her. Young men and women (and even older men and women) face ongoing temptation.

Joseph was a very righteous man, but if he made a mistake in this story, it would be in verse 11: “And it came to pass about this time, that Joseph went into the house . . . and there was none of the men of the house there within.”

Perhaps he *needed* to be inside at that particular moment, but he put himself into a vulnerable situation—being alone with a member of the opposite sex who wanted to be immoral with him. Joseph could have avoided what was about to happen by not being alone with Potiphar's wife.

Once Joseph and Potiphar's wife were alone, she grabbed part of his clothing and again said, “Lie with me.” But Joseph “Fled, and got him out” (Genesis 39:12). In other words, he left in a hurry. A key principle is this: Joseph quickly got out of a bad situation. He left so quickly that he left part of his clothing behind.

I know of a young man who was faced with temptation but refused to do something he had committed not to do. How? By getting out as Joseph did.

As I understand the story, Tim promised his older brother he wouldn't kiss a girl until he graduated from high school. In return,

Tim's older brother promised him that if he graduated from high school without kissing a girl, he would buy Tim the best steak of his life.

Tim's brother promised him that he (the older brother) would buy Tim the best steak of his life.

Tim got to his senior year without kissing anyone. One Friday night he went out with a girl he had a huge crush on. He didn't think she liked him, but on their date she took his hand and started holding it. As he was driving her home, she started holding his hand again. When he pulled up to her house, she didn't let go. She looked at him and asked, "Are you going to kiss me?"

Tim said, "No."

"Why not?"

"My brother promised me he'd buy me a steak if I didn't kiss a girl before I graduated from high school."

Before we finish the story, you should know that Tim loved steak! But this story isn't about steak, and it isn't about kissing. It's about sticking to what you said you would do and getting out of bad situations.

When Tim said he wouldn't kiss her, his date asked, "Don't you think a kiss is better than a steak?"

"No!" Tim said. He got out of the car, opened his date's door, and walked her to the door. In a subtle way, he got out of the situation he was in.

No matter how hard you try to avoid it, you may find yourself in a position in which the person (or people) you are with want you to do things you are uncomfortable with. Like Joseph, you can get out of those situations. You might have to say "Good night" and walk straight inside, or say, "Please take me home right now" or "I don't do that kind of thing." It

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might be awkward, but getting out of bad situations will bless your life over and over again.



LEE FROM TEMPTATION

President Gordon B. Hinckley said, "You can put behind you any evil with which you have been involved. You can go forward with a renewal of hope and acceptability to a far better way of life.

"The best way, the only way for you, is to avoid any entrapment with evil. You have within you instincts, powerful and terribly persuasive, urging you at times to let go and experience a little fling. You must not do it. You cannot do it. You are [children] of God with tremendous potential. He has great expectations concerning you, as do others. You cannot let down for a minute. You cannot give in to an impulse. There must be discipline, strong and unbending. Flee from temptation, as Joseph fled from the wiles of Potiphar's wife" (*New Era*, November 2001).



Even though Joseph got out of a bad situation, his story wasn't over. What happened next? Potiphar's wife was angry and humiliated. She lied to Potiphar and got Joseph imprisoned for more than two years.

You might not be immediately blessed for getting out of a bad situation. As with Joseph, your situation may temporarily worsen. Consider what happened to my friend Jenny. When she was in high school she began steady dating. At the time, she

Get Out of Bad Situations

didn't know it was wrong. Then she found these words in *For the Strength of Youth*: "Avoid going on frequent dates with the same person" (25).

Jenny realized that by steady dating she had put herself in a bad situation. Even though it was very hard, she decided to "get out," and she broke up with her boyfriend.

As soon as they broke up, Jenny found herself alone. She had lost a lot of her good girlfriends because of all the time she had spent with her boyfriend, and no guys asked her on dates. When Jenny did the right thing, life got harder, not easier.

But look at the long term. Joseph was sent to prison, and as a result he made connections that led him to eventually become the second in command (next only to Pharaoh) over all Egypt. In the same way, Jenny was and continues to be blessed for doing the right thing, even though it was hard at the time.

Whatever the short-term consequences, you will always be eternally grateful when you get out of bad situations.

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Make It Real



How have you seen the principle "Get out of bad situations" applied (or not applied) in your life and the lives of people you know? In other words, what situations have you or your friends and family been in that relate to the topic of the chapter?

Possible Goals:

1. Decide now what things you will refuse to do.
2. Make a plan for how you will get out of difficult situations.
3. Your own idea:

What goal(s) will you set for yourself to more fully "get out of bad situations"?

Get Out of Bad Situations

Additional Reading

Susan W. Tanner, "Making Dating Smooth Sailing," *New Era*, October 2004, 28–32. Sister Tanner teaches about friendship and courtship, and she shares four principles to guide you in physical relationships.

3

Be Wise

"In the Church we are not exempt from common sense"

(Elder Boyd K. Packer, Ensign, November 1979, 21).

The Book of Mormon prophet Jacob summarized his teachings by writing, "Oh be wise; what can I say more?" (Jacob 6:12). You will face many situations where the "right" thing to do may not be clear. Perhaps you will want to do something that isn't necessarily "wrong" or want to figure out if it is "okay" to do something. Remembering common sense and remembering to "be wise" can be very helpful.

These principles would have been useful to me during my freshman year at BYU. Thirteen days before the semester ended, I met Brittany, an amazing young woman who I thought was perfect. We had a lot of fun together the last two weeks of school, and then I went home to Seattle and she went to Salt Lake.

We kept in contact. I wrote her two or three letters each week, and we talked to each other on the phone. I thought

about her all day every day. I was sure we would get married!

After I had been home about a month, I realized that I would have an opportunity to see Brittany before my mission. I had been set apart and was going into the Missionary Training Center on June 26 but would fly into Salt Lake June 25 at 1:00 P.M. My parents weren't coming with me to the Missionary Training Center, so I would be by myself (my grandparents were going to take me to the Missionary Training Center). I thought, "This is perfect! Brittany lives in Salt Lake, so she can pick me up from the airport and we can spend the whole day together. Then she can drop me off at my grandparents' house that night." Of course, she and I wouldn't be alone—one of her siblings or parents could be with us. We could keep things completely clean. I was *really* looking forward to my day with Brittany.

Then I realized that because I would be set apart on June 24, I would be an official missionary on the day I was with Brittany. My parents thought it wasn't a good idea to spend the day with her. I wasn't worried about doing something bad with her, but I thought, "Since I'll be a missionary, I should probably make sure it's okay with Heavenly Father if I spend the day with Brittany."

So I prayed and said, "Heavenly Father, I've thought a lot about this, and I think it's the right thing for me to spend the day with Brittany. What do you think?"

I didn't feel anything, so I prayed again. And again. And again! Still I felt nothing. It's probably obvious to you what the

Thirteen days before the semester ended, I met Brittany, an amazing young woman who I thought was perfect.

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right thing for me to do was: “Be wise, John. You are not exempt from common sense.” Common sense says that if I’m going to be set apart as a missionary, I probably shouldn’t spend ten hours with a girl I’m madly in love with. Common sense tells me that if I keep praying about something and it still doesn’t feel right, it probably isn’t.

Have you ever seen a friend make choices that you knew were unwise? Perhaps you could see that what your friend was

Have you ever seen a friend make choices that you knew were unwise?

Perhaps you could see that what your friend was doing wasn’t smart.

You could, but your friend couldn’t!

doing wasn’t smart. *You* could, but *your friend* couldn’t! When we don’t use common sense, often people close to us can see that we are making poor choices.

Using common sense isn’t just for us today. Consider what happened to the Israelite Samson several thousand years ago. You’ve probably heard about Samson’s great strength. The secret of his strength was that as long

as Samson didn’t cut his hair, God would make him strong. Samson was so powerful that he killed a thousand of the Philistines (enemies of the Israelites) using only the jawbone of a donkey (Judges 15:15). The Philistines hated him and were always trying to kill him.

At times the Spirit was with Samson, and he had his prayers answered (Judges 14:6; 15:18–19). In the end, though, he didn’t use common sense—he was not wise. Samson fell in love with a Philistine woman named Delilah. When the Philistines realized that Samson was in love with Delilah, they approached

her and said, “Entice him, and see wherein his great strength lieth, and by what means we may prevail against him, . . . and we will give thee every one of us eleven hundred pieces of silver” (Judges 16:5).

In other words, they told Delilah they would pay her a lot of money if she could figure out the secret of Samson’s strength and tell them.

So Delilah asked Samson what the secret of his strength was. If you were Samson, wouldn’t that strike you as being a bit odd? Why would your girlfriend want to know how to make you weak? I wonder how the conversation went. Maybe something like this:

Samson: “Hi, honey. What’s for dinner?”

Delilah: “Fried camel.”

Samson: “Mmmm . . . My favorite!”

Delilah: “Oh, by the way, what’s the secret of your strength? How can you be made weak?”

I would think this was a strange question, and maybe Samson did too. In any event, when Delilah asked him about the secret of his strength, he lied and told her that if he was tied up with seven fresh cords, he would be weak like anybody else.

So one night (maybe while Samson was sleeping), Delilah tied him up with seven fresh cords. Then she said, “Samson, the Philistines are here!” Samson burst the bands he was tied with, and Delilah realized that Samson had lied to her.

Now, if you were Samson, what would you be thinking at this point? “I just told Delilah that if I were tied with seven new cords I would be made weak . . . and now all of a sudden I’m

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tied up with seven cords. . . . Hmmm . . . that's kind of random."

It should have been obvious that Delilah was trouble, but Samson did not see it. Delilah came to him and said, "Why did you lie to me about fresh cords being the secret of your strength?" If Delilah loved Samson, why would she try to weaken him? Be wise, Samson!

Delilah asked Samson a second time to tell her the secret of his strength. Samson lied again and told her that if he were tied up with new ropes he would become weak. Delilah tied Samson up with seven new ropes and said, "The Philistines are here!" and Samson broke free.

As if two times weren't bad enough, the whole thing was repeated a third time. This time Samson told Delilah that if his hair was braided in a certain way, he would become weak. She braided his hair, and he didn't lose his strength.

By now you are thinking, "Come on, Samson! It is *obvious* that this woman hates you!" Think about it! Three times he says, "If such and such a thing happens to me, I'll be made weak," and each time the thing happens. It couldn't be a coincidence; it seems clear that Delilah is trying to weaken him. Be wise, Samson!

But Samson couldn't see it. What happened next might be humorous if it wasn't so tragic. Delilah said to Samson, "How canst thou say, I love thee, when thine heart is not with me?" (Judges 16:15).

So Delilah is saying, "If you really loved me, you would tell me the secret of your great strength." Or, in other words, "If you really loved me you would do something that you know in

your heart is wrong.” Does that line sound familiar? Be wise, Samson! Do you think she really loves you?



WAS DELILAH A TRUE FRIEND?

“We need to measure very carefully who our true friends are. The measure of a true friend is one who will not have us choose between his way and the Lord’s way. A true friend makes it easier for us to live the commandments of the Lord. A true friend will not let us do anything we want. True friends will correct us when we do something wrong and bring us back on the straight and narrow path that leads to exaltation” (Elder Robert D. Hales, *Ensign*, June 1999, 12).



Delilah continued, “Thou hast mocked me these three times, and hast not told me wherein thy great strength lieth. And it came to pass, when she pressed him daily with her words, and urged him, so that his soul was vexed unto death” (Judges 16:15–16).

She pressed him daily; she wasn’t giving up. At this point it seems like the only smart thing for Samson to do is get out of this situation. But unlike Joseph of Egypt, he decided to stay. He told Delilah the secret of his strength. The scriptures then tell us what happened:

And when Delilah saw that he had told her all his heart, she sent and called for the lords of the Philistines, saying, Come up this once, for he hath shewed me all his

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heart. Then the lords of the Philistines came up unto her, and brought money in their hand.

And she made him sleep upon her knees; and she called for a man, and she caused him to shave off the seven locks of his head; and she began to afflict him, and his strength went from him (Judges 16:18–19).

Because Samson was not wise, he was captured and eventually killed. If only he had used common sense!

I hear many questions that could be answered with the simple advice, “Use common sense.” “Be wise.” One time at a youth conference, we read in *For the Strength of Youth* that you shouldn’t “lie on top of another person” (27). A young man stood up and asked, “What if you’re kind of at an angle, like this,” and then contorted his body so he was at a forty-five-degree angle. “Is that all right?”

For the Strength of Youth doesn’t say anything about forty-five-degree angles, but members of the Church should use common sense. *Be wise.*

Another time, I heard a young person say, “I know you’re not supposed to date until you’re sixteen. I’m fourteen and I’m not dating. I’m just ‘going out’ with somebody. We hold hands at school, write each other notes, and stuff like that. Is that wrong? *For the Strength of Youth* doesn’t say anything about going out!” *Be wise.*

Someone might ask, “I plan on getting married in the temple, but I hang out with people who do really bad stuff. My parents don’t like it, but I’m not doing anything bad. Is that okay?” *Be wise.* President Hinckley said, “Choose your friends carefully. . . . Never lose sight of the fact that it is your friends

who will lead you along the paths that you will follow” (*New Era*, January 2001). If you are spending time with people your parents don’t want you to be with, you may be falling into the Samson trap.

In Mosiah 4:29–30, King Benjamin said,

I cannot tell you all the things whereby ye may commit sin; for there are divers ways and means, even so many that I cannot number them. But this much I can tell you, that if ye do not watch yourselves, and your thoughts, and your words, and your deeds, and observe the commandments of God, and continue in the faith of what ye have heard concerning the coming of our Lord, even unto the end of your lives, ye must perish. And now, O man, remember, and perish not.

Paraphrasing what King Benjamin said, “There are lots of things we shouldn’t do, and they aren’t all mentioned in *For the Strength of Youth*. We need to carefully watch our words, thoughts, and actions to make sure we are wise and not do something that would hurt or destroy us spiritually.”

So what happened with Brittany and my trip to the MTC? I kept praying and praying to see if I could see her. On about the hundredth time I prayed about it, I felt an impression come to my mind, saying, “*What will you do if I say no?*”

I thought, “Well I’ll do it anyway, because I want to hang out with her, and it’s not really wrong!”

“*If you’re not going to listen to what I say, why are you even asking?*”

I felt bad and realized that my heart wasn’t right. I stopped praying and went into my backyard to think about my

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situation. About an hour later I had humbled myself somewhat and prayed again. This time I told Heavenly Father that I would do whatever he wanted. I felt like it would be okay to see Brittany for an hour but that I shouldn't spend the day with her. I was disappointed, but looking back I can see that it was the wise thing to do. In fact, I can't believe that I thought about spending a whole day with a girl while I was a missionary.

You will face many situations in which the "right" thing to do isn't immediately clear. As Samson showed us, we can let emotions cloud our judgment. But we can also "be wise" and use common sense and humble prayer to find out what we should do.

Make It Real

How have you seen the principle "Be wise" applied (or not applied) in your life and the lives of people you know? In other words, what situations have you or your friends and family been in that relate to the topic of the chapter?



Possible Goals:

1. The next time you are tempted to ask, "Is it okay to _____," think to yourself, "What does common sense tell me?"

2. Focus on sincerely praying to know what the Lord's will for you is, and then act on the promptings you feel.

3. Your own idea:

What goal(s) will you set for yourself to more fully "be wise"?

Additional Reading

Elder Boyd K. Packer, "You're in the Driver's Seat," *New Era*, June 2004, 5–9. Elder Packer teaches a parable about a convertible car. After reading this article, you'll agree that what he teaches makes perfect sense.

4

Don't Make Girls Cry

"In dating, treat your date with respect, and expect your date to show that same respect for you. Tears inevitably follow transgression. Men, take care not to make women weep, for God counts their tears"
(President Thomas S. Monson, Ensign, November 1990, 47).

When I'm giving a talk, I sometimes ask the young women in the room to stand if they have cried because of something a guy has said or done. I'm always amazed and saddened at how many stand up.

The principle "don't make girls cry" is one that young women usually love to hear discussed. Sometimes a guy will say, "What about 'don't make guys cry'?" While the principle certainly works both ways, I want to focus on guys not making girls cry. It seems that Jacob the brother of Nephi had this same focus when he taught more than 2,000 years ago.

"Now, my beloved *brethren*," he began (Jacob 2:2, emphasis added). Jacob is talking to the men. Toward the end of this

sermon, in verses 31 and 32, Jacob tells the people what the Lord had said:

I, the Lord, have seen the sorrow, and heard the mourning of the daughters of my people. . . . And I will not suffer, saith the Lord of Hosts, that the cries of the fair daughters of this people, which I have led out of the land of Jerusalem, shall come up unto me against *the men of my people*, saith the Lord of Hosts (emphasis added).

When the Lord says “the men of my people,” who is he talking about? I think the priesthood holders of today certainly qualify as “the men of the Lord’s people.” Clearly the Lord is telling men that they need to be very careful in the way they treat his daughters.

The quotation from President Thomas S. Monson at the beginning of this chapter teaches this same principle, as does the following quotation from President Gordon B. Hinckley: “Every woman is a daughter of God. You cannot offend her without offending Him” (*Ensign*, November 2004, 84). President Hinckley also said, “I believe that any man who offends a daughter of God will someday be held accountable, and the time will come when he will stand before the bar of judgment with sorrow and remorse” (*Ensign*, November 1989, 95–96).

Every woman is a daughter of God. You cannot offend her without offending Him” (President Gordon B. Hinckley, *Ensign*, November 2004, 84).

So what can guys do to not make girls cry?

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Here are several suggestions I've collected from young women from across the country (and a few of my own):

- Don't hit. Sometimes you're just playing around, but it can hurt!
- Give genuine compliments.
- Tell your sister she's pretty.
- Don't pretend to like a girl when you really don't. Don't play with a girl's feelings.
- Be honest. If you don't really like a girl, don't do things with her that would lead her on.
- Give girls respect—open the door for them, let them go ahead of you in line, treat them like queens.
- Honor your priesthood. One young woman said, "It really hurts to see a priesthood holder do bad things."
- Don't say demeaning things about girls. One young woman told me how her younger brothers would always refer to women by using derogatory terms. Her family was very active in the Church, but her brothers had developed a bad habit of using inappropriate terms for women. These were good young men; they just didn't realize how offensive the words were and how they made their sister feel.
- *Never* call a girl stupid, fat, or ugly. *Even if you're joking! Never do it!* I was talking to a young woman once who had hurt her foot. She said that when she was limping, her older brother said, "Oh, you can't walk, huh? That's God's way of telling you that you need to go on a diet." He was kidding, but still—that is the kind of thing you should *not* say.
- Ask young women on dates! It can be a fun group date. It doesn't need to involve money or commitment, but it makes

young women feel good to know that you want to be with them.

I was teaching an institute class once and a young woman named Peggy commented that sometimes her brother and his friends had said negative things about other girls. “That really hurt me,” Peggy said, “because even though they weren’t talking about me, it made me wonder if they or other guys were saying bad things about me.”

Peggy’s perspective caught me off guard. I had never thought about the way it might affect a young woman to hear young men say negative things about *other* girls in front of them. Peggy’s comment also shows us that the principle of not making girls cry applies to the way we treat our sisters and mothers as well!

Sometimes guys think they are superior to women because they have the priesthood. *That is not true.* I knew a woman whose husband told her, “You need to do what I say because I hold the priesthood.” That is an example of what the scriptures call “unrighteous dominion” (Doctrine and Covenants 121:39). The Lord has said, “No power or influence can or ought to be maintained by virtue of the priesthood, only by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned” (Doctrine and Covenants 121:41). Men who hold the priesthood need to treat women with kindness and respect, and never think that they are “better” because they hold the priesthood.

I know that if you’re a young man reading this book, you are probably not the kind of guy that makes girls cry. (If you are, repent!) If you’re not making girls cry, I hope you will use

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this chapter to help other young men treat young women with the respect they deserve. You might want to give a seminary devotional on this subject. All you have to do is this: Share Jacob 2:2, 31–32 and the quotations from President Monson and President Hinckley. Then say, “To you young women in this class, we young men don’t want to make you cry. What suggestions can you give to the young men so we won’t make girls cry?” (If you are a young woman, you could use this for a devotional as well, but it might sound a little preachy.)



DON’T LET BOYS MAKE YOU CRY!

At some time in their lives, many young women will be hurt by something a boy says or does. Don’t let a young man determine how you feel about yourself. Remember these words from President Hinckley:

“Respect yourself. Do not feel sorry for yourself. Do not dwell on unkind things others may say about you. *Particularly, pay no attention to what some boy might say to demean you.* Polish and refine whatever talents the Lord has given you. Go forward in life with a twinkle in your eye and a smile on your face, but with great and strong purpose in your heart. Love life and look for its opportunities, and forever and always be loyal to the Church. Never forget that you came to earth as a child of the divine Father, with something of divinity in your very makeup.” (*New Era*, November 2001, emphasis added).



Don't Make Girls Cry

I hope every man can develop the gratitude and respect for young women that President Hinckley expressed in general conference:

How thankful I am, how thankful we all must be, for the women in our lives. God bless them. May His great love distill upon them and crown them with luster and beauty, grace and faith. And may His Spirit distill upon us as men and lead us ever to hold them in respect, in gratitude, giving encouragement, strength, nurture, and love, which is the very essence of the gospel of our Redeemer and Lord (*Ensign*, November 2004, 85).

Make It Real

How have you seen the principle "Don't make girls cry" applied (or not applied) in your life and the lives of people you know? In other words, what situations have you or your friends and family been in that relate to the topic of the chapter?



Possible Goals:

1. Plan a devotional for seminary or institute using the scriptures and quotations from this chapter.

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2. Find ways to encourage the men you know to show more respect for women.

3. Do something that shows respect for women (open the door for them, stand when they enter the room, compliment them, offer to let them cut to the front of a serving line).

4. Your own idea:

What goal(s) will you set for yourself to more fully not make girls cry?

Additional Reading

President Gordon B. Hinckley, "The Women in Our Lives," *Ensign*, November 2004, 82–85. President Hinckley proclaims the sacred nature of womanhood and admonishes men to be thankful for and honor the women in their lives.

Elder Richard G. Scott, "The Sanctity of Womanhood," *Ensign*, May 2000, 36–38. Elder Scott addresses young men regarding their role in helping young women make good decisions.

5

Be the Kind of Person You Want to Marry

"Virtue loveth virtue"

(Doctrine and Covenants 88:40).

If you're a female, imagine that you are on a dating talk show and you have to choose one of the following three guys to marry. Which would you choose?

Guy #1

I think you'd really like hanging out with me. I'm very smart, very athletic, very cool, and very humble. I spend most of my time playing sports or working out. My body is a temple, and I want to keep it in perfect condition. Speaking of the temple, that's where I want to get married. I don't go to church right now because of sports, and I'm not worthy of a temple recommend, but when I'm older I'll get active so I can take you to the temple.

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Guy #2

If you want to have a good time, pick me, baby! My middle name is spelled P-A-R-T-Y. I never get stressed out, and I never get mad. For me, life is fun. On the weekends I go to all-night dance parties. It is a ton of fun, and if you don't feel comfortable staying up all night long, then get a life! Just try a few all-nighters with me, and I'll show you a good time.

Guy #3

One thing you should know about me is that my highest priority in life is my current and future family. I love my little brothers and sisters and go to their sporting events and other activities whenever I can. I'm working hard in school so I'll be able to provide a good living for my family in the future. I like to have fun, too. I love to paintball and snowboard, and one of my hobbies is cooking gourmet food. I recently got my Eagle Scout award, and my big goal in life is to be married in the temple and always make serving God and my wife my highest priorities.

Ladies: If you were on a game show and had to pick one of those guys to marry, which would you choose—and why?

Guys, now it's your turn. If you had to pick one of the following three girls to marry, which would it be?

Girl #1

I was voted "coolest girl" in seminary. I also won the "most likely to skip class" award. Guys and shopping are

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my two favorite hobbies—and not necessarily in that order. I can spend \$500 and an entire Saturday at the mall, easy. And I don't want to brag, but every guy I've kissed (there have been about a hundred of them) has told me that I'm the best kisser around. Wouldn't you like to find out for yourself?

Girl #2

Sometimes I get made fun of for being a “Molly Mormon,” but that doesn't bother me. I've set my priorities in life, and I'm sticking with them. I'm not perfect, but I do my best to follow *For the Strength of Youth* and keep the commandments. I love to play tennis, and I dance, sing, and play the piano. My number-one goal in life is to be a good wife and mother.

Girl #3

Don't pick me! I hate boys. Every guy I've ever met is a total jerk, so even if you pick me, I won't marry you.

Guys, which of those three do you want to marry?

I'm guessing that whether you're a guy or a girl, you chose the person who is most like you. If you're a guy who likes to shop and kiss around, you probably picked girl #1. If you're a girl who puts a higher priority on sports than on church, you might want to marry guy #1. If your focus in choosing an eternal companion is someone who tries to keep the commandments and wants to have a good family, you probably picked guy #3 or girl #2.

The principle these scenarios illustrate is this: *We attract and are attracted to the same kind of person that we are. Like*

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attracts like. See if you can find this principle in the following verse:

Intelligence cleaveth unto intelligence; wisdom receiveth wisdom; truth embraceth truth; virtue loveth virtue; light cleaveth unto light; mercy hath compassion on mercy and claimeth her own; justice continueth its course and claimeth its own (Doctrine and Covenants 88:40).

Do you see the principle? Intelligence cleaveth unto (sticks to) intelligence: If you are a genius, you probably don't want to be with someone who can't read or add. Truth embraces truth: If you are honest, you probably don't want to commit your life to a habitual liar. Virtue (goodness) loves virtue: If you are a good, virtuous person, you don't want to marry an evil person. *Like attracts like.*

Don't get me wrong; I'm not saying that you have to marry somebody who is *exactly* the same as you are. For example, if Marie likes to watch movies and Nathan prefers to read, I'm not saying they could never have a happy marriage. However, most likely you will marry somebody who has the same qualities of character and the same priorities that you have. And if you will attract somebody who has the same attributes you have, *you want to make sure you have the right attributes.*

For example, if you want to marry somebody who puts a high priority on daily scripture study, then *you* need to have a high priority on scripture study. If you want to marry somebody who loves children, then *you* need to love children. If you want to marry somebody who puts family first, *you* need to put family first.

Be the Kind of Person You Want to Marry

The beauty of this principle is that it gives you something to focus on that is in your control. Young women may not control how many guys ask them out on dates, but they do determine the kind of person they become. A young man can't make a certain young woman like him, but he does control the type of person he is.

Lani is an exceptional example of focusing on being the kind of person she wanted to marry someday. When she was in

When Lani was in high school, she was asked out on only one or two dates.

But she didn't stress out about it—she focused on the kind of person she was becoming.

high school, she had only one or two dates. But she didn't stress out about it—she focused on the kind of person she was becoming. She didn't worry about who was (or was not) asking her out; instead, she got involved in uplifting activities and spent a lot of time with her family. She made herself a better person.

Maybe the person you have a crush on doesn't know you exist.

Don't waste your time fretting and plotting about how to win his or her love. Instead, focus on the attributes you're developing. There are many ways you can focus on being the kind of person you want to marry someday. For example, *you* are in charge of how well you keep commandments. If you are exactly obedient, you will attract and be attracted to others with that same dedication.

You might have made a list of attributes you are looking for in your future spouse. If you haven't, or if you lost the list, I suggest you make one. Once you have a vision of the kind of

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person you hope to marry someday, focus on becoming that kind of person yourself.

Knowing this principle can come in handy. When Lani and I were starting to date seriously, she said, “I don’t know if we should get married; we are so similar, and I thought you should marry somebody different from you so you can grow.”

I showed her Doctrine and Covenants 88:40 and said, “It’s a good thing to be similar! Once we get married, we’ll find lots of differences to grow from.” We did get married, we did find some differences, and we have grown. But we are both happy we married somebody with the same ideals and priorities.

No matter who you are, or what your situation is, you can focus on becoming the kind of person you hope to marry someday.

Be the Kind of Person You Want to Marry

Make It Real



How have you seen the principle "Be the kind of person you want to marry someday" applied (or not applied) in your life and the lives of people you know? In other words, what situations have you or your friends and family been in that relate to the topic of the chapter?

Possible Goals:

1. Make a list of attributes you hope to find in a future spouse.
2. Select some of the attributes you hope your future spouse has and then set a goals to improve yourself in those areas.
3. If you are old enough to date, go on dates with the kind of people that you hope to marry someday.
4. Your own idea:

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What goal(s) will you set for yourself to more fully
“be the kind of person you hope to marry someday”?

Additional Reading

President Gordon B. Hinckley. “How Can I Become the Woman of My Dreams?” *New Era*, November 2001, 4–8. President Hinckley teaches young women how to reach their divine potential.

President Gordon B. Hinckley, “Living Worthy of the Girl You Will Someday Marry,” *Ensign*, May 1998, 48–51. President Hinckley tells young men what they must do to be worthy of the woman they will marry.

Elder Lynn G. Robbins, “Finding Your Sweetheart,” BYU—Idaho Devotional, February 12, 2002. Available at <http://web.byui.edu/presentations/>. Elder Robbins teaches about the interaction between true love and the choices we make.

6

Don't Do Something You Know Is Wrong for a Member of the Opposite Sex

"Set your standard of values and never compromise it"

(Elder L. Tom Perry, quoted in Ensign, August 1986, 19).

Most of the time, I'm pretty rational. You probably are too. But I've noticed one thing that influences even the most rational people to make wrong decisions—and that is members of the opposite sex.

Have you ever seen a friend make poor choices to impress or attract a member of the opposite sex? It could be something as simple as helping someone cheat on a test, or dressing inappropriately to attract others. Doing things that are wrong to impress members of the opposite sex doesn't happen just in our day; it has been going on for thousands of years. Consider what happened to Herod Antipas in the New Testament.

To understand this story, it's helpful to know a little bit of

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family history. Here is a chart of King Herod and his three sons:

King Herod		
Killed all the babies in Bethlehem younger than two		
Archelaus	Herod Antipus	Philip
Not in this story	Main character in this story	Married to a woman named Herodias

This story is about Herod Antipas, known as “Herod” in this story. His brother Philip was married to a woman named Herodias. The name “Herodias” sounds like “Herod” and can be a little confusing—but Herodias is a woman. So Herod fell in love with Philip’s wife (Herodias) and married her. (Not a good thing, in case you weren’t sure.)

We don’t know what Philip had to say about this, but the scriptures record that John the Baptist stood up to Herod and told him that what he had done was wrong. As a result, John the Baptist was put in jail (Mark 6:17–18).

Herodias was angry about what John the Baptist had said, but she couldn’t kill him because Herod was afraid of him (see Mark 6:19–20). Let’s read what happened next:

And when a convenient day was come, . . . Herod on his birthday made a supper to his lords, high captains, and chief estates of Galilee;

And when the daughter of the said Herodias came in, and danced, and pleased Herod and them that sat with him, the king said unto the damsel, Ask of me whatsoever thou wilt, and I will give it thee (Mark 6:21–22).

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So it was Herod's birthday, and he had a lot of cool people over to his house for dinner. For the evening's entertainment, Herodias's daughter came in and danced for the group. Her dance pleased Herod, and he promised to give her whatever she wanted.

So the daughter went to her mom, Herodias, and asked her what she should get from Herod. Her mother said, "The head of John the Baptist" (Mark 6:24).

Herodias's daughter came back to the dinner table and said something like, "Herod, I want you to give me John the Baptist's head on a plate, and I want it right now!" (See John 6:25).

When Herod heard this, he must have felt sick. But he had made a promise, and he wanted to look good in front of his friends. The scriptures say,

And [Herod] was exceeding sorry; yet for his oath's sake, and for their sakes which sat with him, he would not reject her. And immediately the king sent an executioner, and commanded his head to be brought: and he went and beheaded him in the prison, and brought his head in a charger, and gave it to the damsel: and the damsel gave it to her mother (Mark 6:26–28).

Herod did something *he knew* was wrong. Why? Because he was prideful. He made a foolish oath and wanted to stick to it. Why did he make a foolish oath? Because some girl danced for him.

Can we step back for a moment and look at what happened in this story? *Herod did something he knew was wrong because of a member of the opposite sex.* Herod could have done the right

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thing. His friends might have made fun of him, and perhaps Herodias would have been angry, but he could have done it.

This story is played out in different ways every day. Have you seen people do things they know are wrong to impress a member of the opposite sex? Ironically, the people they are trying to please are often not even the kind of people they really want to be with.

I taught a seminary class in which several young women were talking about why they sometimes chose to dress immodestly. One young woman said, "If I dress modestly guys don't talk to me. But if I dress immodestly guys pay attention to me."

A young man in the class raised his hand and said, "Why would you want a guy like that to pay attention to you?"

He had a good point. This young woman was doing something she knew was wrong to impress guys who wouldn't treat her the way she deserved to be treated.

A young man in the class raised his hand and said, "Why would you want a guy like that to pay attention to you?"

Don't Do Something You Know Is Wrong for a Member of the Opposite Sex



DO YOUR PART!

Young women often hear about the importance of modesty. Of course, young men need to be modest as well. Furthermore, Elder Richard G. Scott encouraged young men to let “young women know that you will not seek an eternal companion from those that are overcome by worldly trends. Many dress and act immodestly because they are told that is what you want. In sensitive ways, communicate how distasteful revealing attire is to you, a worthy young man, and how it stimulates unwanted emotions from what you see against your will.”

Elder Scott went on to say that those young women who do dress modestly “are often criticized for not being ‘with it.’” He then gave young men the following invitation: “Encourage [young women who dress modestly] by expressing gratitude for their worthy example. Thank them for doing what is pleasing to the Lord and in time will bless their own husband and children. Many young women have returned to righteousness because of the example and understanding support of a worthy priesthood bearer. Perhaps a group of you could frankly discuss your concern in an appropriate setting such as a Sunday School or seminary class. Will you begin a private crusade to help young women understand how precious they are to God and attractive to you as they magnify their feminine traits and divinely given attributes of womanhood? You might even help mold the character and devotion of your own future eternal companion” (Ensign, May 2000, 37).



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Some people are tempted to do things they know are wrong so others will like them. For example, Shannon wanted a guy to like her, so she did some immoral things with him. Then he broke up with her and told everyone what they had done. She was humiliated! Her friends, parents, and Church leaders could see that what she had been doing would bring unhappiness, but she had refused to see it. She learned the hard way that you shouldn't do something wrong for a member of the opposite sex.

A happier story illustrates how doing the right things brought protection to Lisa. She was a high school sophomore who was asked to the homecoming dance by the quarterback of the football team.

"I couldn't believe my luck," she said. "One of the most high-profile guys in the school had asked me to the most prestigious dance of the year."

Her enthusiasm dampened, though, when after the dance her date started driving down a lonely road she realized led to Lover's Lane. Quarterback or no quarterback, she had decided long ago that "parking" was something she would not do.

To avoid embarrassment, she began talking about how this particular road reminded her of a friend's experience. The police had caught her friend and a date parking up there, and had taken them to the police station.

"Of course, anyone who is silly enough to park deserves what they get," she laughed. Without speaking, her date turned the car around, and a few minutes later they were sitting in her living room eating pie with her

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parents. (JeaNette Goates Smith, *New Era*, June 1993, 10).

It would have been easy for Lisa to fall into the trap of trying to impress the quarterback by doing something she knew was wrong—but she was true to what she knew was right.

Elder Richard G. Scott said, “Some are so anxious for friendship and popularity that they compromise their standards. You will not obtain desirable friends that way, but you can lose your worthy dreams” (Brigham Young University Devotional, 3 March 1996). No matter what happens, never do something you know is wrong to impress or attract a member of the opposite sex.

Make It Real

How have you seen the principle “Don’t do something you know is wrong for a member of the opposite sex” applied (or not applied) in your life and the lives of people you know? In other words, what situations have you or your friends and family been in that relate to the topic of the chapter?



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Possible Goals:

1. Come up with a motto to help yourself live this principle.
2. Share the scriptures and quotes from this chapter with a friend or in a family home evening.
3. Your own idea:

What goal(s) will you set for yourself to never do something you know is wrong for a member of the opposite sex?

Additional Reading

President Ezra Taft Benson, "The Law of Chastity," *New Era*, January 1988, 4. President Benson gives six steps to prepare yourself and prevent moral sin, as well as five things to do to repair and repent.

Elder Richard G. Scott, "Do What is Right," Brigham Young University Devotional, 3 March 1996. Available at <http://speeches.byu.edu>. Using several examples, Elder Scott clearly teaches that we should "do what is right, let the consequence follow."

7

Keep an Eternal Perspective

“Look at everything through the lens of eternity. If you will do this, life will take on a different perspective”

(President James E. Faust, Church News, October 1, 2005, 3)

When I was in high school my friend and I made a movie about our search for happiness. In the movie, he and I tried to find happiness in all sorts of ways. We got jobs, hung out with the popular crowd, and even tried out for the girls’ gymnastics team. (We didn’t make it.) At the end of the movie we finally finished our quest and found true happiness. Can you guess how? It was by meeting some girls!

Is that how you will find real happiness? It’s true that nothing excites many teenagers and young adults like members of the opposite sex. Why is the opposite gender so fascinating? Well, for one reason, God made us that way. The feeling of attraction we have toward the opposite sex is a gift that motivates us to get married and have families. It’s part of God’s plan

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of happiness for us. You know about the plan of happiness; sometimes it's called the plan of salvation.

As part of God's plan of happiness, we're here on earth to learn, to grow, and to marry in the temple so we can build eternal family units. When we understand God's plan for us, we realize that we are children of God—and so are the people we're dating.

Recognizing that the people around us are children of God helps us view guy-girl relationships with an eternal perspective—and treat members of the opposite sex differently. For example, suppose a young man went out with a young woman and wanted to do something inappropriate with her. Would he do it if the young woman's father was in the car watching? Probably not. If that young man has an eternal perspective, he will remember that this young woman has a Heavenly Father who *is* watching and who loves her eternally.

Part of viewing guy-girl relationships with an eternal perspective is not worrying so much about what happens this Friday night, and instead focusing on Heavenly Father's eternal plan for us. It means treating others with the respect and dignity they deserve. When you behave toward others using an eternal perspective, things always work out better.

One summer night as they were walking together, Charles wondered if he should kiss her.

After his mission, Charles was set up with a girl named Mary. They went on a few dates and began to enjoy each other's company. One summer night as they were walking together, Charles wondered if he should kiss her. As he thought about

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his feelings, he decided that he wasn't ready to commit to a serious relationship and that he had better not kiss Mary.

They soon stopped seeing each other, and within a year Charles decided to marry a different girl. A few years later Charles was talking with one of his best friends from college, Kevin. "Charles," Kevin said, "do you remember that girl Mary you introduced me to a few years ago?"

Charles remembered. Kevin and Mary started dating, and they got married. Charles and Kevin are still close friends, and every time they get together, Charles is grateful that he and Mary never did anything they would now be embarrassed about.

Having an eternal perspective protected Charles. You are not going to marry every person you date. In fact, most of the time you are going out with somebody else's future eternal companion—so treat your dates accordingly!

I had an experience that helped me more clearly see guy-girl relationships from an eternal perspective. After my mission, I returned to Brigham Young University in Provo. At the beginning of the school year, BYU hosts a huge party on campus. There were several thousand people there, but I wasn't having a good time. Just as I was getting ready to head home, I ran into an old mission companion. He was having a great time and asked if I'd gotten any phone numbers from girls. I told him no, and he said, "What? I've got twenty!"

I was discouraged. "C'mon!" my former companion said. "Promise me you won't go home until you get at least one phone number."

I didn't want to look like a chicken, so I promised him. I

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He said, "Promise me you won't go home until you get at least one phone number." I didn't want to look like a chicken, so I promised him.

walked around for half an hour trying to get up the courage to get a girl's phone number, but I just couldn't! Finally I saw a girl standing off by herself. I went up to her and said, "Hi, I'm John. What's your name?"

She told me her name. I'll call her Julie.

"Where are you from?" I asked.

"Idaho."

I had run out of things to say, so I asked, "What's your phone number?" I don't recommend that you use that pick-up line. But I think she felt sorry for me, so she gave me her number. I said thanks and walked off. I went home that night, happy that I had at least one phone number. I was excited to call Julie.

The next day I was talking about the party with some of my buddies. One of them said, "I met this great girl last night. She wants me to call her!"

"Oh," I replied. "What's her name?"

"Julie."

"Where's she from?"

"Idaho."

"Oh." I was bummed. Now I had competition!

A little while later I was talking to another friend, who said, "John, there's this cool girl in my psychology class!"

"What's her name?"

"Julie."

"From Idaho?"

“Yeah!”

I was discouraged. My friends were a lot cooler than I was, so I decided not to call Julie. A couple of months later on a Friday night, I was home being bored. The only thing I wanted to do was watch a movie, and the only person who had the movie I wanted to watch was my roommate’s friend’s girlfriend (did you get that?).

Even though I didn’t know her, I called her to see if I could borrow the movie. She wasn’t there, but *her* roommate was. And her roommate turned out to be Julie—the same one I had met at the party! On the phone I explained who I was and that I was trying to borrow this movie. Julie was very nice and said she’d bring it over. I was excited. Maybe this would be the start of something!

When she arrived, I invited her in, and we began to talk (I had thought of more things to say by then). After we had talked for a while, I asked, “How many kids are in your family?”

“I have four sisters,” she said.

“Wow, what does your dad say about that?”

“Not much.”

“I would think not. He probably never gets a chance to talk with five daughters!”

I thought that was a pretty funny thing to say, but Julie didn’t laugh. “Actually,” she said, “we’re kind of mad at my dad right now.”

“Why?”

“Well, we just found out he’s been cheating on my mom.”

At that moment, my perspective changed. Before, I had seen Julie as a cute girl, a potential date, a phone number. Now

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At that moment, my perspective changed. Before, I had seen Julie as a cute girl, a potential date, a phone number.

I saw her as a daughter of Heavenly Father, my spiritual sister who was hurting. I wanted to help her. I saw that she needed a real friend, not some guy pulling cheesy pick-up lines on her.

This story illustrates what I mean by looking at guy-girl relationships with an eternal perspective. Our focus shouldn't be on how cute somebody is but on how we can build up our spiritual brothers and sisters. The people you check out at school or a dance might be "your type" or they might not be, but either way they are children of God, and they deserve to be treated as such.

Many awkward dating situations can be resolved by maintaining an eternal perspective. Consider this question, frequently posed by young women: "What do you do when a guy likes you, but you don't like him?" With an eternal perspective, you remember the principles of both kindness and honesty, and you prayerfully find a way to tactfully let the young man know you are not interested in him. Your focus isn't on "What will my friends think of me?" but on "How can I resolve this situation in a way that will protect the dignity of this son of God?"

I think that unless it seems harmful or risky, you should go out at least once with each young man who asks you out, just as a courtesy. However, once you have given him a courtesy date, what do you say to a guy who keeps asking you out when you aren't interested in him? Again, an eternal perspective focused on kindness and honesty will help you prayerfully find a way to gently break the news to the young man.

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Elder Dallin H. Oaks said, “Young women, if you turn down a date, be kind. Otherwise you may crush a nervous and shy questioner and destroy him as a potential dater, and that could hurt some other sister” (Church Educational System Fireside, 1 May 2005).

Another part of keeping an eternal perspective is understanding *why* it is so important to live the law of chastity. When my wife was a teenager in the Young Women program, she felt that *she* could give the lessons on morality because she had sat through so many firesides and Sunday lessons on the same subject. Why is it always talked about? There are many reasons; here are just two.

First, breaking the law of chastity makes a mockery of the Savior’s Atonement. Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, explained this concept:

We declare that one who uses the God-given body of another without divine sanction abuses the very soul of that individual. . . . In exploiting the body of another—which means exploiting his or her soul—one desecrates the Atonement of Christ, which saved that soul and which makes possible the gift of eternal life. And when one mocks the Son of Righteousness, one steps into a realm of heat hotter and holier than the noonday sun. You cannot do so and not be burned.

. . . “Flee fornication,” Paul cries, and flee “anything like unto it,” the Doctrine and Covenants adds. Why? Well, for one reason because of the incalculable suffering in both body and spirit endured by the Savior that we could flee. We owe Him something for that. Indeed, we

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owe Him everything for that. “Ye are not your own,” Paul says. “Ye [have been] bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.” In sexual transgression the soul is at stake—the body and the spirit (*Ensign*, November 1998, 76).

Our bodies are gifts that should not be tarnished by immoral activities. The Savior purchased them with his blood in the Garden of Gethsemane; we owe it to Him to keep them clean. If we break the law of chastity, we desecrate Christ’s Atonement.

A second reason *why* it’s so important to stay morally clean is found in 1 Corinthians 3:16–17: “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.” We must stay morally clean because *our bodies are sacred*. When we understand that our bodies are temples, and that Christ purchased them with his blood, we can look at guy-girl relationships with an eternal perspective.

Here are three other scriptures that might help you keep an eternal perspective of guy-girl relationships.

In Malachi 4:5–6, the Lord said, “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children.” I like the phrase “he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children.” Even if you don’t have children, you can still “turn your heart” to your future children by not doing anything now that you would be ashamed for them to know

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about and by thinking about how your actions today will affect them.

A second “eternal perspective” scripture is Matthew 25:40. The Savior said, “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.” Who are the little people, the “least” important people in your life? The way we treat them is the way we treat the Savior.

There are probably people at your school that you don’t know, and maybe even some that you don’t like. Part of having an eternal perspective is realizing that they too are your spiritual brothers and sisters. God loves them, and however you treat them is the way you treat the Savior. Even if you have absolutely no interest in dating somebody, by remembering that he or she is your spiritual sibling, you can still treat him or her with courtesy and respect. This is a hard principle to remember, and an even harder principle to live. But when I remember Matthew 25:40, I treat people differently.

A third scripture that helps me maintain an eternal perspective is Doctrine and Covenants 42:22, which says, “Thou shalt love thy wife with all thy heart, and shalt cleave unto her and none else.” A few years ago I was teaching seminary, and we were discussing this verse. I thought it applied to me as a married person but not to my seminary students. Then a student said, “That verse applies to me because I’m going to get married someday, and I can show love for my future spouse by making right choices today.”

A student said, “That verse applies to me because I’m going to get married someday, and I can show love for my future spouse by making right choices today.”

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What a great insight! You don't have to wait until your wedding day to show love to your future spouse. By staying morally clean now, you strengthen your future marriage. President Ezra Taft Benson said, "When we . . . keep ourselves morally clean, we will experience the blessings of increased love and peace, greater trust and respect for our marital partners, deeper commitment to each other, and therefore a deep and significant sense of joy and happiness" (*New Era*, Jan. 1988, 5–6).



"If you can . . . discipline yourselves, you will be grateful for as long as you live. Most of you will marry, and your marriage will be much the happier for your earlier restraint" (President Gordon B. Hinckley, *Ensign*, May 2001).



For the Strength of Youth teaches,

When you obey God's commandment to be sexually pure, you prepare yourself to make and keep sacred covenants in the temple. You prepare yourself to build a strong marriage and to bring children into the world as part of a loving family. You protect yourself from the emotional damage that always comes from sharing physical intimacies with someone outside of marriage (26).

Someday you will be married in the temple (likely to somebody you didn't even *know* when you were sixteen). Asking the following questions can help you keep an eternal perspective. How are your actions today affecting your future children? Are

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you treating others as the Savior would? What are you doing *now* to show love for your future spouse?

It doesn't matter so much if so-and-so likes you, or who you take to homecoming. The question is, what are you doing (or not doing) today to show love and respect for your future family and to strengthen the people around you?

Make It Real

How have you seen the principle "Keep an eternal perspective" applied (or not applied) in your life and the lives of people you know? In other words, what situations have you or your friends and family been in that relate to the topic of the chapter?



Possible Goals:

1. Create a mental picture of the family you hope to have someday. When faced with temptation, think of this picture to help you keep an eternal perspective.
2. Search the scriptures, looking for other verses that help you keep an eternal perspective.
3. Write a paragraph about what you feel it means to keep an eternal perspective.

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4. Your own idea:

What goal(s) will you set for yourself to more fully keep an eternal perspective?

Additional Reading

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, "Personal Purity," *Ensign*, November 1998, 75–78. Elder Holland clearly teaches why it is so important to stay morally clean.

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin, "The Time to Prepare," *Ensign*, May 1998, 14–17. Elder Wirthlin explains how our daily decisions affect eternity.

Elder Henry B. Eyring, "A Law of Increasing Returns," Brigham Young University Devotional, 28 March 1982. Available at <http://speeches.byu.edu>. Elder Eyring teaches about something he did to help him think of his future wife and children, long before he was married.

8

Use Your Influence for Good

*"There is one responsibility that no one can evade. That is
the effect of one's personal influence"*

(President David O. McKay, quoted in Ensign, May 2004, 20).

In the introduction I wrote that after my first date with Lani, I felt I wasn't good enough for her. I wasn't doing evil things; I just wasn't doing all the good things I could have been doing. My life consisted of going to school, doing homework, hanging out with friends, watching TV, and going on dates. It was a fun life.

Lani's life was different. She was a student as well, but she also found time to teach music lessons, volunteer as a leadership teacher, do activities with her family, and do many other good things. When she told me about her schedule, I saw that she prioritized her time to make sure she was becoming the woman God wanted her to be.

As you remember from the introduction, I felt that I should

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not pursue Lani but instead focus on improving myself. Over the next four months I became a better person. I started a “big-brother, big-sister” program that helped struggling high school students. I got a job teaching at the Missionary Training Center. I worked harder in my Church calling and got involved in other good activities.

I had spent only four hours with Lani, but she had motivated me to be a better person. She didn’t even *try* to make me

I had spent only four hours with Lani, but she motivated me to be a better person. She didn’t *try* to make me a better person; it was simply who she was that made me want to be better.

a better person; it was simply who she was that made me want to be better. Though Lani probably wouldn’t tell you this herself, I know she had this same influence on many other young men. *Who she is* has influenced many people to be better. We can all use our influence for good.

Esther was a woman from the scriptures who used her influence for good. She was a Jewish orphan; her adopted father was named Mordecai. At this time the Jews did not have their own kingdom; they were ruled by a king named Ahasuerus. A time came when Ahasuerus was looking for a new wife, and he chose Esther. She became the queen, but she did not reveal to the king that she was Jewish.

Some time later one of the king’s officers, Haman, was offended by Mordecai. Haman knew that Mordecai was a Jew, so he persuaded the king to issue an order to exterminate all of the Jews. Mordecai sent a messenger to tell Esther what Haman

was planning to do and asked Esther to tell the king that she was a Jew so that Haman's plan would be stopped.

But there was a problem. The law in that day was that you weren't supposed to go talk to the king unless he asked you to talk to him. If you did, the penalty was death, *unless* the king let you touch his gold scepter. And Esther hadn't been called to see the king for thirty days (see Esther 4:11).

Mordecai encouraged Esther to use her influence for good, saying, "Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for a time such as this?" (Esther 4:14). In other words, "Esther, maybe this is the reason God allowed you to become the queen—to save the Jewish people."

Imagine how Esther felt as she walked into the inner court to see the king. Unless he held out the golden scepter to her, she would be put to death. "When the king saw Esther the queen standing in the court, . . . she obtained favour in his sight: and the king held out to Esther the golden sceptre" (Esther 5:2). She was safe.

The king was angry that Haman was trying to kill Esther's people. Haman was put to death, and Mordecai was given Haman's job. The Jews were saved because Esther used her influence for good.

Esther was in a position of power, and she used this power to influence others for good. You might not be a queen, or even in the Mia Maid presidency, but you can still influence others. For example, one young woman invited several people to church activities each week and gave them rides when needed. I know a young man who decided to make sure that every girl in his ward would get asked to dance at each stake dance. He

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wasn't showy about it; in a quiet way he showed genuine care and interest in each young woman in his ward. Perhaps his influence helped some of the young women continue attending Church activities.

Another young man decided he would always hold doors open for women and let them go ahead of him. These were small things, but I know his influence helped many young women better understand who they are as daughters of God.

No matter who you are, you can use your influence to bless lives. Many people hunger for good friendships. You can reach out by helping others make good choices and find positive things to do with their time.

Esther used her position and acted courageously to influence others. You can use your position to do things for people that will influence them to be better. But even more than consciously trying to use your influence for good, you influence people by the kind of person you are. President Thomas S. Monson, quoting President David O. McKay, said, "There is one responsibility that no one can evade. That is the effect of one's personal influence" (*Ensign*, May 2004, 20).

I wrote earlier in this chapter about how Lani influenced me for good. Many other people have influenced me to be a better person. One of these was a girl I'll call Jessica. I met Jessica a couple of months before I left on my mission. I was a good person, but Jessica made me want to be even better. For example, once I met her, I decided I wanted to learn how to play the piano well enough so I could play hymns on my mission. Jessica never told me she thought I should play the piano. But somehow she influenced me to learn the hymns—

something that was a great blessing for me on my mission and later in life. Another way Jessica influenced me was in the language I used. I didn't swear, but there were a few words I said that weren't the best. When I was with Jessica I didn't want to use that language. I was a better missionary because of Jessica's influence on me. I mention Jessica to again point out that you can influence many people—not just the person you eventually marry.



USING YOUR INFLUENCE

Your influence is not limited to members of the opposite sex. A young man named Adam was starting to go down a bad path when some good young men in his school invited him to sit by them at lunch. He wrote that this simple act saved him (see Adam Olson, *New Era*, November 2004, 47–48). As another example, consider this story, told by Rand Packer:

“When I was 14, I went camping with some friends. As we sat in a circle talking, one of the guys reached into his pack and pulled out a can of beer. Everyone went silent as he popped the lid and held it high above his head. ‘If any of you are men,’ he bellowed, ‘you’ll have a drink with me.’ Tilting the can to his lips, he took a large swallow.

“All the eyes were on the can as the boy next to him received it in his waiting hand. He didn't hesitate. He took a swig with great bravado in front of us all. The can moved to the next boy in the circle.

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"As it moved in my direction, my mind searched for a quick solution, a cool response that would rescue me. . . . The can found its way to the third boy. He had not come to be tempted. He thought he was just going camping. As he held the can, I could sense the frantic debate going on in his mind. All eyes were upon him, staring, seeming to demand that he drink as the others had. I could almost hear his cries pleading for his mother to come save him, but she was nowhere to be found. Try as he did, he could not handle the pressure. He took a drink and hurriedly passed the can to my friend—my example—Rick.

"My heart was pounding as I realized that I was the next one in the circle to receive the can. I didn't know how I was going to get out of this one. I imagined that if I didn't take a drink, they would bury me up to my neck in the hills somewhere and let the ants crawl through my nose and ears. 'Rick,' I thought to myself, 'if you take one sip of that, I'm going to slug you.'

"Rick held the can. He looked at me, and I looked at him. We then both looked at the can he was holding and up at the dozen other faces waiting anxiously.

"For a moment, Rick just stared at the can. Then he casually put it down, reached into his pack, and fished around until he found what he was looking for. He raised a purple can into the air for all to see.

"'If any of you are men,' Rick yelled, 'you'll have a drink of grape soda with me!' Rick popped the lid, brought the can to his lips, and tilted his head back

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dramatically as he drank from it. Then he passed it back in the direction from which the beer had come.

"The kid next to Rick found himself holding the soda now. Everyone was staring at him. He gladly drank some and passed it on. As they were enjoying the grape soda, Rick grabbed the beer can and threw it as far as he could. . . .

"It takes just one person to stand up for what's right, to stop the darkness from creeping in. Just as one bulb can light a dark room, so can one person chase away the adversary. I'll always remember Rick for the light he turned on for us all" (*New Era*, July 2004, 26–27).



Elder Henry B. Eyring said, "In the world to come, thousands may call your name blessed, even more than the people you serve here. They will be the ancestors and the descendants of those who chose eternal life because of something you said or did, *or even what you were* (*Ensign*, November 2002, 75; emphasis added).

Two things in this quotation strike me: (1) The type of person *you are* can influence whether or not other people choose eternal life. (2) When you use your influence for good, you bless not only those whose lives you touch but perhaps even their ancestors and descendants as well.

Use your influence for good! Thousands may call you blessed!

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Make It Real



How have you seen the principle "Use your influence for good" applied (or not applied) in your life and the lives of people you know? In other words, what situations have you or your friends and family been in that relate to the topic of the chapter?

Possible Goals:

1. Esther used her influence for good. Make a list of other people from the scriptures that used their influence for good. Write down their names and how they influenced others.

2. Make a list of things you could do to influence others for good. Select some and do them.

3. Your own idea:

What goal(s) will you set for yourself to more fully use your influence for good?

Use Your Influence for Good

Additional Reading

President Thomas S. Monson, "Your Personal Influence," *Ensign*, May 2004, 20–23. President Monson gives several examples of individuals using their influence for good.

President James E. Faust, "Ten Ways to Make a Difference," *New Era*, November 2004, 4–8. President Faust shares ten things young women can do to influence others for good.

Elder Dallin H. Oaks, "The Challenge to Become," *Ensign*, November 2000, 32–34. Elder Oaks teaches that at the judgment day, we will be accountable not only for what we have done but also for what we are.

Anonymous, "Count the Ripples," *New Era*, February 2005, 26–27. Personal and scriptural examples that show you cannot measure the eternal effect of one person using his or her influence for good.

9

Don't Be Like Water! Be Firm and Immovable in Your Standards

"Firmly establish personal standards. Choose a time of deep spiritual reflection, when there is no pressure on you, and you can confirm your decisions by sacred impressions.

Decide then what you will do and what you will not do to express feelings. The Spirit will guide you"

(Elder Richard G. Scott, BYU Devotional, 3 March 1996).

Several years ago I went to a youth conference, and the director, Ted Gibbons, shared two verses of scripture (Genesis 49:3–4) that I had never thought about before. But now I think of them often. He explained that when Jacob (also called Israel) was about to die, he called his twelve sons together to receive blessings from him. He gave each son a blessing, starting with his firstborn son, Reuben. The blessing began, "Reuben, thou art my firstborn, my might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power" (Genesis 49:3). That sounds like a pretty good blessing!

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But the blessing continued: “Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel.” Whoa, what happened? In essence Reuben’s father said, “You are my oldest child, an excellent child, but I can’t count on you. You’re unstable. You won’t achieve great things.”

Reuben did some good things—like rescuing his brother Joseph from death. But he also did some bad things. Perhaps the worst was committing adultery (Genesis 35:22). Reuben was sometimes righteous, but he was also “unstable as water.”

Water is a good analogy for instability. It takes the form of whatever container it’s in. If you pour water into a vase, it takes the shape of the vase. Pour it into a bucket, and it takes the shape of the bucket. This is kind of like people who change the way they act depending on the group of people they are with. If they are with their good friends, they do good things. If they’re with their bad friends, they do bad things.

We need to be different—constant and firm—so that Heavenly Father can always count on us. To Joseph Smith the Lord said, “I command you, my servant Joseph, to . . . be firm in keeping the commandments wherewith I have commanded you; and if you do this, behold I grant unto you eternal life, even if you should be slain” (Doctrine and Covenants 5:21–22).

Some of the commandments we must firmly keep have to do with sexual purity. *For the Strength of Youth* says,

Before marriage, do not do anything to arouse the powerful emotions that must be expressed only in marriage. Do not participate in passionate kissing, lie on top of another person, or touch the private, sacred parts of another person’s body, with or without clothing. Do not allow anyone to do that with you. Do not arouse those

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emotions in your own body. . . . Do not participate in talk or activities that arouse sexual feelings (27).

We *must* keep this commandment! It answers the question “What is okay and not okay in dating relationships?” If I do the things *For the Strength of Youth* says not to do, I am sinning.



WHAT ABOUT KISSING?

Some wonder, “Has the church said anything about kissing?” *For the Strength of Youth* clearly states, “Do not participate in passionate kissing” (27). In addition, President Spencer W. Kimball taught, “What is miscalled the ‘soul kiss’ [or French kiss] is an abomination. . . . Even if timely courtship justifies [a] kiss it should be a clean, decent, sexless one, like the kiss between mother and son, or father and daughter” (*The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, 281).

Did you notice he said, “The kiss should be . . . a clean, decent, sexless one”? What’s more, even *that* type of kissing is supposed to be reserved for “timely courtship,” something most teenagers shouldn’t be involved in.

In fact, President Kimball also said, “Kissing has . . . degenerated to develop and express lust instead of affection, honor, and admiration. *To kiss in casual dating* is asking for trouble. What do kisses mean when given out like pretzels and robbed of sacredness?” (*The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, p. 281, emphasis added).



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A few youth may ask, “How far can you go physically and not sin?” But Elder Henry B. Eyring of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said, “The question that really matters is this: ‘How can I learn to sense even the beginning of sin and so repent early?’” (*Ensign*, November 1999, 34).

For example, *For the Strength of Youth* says, “Do not participate in passionate kissing.” The question isn’t “How long can I kiss before it’s passionate?” but rather “How can I stay far away from passionate kissing?” What’s important isn’t *How close can I get to the line?* but rather *How can I avoid even getting close?*

Elder Boyd K. Packer, acting president of the Quorum of the Twelve, told a story about getting close to the line. He said,

[There once was] a king who was choosing between two drivers for his coach. He ordered each of them to drive his coach down a steep, winding road cut into a high cliff. The first driver came down slowly, hugging the wall of the cliff. The second driver demonstrated great talent and ability. He raced down the mountain, with the coach so close at times that half the wheel was off the edge of the cliff. The king was very thoughtful, then wisely chose the first man to drive his coach. It is best to stay on the safe side of things (*Ensign*, May 1996, 18).

Remember that even if it’s technically “okay” to do something, “It is best to stay on the safe side of things.” Elder Hartman Rector Jr. talked about this same principle:

I spent twenty-six years flying the navy’s airplanes. It was very exciting to see how close I could fly to the trees. This is called “flat hatting” in the navy, and it is extremely

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dangerous. When you are flying just high enough to miss the trees and your engine coughs once, you are in the trees.

Now let's pretend that the navy had a commandment—"Thou shalt not fly thy airplane in the trees." As a matter of fact, they did have such a commandment. In order to really be free of the commandment, it becomes necessary for me to add a commandment of my own to the navy's commandment, such as, "Thou shalt not fly thy airplane closer than 5,000 feet to the trees." When you do this, you make the navy's commandment of not flying in the trees easy to live, and the safety factor is tremendously increased (*Ensign*, January 1973, 131).

Elder Rector counseled us to set our own rules to keep us from even getting close to the line between sin and righteousness.

Toward the end of my mission, Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve visited. He told us missionaries that we should pray about what our moral standard should be, and that we should receive a confirmation from the Holy Ghost about the standard we set for ourselves. I took Elder Scott's counsel.

I prayed and felt that the standard I should set for myself (and I'm *not* saying that you should set this same standard—this was just what I felt for me) was that from that point I was not going to kiss anybody until I was sure she was going to be the woman I would marry. And this standard was pretty easy to live—while I was on my mission.

A week after I got home, I went on my first post-mission

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date. As I recall, my date and I were sitting together on a couch, talking about the past years of our lives, when all of a sudden she gave me *the look*. I hope you don't know the look I'm talking about. It was the "Are you going to kiss me?" look. And I thought, "Maybe I will!"

I'll be honest: this was a big temptation. Sure I had set a standard for myself, but that was on my mission; now I was with a girl who wanted to kiss me! And the truth is, I wanted to kiss her! This is where the phrase "unstable as water" becomes important. If I had kissed her, I would have been like water—changing my standards depending on the environment I was in.

Instead, I looked my date in the eye and said, "Did I ever tell you about the standard I set for myself while I was on my mission?"

"No," she said. "What was it?"

"I decided that I'm not going to kiss a girl until I know she's the one I'm going to marry."

Her response surprised me. "That's the dumbest thing I ever heard."

Even though she didn't like my standard, I stuck to it. Some people may not like the standards you set for yourself, but that's okay. Worse things can happen than having people make fun of you.

Elder Richard G. Scott said,

Firmly establish personal standards. Choose a time of deep spiritual reflection, when there is no pressure on you,

My date and I were sitting together on a couch, talking about the past years of our lives, when all of a sudden, she gave me *the look*.

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and you can confirm your decisions by sacred impressions. Decide then what you will do and what you will not do to express feelings. The Spirit will guide you. Then do not vary from those decisions no matter how right it may seem when the temptation comes. The realization of your dreams depends upon your determination to never betray your standards” (BYU Devotional, 3 March 1996).

Set a standard for yourself early in life. As President Spencer W. Kimball said, “Right decisions are easiest to make when we make them well in advance. . . . The time to decide to go on a mission is long before it becomes a matter of choosing between a mission and a . . . scholarship. The time to decide on temple marriage is before one has become attached to a boyfriend or girlfriend who does not share that objective” (*The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, 164).



WHAT ARE POSSIBLE STANDARDS?

One great standard suggested by Elder Richard G. Scott is, “Keep your expressions of feelings to those that are comfortable in the presence of your parents” (*Ensign*, November 1994, 38). You should prayerfully determine what *your* standard will be.



Perhaps in the past you have done things that you know are wrong. Satan might tempt you to think, “It’s too late to set a standard for yourself; you have already done too much.” You cannot control the past, but you *can* control what you do now.

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Regardless of what you have done before, set a standard of what you will and will not do in the future.

When you have prayerfully set a standard, write it down so you will remember it. Follow the example of the righteous Lamanites mentioned in 3 Nephi 6:14. Even though most of the people stopped keeping the commandments, there were some “who were converted unto the true faith; and they would not depart from it, for they were firm, and steadfast, and immovable, willing with all diligence to keep the commandments of the Lord.”

Take the scripture's advice. Don't be like water. Set a standard for yourself that you will never deviate from. Be firm, steadfast, and immovable!

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Make It Real



How have you seen the principle “Don’t be like water, be firm and immovable in your standards” applied (or not applied) in your life and the lives of people you know? In other words, what situations have you or your friends and family been in that relate to the topic of the chapter?

Possible Goals:

1. Find a private place where you can prayerfully set a moral standard that you will never deviate from. You could think about some possible standards that you could have (study it out in your mind) and then ask Heavenly Father to confirm to you through the Holy Spirit what standard you should set for yourself. Once you feel a standard confirmed in your heart, write it down and never deviate from it.
2. Set a standard for yourself in an area besides morality.
3. Study the additional readings for this chapter many times.

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4. Your own idea:

What goal(s) will you set for yourself to more fully be firm, steadfast and immovable?

Additional Reading

For the Strength of Youth, 26–28. These standards are clear and will help you immensely. Read them over and over again.

Elder Richard G. Scott, "Do What is Right," Brigham Young University Devotional, 3 March 1996. Available at <http://speeches.byu.edu>. Elder Scott teaches why we must do what is right, and how to set standards we will never deviate from.

Bruce Monson, "Speaking of Kissing," *New Era*, June 2001, 32–34. When Brother Monson tried to kiss his date, things didn't work out very well. Find out what he learned.

10

It's Easier to Stop Before You Start

"The thought of intentionally committing serious sin now and repenting later is perilously wrong. Never do that"
(Elder Richard G. Scott, Ensign, November 1994, 38).

In the previous chapter I talked about setting standards and being firm and steadfast in living them. This chapter explains one of the reasons *why* setting standards is vital.

One night when I was driving back from a date with Lani, I was feeling very poor financially. Money seemed to be heading in all directions except my wallet. So I decided to have some fun and save a little money. About a mile from her apartment, I put the car in neutral and declared that I would coast the rest of the way to her house! I wanted to save gas money (I probably saved about five cents), and I thought by coasting to Lani's house I would look cool (I need all the help I can get). It was fun, and I felt successful as I pulled into her street still going thirty miles an hour. We were going to make it!

During this time, I had put my left foot up on my seat, and

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my right foot was controlling the clutch, brake, and accelerator. Of course, since I was in neutral, I wasn't using any of these pedals. I swung into the parking lot now going five or ten miles per hour. As I pulled into the parking stall, I put my foot on the brake, but nothing happened. I was slamming on the brake, but the car kept going. I hopped the curb, smashed into the wall of her apartment, and finally came to a complete stop. I was stunned. What had happened?

I hopped the curb, smashed into the wall of the apartment, and finally came to a complete stop.

It was only then that I realized that instead of putting on the brakes I had been pushing in the clutch. Because I had put my left foot on my seat, I misgauged where the brake pedal was.

I learned an important lesson from this experience. Even if you think you're in control, you might not be. If you had told me at any point in my coasting trip that I couldn't stop, I would have laughed at you. Of course I could! I had been driving for six years. But in the critical moment, when I really needed to stop, I blew it. It was a matter of two or three seconds, but that's all it took for me to bang up the car.

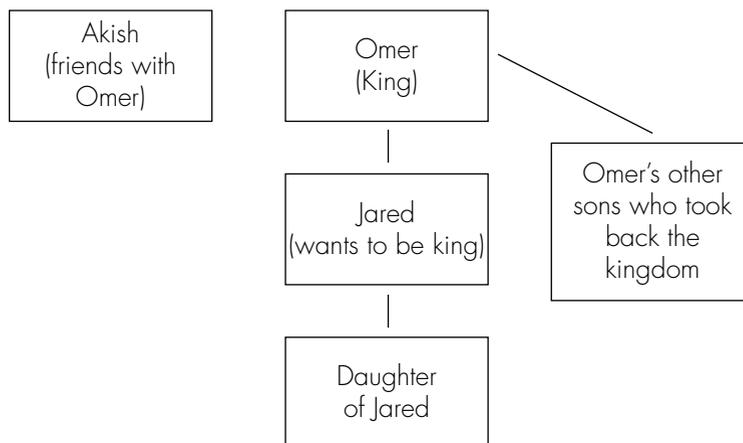
The same principle is true with morality. A guy and a girl might think they are in control, that they can stop any time. If somebody were to say, "Hey, you guys are getting too close to the line," they might think, "It's okay. We won't let things get out of hand." But then, in a critical moment, one wrong move and tragedy can result. It takes only a few seconds to smash a life into the wall of immorality. That's one of the reasons why it's so important to set standards to keep from getting close to

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the line. A related principle is this: It is easier stop a bad situation before it has begun.

I could have prevented the accident by stopping my coasting trip before it got started. Now, there isn't anything wicked about coasting, but often we face situations where we *are* offered the opportunity to do something we know is wrong. For example, if a friend invites you to go to a place where there will be negative influences, it's clearly best to stop the situation before it starts by not going with your friend.

Ether chapter 8 describes a terrible event that could have, and should have, been stopped before it was started. There was a man named Jared whose father, Omer, was the king. Jared rebelled against his dad and took over the kingdom from him. Some of Jared's brothers were angry with Jared, and they led an army that overpowered Jared and restored the kingdom to Omer. There are two other characters in this story—Jared's daughter, a beautiful but scheming young woman; and a man named Akish who was friends with Jared's father, Omer. The following chart might help you keep these names straight:



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Jared was depressed about having to return control of the kingdom to his father. He still wanted the power. We read:

And now Jared became exceedingly sorrowful because of the loss of the kingdom, for he had set his heart upon the kingdom and upon the glory of the world.

Now the daughter of Jared being exceedingly expert, and seeing the sorrows of her father, thought to devise a plan whereby she could redeem the kingdom unto her father.

Now the daughter of Jared was exceedingly fair. And it came to pass that she did talk with her father, and said unto him: Whereby hath my father so much sorrow? Hath he not read the record which our fathers brought across the great deep? Behold, is there not an account concerning them of old, that they by their secret plans did obtain kingdoms and great glory?

And now, therefore, let my father send for Akish, the son of Kimnor; and behold, I am fair, and I will dance before him, and I will please him, that he will desire me to wife; wherefore if he shall desire of thee that ye shall give unto him me to wife, then shall ye say: I will give her if ye will bring unto me the head of my father, the king.

And now Omer was a friend to Akish (Ether 8:7–11).

What's happening here? Jared is sad because he has set his heart on the world; his daughter notices, and she says, "Dad haven't you heard of secret plots other people have made? I've got an idea for a plot. There's this guy, Akish—invite him over, and I'll dance for him. He'll like my dance so much that he'll

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say, ‘Let me marry her!’ And you’ll say, ‘You can marry her if you kill my dad, Omer, and bring me his head.’”

To say this is a bad situation would be an understatement. But notice that at this point Jared could easily stop this plot from happening. He could have said, “Honey, I think we’re going to have to cancel your dance lessons; they’re going to your head!” And that would have been the end. Jared could have stopped it—but he didn’t. The story continues:

Wherefore, when Jared had sent for Akish, the daughter of Jared danced before him that she pleased him, inasmuch that he desired her to wife. And it came to pass that he said unto Jared: Give her unto me to wife.

And Jared said unto him: I will give her unto you, if ye will bring unto me the head of my father, the king (Ether 8:11–12).

Akish now had the opportunity to put a stop to the situation. Omer was his friend. He could have said, “Jared, I’m attracted to your daughter and everything, but I’m not going to kill my friend to marry her. Thanks but no thanks.” Akish could have stopped the plan—but he didn’t.

Akish called together Jared’s relatives and made them promise to help him secretly kill Omer. Fortunately, the Lord warned Omer and his family of what was happening, and they were able to escape. Jared then became the king and let Akish marry his daughter. But Akish wasn’t satisfied. He killed Jared so that he could become king. I wonder how Jared’s daughter felt then. Eventually there was a civil war among the people; only thirty survived. These thirty people went to where Omer was and reappointed him king over the people.

This tragedy could have been prevented. Jared's daughter could have kept her mouth shut. Jared could have stopped the plan. Akish could have said no. Because they didn't, many people were killed.

The situations you face may not be as dramatic as mass murders, but for you in your life, they can be equally important. Drugs, alcohol, and pornography are all vicious temptations you must never come close to—sins you can stop before they ever start.

For example, you could prevent yourself from accidentally viewing pornography by installing filtering software, or putting your computer in a room in the house where others can see the screen (see Elder M. Russell Ballard, *Ensign*, November 2003, 16).

Choose to avoid situations where temptation will be present. I can picture a young man debating whether he should go to a party where he knows alcohol will be served. He has the chance to stop a situation before it gets started. But perhaps he rationalizes and says he will go but not drink.

At the party he meets a girl who is drunk. He wants to help and gives her a ride home. Alone in the car, she asks him to do things he knows are wrong. It's late at night, and he is rationalizing. A tragic situation results that could have been stopped before it was ever started.

Don't be like that young man. Be like Zach, who stopped a bad situation before it got started. He was with a girl who said, "I like that shirt you have on, Zach. Next time I'd like to see you without it on." Zach made sure there wasn't a "next time" (see JeaNette Goates Smith, *New Era*, June 1993, 11).

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During a period of war in the Book of Mormon, the Nephites were in possession of a city called Nephihah. Unfortunately, they did not send sufficient reinforcements to the city, and the Lamanites took control of it. A small verse commenting on this battle teaches us an important principle: “And now as Moroni had supposed that there should be men sent to the city of Nephihah, to the assistance of the people to maintain that city, and knowing that *it was easier to keep the city from falling into the hands of the Lamanites than to retake it from them*, he supposed that they would easily maintain that city” (Alma 59:9, emphasis added).

It would have been easier to never let the Lamanites take over the city than to lose control of the city and then try to retake it. Similarly, it’s easier to maintain the good habits we have than to mess up and then try to repent.

Sometimes people think they’ll do a little sinning and change later. Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve taught, “Never say: . . . ‘I can transgress now and repent later’” (*Ensign*, November 1998, 76).

Similarly, Elder Richard G. Scott said,

The thought of intentionally committing serious sin now and repenting later is perilously wrong. Never do that. Many start that journey of intentional transgression and never make it back. Premeditated sin has greater penalties and is harder to overcome. If there is sin, repent now—while you can (*Ensign*, November 1994, 38–39).

Avoid the trap of thinking “I can sin now and repent later.” We know when things are right and when they are wrong. Mormon taught that “the Spirit of Christ is given to every man

It's Easier to Stop Before You Start

[and woman], that he [or she] may know good from evil” (Moroni 7:16). When we sense we are getting into bad territory, we should stop—before we even get started.

Make It Real



How have you seen the principle “It’s easier to stop before you start” applied (or not applied) in your life and the lives of people you know? In other words, what situations have you or your friends and family been in that relate to the topic of the chapter?

Possible Goals:

1. Read the talk (mentioned below) from Elder Richard G. Scott. Prepare a talk that teaches these same principles using your own words.
2. Highlight the story of Jared and Akish in your scriptures. What do you learn from pondering this tragedy?
3. Your own idea:

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What goal(s) will you set for yourself to more fully stop before you start?

Additional Reading

Elder Richard G. Scott, "Making the Right Choices," *Ensign*, November 1994, 37–39. Elder Scott answers several commonly asked questions about morality.

11

Do Things at the Right Time

*"Since faith in the timing of the Lord may be tried,
let us learn to say not only, 'Thy will be done,' but
patiently also, 'Thy timing be done'"*

(Elder Neal A. Maxwell, Ensign, May 2001, 59).

You might have heard the song that is based on Ecclesiastes
3:1–8:

To every thing there is a season, and a time to every
purpose under the heaven:

A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant,
and a time to pluck up that which is planted;

A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break
down, and a time to build up;

A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to
mourn, and a time to dance;

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A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;

A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away;

A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;

A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.

In verse 11 there is a beautiful summary of the principle these verses teach. It says that God “hath made every thing beautiful in his time.” In *his* time. The principle from these verses is fairly clear. There is a right time for everything, and when things are done at the right time they are beautiful. Sometimes it’s good to laugh, and sometimes it’s good to cry; sometimes it’s good to speak up, and sometimes it’s good to be quiet. The trick is knowing when it’s time for what.

Fortunately, when it comes to matters of dating, the prophets have given us clear guidance on questions of timing. For example, *when is the right time to begin dating?* Every LDS teenager knows the answer—when you are sixteen. Sometimes people wonder why they have to wait to date.

For the Strength of Youth gives three reasons why you should wait until you are sixteen to date. It says, “Do not date until you are at least 16 years old. Dating before then can [1] lead to immorality, [2] limit the number of other young people you meet, and [3] deprive you of experiences that will help you choose an eternal partner” (24).

Hearing it from *For the Strength of Youth* should be enough.

Do Things at the Right Time

In addition, research has shown that teenagers who begin dating early are much more likely to be immoral than those who wait to date. For example, a study by Bruce Monson, published in the *New Era*, showed that teenagers who began dating before they were sixteen were nearly three times more likely to be immoral than teens who waited until sixteen to date (June 2001, 36).

President Gordon B. Hinckley added this insight into the question of why wait to date by saying,

The Lord has made us attractive one to another for a great purpose. But this very attraction becomes as a powder keg unless it is kept under control. It is beautiful when handled in the right way. It is deadly if it gets out of hand.

It is for this reason that the Church counsels against early dating. This rule is not designed to hurt you in any way. It is designed to help you, and it will do so if you will observe it (*Ensign*, January 2001, 8; emphasis added).

What do you think about this scenario?

There is a member of the opposite gender that you *really* like. I mean you *really* like this person. And this person asks you to a formal school dance. You are so excited; the only problem is, the dance is a month before you turn sixteen. Should you go?

Some might think, "It's no big deal; it's only a month." But consider this statement from Elder Henry B. Eyring about following the prophet:

It is a fallacy to believe that the choice to accept or not accept the counsel of prophets is no more than

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deciding whether to accept good advice and gain its benefits or to stay where we are. But the choice not to take prophetic counsel changes the very ground upon which we stand. It becomes more dangerous. The failure to take prophetic counsel lessens our power to take inspired counsel in the future. The best time to have decided to help Noah build the ark was the first time he asked. Each time he asked after that, each failure to respond would have lessened sensitivity to the Spirit. And so each time his request would have seemed more foolish, until the rain came. And then it was too late (*Ensign*, May 1997, 25).

When we follow the prophet, not only are we blessed for being obedient, but we also become the kind of person who will follow the prophet—no matter what. Obviously, we know people shouldn't date before turning sixteen, but what about this question?

"I'm 14 and I know we aren't supposed to date until we're 16. But a lot of friends my age at school have a girlfriend or boyfriend, even though they don't really date. Is anything wrong with this?"

This question was asked in the September 2005 *New Era*. As part of their response, the *New Era* said, "Some teens pair off but say they're not dating. Having a boyfriend or girlfriend, however, *is* dating, and it can create several problems" (16)

A similar question was asked in the July 1995 *New Era*. They said that they "probably received more letters in response to this question than any other printed in Q&A" (17). The temptation to pair up before age sixteen seems to be extremely common. The *New Era* went on to write,

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Overwhelmingly, the letters written by our readers said, “Yes, there is something wrong with pairing up with a girlfriend or boyfriend before age 16.” They nearly all pointed out that modern-day prophets have said we should not date until age 16, and that even then, it’s the beginning of dating and group dates are best.

Here is one letter that points out many of the problems with starting to think seriously about one person too soon:

“When I was 14, I decided that pairing up with one ‘special’ boyfriend wasn’t ‘dating,’ so it was okay. It began as a way to be more popular, but soon I was lying to my parents so I could spend time alone with him. Over the ten months we were together, my testimony was slowly weakened, and eventually I had problems with the law of chastity. Since then I’ve talked with my bishop and repented, but it was a long, difficult, and painful process. I hurt myself, my parents, and the Lord. It opened the door to many other temptations bit by bit and made the important things in life seem foolish, and the wrong things appear right. My parents and bishop showed me nothing but love as they tried to help me return to the Lord’s favor. How much I wish I’d had the strength when I was 14 to stand alone and be different!” (17–18).

The *New Era* included responses from other readers about why pairing off before sixteen can be dangerous. One young woman pointed out that a lot changes between fourteen and sixteen. Even if a couple think they are mature enough to begin pairing off early, those who trust in the Lord’s timing will be

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blessed. The *New Era* concluded their answer to this question by saying:

Some young people under 16 try to explain that they aren't really dating. They try to make it seem all right by saying they are just being good friends. But by pairing up as boyfriend and girlfriend, they are imitating a dating relationship. And it can be harmful. Talk to your parents. They can help guide you.

Very simply, you should not be pairing up as girlfriend and boyfriend until you are of the age to be dating as preparation for a temple marriage (18).

I can sympathize with a fourteen-year-old's desire to have a "special friend" to pair off with—but this is going against the counsel we have received regarding the proper timing of dating. Remember, God "hath made every thing beautiful in *his* time" (Ecclesiastes 3:11). Fourteen and fifteen isn't the time to pair off. It won't be beautiful unless it is done in God's time.

So *when* it is okay to steady date? When you turn sixteen? Again, *For the Strength of Youth* answers this question: "When you begin dating, go in groups or on double dates. Avoid going on frequent dates with the same person" (25).

Research clearly shows that the vast majority of those who steady date in high school break the standards outlined in *For the Strength of Youth* (see Bruce Monson, *New Era*, June 2001, 36). But even more important than research is the clear counsel we have received regarding the timing of steady dating. If it weren't important, would the prophets have emphasized it so much? Before reading the following quotations, notice what Elder Henry B. Eyring taught: "One of the keys to recognizing

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. . . warnings [from the prophets] is that they are repeated” (*Ensign*, May 1997, 25). Read the following repeated warnings regarding steady dating in high school.

President Spencer W. Kimball, the twelfth president of the Church, said:

Early dating increases temptation. A vicious, destructive, social pattern of early steady dating must be changed . . .

It is my considered feeling, having had some experience in interviewing youth, that *the change of this one pattern of social activities of our youth would immediately eliminate a majority of the sins of our young folks*; would preclude numerous early, forced marriages; would greatly reduce school dropouts; and would be most influential in bringing a great majority of our young men and women to the holy marriage altar at the temple—clean, sweet, full of faith to become the worthy parents of the next generation (*The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, 287–88, emphasis added).

President Ezra Taft Benson, the thirteenth president of the Church, said to the young women,

Refrain from . . . going steady. . . . Avoid steady dating with a young man prior to the time of his mission call. If your relationship with him is more casual, then he can make that decision to serve more easily and also can concentrate his full energies on his missionary work instead of the girlfriend back home (*Ensign*, November 1986, 82–83, emphasis added).

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President Howard W. Hunter, the fourteenth president of the Church, said,

When should a young man or a young woman commence steady dating? I am sure you will agree that it is not a good idea for a young man and a young woman to begin steady dating until they have arrived at the marriageable age . . . There is plenty of time after high school to go steady (*The Teachings of Howard W. Hunter*, 124).

President Gordon B. Hinckley, the fifteenth president of the Church, counseled in the priesthood session of general conference:

When you are young, do not get involved in steady dating. When you reach an age where you think of marriage, then is the time to become so involved. *But you boys who are in high school don't need this, and neither do the girls* (*Ensign*, November 1997, 51, emphasis added).

That is four prophets in a row, and there are many other quotations that could be added to this list!

This can be a very difficult commandment to obey. In lots of schools, steady dating is common. Some youth say that at their school you either steady date or you don't date at all. And if you try to go out with lots of different people, as just friends, people start rumors about you. There are lots of reasons steady dating might seem attractive. Maybe there is only one person you like, or only one guy asks you out. I don't know the individual circumstances you face, but I do know this: If you follow the prophet, you will be blessed.

I talked about this topic at Especially For Youth a few years

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ago. A couple of hours after giving the talk, I went to dinner. On my way, I saw a girl with bright red hair. She pointed at me and shouted, “*You!*” She made a terrible face and yelled, “You’re the one!”

Then she ran into the bathroom with her friend. I saw her later that night, and she was pointing at me and making a mean face. The last day of EFY I saw her again and asked her why she was always pointing at me. She explained that she was mad at me because she had a boyfriend and now she felt guilty about it. I told her that I wasn’t trying to make her feel guilty, and we got to talk a little more. I gave her my email address and told her to let me know what happened. A couple of weeks later I received the following email:

I saw this girl with bright red hair. She pointed at me and shouted “*You!*” She made a terrible face and yelled, “You’re the one!”

Hi, I’m that crazy red-headed girl that kept on pointing at you. There is this guy I have been dating for nine months, and he will leave next year on a mission. Well, when I got home, we hung out for a while, and then I broke it all out and told him . . . how I was feeling inside. We decided to be great friends that would still occasionally hang out. It was so extremely hard, but I know that this is what my Heavenly Father would want me to do.

You will be blessed if you don’t steady date until after high school. It won’t be easy, but it will be worth it. If you are not currently steady dating, make a goal that you will not steady date until the appropriate time. If you are steady dating, I encourage you to think about the quotations in this chapter.

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And if we happen to see each other, please don't point at me!
Remember these words from Elder Henry B. Eyring:

Every time in my life when I have chosen to delay following inspired counsel or decided that I was an exception, I came to know that I had put myself in harm's way. Every time that I have listened to the counsel of prophets, felt it confirmed in prayer, and then followed it, I have found that I moved toward safety (*Ensign*, May 1997, 25).

I was inspired by one young couple's desire to follow the prophet. They had never heard that you shouldn't steady date. The same day this couple heard what the prophets have said on the subject, they decided to break up.

Is there ever a time for steady dating? Of course! Speaking to young single adults, Elder Dallin H. Oaks said,

For many years the Church has counseled young people not to date before age 16. Perhaps some young adults, especially men, have carried that wise counsel to excess and determined not to date before 26 or maybe even 36.

Men, if you have returned from your mission and you are still following the boy-girl patterns you were counseled to follow when you were 15, it is time for you to grow up. Gather your courage and look for someone to pair off with. Start with a variety of dates with a variety of young women, and when that phase yields a good prospect, proceed to courtship. It's marriage time. That is what the Lord intends for His young adult sons and daughters. Men have the initiative, and you men should get on with

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it. If you don't know what a date is, perhaps this definition will help. I heard it from my 18-year-old granddaughter. A "date" must pass the test of three p's: (1) planned ahead, (2) paid for, and (3) paired off.

Young women, resist too much hanging out, and encourage dates that are simple, inexpensive, and frequent. Don't make it easy for young men to hang out in a setting where you women provide the food. Don't subsidize freeloaders. An occasional group activity is okay, but when you see men who make hanging out their primary interaction with the opposite sex, I think you should lock the pantry and bolt the front door (Church Educational System Fireside, 1 May 2005).

There is a time and a season for everything. Write Ecclesiastes 3:11 on your heart: God "hath made every thing beautiful in his time." Dating and pairing off can be wonderful, beautiful things *if done according to the Lord's timing*. It can be *extremely* difficult to wait and to trust in the Lord's timing. But I promise you it is worth it. *God "hath made every thing beautiful in his time."*

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Make It Real



How have you seen the principle "Do things at the right time" applied (or not applied) in your life and the lives of people you know? In other words, what situations have you or your friends and family been in that relate to the topic of the chapter?

Possible Goals:

1. If you haven't already, make a firm rule for yourself that you will not date until sixteen and not steady date in high school. Pray about your standard so that it is confirmed by the Spirit and written in your heart.

2. Your own idea:

What goal(s) will you set for yourself to more fully do things at the right time?

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Additional Reading

Elder Dallin H. Oaks, "The Dedication of a Lifetime," Church Educational System Fireside, 1 May 2005. available at <http://speeches.byu.edu> or <http://ldscs.org/>. Elder Oaks gives specific dating advice to young single adults.

Bruce Monson, "The Facts," *New Era*, June 2001, 36. Brother Monson shares the results of research he did regarding the relationship between immorality and premature dating.

"Questions and Answers," *New Era*, September 2002, 16–17. The *New Era* and its readers answer the question "How can I follow the counsel in *For the Strength of Youth* to 'avoid going on frequent dates with the same person?' It's hard for me to ignore my feelings for one person and date others. What should I do?"

12

Get Help When You Need It

"In a dating and courtship relationship, I would not have you spend five minutes with someone who belittles you, who is constantly critical of you, who is cruel at your expense and may even call it humor."

(Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, BYU Devotional, 15 February 2000)

The Nephites were in the middle of a vicious war, battling not only the Lamanites but also themselves. Some Nephites had become wicked and were causing contention. One of these Nephite dissenters was Morianton, whose people got into a fight with other Nephites about who owned land. Morianton's group was in the wrong.

Moroni, the Nephite general, brought his army to protect the innocent Nephites from Morianton. Morianton developed a plan to escape from Moroni. We read,

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Morianton being a man of much passion, therefore he was angry with one of his maid servants, and he fell upon her and beat her much.

And it came to pass that she fled, and came over to the camp of Moroni, and told Moroni all things concerning the matter, and also concerning their intentions to flee into the land northward. . . . Therefore Moroni sent an army, with their camp, to head the people of Morianton (Alma 50:30–33).

As you can see, Morianton was an evil man. Had he escaped into the land northward, he would have significantly hurt the Nephites. Thankfully, Morianton’s maidservant had enough courage to run and tell Moroni what was happening, and Moroni was able to stop Morianton and his army before they got away.

The principle “Get help when you need it” may seem obvious, but it is rarely easy. It took courage for this female servant to go to Moroni. Sadly, many people today are involved in negative relationships—and some do not know how to get help.

Some of these relationships may be physically abusive like the relationship between Morianton and his servant. Others might be verbally or emotionally abusive. The following story illustrates how difficult it can be to recognize and get out of harmful relationships.

Allie started dating Christopher shortly after she turned sixteen. Both of them were active members of the Church. Some of Allie’s friends told her that he had a bad reputation and treated women poorly. But Christopher was nice to Allie, and she liked the attention he gave her, so she didn’t listen to her

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friends. “Besides,” she thought, “you shouldn’t judge people. I can give him a second chance.”

Allie and Christopher spent nearly every day together. She always went to his house, and being with him and his family became her life. Allie liked Christopher, but she was concerned about a few things. For example, sometimes when they got together she thought she smelled alcohol on his breath. One time she asked him if he had been drinking. Christopher got mad and yelled at her. Allie had never been around alcohol and so assumed that she must have been mistaken. She thought, “Well, I guess I falsely accused him, so it’s okay that he got mad.”

A few weeks later, Allie found out that Christopher had gone out with another girl and done some immoral things with her. She was upset and told Christopher that she didn’t want to see him anymore. She tried to hang out with other guys, but she had been going out with Christopher for so long that most guys thought of her as “Christopher’s girl,” and nobody else asked her out.

After a few weeks she really missed Christopher and his family, so she decided to get back together with him. She

Allie later found out that Christopher didn’t tell the bishop the full truth. Still, she didn’t want to leave Christopher, because she was sure she could help him be a better person.

thought she could help him change. She convinced him to talk to his bishop about what he had done with the other girl. He did, but Allie later found out that he didn’t tell the bishop the full truth. Still, Allie didn’t want to leave Christopher—she was sure she could help him be a better person.

As the months passed, their relationship was terrible—and great. Christopher would often yell at Allie. Frequently they would be with a group of mutual friends, and Christopher would say something like, “Get out of here, Allie! I don’t want to be around you anymore.” The words were cruel, and the way he said them made it worse—he would yell at her in front of everyone. None of her friends did anything to help her. But each time this happened, after a couple of days, Christopher would take Allie to a nice restaurant or do something sweet and apologize for being so mean. Allie thought, “Maybe he’s not such a jerk after all.”

But the happy times became fewer and Christopher’s outbursts more common. He tried to control Allie. If she wanted to spend an evening at home, he would give her a guilt trip. When they went to a restaurant, he would sometimes take her food from her because (as he would say), “I bought it and I can keep it.” He also became violent. When Allie danced with another guy, he shoved her to the ground. Later he said that she had made herself fall. On another occasion he punched a wall when Allie didn’t want to kiss him. But still, Allie stayed with him.

This story might have had a tragic ending. But fortunately, Allie’s mother could tell that Allie was struggling. Allie didn’t want to talk to her mom about the situation, but Allie’s mom kept asking, “What’s going on? Why do you come home crying after you’ve been with Christopher?” Eventually Allie told her mom what had been happening.

Allie’s mom recognized that this was a serious problem and gave her some pamphlets about abusive relationships. As Allie

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read the pamphlets, she realized that Christopher fit the profile of an abuser. With her parents' help, she decided to stop seeing Christopher.

It was hard. She had spent so much time with him, his family, and his friends, that they were her whole life. She felt empty without him. Christopher called her several times and said, "Things will be different. Let's get back together. Give me another chance." Allie needed all her strength to stay away from him.

"I always thought that women who are in abusive relationships were so stupid!" Allie said. "They should just leave the relationship!" But after what happened with Christopher, she realized it is rarely easy to get out of a negative relationship.

Notice the following characteristics of Allie's story:

- There were several warning signs that Christopher was not a good guy.
- Allie ignored these warning signs or rationalized that they didn't matter.
- Christopher was possessive and controlling.
- They spent all their time together.
- Allie thought she could change Christopher.
- The relationship got worse.
- Not until Allie got outside help was she able to leave the relationship.

If you are in a relationship like this, you may need outside help. Some people think, "I deserve to be treated this way," "That's just the way it is," or "Maybe I can change him." You *can't* change others; if you're in a harmful relationship, *you* must

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change by getting outside help. This principle also applies to young men who find themselves in negative relationships.

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve gave the following counsel regarding negative relationships:

In a dating and courtship relationship, I would not have you spend five minutes with someone who belittles you, who is constantly critical of you, who is cruel at your expense and may even call it humor. Life is tough enough without having the person who is supposed to love you leading the assault on your self-esteem, your sense of dignity, your confidence, and your joy. In this person's care you deserve to feel physically safe and emotionally secure.

Members of the First Presidency have taught that “any form of physical or mental abuse to any woman is not worthy of any priesthood holder” and that no “man who holds the priesthood of God [should] abuse his wife in any way, [or] demean or injure or take undue advantage of [any] woman”—and that includes friends, dates, sweethearts, and fiancées, to say nothing of wives (James E. Faust, *Ensign*, May 1988, 37, and Gordon B. Hinckley, *Ensign*, November 1982, 77) (BYU Devotional, 15 February 2000).

Another form of negative relationships are those that involve sexual abuse. You might have been a victim of sexual abuse. Perhaps you wonder if the abuse you have suffered makes you morally unclean. *It does not. For the Strength of Youth* says,

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Victims of rape, incest, or other sexual abuse are not guilty of sin. If you have been a victim of any of these crimes, know that you are innocent and that God loves you. Seek your bishop's counsel immediately so he can help guide you through the process of emotional healing (28).

Victims of abuse should see their bishop not because they have done something wrong, but because the bishop can help with the healing process. In all abusive situations—emotional, verbal, physical, sexual—it can be difficult to seek help, but *it must be done*.

Another application of the principle “get help when you need it” has to do with helping friends who are in negative relationships or doing self-destructive or illegal things. You can take responsibility for getting help by telling a person with authority (a parent, church leader, or teacher) what you know, even though it may be a difficult thing to do.

At first you might think, “If I tell on my friends, they’ll get in trouble.” The irony is, your friends are *already* in trouble. Your telling on them may be the only way for them to get help. If the Spirit prompts you to tell on your friends, you will do it—because you love your friends. A friend might get mad at you if you tell on him or her, but, in the long run, you will have shown true friendship. You put your friend’s well-being above anything else. Imagine how you would feel if your friend suffered terrible things because you didn’t get help.

If your friend was harming herself physically, you would probably seek outside assistance. In the same way, if your friends harm themselves spiritually, talk about the situation

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with a trusted leader. I understand that it is *not easy* to decide whether or not you should tell on your friends. When I was in high school, I went to a youth conference and met many youth from around the stake. One young woman in my group talked to me about how she was going to sneak out that night to meet her boyfriend. She told me some of the things they were going to do.

I was shocked. “Courtney!” I said. “You know that’s not right.”

“I know,” she said. “But he wants to do even more, so I just let him. I can’t help it.”

I felt sick. Courtney was an amazing young woman—why was she trapped in this terrible relationship? I tried to talk her out of meeting her boyfriend that night. I wasn’t successful.

My question to you is this: What should I have done? Should I have talked to Courtney’s Young Women leaders, her bishop, her parents? Every situation will be different, but if you find yourself in a situation like mine, I encourage you to pray and ask Heavenly Father for inspiration. Then follow the answer to your prayer.

Pray about your own life. Are you involved in a harmful relationship? Remember, if Elder Holland wouldn’t want you to spend five minutes with someone who is verbally abusive, surely you shouldn’t be involved with someone who is physically or sexually abusive. If you are involved in a negative relationship, get help. Turn to your parents, youth leaders, and bishop or stake president, and trust that they will give you the

I was shocked.
 “Courtney!” I said. “You know that’s not right.” “I know,” she said. “But he wants to do even more, so I just let him. I can’t help it.”

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help you need. It might be hard, but it could literally save your life.

Make It Real



How have you seen the principle "Get help when you need it" applied (or not applied) in your life and the lives of people you know? In other words, what situations have you or your friends and family been in that relate to the topic of the chapter?

Possible Goals:

1. Evaluate your relationships. Are any of them harmful?
2. Think about your friends. Do any of them need help getting out of an unhealthy relationship? If so, talk to your friends. If that doesn't seem to help, prayerfully consider whether you should seek outside help.
3. Read this chapter with your parents. Ask them to share their insights about getting help when you need it.

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4. Your own idea:

What goal(s) will you set for yourself to more fully get help when you need it?

Additional Reading

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, "How Do I Love Thee?" BYU Devotional, 15 February 2000. Available at <http://speeches.byu.edu>. Elder Holland speaks to young adults on how to express true love. He also points out danger signs that show that the person you are with is not helping you get to where you need to be.

13

Immorality Leads to Hate, Not Love

“Do not be misled by Satan’s lies. There is no lasting happiness in immorality. There is no joy to be found in breaking the law of chastity. Just the opposite is true”

(President Ezra Taft Benson, New Era, January 1988, 5).

In the quotation above, President Ezra Taft Benson teaches something different than many people do. Often the message we receive is, *If you sin, people will like you*. Is that true?

Certainly the world tells us that sin leads to love: “If you want to be part of our group, you have to smoke.” “If you’re cool, you listen to this type of music.” “It doesn’t matter what the movie is rated—everyone is going to it!” “Who cares if it’s not true; just tell my parents I was with you!”

In countless ways, Satan and his followers try to convince you that doing wrong will bring you friends and love. But this is a lie. Doing wrong brings just the opposite result. Sinning can bring temporary pleasure but always leads to hate, not love.

Immortality Leads to Hate, Not Love

Consider the Old Testament story of Amnon (a guy) and Tamar (a girl). Amnon was madly in love with Tamar, but he couldn't figure out how to get together with her. Amnon's friend came up with a plan for Amnon to be alone with her. Amnon pretended to be sick and asked for Tamar to come visit him and bring him some food.

She came with the food, and when he was alone with her, he asked her to have sex with him. She knew it was wrong, and she told Amnon to ask his father if they could get married. But Amnon did not listen to her, and he raped her. What was the result of this immoral act? Did Amnon's love for Tamar grow? It did not: "Then Amnon hated her exceedingly; so that the hatred wherewith he hated her was greater than the love wherewith he had loved her" (2 Samuel 13:15). *Immortality leads to hate, not love.*

The Savior taught this principle in Matthew 24:12: "Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold." Iniquity (sin) causes love to *wax cold*, to shrink and to die.

Search your memory—can you think of an example from your life that teaches this principle? Have you seen friends do things they knew were wrong in order to be liked? What was the result?

For me, the most tragic example of this principle comes when a young man and a young woman are together, and the young man wants

Search your memory.
Can you think of an example from your life that teaches this principle? Have you seen friends do things they knew were wrong in order to be liked? What was the result?

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to do something that the young woman knows is wrong. She really wants him to like her—so she does it. Does it work? Does he like her? It doesn't work. Immorality leads to hate, not love. Iniquity causes love to *wax cold*.

I know of a young woman whose boyfriend said to her, "If you love me, you'll have sex with me." He kept pressuring her and told her, "If you don't have sex with me, I'll know you don't love me, and I'll leave you."

She wanted him to like her. She gave in to his request. He left her the next week.



DON'T GIVE IN!

President Gordon B. Hinckley said to young women, "You spend a lot of time thinking of the boys. You can have a good time with them, but never overstep the line of virtue. Any young man who invites or encourages you or demands that you indulge in any kind of sexual behavior is unworthy of your company. Get him out of your life before both yours and his are blighted. If you can thus discipline yourselves, you will be grateful for as long as you live. Most of you will marry, and your marriage will be much the happier for your earlier restraint" (*New Era*, November 2001).



President Ezra Taft Benson, the thirteenth president of the Church, taught:

Do not be misled by Satan's lies. There is no lasting happiness in immorality. There is no joy to be found in

Immorality Leads to Hate, Not Love

breaking the law of chastity. Just the opposite is true. There may be momentary pleasure. For a time it may seem like everything is wonderful. But quickly the relationship will sour. Guilt and shame set in. We become fearful that our sins will be discovered. We must sneak and hide, lie and cheat. Love begins to die. Bitterness, jealousy, anger, and even hate begin to grow. All of these are the natural results of sin and transgression (*New Era*, January 1988, 5–6).

Satan is very clever. He knows we want to feel loved. So he tries to tap into our real, wholesome desire to love and be loved, and he tempts us to think that if we do things that are wrong, people will love us. They will not. Physical intimacy does not equal emotional love. And it doesn't have to be a "big" sin like immorality for this principle to take effect. Any sin makes love wax cold. If somebody really loves you, he or she won't ask you do something wrong. If you really love somebody, you won't do something with that person that you know is wrong.

Remember these words: "Some are so anxious for friendship and popularity that they compromise their standards. You will not obtain desirable friends that way, but you can lose your worthy dreams" (Elder Richard G. Scott, *BYU Devotional*, 3 March 1996).

If immorality leads to hate, what happens when you choose the right? You may be made fun of, but you also earn respect. I was in a seminary class and heard Jeff say that once he was talking with some guys and when they found out about his standards, they laughed at him. Later, though, one of them (who

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happened to be very sexually promiscuous) came to Jeff privately and said, “I wish I had standards like you.”



CHOOSING THE RIGHT EARNS YOU RESPECT

A young woman was on a date with the coolest guy in the school. When he tried to kiss her she told him that she didn't do that. He was mad and took her home. At the end of the school year he wrote her a letter and told her that she was the only girl he had ever dated that had refused to kiss him. He also told her that she was the only girl in school he respected. If you do what is right, people will respect you.



Millions of people have fallen into Satan's trap that “if you sin people will like you.” I wish I could look you in the eye and talk to you face to face about this principle. *Doing wrong will not bring you the love you want and deserve.* “Wickedness never was happiness” (Alma 41:10). “Because iniquity shall abound . . . love . . . shall wax cold” (Matthew 24:12).

Doing what is right will earn you respect. But more important, it will give you confidence to draw closer to God and feel his love—the deepest, truest, and best source of love.

Immorality Leads to Hate, Not Love

Make It Real



How have you seen the principle "Immorality leads to hate, not love" applied (or not applied) in your life and the lives of people you know? In other words, what situations have you or your friends and family been in that relate to the topic of the chapter?

Possible Goals:

1. Share what you have learned in this chapter as a seminary or institute devotional (using your own words, not reading from the book).

2. Your own idea:

What goal(s) will you set for yourself to more fully realize that immorality leads to hate, not love?

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Additional Reading

President Ezra Taft Benson, "The Law of Chastity," *New Era*, January 1988, 4–7. President Benson teaches that while immorality may bring momentary pleasure, there is no lasting happiness in doing things that are wrong. He also extends a powerful promise to those who remain morally clean.

Don't Tarry, Look, or Enquire

"But David tarried . . ."

(2 Samuel 11:1).

Anybody can fall into temptation. Consider David, Israel's second king. This is the same David that slew Goliath. He was "a mighty valiant man, . . . prudent in matters, and a comely [attractive] person, and the Lord [was] with him" (1 Samuel 16:18).

David did many great things, but he also committed serious sins. As you read the following account, look for mistakes that David made:

And it came to pass, after the year was expired, at the time when kings go forth to battle, that David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they destroyed the children of Ammon, and besieged Rabbah. But David tarried still at Jerusalem.

And it came to pass in an eveningtide, that David arose from off his bed, and walked upon the roof of the

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king's house: and from the roof he saw a woman washing herself; and the woman was very beautiful to look upon.

And David sent and enquired after the woman. And one said, Is not this Bath-sheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?

And David sent messengers, and took her; and she came in unto him, and he lay with her; for she was purified from her uncleanness: and she returned unto her house.

And the woman conceived, and sent and told David, and said, I am with child (2 Samuel 11:1–5).

What was David's first mistake? It might be that he “tarried” (stayed) in Jerusalem. It was the time that all the kings were supposed to go to battle—he had somewhere he was supposed to go—but he stayed in Jerusalem.

His second mistake could have been walking on his roof at night. Did David know that he would see somebody taking a bath? I don't know. But he put himself in a dangerous situation, and I'm not talking about falling off the roof!

So in verse 2 David saw Bath-sheba bathing, and in verse 3 he “enquired” after the woman. He was told that she was married to Uriah, but David apparently didn't care. He sent messengers to bring her to his castle, and as a result of what happened next, Bath-sheba got pregnant.

Notice the downward spiral of sin: It started out with just tarrying—staying in a place when he should have been somewhere else; next came a look, then enquiring, and finally adultery.

David could have avoided walking on his roof, but

Don't Tarry, Look, or Enquire

occasionally you might find yourself in a situation that you can't immediately get out of—you don't want to tarry, but there is no other option. What do you do then? I heard a story about two missionaries on bikes in Miami Beach. They were at a crosswalk waiting for the light to change. A couple of feet from them were some scantily clad beach-goers. "Sing a hymn!" the senior companion whispered.

"There is beauty all around," the junior companion began to sing.

"Pick a different hymn!"

That story may not be true, but you *can* use hymns to help yourself avoid temptation. For example, suppose somebody offended you, and you were thinking about how you could get revenge. Rather than allowing those bad thoughts to "tarry" in your mind, use a hymn to kick them out.

Elder Boyd K. Packer taught:

I want to tell you young people about one way you can learn to control your thoughts, and it has to do with music.

The mind is like a stage. Except when we are asleep the curtain is always up. There is always some act being performed on that stage. It may be a comedy, a tragedy, interesting or dull, good or bad; but always there is some act playing on the stage of the mind.

Two missionaries on bikes in Miami Beach were at a crosswalk waiting for the light to change. A couple of feet from them were some scantily clad beach-goers. "Sing a hymn!" the senior companion whispered. "There is beauty all around," the junior companion began to sing.

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Have you noticed that without any real intent on your part, in the middle of almost any performance, a shady little thought may creep in from the wings and attract your attention? These delinquent thoughts will try to upstage everybody. . . .

What do you do at a time like that, when the stage of your mind is commandeered by the imps of unclean thinking?—whether they be the gray ones that seem almost clean or the filthy ones which leave no room for doubt. . . .

This is what I would teach you. Choose from among the sacred music of the Church a favorite hymn, one with words that are uplifting and music that is reverent, one that makes you feel something akin to inspiration; . . . perhaps “I Am a Child of God” would do. Go over it in your mind carefully. Memorize it. Even though you have had no musical training, you can think through a hymn.

Now, use this hymn as the place for your thoughts to go. Make it your emergency channel. Whenever you find these shady actors have slipped from the sidelines of your thinking onto the stage of your mind, put on this [CD], as it were.

As the music begins and as the words form in your thoughts, the unworthy ones will slip shamefully away. It will change the whole mood on the stage of your mind. Because it is uplifting and clean, the baser thoughts will disappear. For while virtue, by choice, will not associate with filth, evil cannot tolerate the presence of light. . . .

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Once you learn to clear the stage of your mind from unworthy thoughts, keep it busy with learning worthwhile things. Change your environment so that you have things about you that will inspire good and uplifting thoughts. Keep busy with things that are righteous (*Ensign*, January 1974, 28).

I know that memorizing hymns or Primary songs and singing them to clean up your thoughts really does work. Something else I've used to get rid of bad thoughts is memorizing scriptures. When I was preparing for my mission, I memorized Doctrine and Covenants section 4, and any time I had a thought that distracted me from serving a mission, I would recite the section. Having an "emergency channel" for your thoughts can be very useful.

Let's return to the story of David. After he committed adultery, the downward spiral of sin continued. At first he had a plan: to get Bath-sheba's husband, Uriah, to come home from the war and sleep with Bath-sheba. David hoped that if Uriah slept with Bath-sheba, when he found out that she was pregnant, Uriah would think he (Uriah) was the father.

David sent for Uriah, supposedly so that Uriah could give him a report of the battle. After Uriah gave his report, David told Uriah to go home and relax. David even sent a special dinner to Uriah's home. But we read:

Uriah went not down unto his house. . . . David said unto Uriah, Camest thou not from thy journey? why then didst thou not go down unto thine house?

And Uriah said unto David, The ark, and Israel, and Judah, abide in tents; and my lord Joab, and the servants

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of my lord, are encamped in the open fields; shall I then go into mine house, to eat and to drink, and to lie with my wife? as thou livest, and as thy soul liveth, I will not do this thing (2 Samuel 11:10–11).

Uriah was so dedicated to the battle that he wouldn't even go home and be with his wife. In essence he said, "How can I go home and relax with my wife when my fellow-soldiers are camped out in battle?" In contrast to David's "tarrying" in a place when he should have been busy elsewhere, Uriah showed dedication to his duty.

Because David could not get Uriah to go be with Bath-sheba, he arranged for Uriah to be killed in battle. The downward spiral of sin continued, setting in motion a chain of events that brought tragedy to many lives.

Being in the wrong place and looking at inappropriate things led to David's downfall. In the same way, the spiral could begin with a young man on a sports team sitting in the back of a bus as they travel to an away game. He knows what happens at the back of this bus. But he tarries. Somebody pulls out a bad magazine. As it's passed around, he takes one curious look. Then he enquires after it and looks some more. He is caught in a downward spiral of sin that leads to increasingly wicked acts.

In our day the prophets and apostles have given a clear message about the dangers of pornography. Consider this warning from Elder Dallin H. Oaks:

Pornographic or erotic stories and pictures are worse than filthy or polluted food. The body has defenses to rid itself of unwholesome food. With a few fatal exceptions, bad food will only make you sick but do no permanent

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harm. In contrast, a person who feasts upon filthy stories or pornographic or erotic pictures and literature records them in this marvelous retrieval system we call a brain. The brain won't vomit back filth. Once recorded, it will always remain subject to recall, flashing its perverted images across your mind and drawing you away from the wholesome things in life. . . .

Those who seek out and use pornography for sexual stimulation obviously violate [the sacramental covenant.] They also violate a sacred covenant to refrain from unholy and impure practices. They cannot have the Spirit of the Lord to be with them. . . .

Pornography impairs one's ability to enjoy a normal emotional, romantic, and spiritual relationship with a person of the opposite sex. It erodes the moral barriers that stand against inappropriate, abnormal, or illegal behavior. . . .

Pornography is also addictive. It impairs decision-making capacities and it "hooks" its users, drawing them back obsessively for more and more. A man who had been addicted to pornography and to hard drugs wrote me this comparison: "In my eyes cocaine doesn't hold a candle to this. I have done both. . . . Quitting even the hardest drugs was nothing compared to [trying to quit pornography]" (*Ensign*, May 2005, 88–89).

Clearly the best solution for the pornography problem is to never get involved. Don't tarry! Don't look—not even for a second! Set safeguards to stay far away from pornography. Once I directed a youth conference in which one of the participants

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had a pornographic magazine he wanted me to get rid of for him. I asked him to put it in a bag (so the magazine could not be seen). Then a counselor and I went together to throw it away. Why did we go together? To eliminate the temptation for either of us to open the bag and look at it. I distinctly felt as we carried that magazine to the dumpster that we carried in our hands a deadly poison.

To those who are involved or tempted to be involved in pornography, Elder Dallin H. Oaks gave the following suggestions:

First, acknowledge the evil. Don't defend it or try to justify yourself. . . .

Second, seek the help of the Lord and his servants. Hear and heed President Hinckley's words:

"Plead with the Lord out of the depths of your soul that He will remove from you the addiction which enslaves you. And may you have the courage to seek the loving guidance of your bishop and, if necessary, the counsel of caring professionals" (*Ensign*, November 2004, 62).

Third, do all that you can to avoid pornography. . . .

Don't accommodate any degree of temptation. Prevent sin and avoid having to deal with its inevitable destruction. So, turn it off! Look away! Avoid it at all costs. . . . Be faithful in temple attendance. [A wise bishop said] "an endowed priesthood bearer's fall into pornography *never* occurs during periods of regular worship in the temple; it happens when he has become casual in his temple worship" (letter of March 13, 2005). . . .

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Finally, do not patronize pornography. Do not use your purchasing power to support moral degradation. And young women, please understand that if you dress immodestly, you are magnifying this problem by becoming pornography to some of the men who see you.

Please heed these warnings (*Ensign*, May 2005, 89).

David's tarrying and looking provides us with a contrast to Joseph, who fled! When we find ourselves tempted by pornography or anything else that's bad, we have a choice: Follow Joseph and flee, or be like David and tarry, look, and enquire. Consider the ways the following individuals chose to be like Joseph rather than David.

George told me about a time he was on a trip with people from school. He got to know one of the young women on the trip, somebody he didn't know very well before. They were up late, and George was alone with this young woman. Fortunately, he decided not to keep talking to her. He later found out that *the same night* the girl he had been talking with had done some inappropriate things with another guy. My friend was glad he wasn't the one to tarry.

Danielle told me of a time she was at a house for a party. Many members of the Church were there, but when an inappropriate movie was put in the VCR, none of them did anything. They all kept watching the movie. Danielle knew better than to "tarry" in this situation. She went into another room. Another person joined her. Soon more people were with Danielle than were watching the movie.

Nathan was playing soccer with some friends. Some girls they didn't know came to watch. It was hot outside, and after

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It was hot outside, and after the game the girls suggested they go swimming. "I don't have my swimming suit," the young man said. "Neither do we," said one of the girls.

the game the girls suggested they go swimming. "I don't have my swimming suit," Nathan said. "Neither do we," said one of the girls.

The young man could have said, "I'll just go see what happens." But he chose not to tarry.

When you find yourself in a temptation situation, don't tarry! Don't let bad thoughts remain in your mind. Staying in a place when we should be somewhere else leads to "looking," "enquiring," and the downward spiral of sin. David was a powerful man who had done great things for the Lord. But from him we learn that anybody can fall. Don't let it happen to you!

Make It Real

How have you seen the principle "Don't tarry, look, or inquire" applied (or not applied) in your life and the lives of people you know? In other words, what situations have you or your friends and family been in that relate to the topic of the chapter?



Don't Tarry, Look, or Enquire

Possible Goals:

1. If you have not already, pick a favorite hymn and sing it to yourself if you find negative thoughts coming into your mind.
2. Re-read Elder Oaks's counsel regarding pornography. What can you do to more fully apply his words?
3. Your own idea:

What goal(s) will you set for yourself to more fully not tarry, look, or inquire?

Additional Reading

Elder Dallin H. Oaks, "Pornography," *Ensign*, May 2005, 87–90. Elder Oaks warns of the dangers of pornography and gives specific suggestions for avoiding and repenting of this serious sin.

Elder Boyd K. Packer, "Inspiring Music—Worthy Thoughts," *Ensign*, January 1974, 25–28). Elder Packer uses several analogies to teach youth how to control their thoughts.

15

Prepare Now for Temple Marriage

“Date only those who have high standards and in whose company you can maintain your high standards. . . . Look for a companion of your own faith”

(True to the Faith, 99).

What sacrifices would you make to be married in the temple? The ancient patriarch Jacob went on a four-hundred mile journey to find someone he could marry in the covenant. Centuries after Jacob made this journey, his descendants were commanded, “Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. For they will turn away thy son from following me” (Deuteronomy 7:3–4). In other words, Israelites were told to marry only other Israelites; in our day, this would be like saying you should get married in the temple. In fact, we are commanded to marry in the temple.

I can still remember when I learned that you had to be married to get into the highest degree of the celestial kingdom.

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My teachers quorum advisor read us Doctrine and Covenants 131:1–4:

In the celestial glory there are three heavens or degrees; and in order to obtain the highest, a man must enter into this order of the priesthood [meaning the new and everlasting covenant of marriage]; and if he does not, he cannot obtain it. He may enter into the other, but that is the end of his kingdom; he cannot have an increase.

The teacher then explained, “So in order to get to the highest degree of glory, you have to be married in the temple.”

Marriage *is* a wonderful thing. Speaking on this subject, President Gordon B. Hinckley said,

I could wish for you nothing more wonderful than the love, the absolute total love, of a companion of whom you are proud and worthy in every respect. This choice will be the most important of all the choices you make in your life” (*Ensign*, May 1998).

What can you do *now* to prepare yourself for a temple marriage? One of the most important things you can do is keep the covenants you have already made. I once heard somebody teach that one of the best indicators of how well you will keep your marriage covenant is how well you keep your baptismal covenant.

What sacrifices would you make to be married in the temple? “Brigham Young once said that if young people really understood the blessings of temple marriage, they would walk all the way to England if that were necessary” (President Gordon B. Hinckley, *Ensign*, November 1995, 53). You

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probably won't have to walk to England, but you will need to make other sacrifices.

For example, one sacrifice you should make is to set moral guidelines to help yourself stay worthy to attend the temple. Though I discussed this in an earlier chapter, I mention it here for emphasis, because when two people really love each other, and perhaps even begin to prepare for temple marriage, they may rationalize that they can go further physically than they could when they were first dating. Elder Richard G. Scott taught,

Observe how Satan works. A righteous returned missionary meets a pure, lovely young woman. They are at an age where they can think seriously about marriage. They begin to date. He develops deep, beautiful feelings of love for her—and she for him. Neither one intends to do anything that is wrong. They have decided not to cross the boundary into Satan's territory. When he is with her he wants to express the feelings he has for her—somehow, after a while, holding her hand doesn't quite communicate what he feels. Each time they are together they do what they did the time before and a little more to physically express their feelings. They move closer and closer to the boundary, but they are determined not to cross it. One day Satan plants the seeds of rationalization in their minds. By that I mean that he tempts them to believe that something that is really wrong can be twisted or justified to be acceptable because of their special circumstances. Rationalization is one of the devil's most effective tools. These thoughts are planted: "You really love one another. You plan to be sealed

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in the temple. You both are worthy and will be true to each other. You are an exception. You have not reached the limit.” The boundary is moved farther. . . . So they continue their physical expressions. They are very much in love. Each time they become a little more intimate. Strong, powerful emotions are aroused, but they are sure they can control them. They are going to be sealed in the temple. Then those emotions become overpowering, and they commit acts that they had determined they would never perform outside of marriage. Their lives are terribly complicated—tragically and unnecessarily.

Please recognize that you cannot barely cross the boundary and not encounter the high risk of slipping and being led to places you have no intent of ever visiting or experiences you have no desire to ever have. That is how Satan works (BYU Devotional, 3 March 1996).

Taking the time to set, write down, and maintain a high moral standard for yourself—no matter how old you are—is a sacrifice you should make to prepare for a temple marriage.



EVEN ENGAGED COUPLES NEED STANDARDS

The more serious a couple becomes, the more they need strong standards. One engaged couple decided that they would never kiss in the car. Another couple decided they would not be alone in an apartment together. When you start to seriously date, discuss specific boundaries with your boyfriend or girlfriend.



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Another sacrifice you will need to make is to carefully select the people you date. This is because, as President Spencer W. Kimball wrote,

Right marriage begins with right dating. A person generally marries someone from among those with whom he associates, with whom he goes to school, with whom he goes to church, with whom he socializes. Therefore, this warning comes with great emphasis. Do not take the chance of dating nonmembers, or members who are untrained and faithless. A girl may say, “Oh, I do not intend to marry this person. It is just a ‘fun’ date.” But one cannot afford to take a chance on falling in love with someone who may never accept the gospel (*The Miracle of Forgiveness*, 242).

Some might think, “It’s okay to get married outside the temple. My ——— (mom, aunt, cousin’s neighbor’s friend, pool repairman, etc.) married outside the temple, and they got sealed in the temple later.”

It is true that this does happen—sometimes. President Spencer W. Kimball pointed out that “a small minority” of people of other faiths who marry members are later baptized (*The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, 299). But the marriage decision is the most important one you will ever make. Don’t be so foolish as to think, “He or she will for sure get baptized later.”

Even if you know people who married out of the Church and were later sealed, you probably don’t know the many people who married outside of the Church and became inactive. You don’t know them because they don’t come to church

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anymore. As President Kimball wrote, “Without a common faith, trouble lies ahead for the marriage. There are some exceptions but the rule is a harsh and unhappy one” (*Miracle of Forgiveness*, 240).

President Ezra Taft Benson taught the following:

Our Heavenly Father wants you to date young [people] who are faithful members of the Church, who will be worthy to take you to the temple and be married the Lord’s way. There will be a new spirit in Zion when the young women will say to their boyfriends, “If you cannot get a temple recommend, then I am not about to tie my life to you, even for mortality!” And the young returned missionary will say to his girlfriend, “I am sorry, but as much as I love you, I will not marry out of the holy temple (*Ensign*, November 1986, 84).

The book *True to the Faith*, published by the Church, says:

If you are single, prepare yourself carefully for marriage. Remember that there is no substitute for marrying in the temple. Prepare to marry the right person in the right place at the right time. Live worthy now of the kind of person you hope to marry.

Date only those who have high standards and in whose company you can maintain your high standards. . . . Look for a companion of your own faith” (98–99).

The section on dating in *For the Strength of Youth* refers to 2 Corinthians 6:14, which says, “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers.”

Sometimes it requires a lot of faith to decide not to date

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somebody who can't take you to the temple. A woman named Loie lived in a remote village in Alaska. Her odds of having a temple marriage were small, particularly since there were so few Mormons where she lived.

Fortunately, she met Brock at a regional singles dance. They began seeing each other. Though they didn't have everything in common, they grew closer, and finally Brock proposed. They planned to get married in the temple.

As their engagement progressed, Brock changed his mind about getting married in the temple. When Loie expressed how important it was to her to get married in the temple, Brock said angrily, "Are you marrying me or the temple?"

As their engagement progressed, Brock changed his mind about getting married in the temple. When Loie expressed how important it was to her to get married in the temple, Brock said angrily, "Are you marrying me or the temple?"

Loie asked for some time to think about it. She was thirty-one years old and felt that she didn't have much time to waste. Perhaps they could get married in a church now and get sealed in the temple later. Yet

Loie had always had the goal of a temple marriage. She prayed and received a blessing from a trusted friend. She decided to tell Brock she would marry him—but only in the temple.

Brock was angry and ended their relationship. A few months later, Loie met Jason, the man she eventually married. Loie said, "I am overwhelmed with gratitude that I chose to wait until I could marry in the temple" (*Ensign*, February 1999, 48–50).

Part of Loie's sacrifice was ending a relationship with

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somebody who would not take her to the temple. Perhaps there is somebody you *really like*, but that person can't take you to the temple. President Spencer W. Kimball quoted another prophet, President Joseph F. Smith, who said, "Do not marry those out of the church, as such unions almost invariably lead to unhappiness. . . . I would rather go myself to the grave than be [married out of the temple]" (*The Miracle of Forgiveness*, 239).

What if Loie had never met anyone worthy to take her to the temple? Would she have missed out on the opportunity to go to the highest degree of the celestial kingdom? Righteous individuals who don't have the opportunity to be married in this life will be able to marry in the next life. This promise is also extended to people who die before they are old enough to get married. Elder Dallin H. Oaks said,

Singleness, childlessness, death, and divorce frustrate ideals and postpone the fulfillment of promised blessings. . . . But these frustrations are only temporary. The Lord has promised that in the eternities no blessing will be denied his sons and daughters who keep the commandments . . . and desire what is right (*Ensign*, November 1993, 75).

There are a lot of quotations in this chapter, and we've covered a lot of territory. Let's go back to the story of Jacob, from Genesis 29. Not only did Jacob travel four hundred miles to marry in the covenant, but he also had to work seven years to marry the woman of his dreams. I have heard some guys say, "Work for seven years? Forget it! I'd just fall in love with somebody else." Not Jacob! Of him the scriptures say, "Jacob served

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seven years for Rachel; and they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her” (Genesis 29:20).

You may not have to make the sacrifices Jacob made, but you can prayerfully make decisions that will help you prepare now for your future temple marriage. If you marry the right person, at the right place, at the right time, all the sacrifices you make in preparation will seem like a small thing to you because of the love you have for your eternal companion.

Make It Real



How have you seen the principle “Prepare now for temple marriage” applied (or not applied) in your life and the lives of people you know? In other words, what situations have you or your friends and family been in that relate to the topic of the chapter?

Possible Goals:

1. Make a firm resolve to “date only those who have high standards and in whose company you can maintain your high standards.”
2. Share what you have learned from this chapter with a friend.

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3. Your own idea:

What goal(s) will you set for yourself to more fully “prepare now for a temple marriage”?

Additional Reading

President Thomas S. Monson, “Whom shall I Marry?” *New Era*, October 2004, 4–7. President Monson gives timely advice regarding this most important question.

“Marriage,” *True to the Faith*, 97–101. Available from your bishop or at <http://lds.org>. In this chapter, written particularly for youth, young single adults, and new converts, Church leaders give specific advice on dating and marriage.

Bishop H. David Burton, “Who’s Asking?” *New Era*, December 2003, 38–41. A young man is asked to a formal school dance—but he knows that the girl who is asking isn’t the kind of girl he should be dating.

Anonymous, “I Broke my Promise,” *New Era*, October 2001, 38–40. A young woman talks about a promise she made to herself about dating and tells about what happened when she broke it.

16

Have Fun!

“We want you to have fun”

(President Gordon B. Hinckley, Ensign, January 2001, 2).

One reason God gives us commandments is because he wants us to be happy. After all, “men are, that they might have joy” (2 Nephi 2:25). Heavenly Father created us, and he knows what will bring us the most happiness in life. In a similar way, our Church leaders love us. That is why they gave us *For the Strength of Youth*—because we will be happier as we live the standards it includes. It’s not like the Church leaders get together and say, “What rule can we come up with that will really bug the youth?”

“I know! How about no dating until sixteen?”

“Great idea; put it in the pamphlet!”

Our Church leaders want you to be happy. I love this quotation from President Hinckley, from his talk on the “Six Bs”: “You can have a good time. Of course you can! We want you to have fun. We want you to enjoy life. We do not want you to

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be prudes. We want you to be robust and cheerful, to sing and dance, to laugh and be happy” (*Ensign*, January 2001, 2).

Our Church leaders want us to have fun! Good, clean fun! One of the most important things you can do to have fun in guy-girl relationships is live the standards found in *For the Strength of Youth*. For example, in the last paragraph of the “dating” section of this pamphlet we read,

When you begin dating, go in groups or on double dates. Avoid going on frequent dates with the same person. Make sure your parents meet those you date. You may want to invite your dates to activities with your family. Plan dating activities that are positive and inexpensive and that will help you get to know each other. Do things that will help you and your companions maintain your self-respect and remain close to the Spirit of the Lord (25).

Let’s take a closer look at some of these sentences and see how they can help us have fun.

WHEN YOU BEGIN DATING, GO IN GROUPS OR ON DOUBLE DATES

Dating in groups helps you have fun! One young man said, “If you have at least three couples, the date can’t go wrong! You won’t get bored!”

Sometimes it can be difficult to get your friends motivated to help you organize a group date, but it is worth the effort. One of the best group dating experiences I have heard came from my sister Kristen. She said,

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My senior year there was a group of us that went on Friday Fun Nights. A few guys had bought an old car and cut the top off to make a convertible, and we'd do something different every Friday night. It started with just painting the car, but we did other things like bonfire dinners at the beach, bowling (we all had bowling "names" and made big plans to get matching shirts), scavenger hunts, etc. We would take video cameras around town and make movies.

I think you know it's a good date when you really don't remember date-night specifics but just a great feeling of having fun being with friends."

It wasn't so much the things they did that mattered but the fact that they had fun together in a group. Kristen said, "I think you know it's a good date when you really don't remember date-night specifics but just a great feeling of having fun being with friends."

MAKE SURE YOUR PARENTS MEET THOSE YOU DATE

When you are a parent, you will want to meet your children's dates, right? When you get to know your date's parents, it is almost certain that you will treat your date with more respect. Make the effort to meet the parents. Remember, they might be just as nervous about meeting you!

YOU MAY WANT TO INVITE YOUR DATE TO ACTIVITIES WITH YOUR FAMILY

Doing an activity with Lani's family turned out to be a big blessing in our relationship. At the time, we had been on only two or three "official" dates and still didn't know each other

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very well. Lani had promised to take me hiking, but when I picked her up, she asked me if we could give her sisters a ride up the canyon because they were supposed to meet her parents there.

I'll be honest with you. I had been looking forward to spending time with Lani—I wasn't too excited about bringing her sisters along. But what could I say? We took her sisters with us. When we got to the place we were supposed to meet Lani's parents, they weren't there. We didn't want to leave Lani's sisters in case her parents never showed up, so for the next hour we played games, and it was fun! When Lani's parents arrived, they invited Lani and me to join their family on the Heber Creeper train ride they were taking.

On the train I got to know some of Lani's sisters. In fact, I spent more time with them than with her! But I had fun, and by spending time with her family, I fell more in love with her, and she became more attracted to me.

PLAN DATING ACTIVITIES

A major obstacle to having fun in dating is *not going on dates!* Why do people not go on dates? I have talked to many young people who say, "There is nothing to do where I live." It doesn't matter if you live in a small farm town or a big city (I've lived in both); some people still think "there is nothing to do." Maybe there *is* nothing to do where you live. That's why you have to *plan* dating activities, just as *For the Strength of Youth* says.

Planning group dates with your friends can be fun! Whole books have been written about planning fun dating activities. Here are a few of my favorites:

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- Go hiking. Find a forest, a waterfall, a butte, somewhere interesting where you enjoy the beauty of nature.
- Have a picnic. You can make the picnic at home or get food on the road.
- Do a service project together. Once a group of friends and I went to a retirement home and sang to the residents. The residents and we both enjoyed it.
- Go on a scavenger hunt.
- Have a “morning date” to see the sunrise. It’s beautiful, plus you’re sure not to miss curfew!
- Make food for somebody else. Once some people on a date came to my house and brought me cookies. I wasn’t on a date, but at least I got some cookies!

PLAN DATING ACTIVITIES THAT ARE INEXPENSIVE

In an address to young single adults, Elder Dallin H. Oaks encouraged casual, inexpensive dates (“The Dedication of a Lifetime,” Church Educational System Fireside, 1 May 2005). Besides “there is nothing to do,” the most common excuse I hear for not dating is that it is too expensive. I can empathize; if you don’t have a lot of money, you probably don’t want to spend what little you have! But as most young women say to young men, “It doesn’t matter how much the date costs; just please ask us out!” A little creativity and planning will make up for a lack of money. The six ideas I listed above can all be done for little or no money! And that’s just the beginning of cheap dating ideas. Look in old issues of the *New Era* for other fun and inexpensive dating activities (for example, *New Era*, February 1993, 32–33).

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PLAN DATING ACTIVITIES THAT WILL HELP YOU GET TO
KNOW EACH OTHER

Going to the movies is fun, but unless you critique the movie afterward, you probably won't get to know your date very well. For a fun (and cheap) group date that helps you get to know one another, have everybody write down five questions they want other people to answer (like, "What is your first memory as a child?" "What are you most afraid of?" or "If you could go anywhere in the world, where would you go and why?"). Put all the questions in a jar. Then take turns answering the questions. A friend of mine in college did something similar. She bought a cheap plastic ball and wrote questions all over it; she called it "The Question Ball." We would pass it around, and whichever question your right thumb touched when you caught the ball was the question you would answer.

DO THINGS THAT WILL HELP YOU AND YOUR COMPANIONS
MAINTAIN YOUR SELF-RESPECT AND REMAIN
CLOSE TO THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD

Earlier in this book I wrote about "keeping an eternal perspective" and "setting standards you will never deviate from." Treating your date as a child of God and maintaining righteous standards will help you maintain respect for yourself and your date. It will help you have fun!

Satan wants us to think that in order to have fun, we have to do things that are wrong. *That is a lie.* The clean dating relationships you have in high school and college can be filled with fun as you follow the standards the Lord has set. Our Church leaders *want* us to have fun. Before you are sixteen, make lots of friends. When you begin dating, go in groups, meet the

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parents, and plan activities that are inexpensive and help you to get to know each other. Do things that will help you and your companions maintain your self-respect and remain close to the Spirit of the Lord. Have fun!

Make It Real



How have you seen the principle "Have fun" applied (or not applied) in your life and the lives of people you know? In other words, what situations have you or your friends and family been in that relate to the topic of the chapter?

Possible Goals:

1. Talk to a group of your friends and plan a fun and inexpensive group date.
2. Make a list of dating activities. Pick one from your list and do it!
3. Your own idea:

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What goal(s) will you set for yourself to more fully have fun?

Additional Reading

For the Strength of Youth, 24–25. The best way to have fun is to follow the rules!

"Great Group Dates," *New Era*, October 2004, 33. Twelve ideas for group dates.

"How to be a First Rate Date," *New Era*, October 2004, 34–35. Specific suggestions for young men and women on how to handle awkward dating situations.

"Idea List: The Do's of Dating," *New Era*, November 2000, 15. Thirteen suggestions for having fun while dating.

"For Your Information," *New Era*, February 1993, 32–33. Seven ideas for getting group dates started, and sixteen group date ideas.

Applying the Atonement to the Trials of Dating

“There is no physical pain, no anguish of soul, no suffering of spirit, no infirmity or weakness that you or I ever experience during our mortal journey that the Savior did not experience first”

*(Elder David A. Bednar, Brigham Young University—
Idaho Devotional, January 8, 2002).*

Hopefully your dating experiences are fun and carefree. Unfortunately, disappointment and rejection are often a part of the dating and courtship process. A young man I’ll call Dale told me about a painful experience he had.

He was at a basketball game, and sitting in front of him were a guy and two girls. One of the girls was with the guy, but the second girl, Alicia, was there without a date. Dale was talking with the three of them and really wanted to get Alicia’s phone number. Dale and the other guy both liked to play soccer, and at one point in the conversation, the guy said to Dale,

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“Let me give you my phone number so we can play soccer sometime!”

Dale got out his phone and punched in the guy’s number. He thought, “This is my chance to get Alicia’s phone number.” He turned to Alicia and said, “Maybe I should get your number too.”

Alicia just stared at him. “I don’t know what you’d use it for!”

Dale laughs about that experience now, but unfortunately many guy-girl relationships bring pain that does not easily go away. Perhaps the person you like doesn’t know you exist. Or you have a painful breakup. Maybe your date treats you like trash. Or you don’t even get a date!

When you experience a trial in life, it’s probably for one of three reasons. Either (1) you deserve it, (2) God is giving you an experience you need, or (3) somebody is exercising agency in a way that negatively affects you. When you have a trial, it’s important to know *why* you received it, because what you should do about your trial depends on the reason you are having it. Let’s take a closer look at each of these three reasons:

First reason: *You have a trial because you deserve it.*

Very simply, “wickedness never was happiness” (Alma 41:10). If I do things that are wrong, negative consequences will result. In Doctrine and Covenants 101:2, the Savior said, “I, the Lord, have suffered the affliction to come upon them, wherewith they have been afflicted, *in consequence of their transgressions*” (emphasis added).

He turned to Alicia and said, “Maybe I should get your phone number too.”
Alicia just stared at him.

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Some trials come because we have done wrong—and we deserve them. If you are having a trial of this sort, there is a simple solution: Repent. It is not more complicated than that. It is never easy to repent, but it is always worth it.

Second reason: *You have a trial because God is giving you experiences you need to grow.*

Joseph Smith went through many trials. At one point in his life he was in a dirty prison, living in horrible conditions. He had been torn from his family and badly mistreated. The Lord told him, “All these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good” (Doctrine and Covenants 122:7).

If you are having a trial because God is blessing you with the opportunity to grow, you shouldn't pray for the trial to go away. Instead, pray to learn what you need to from the experience, and for strength to overcome and endure it well.

Third reason: *You have a trial because someone is exercising agency in a way that negatively affects you.*

Nephi was righteous, but he suffered many trials because his brothers chose wickedness. At one point in the Book of Mormon, Nephi told his brothers that if they didn't want to be in the wilderness, they could go back to Jerusalem. They became angry. Nephi wrote,

And it came to pass that they did lay their hands upon me, for behold, they were exceedingly wroth, and they did bind me with cords, for they sought to take away my life, that they might leave me in the wilderness to be devoured by wild beasts.

But it came to pass that I prayed unto the Lord, saying: O Lord, according to my faith which is in thee, wilt

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thou deliver me from the hands of my brethren; yea, even give me strength that I may burst these bands with which I am bound (1 Nephi 7:16–17).

Nephi's example shows us what to do when we are faced with a trial because of choices others make. We cannot force others to do the right thing, but we can pray to Heavenly Father that he will give us strength to get through our trials.

How can you tell which is the reason for your trial? One way is to ask. When you have a trial, ask Heavenly Father if there is something you are doing that is causing that trial. If so, repent.

Perhaps when you pray you will feel that the trial you are experiencing is not because of something you did but because God is teaching you something, or because of another's agency. What should you do then? An anonymous story from the *New Era* tells of an "average" young man who was excited to go to Homecoming with a new young woman in his ward. His excitement disappeared at dinner, however, when it became apparent that his date was more interested in the guy who was part of the couple they were "doubling" with than in him. At the dance, things got worse. The young man wrote:

My date wouldn't dance with me, but she did dance with the other guy. My heart broke. I got so frustrated that I left and took a walk. . . . All I could think was . . . I've tried to do what's right, so why is this happening to me?

The dance finally ended . . . [and we went to a movie with the other couple.] During the movie, my date held hands with the other guy. I hadn't expected to hold hands

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with her, but I never guessed she would be holding hands with him.

When this young man got home he was depressed. His family was out of town, and he felt completely alone. He decided to kneel down and pray for help—and his prayer was answered. He wrote,

At that moment, my heart was filled with a love that was so powerful and amazing I can't really describe it. The Savior's love filled my heart, and I knew that Heavenly Father loved me. . . .

Now that I look back on this experience, I have to laugh. That horrible date is just a memory to me, and my life has gone on. And even though it was a terrible experience, I learned something very important: with Heavenly Father's love, I can endure (May 1998, 27).

This person can now look back on his experience and laugh. One thing you can do when faced with a dating trial is relax. Ask yourself, "Will this matter ten years from now? Or even one year from now?" In the eternal scheme of the things, it's probably not that big a deal if "that special someone" doesn't ask you to the dance. In addition to gaining perspective, the young man in this story turned to the Lord. Whatever trial you have, no matter how hard things get, Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ can heal you and make you whole.

Don't make your trials worse by comparing yourself with others. You might think that you are not as athletic, smart, beautiful, or popular as someone else, but that doesn't matter. Elder Jeffrey R. Holland said, "No one of us is less treasured or

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cherished of God than another. I testify that He loves each of us—insecurities, anxieties, self-image, and all. He doesn't measure our talents or our looks. . . . He cheers on every runner, calling out that the race is against sin, not against each other" (*Ensign*, May 2002, 64).

The Savior's Atonement goes beyond his suffering for our sins and enabling us to be resurrected. Alma taught that Christ would "go forth, suffering pains and afflictions and temptations of every kind; and this that the word might be fulfilled which saith he will take upon him the pains and the sicknesses of his people" (Alma 7:11). The Savior suffered not only our sins but also our pains and sicknesses. When we hurt, he knows what it feels like.

Elder David A. Bednar explained,

There is no physical pain, no anguish of soul, no suffering of spirit, no infirmity or weakness that you or I ever experience during our mortal journey that the Savior did not experience first. You and I in a moment of weakness may cry out, "No one understands. No one knows." No human being, perhaps, knows. But the Son of God perfectly knows and understands, for He felt and bore our burdens before we ever did. And because He paid the ultimate price and bore that burden, He has perfect empathy and can extend to us His arm of mercy in so many phases of our life. He can reach out, touch, and succor—literally run to us—and strengthen us to be more than we could ever be and help us to do that which we could never do through relying only upon our own power (Brigham Young University—Idaho Devotional, January 8, 2002).

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The Savior has felt your every pain. He has:

- Suffered your sicknesses.
- Borne the burden of unpopularity.
- Been rejected.
- Felt completely alone.

Christ knows what it's like to:

- Go through surgery.
- Lose an election.
- Be broken up with.
- Have your best friend betray you.
- Suffer abuse from loved ones.
- Feel guilty.
- Watch a friend wreck her life.
- Not make the team.

For every trial you've had, he has felt the pain that accompanies it. Because he has felt your pain, he understands you better than anyone else can. When you have trials, look at them as an opportunity for you to more fully draw on the power of the Atonement in your life.

You can apply Christ's Atonement by sincerely praying to Heavenly Father and asking for strength. Rather than asking "Why me?" or falling into despair, let the power of the Atonement flow into your life as you pray for and receive the strength to endure. Remember these words from Elder Boyd K. Packer:

For some reason, we think the Atonement of Christ applies only at the end of mortal life. . . . It is much more than that. It is an ever-present power to call upon in everyday life. When we are . . . burdened with grief, He

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can heal us. . . . The Atonement has practical, personal everyday value; apply it in your life. It can be activated with so simple a beginning as prayer (*Ensign*, May 2001, 23–24).

The more I know Christ and apply his Atonement in my life, the greater joy I have. I know that the Savior of the world cares about me. And I know he cares about you. In Revelation 3:20 Christ says, “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him.”

The Savior is “knocking on your door” right now, hoping that you will more fully let Him into your life. As you ponder and apply his Atonement, you will be blessed and strengthened.

Make It Real

How have you or others you know applied (or not applied) the Atonement to the trials of dating?



In other words, what situations have you or your friends and family been in that relate to the topic of the chapter?

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Possible Goals:

1. Do a topical study on the Atonement of Jesus Christ. What do you learn?
2. Read the talk (mentioned below) from Elder Bednar and write a paragraph on what it means to you.
3. Your own idea:

What goal(s) will you set for yourself to more fully apply the Atonement in your life?

Additional Reading

Elder David A. Bednar, "In the Strength of the Lord," Brigham Young University—Idaho Devotional, January 8, 2002. Available at <http://web.byui.edu/presentations/>. Elder Bednar teaches that the enabling power of Christ's Atonement can help us do and become more than we ever could on our own.

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, "The Other Prodigal," *Ensign*, May 2002, 62–64. Elder Holland shows that we should have compassion on others and ourselves, and remember that life is not a competition.

18

Take Responsibility for Your Mistakes

When people understand [responsibility] and make no more excuses is the day they're on top, and achieve things they have never done"

(Elder Lynn G. Robbins, Denver North Mission Leadership Meeting, April 1998).

Corianton was a Nephite who went on a mission with his father, Alma the Younger, to teach the Zoramites. While Corianton was on his mission, he met a girl and did some bad things with her. After returning home, Corianton had a father-son conversation with his dad. Corianton might have said something like, "Dad, it wasn't my fault I went for that girl. All the other guys were going after her too!"

Alma let his son know that this excuse was not acceptable. In Alma 39:4 he said, "She did steal away the hearts of many; *but this was no excuse for thee, my son*" (emphasis added). "Everybody else is doing it" was no excuse.

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People make many excuses for doing wrong things. “Everybody else is doing it” is one of these excuses. Others are: “I didn’t really know it was wrong.” “There’s nobody else I like (or that asks me out), so it’s okay to steady date.” “She treated me like trash, so it’s fine to do the same to her.” “It’s only a little sin.” “I’ll only do it one time.”

When we make mistakes in any area of life, we should not make excuses. At the end of their conversation, Alma gave Corianton a stern command: “Do not endeavor to excuse yourself in the least point” (Alma 42:30). Mark that in your scriptures! *Do not endeavor to excuse yourself in the least point.*

The opposite of making excuses is accepting responsibility for the choices we make. In this same conversation, Alma told Corianton, “Acknowledge your faults and that wrong which ye have done” (Alma 39:13). In other words, if you’ve made a mistake, admit it! Take responsibility for the choices you make.

For example, perhaps there is a young man or young woman that you mistreated. Maybe you led the person on, talked bad about him or her, or did something else that was unkind. It might not have been a “big” thing, but it was still wrong. Take responsibility for your mistake by seeking that person out and apologizing.

Because of the serious nature of sexual sin, part of taking responsibility for being immoral involves confession to the bishop. When Alma talked to Corianton, he explained, “Know ye not, my son, that these things are an abomination in the sight of the Lord; yea, most abominable above all sins save it be the shedding of innocent blood or denying the Holy Ghost?” (Alma 39:5).

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There are only two sins more serious than breaking the law of chastity: murder and denying the Holy Ghost. Nothing is more precious than chastity and virtue (see Moroni 9:9).



CAN YOU BE FORGIVEN OF IMMORALITY?

President Gordon B. Hinckley taught, "Immorality will blight your life and leave a scar that will never entirely leave you. . . . Let me . . . assure you that if you have made a mistake, if you have become involved in any immoral behavior, all is not lost. Memory of that mistake will likely linger, but the deed can be forgiven, and you can rise above the past to live a life fully acceptable unto the Lord where there has been repentance. He has promised that he will forgive your sins and remember them no more against you (see D&C 58:42)" (*New Era*, November 2001).



Because immorality is such a serious sin, it requires confession to proper priesthood authority. Elder Richard G. Scott explained,

For a moment I speak to anyone that has succumbed to serious temptation. Please stop now. . . . Serious transgression such as immorality requires the help of one who holds keys of authority, such as a bishop. . . . Do not . . . assume that because someone did not ask you all the important details of a transgression, that you need not mention them. You personally must make sure that the

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bishop or stake president understands those details so that he can help you properly through the process of repentance for full forgiveness (*Ensign*, November 1998, 69–70).

If you have been involved with immorality, I invite you to do whatever it takes to fully repent. President Gordon B. Hinckley said, “This is the time, this is the *very hour* to repent of any evil in the past, to ask for forgiveness, to stand a little taller and then go forward with confidence and faith” (*New Era*, October 2001, 7).

The following story, published in the *New Era* by an anonymous author, encapsulates what it means to take responsibility for your mistakes. The summer before her senior year, she started dating Tom. They had been friends for many years, and although Tom had had a few problems with the Word of Wisdom and morality, she thought she could change him. They dated for a few months, and then Tom went off to college. This young woman wrote,

Tom called every other day, and we would talk into the night. Then Tom started coming home almost every month. That’s when the trouble started. Tom kept telling me we were going to get married after he finished his first year of college and I had graduated from high school. I wanted to believe we could get married and live happily ever after. I thought I was so in love with him that I gave in slowly to the pressure he put on me. We ended up necking and petting. Then he would go back to school and leave me for another month. I would wait by the phone every night for his call.

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I started feeling guilty after a while and would take my frustrations out on others. . . .

One night my friends and I were . . . talking about our futures. Right then it hit me. Everything I had ever wanted was being thrown away just because I knew if I didn't give in to my boyfriend for a few minutes, he might leave me. I realized I wasn't even worthy of a temple marriage right then.

I decided to call my bishop. I told him I would like to talk to him for a few minutes and made an appointment for the next night. I hung up the phone feeling better than I had felt in a long time. I knew this was the right thing to do.

I found myself sitting in the bishop's office the next evening, nervous and unsure of myself. After a brief bit of small talk, the bishop asked what he could do for me. I started crying and told him I had had a few problems with Tom. I wanted to get rid of all the guilt and anguish I had building up inside of me. We talked about how to fully repent. And if I really wanted to fully repent, I would probably have to stop seeing Tom. Then the bishop explained some reasons why. I left his office feeling refreshed and more sure of myself. Now I had to tell Tom.

Talking to Tom wasn't easy. He was angry and unkind, but she prayed with real intent and knew she was doing the right thing. Notice what happened next, and what lessons she learned:

After I broke up with Tom, everything didn't immediately fall into place as I thought it would. It actually got

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harder for a while. I was feeling miserable and made the people around me miserable too. But my Young Women leader gave me a quotation that says, “If a man is unworthy to take you to the temple, then he isn’t worthy of your undying love.” I think about that every time I catch myself wondering if I could still be with Tom.

I have learned through all of this that true happiness is feeling the Lord’s spirit where you are and in everything you are doing. If you can’t feel at peace doing something by yourself or with friends, then it probably isn’t the right thing to do. I have also learned if a boy really does love you, he won’t just tell you so; he will show you by treating you with respect and by helping you reach the righteous goals you have set for yourself. (*New Era*, February 1998, 35–36).

It was not easy for this young woman to take responsibility for her mistakes and press forward with her life, but she did it. Some have questions about confessing sins to the bishop. Consider the following:

WHY DO I HAVE TO CONFESS MY SINS TO THE BISHOP?

There are many reasons why confession is important. First, it is a commandment. In Mosiah 26:29 Alma, who was in charge of the Church, asked the Lord what people needed to do to be forgiven. The Lord answered, “Go; and whosoever transgresseth against me, him shall ye judge according to the sins which he has committed; and if he confess his sins before *thee and me*, and repenteth in the sincerity of his heart, him shall ye forgive, and I will forgive him also” (emphasis added).

Take Responsibility for Your Mistakes

Notice that God said the sinner needs to confess to two people—the Lord and the Church leader.

A second reason for confession is that it brings relief to the repentant sinner. Sin is a heavy burden to carry alone; when you confess, the bishop helps you carry the weight.

Third, some sins are difficult to overcome by yourself. For example alcohol, tobacco, immorality, and pornography are addictive sins that are hard to repent of without help. With the bishop's aid, you can overcome sins that you couldn't resolve on your own.

I HAVE A SIN I NEED TO CONFESS, BUT I DON'T LIKE MY BISHOP. WHAT SHOULD I DO?

The best thing to do in this situation is to talk to the bishop anyway! Even if you have a problem with him, you shouldn't let that interfere with repenting. Maybe the bishop is your dad, or (perhaps worse) your boyfriend's dad! It doesn't really matter. If you have a strong reason not to visit with your bishop, you could talk to the stake president about your concerns. Because confession is so important, you must have the courage to talk to your bishop or stake president even if you feel uncomfortable.

WON'T MY BISHOP LOOK DOWN ON ME IF HE KNOWS I'VE SINNED?

He definitely will not! Many people worry that their bishop will think less of them if they confess their sins. However, several bishops have told me that they respect the people who have the courage to come and talk to them. If I've sinned and need to talk to my bishop, I have two choices. I can confess to my bishop, or I can avoid him. Which option takes more courage?

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Obviously, confessing to the bishop. The bishop will admire you for having the strength to do the right thing, even though it's hard.

WILL THE BISHOP TELL MY PARENTS OR OTHERS WHAT I'VE DONE?

Your secrets are safe with the bishop. Even if he knows your parents better than he knows you, part of his duty as bishop is to keep confessions private. President Gordon B. Hinckley said to youth, your "bishop will listen [to your confession] with confidentiality" (*New Era*, October 2001, 6).

HOW CAN I TELL IF I SHOULD CONFESS A SIN TO THE BISHOP?

If you have any doubts about whether you need to confess a sin to the bishop, do it. Is it a sin that you *have* to confess to the bishop? Maybe, maybe not. But I know that if you or I have a sin weighing on our mind, it is best to talk about it with the bishop. That way, we won't have to bear the burden alone.

Whether it's a "big thing" or a "little thing," everybody makes mistakes. My plea for each of us is that we will take responsibility for our mistakes. Whether we need to talk to the bishop, get out of a bad situation, or simply apologize for something we've done, it can be very difficult to accept responsibility. But we will be blessed and strengthened as we do.

Take Responsibility for Your Mistakes

Make It Real

How have you seen the principle "Take responsibility for your mistakes" applied (or not applied) in your life and the lives of people you know? In other words, what situations have you or your friends and family been in that relate to the topic of the chapter?



Possible Goals:

1. If you think there is a sin in your life that you should confess to the bishop, make an appointment with him today to talk about it.

2. Think about other people in your life. Do you need to take responsibility for anything you have done to them? If so, make a plan to do so.

3. Your own idea:

What goal(s) will you set for yourself to more fully take responsibility for your mistakes?

I Lost My Phone Number, Can I Have Yours?

Additional Reading

President Gordon B. Hinckley, "You Can Be Forgiven," *New Era*, October 2001, 4–7. President Hinckley teaches youth that they can change, and that now is the time to seek forgiveness.

Elder Richard G. Scott, "The Power of Righteousness," *Ensign*, November 1998, 68–70. Elder Scott teaches youth about living a righteous life and, when necessary, confessing sins to proper priesthood authority.

Elder Boyd K. Packer, "The Brilliant Morning of Forgiveness," *New Era*, April 2005, 4–8. Elder Packer uses a true story to illustrate how we really can be forgiven.

Guy-Girl Relationships: The Quiz

There is a lot of material in this book, so before concluding, take a moment to see what you have learned. Take the Guy-Girl Relationships Quiz! (The answers are in appendix B.)

PART 1: TRUE OR FALSE

1. It is okay to make girls cry.
2. If somebody is passing around a pornographic magazine, the best thing to do is stay where you are, as long as you don't look at the magazine.
3. You will probably marry somebody who is as dedicated to the Lord as you are.
4. You should get married in the temple.
5. It's okay to steady date in high school if there is only one person you really like or only one Mormon in your school.
6. The people that you see at dances or at school are your spiritual brothers and sisters.
7. You should set a standard for yourself to keep from ever getting close to the line of sin.

I Lost My Phone Number, Can I Have Yours?

8. The prophet does not want us to have fun in high school—that is why we have so many rules.

9. You can influence somebody just by the kind of person you are.

10. Most problems with guy-girl relationships aren't your fault, so you don't need to take responsibility for your actions.

PART 2: MULTIPLE CHOICE

1. If you are in the eighth grade, your best choice is to:
 - a. Kiss as many people as you can.
 - b. Go steady but don't date.
 - c. Enjoy good friendships.
2. If you are with people who want you to do bad things, it's best to:
 - a. Stay and talk to them.
 - b. Do what they want you to do.
 - c. Get out of the bad situation!
3. The standard for "how far can you go" is best described as:
 - a. Whatever feels good at the time.
 - b. Keep it above the neck.
 - c. Do not participate in passionate kissing, lie on top of another person, or touch the private parts of another person, with or without clothing.
4. If you do something you know is wrong with a member of the opposite sex, that person will most likely:
 - a. Fall more in love with you.
 - b. Want to marry you in the temple.
 - c. Like you less.
 - d. B and C.

Guy-Girl Relationships: The Quiz

5. By living a clean, moral life, you will:
 - a. Strengthen your future marriage.
 - b. Be more likely to marry somebody clean and moral.
 - c. Influence others to be good.
 - d. All of the above (hint—this is the correct answer).
6. Having the priesthood means in part that:
 - a. You shouldn't make girls cry.
 - b. You are better than girls.
 - c. You can boss girls around and treat them poorly.
 - d. All of the above (hint—this is *not* the correct answer).
7. The phrase “don't be like water” means:
 - a. Don't get your saliva in anybody's mouth.
 - b. Don't freeze if it gets cold outside.
 - c. Be firm in your standards.
8. When Mary told Jesus that they ran out of things to drink, Jesus said:
 - a. “I'm too busy to help you!”
 - b. “Could you go ask somebody else?”
 - c. “Whatever you want me to do, I'll do it.”
9. Who got out of a bad situation?
 - a. Joseph.
 - b. Samson.
 - c. David.
 - d. Akish.
 - e. All of the above.

I Lost My Phone Number, Can I Have Yours?

- 10. How can you best prepare for a temple marriage?
 - a. Be the kind of person you want to marry someday.
 - b. Date people with high standards who can take you to the temple.
 - c. Make a standard to keep yourself morally clean.
 - d. Keep your baptismal covenants.
 - e. All of the above.

PART 3: SHORT ANSWER

1. Jack and Jill are on a date. Jack wants to do something with Jill that she doesn't feel good about. When she says no, Jack says, "What's your problem? This is what people do on dates!" *Which principle from this book do you think is most applicable to Jill at this moment? Why?*

2. Fourteen-year-old Jennifer really likes this guy in her class named Kirby. One day Kirby gives her a note that says, "Will you go with me?" Jennifer knows she shouldn't date until she's sixteen, but she doesn't think there's anything wrong with just going out with somebody as long as you don't go on dates. *Which principle from this book would you share with Jennifer? How would you approach her about it?*

Guy-Girl Relationships: The Quiz

3. Jeff and his buddies always go to dances together. They like to dance with girls from their school, but there is this one girl that always tries to hang out with them. They come up with all kinds of ideas for avoiding this girl and try to get through dances without saying hi to her. *What principle(s) might they be forgetting? Why did you choose the one(s) you did?*

4. Cheryl is dating a guy who treats her really bad. He yells at her, and he even hit her once but he said it was an accident. But Cheryl really likes him and doesn't want to lose him. You are the only person she has told about how this guy treats her. *What is your advice to her?*

5. *How do you think you can best "have fun" on dates?*

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6. *Compare and contrast Joseph, David, and Samson. In what ways were their situations similar? In what ways did they react differently to the temptations they faced? What principle(s) can you learn from their lives?*

Conclusion

The Scriptures Have the Advice You Need

In the introduction, I mentioned that I wrote this book for two reasons. One was to share principles from the scriptures that can help you navigate the ups and downs of guy-girl relationships. I hope as you've read this book, you've found help for some of the struggles you face.

The second reason for this book is to help you see that the scriptures *do* apply to our lives. I hope you are excited to study and find principles from the scriptures that will help you with your problems.

Nephi taught that we should “liken” the scriptures to our own lives (see 1 Nephi 19:23). In this book I've tried to share with you examples of likening the scriptures. For example, there's the story of Samson. I might not have long hair or super-human strength, but I can learn the principle “be wise” and apply what happened to Samson in my own life.

The scriptures really do have the answers to life's problems. They helped me after my first date with Lani and many other times—and not just in guy-girl relationships. Once I was trying

I Lost My Phone Number, Can I Have Yours?

to make a major decision and prayed as I began my scripture study that I would receive some insights that could help me. I was reading Alma 52 and noticed that Moroni and Teancum “held a council” to help them decide what to do next in the war they were fighting (verse 19). As I read that verse, I realized that before I could make such an important decision, I needed to have a council of my own by seeking the advice of others. Even though I wasn’t in a war, I could liken the scripture to my life. My hope for you is that you will study your scriptures diligently and find ways to apply them to your own life.

Nephi promises you—whatever your problem or situation is—the scriptures hold the answer: “The words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do” (2 Nephi 32:3).

A very cool, very tough senior boy raised his hand and said, “I don’t believe you! The scriptures won’t help me with the problems in my life!”

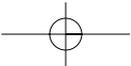
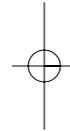
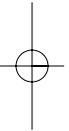
I shared this promise with members of my seminary class. One student, a very cool, very tough senior boy raised his hand and said, “I don’t believe you! The scriptures won’t help me with the problems in my life!”

I challenged him to go to the scriptures with a problem he was having and see if the scriptures would give him a solution. A month later, after class, he pulled me aside and said, “Guess what Brother Hilton? It works! I tried it and it works!” I do not know what his concern was—he said it was too private to share—but he could testify that the scriptures helped him with his problem. *It works. Try it!*

I hope that some of the principles I have shared will help you in your guy-girl relationships. But just as important, I hope

The Scriptures Have the Advice You Need

you have gained confidence that no matter what your situation is, you can open the scriptures and find principles that teach you what you should do. The words of Christ *will* help you in all areas of your life.



Appendix A

More Pick-Up Lines

I wish I could say I came up with all these pick-up lines, but I can't take credit for any of them. They come from youth I have met across the country as well as other individuals.

I lost my phone number; can I have yours?

Girl: Do you know what the Liahona is?

Guy: Yeah, it's like a compass that points the way to go.

Girl: That's right. And my Liahona points to you!

Girl: What's your favorite temple?

Guy: Salt Lake City. Why?

Girl: Because *you're* mine!

I knew I'd feel the Spirit at EFY, but I didn't think I'd see an angel!

Last night I went outside, and for every star I saw I said something I like about you. But then I ran out of stars.

Appendix A: More Pick-Up Lines

Did it hurt when you fell from heaven?

If I could rearrange the alphabet, I'd put U and I together.

Girl: Are you a Gadianton Robber?

Guy: No!

Girl: Well, you stole my heart.

Guy: Are you tired?

Girl: No, why?

Guy: Because you've been running through my mind all day.

If you were a vegetable, I'd want you to be my sweet pea.

Girl: Could you pinch me?

Guy: Why?

Girl: Because I think you might just be a good dream.

Guy: Was your father an alien?

Girl: No, why do you ask?

Guy: Because you're out of this world!

Do you believe in love at first sight, or should I walk by again?

If you were a sandwich at McDonald's, you'd be a McGorgeous.

If stars fell every time I thought of you, the sky would soon be empty.

Appendix A: More Pick-Up Lines

Guy: Could you hold something for me?

Girl: Sure.

[Guy puts his hand in hers.]

Guy: Thanks.

I'm not an environmentalist, but if you were a tree, I'd be
a tree-hugger.

Guy: What time is it?

Girl: 8:30.

Guy: Thanks—I want to remember forever the time I met
you.

Are you a parking ticket? Because you have *fine* written all
over you.

What's a celestial girl like you doing in a telesial place like
this?

If I were a gardener, I'd put your tulips next to mine.

If I had a nickel every time I saw someone as beautiful as
you, I'd have five cents.

I lost my library card, but can I check you out?

Guy: Are you lost?

Girl: No, why?

Guy: Because heaven is a long way from here.

Appendix A: More Pick-Up Lines

Girl: Were you talking to me?

Guy: No.

Girl: Could you please start?

Is your daddy a thief? Because he stole the stars and put them in your eyes.

Guy: Can I show you something?

Girl: Sure.

[Guy holds girl's hand and draws a line down the middle of her palm.]

Guy: This line represents a river. Suppose there was a bunny and he was trying to cross the river to get from one side of your hand to another. How would he do it?

Girl: I don't know . . . Hop?

Guy: Maybe—but there isn't really a bunny; I just wanted to hold your hand.

Girl: Could I take your picture?

Guy: Sure, why?

Girl: I want to show Santa what I want for Christmas!

Appendix B

Answers to “Guy-Girl Relationships: The Quiz”

PART 1: TRUE OR FALSE

1. It is okay to make girls cry. FALSE. (See chapter 4.)
2. If somebody is passing around a pornographic magazine, the best thing to do is stay where you are, as long as you don't look at the magazine. FALSE. (See chapter 14.)
3. You will probably marry somebody who is as dedicated to the Lord as you are. TRUE. (See chapter 5.)
4. You should get married in the temple. TRUE. (See chapter 15.)
5. It's okay to steady date in high school if there is only one person you really like or only one Mormon in your school. FALSE. (See chapter 11.)
6. The people that you see at dances or at school are your spiritual brothers and sisters. TRUE. (See chapter 7.)
7. You should set a standard for yourself to keep from ever getting close to the line of sin. TRUE. (See chapter 9.)
8. The prophet does not want us to have fun in high

Appendix B: Answers to “Guy-Girl Relationships: The Quiz”

school—that is why we have so many rules. FALSE. (See chapter 16.)

9. You can influence somebody just by the kind of person you are. TRUE. (See chapter 8.)

10. Most problems with guy-girl relationships aren't your fault, so you don't need to take responsibility for your actions. FALSE. (See chapter 18.)

PART 2: MULTIPLE CHOICE

1. If you are in the eighth grade, your best choice is to:

- a. ~~Kiss as many people as you can.~~
- b. ~~Go steady, but don't date.~~
- c. Enjoy good friendships. (See chapter 11.)

2. If you are with people who want you to do bad things, it's best to:

- a. ~~Stay and talk to them.~~
- b. ~~Do what they want you to do.~~
- c. Get out of the bad situation! (See chapter 20.)

3. The standard for “how far can you go” is best described as:

- a. ~~Whatever feels good at the time.~~
- b. ~~Keep it above the neck.~~
- c. Do not participate in passionate kissing, lie on top of another person, or touch the private parts of another person, with or without clothing. (See chapter 9.)

4. If you do something you know is wrong with a member of the opposite sex, that person will most likely:

- a. ~~Fall more in love with you.~~
- b. ~~Want to marry you in the temple.~~
- c. Like you less. (See chapter 13.)

Appendix B: Answers to “Guy-Girl Relationships: The Quiz”

5. By living a clean, moral life, you will:
 - a. ~~Strengthen your future marriage.~~
 - b. ~~Be more likely to marry somebody clean and moral.~~
 - c. ~~Influence others to be good.~~
 - d. All of the above (hint—this is the correct answer—hope you didn’t miss this one!). (See chapters 5, 7, and 8.)
6. Having the priesthood means in part that:
 - a. You shouldn’t make girls cry. (See chapter 4.)
 - b. ~~You are better than girls.~~
 - c. ~~You can boss girls around and treat them poorly.~~
 - d. ~~All of the above (hint—this is *not* the correct answer).~~
7. The phrase “don’t be like water” means:
 - a. ~~Don’t get your saliva in anybody’s mouth.~~
 - b. ~~Don’t freeze if it gets cold outside.~~
 - c. Be firm in your standards. (See chapter 9.)
8. When Mary told Jesus that they ran out of things to drink, Jesus said:
 - a. ~~“I’m too busy to help you!”~~
 - b. ~~“Could you go ask somebody else?”~~
 - c. “Whatever you want me to do, I’ll do it.” (See chapter 1.)
9. Who got out of a bad situation?
 - a. Joseph. (See chapter 2.)
 - b. ~~Samson.~~
 - c. ~~David.~~
 - d. ~~Akish.~~
 - e. ~~All of the above.~~

Appendix B: Answers to “Guy-Girl Relationships: The Quiz”

10. How can you best prepare for a temple marriage?
- ~~a. Be the kind of person you want to marry someday.~~
 - ~~b. Date people with high standards who can take you to the temple.~~
 - ~~c. Make a standard to keep yourself morally clean.~~
 - ~~d. Keep your baptismal covenants.~~
 - e. All of the above. (See chapters 5, 7, 9, and 15.)

PART 3. SHORT ANSWER

1. Jack and Jill are on a date. Jack wants to do something with Jill that she doesn't feel good about. When she says no, Jack says, “What's your problem? This is what people do on dates!” *Which principle from this book do you think is most applicable to Jill at this moment? Why?*

The correct answer could be almost any principle from the book. Jill could use her influence for good by setting an example for Jack. She could get out of a bad situation by running away. Hopefully she has already set a standard for herself so she won't be “unstable as water” and give in to what Jack says.

2. Fourteen-year-old Jennifer really likes this guy in her class named Kirby. One day Kirby gives her a note that says, “Will you go with me?” Jennifer knows she shouldn't date until she's sixteen, but she doesn't think there's anything wrong with just going out with somebody as long as you don't go on dates. *Which principle from this book would you share with Jennifer? How would you approach her about it?*

Again, there are many different principles that you could share. One I think is particularly applicable is the principle “Do things at the right time.” God has made everything beautiful in his time—and he has clearly said that high school is not the time for

Appendix B: Answers to “Guy-Girl Relationships: The Quiz”

pairing off. I would try to approach Jennifer with a lot of love and help her understand that I wasn't condemning her or telling her what to do, but that because I love her and want her to be happy, I want to make sure that she knows what the prophet has said and that she will be happier if she follows his counsel.

3. Jeff and his buddies always go to dances together. They like to dance with girls from their school, but there is this one girl that always tries to hang out with them. They come up with all kinds of ideas for avoiding this girl and try to get through dances without saying hi to her. *What principle(s) might they be forgetting? Why did you choose the one(s) you did?*

One answer could be “Don't make girls cry.” If they are avoiding her and she knows it, she could be really hurt. Another answer could be “Keep an eternal perspective.” If Jeff and his friends would step back from the situation, they might see that perhaps this young woman is going through a difficult time in her life. Perhaps Heavenly Father weeps when he sees that his own sons treat their spiritual sisters with such disrespect. It's not about whether Jeff and his friends want to dance with this girl; the question is, what can they do to show her the respect she deserves as a daughter of God?

4. Cheryl is dating a guy who treats her really bad. He yells at her, and he even hit her once but he said it was an accident. But Cheryl really likes him and doesn't want to lose him. You are the only person she has told about how this guy treats her. *What is your advice to her?*

It is going to be difficult, but Cheryl needs to get outside help. I would tell Cheryl to talk to her mom, her dad, or another trusted adult about the situation. And I would tell Cheryl that if she didn't talk to someone, I would. Cheryl might get mad at me, but this is

Appendix B: Answers to “Guy-Girl Relationships: The Quiz”

a situation that I think is too serious to handle alone. If Cheryl refused to tell an adult, I would talk to my bishop and get his advice on what I should do.

5. How do you think you can best “have fun” on dates?

There’s no right or wrong answer to this question—because it is what do you think? I think that the most important factor in having fun on a date is your attitude. If I go out with the attitude that my goal is to make sure my date has a good time, I can almost guarantee I will have fun. But if I am worried about myself and focus on the things I want, my chances of having fun are significantly less.

6. Compare and contrast Joseph, David, and Samson. In what ways were their situations similar? In what ways did they react differently to the temptations they faced? What principle(s) do you learn from their lives?

Joseph, David, and Samson were all powerful men. Joseph saved his people from starvation, David was the king who united Israel and Samson protected the Israelites from the oppressive Philistines. All of them had powerful spiritual experiences and saw miracles. Another similarity they have is that they were all tempted sexually. David and Samson gave in to temptation, and in consequence brought tragedy to their lives and many others. Joseph, however, refused to do wrong and was blessed for being faithful. One principle I learn from their lives is “Even if I am spiritually strong, I still need to work hard to resist temptation.” Another principle could be, “Don’t be prideful and think that I am the exception to the rules.”



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