

Alma 39:2**1** *Boasting - Pride*

Boasting in the arm of flesh, one of the commonest of all sins among worldly people is a gross evil; it is a sin born of pride, a sin that creates a frame of mind which keeps men from turning to the Lord and accepting his saving grace. When a man engages in self exultation because of his riches, his political power, his worldly learning, his physical prowess, his business acumen, or even his works of righteousness, he is not in tune with the Spirit of the Lord.”

Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, pp. 93-94

2 I heard Joseph Smith say that Oliver Cowdery, who was the second apostle in this Church, said to him, “If I leave this Church it will fall.”

Said Joseph, “Oliver, you try it.” Oliver tried it. He fell; but the kingdom of God did not....

I have seen Oliver Cowdery when it seemed as though the earth trembled under his feet. I never heard a man bear a stronger testimony than he did when under the influence of the Spirit. But the moment he left the kingdom of God, that moment his power fell.... He was shorn of his strength, like Samson in the lap of Delilah. He lost the power and testimony which he had enjoyed, and he never recovered it again in its fullness while in the flesh, although he died [a member of] the Church.

Teachings of Presidents of the Church—Wilford Woodruff [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2004], 104-105

Alma 39:3-4**3** *Forsake the Ministry*

You may have heard of Elder Alma Sonne, a former Assistant to the Twelve Apostles, but you may not be familiar with his life. He was a magnificent General Authority for many years and a great preacher of righteousness. Back in the early 1900s he went on a mission to the British Isles. He left behind a dear friend named Fred Dahle, whom Elder Sonne was later able to persuade to serve a mission. Fred then had the opportunity to serve in the British Isles at the same time Elder Sonne served.

Elder Sonne, as a young missionary, kept writing his friend, Fred Dahle, and pleading with him to come on a mission, but Brother Dahle expressed little interest. Eventually, however, he gave in to Elder Sonne’s pleading and, as was mentioned, he was called to serve in the British Isles. He later wrote to Elder Sonne, “Thank God, you were on the map when I was supposed to be a missionary.” Think of that. Elder Dahle’s gratitude knew no bounds because Elder Sonne helped him be on a mission when the Lord wanted him to be there.

One of Elder Sonne’s principal responsibilities on his mission was to plan travel arrangements for new converts traveling to America and the missionaries as they arrived and left the mission field. At the conclusion of his mission Elder Sonne was able to secure passage for himself, Elder Dahle, and other missionaries on a brand new ocean liner that was scheduled to make its maiden voyage from England to New York City. The year was 1912. The new ocean liner was the *Titanic*. Arrangements were made for a train to pick them up in New York, and they would travel across the United States on their way back to Cache Valley, Utah.

A few days before the great trip across the ocean and then across the United States, Elder Dahle sent a wire indicating that he could not make the scheduled departure and suggesting that the elders go on without him. However, Elder Sonne, for some inexplicable reason that would be known only later, canceled their bookings on the *Titanic* and rebooked them all on another ship, the *Mauretania*, leaving a day later. The others in the group manifested resentment because they were not sailing on the *Titanic*.

While they were en route, the purser of the *Mauretania* told Alma in confidence that the *Titanic* had struck an iceberg and sunk on the 15th of April, with the loss of 1,517 passengers and crew and only 705 survivors. The elders were stunned by the news. As Elder Sonne and Elder Dahle walked on the deck, dazing into the

dark waters of the Atlantic, Alma remembered Fred's letter. He turned to Elder Dahle and said, "Thank God, Fred, you were on the map when I was supposed to be on the *Titanic*" (Galyn Hopkins, Presentation to the Alma Sonne Family Reunion and a Faculty Inservice Meeting, Orem Institute of Religion).

Jack R. Christianson and K. Douglas Bassett, *Life Lessons from the Book of Mormon* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2003], 43-44

4 I hope we will not be... too proud to accept the assignments we are given. I pray that we will not be like the person in the well-known poem who said:

Father, where shall I work today?

And my love flowed warm and free.

Then He pointed out a tiny spot

And said, "Tend that for me."

I answered quickly, "Oh no; not that!

Why, no one would ever see,

No matter how well my work was done;

Not that little place for me."

And the word He spoke, it was not stern;

He answered me tenderly:

"Ah, little one, search that heart of thine,

Are thou working for them or for me?

Nazareth was a little place,

And so was Galilee.

--Meade McGuire

James E. Faust, in Conference Report, Oct. 2002 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2002], 56

5 We have inspiring examples of the submissive, faithful service of Latter-day Saints. One of the best known was that of President J. Reuben Clark. After he had served over 16 years as an extra-ordinarily influential first counselor, the First Presidency was reorganized and he was called as second counselor. Offering an example of humility and willingness to serve that has influenced generations, he said to the Church:

"In the service of the Lord, it is not where you serve but how. In the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, one takes the place to which one is duly called, which place one neither seeks nor declines" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1951, 154)...

Still, there is room for improvement in the commitment of some. When I ask stake presidents for suggestions on subjects I should treat at stake conferences, I often hear about members who refuse Church callings or accept callings and fail to fulfill their responsibilities...But this is not without consequences....

My brothers and sisters, if you are delinquent in commitment, please consider who it is you are refusing or neglecting to serve when you decline a calling or when you accept, promise, and fail to fulfill.

Dallin H. Oaks, in Conference Report, Oct. 2002 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2002], 72-74

6 I wish that every Latter-day Saint could say and mean it with all his heart: "I'll go where you want me to go. I'll say what you want me to say. I'll be what you want me to be" (*Hymns* [1985], 270). If we could all do that, we would be assured of the maximum of happiness here and exaltation in the celestial kingdom of God hereafter. *Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1988], 344

- 7 Never go to any place that you wouldn't take your priesthood with you. Stay out of such places. Someone said, when you find a place that is labeled "adults only; no children or youth allowed," no adults should be allowed either, if you will be safe from the pitfalls of the devil. We are members whom the Lord expects to be a light unto the world, and to set a standard for people to seek to it.

Harold B. Lee, *Ensign*, Nov. 1971 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1971], 14

Alma 39:3

- 8 Sexual Sin

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

Neal A. Maxwell, *Ensign*, May 1995, p. 67

- 9 "There are two influences in the world today," said President George Albert Smith, "and have been from the beginning. One is an influence that is constructive, that radiates happiness and builds character. The other influence is one that destroys, turns men into demons, tears down and discourages. We are all susceptible to both. . . .

"My grandfather [George A. Smith] used to say to his family, 'There is a line of demarcation, well defined, between the Lord's territory and the devil's. If you will stay on the Lord's side of the line you will be under his influence and will have no desire to do wrong; but if you cross to the devil's side of the line one inch, you are in the tempter's power, and if he is successful, you will not be able to think or even reason properly, because you will have lost the Spirit of the Lord.'

"When I have been tempted sometimes to do a certain thing, I have asked myself, 'Which side of the line am I on?' If I determined to be on the safe side, the Lord's side, I would do the right thing every time. So when temptation comes, think prayerfully about your problem, and the influence of the Spirit of the Lord will enable you to decide wisely. There is safety for us only on the Lord's side of the line.

"If you want to be happy," President Smith concluded, "remember, that all happiness worthy of the name is on the Lord's side of the line and all sorrow and disappointment is on the devil's side of the line."

George Albert Smith, *Sharing the Gospel with Others*, pp. 42-43

- 10 In the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints there is but one standard of morality. No young man has any more right to sow his wild oats in youth than a young girl. He who is unchaste in young manhood is untrue to the trust given to him by the parents of the girl, and she who is unchaste in maidenhood is untrue to her future husband and lays the foundation for unhappiness in the home, suspicion, and discord. Do not worry about these teachers who encourage promiscuity and self-gratification. Just keep in mind this eternal truth, that chastity is a virtue to be prized as one of life's noblest achievements.

In this day when modesty is thrust into the background, and chastity is considered an outmoded virtue, I appeal to parents especially, and to my fellow teachers, both in and out of the Church, to teach youth to keep their souls unmarred and unsullied from this and other debasing sins, the consequences of which will smite and haunt them intimately until their conscience is seared and their character becomes sordid. A chaste, not a profligate, life is the source of virile manhood. The test of true womanhood comes when the woman stands

innocent at the court of chastity. All qualities are crowned by this most precious virtue of beautiful womanhood. It is the most vital part of the foundation of a happy married life and is the source of strength and perpetuity of the race.

David O. McKay, in Conference Report, April 1967, 7-8

11 The power of creation—or may we say procreation—is not just an incidental part of the plan: it is essential to it. Without it the plan could not proceed. The misuse of it may disrupt the plan.

Much of the happiness that may come to you in this life will depend on how you use this sacred power of creation.

Boyd K. Packer, *Ensign*, July 1972, 111

12 *In matters of human intimacy, you must wait!* You must wait until you can give everything, and you cannot give everything until you are legally and lawfully married. To give illicitly that which is not your to give (remember, you are not your own [1 Corinthians 6:19]) and to give only part of that which cannot be followed with the gift of your whole self is emotional Russian roulette. If you persist in pursuing physical satisfaction without the sanction of heaven, you run the terrible risk of such spiritual, physis damage that you may undermine *both* your longing for physical intimacy and your ability to give wholehearted devotion to a later, truer love. You may come to that truer moment of ordained love, of real union, only to discover to your horror that you should have saved you have spent, and that only God's grace can recover the piecemeal dissipation of the virtue you so casually gave away. On your wedding day the very best gift you can give your eternal companion is your very best self—clean and pure and worthy of such purity in return.

Jeffrey R. Holland, in Conference Report Oct. 1998, 100; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 76-77.

13 President Spencer W. Kimball called attention to a “survey in which seminary teachers asked students to place certain commandments of the Lord in the order of their importance, the word of wisdom placed first and chastity fifth”. Although the survey was taken over thirty years ago, and times have changed, we may still get the same results among some young people. In the past generations sexual behavior was not spoken of as openly as it is today, and because it is openly discussed in society, Satan has convinced many that illicit sex is no a sin. An article from the same time period as President Kimball's statement shows how common sexual discussions had become then. It is much more openly discussed today than it was then.

Every age has employed evil means to seduce the minds of men, but none has been more subtle and destructive than or modern-day use of verbal dualism, popularly called semantics.

Self-appointed intellectuals, living in the rarified atmosphere of their own Tower of Babel, have made a devastating contribution to society, all the way from deception to destruction, by interchanging right with wrong, good with evil, and perverting the truth by substituting it with dangerous lies.

A case in point is the effort to camouflage unbridled sexual behavior by giving it polite and acceptable names.

Examples of Semantics

Put sex in an academic garb and it becomes education.

Add a clerical collar and it becomes new morality.

Dress it in judicial robes and it becomes license.

Clothe it in godless communion and it becomes free love.

Roll it in the language of the gutter and it becomes literature.

Exploit it and it becomes advertising.

Phrase it in the language of the “lower children” and it becomes a love-in in an unprintable four-letter word.

Call it “like it is” and it becomes the animalizing of the race as merely male and female.

Our young people today need to know and understand how the Lord looks upon sexual behavior. Parents may say too little or too much, but children should be taught. President Spencer W. Kimball counseled: "The home is the teaching situation. Every father should talk to his, every mother to her daughter. Then it would leave them totally without excuse should they ignore the counsel they have received." Alma's teachings to Corianton gave us a pattern for teaching our youth.

Monte S. Nyman, *The Record of Alma*, pp.489-490.

Alma 39:4

14 *The many is no excuse*

We are constrained to excuse ourselves because of the failings and faults of others. We are constrained to feel that since everybody is doing it, it is all right for us to do it, and this is persuasively propounded by people in various fields who rely on the statistical method and suggest that since large numbers are doing it, then it must be all right for everybody to do it, just as long as you don't go too far.

Marion D. Hanks, Conference Report, Oct. 1964, 115.

15 "Oh, if our young people could learn this basic lesson to always keep good company, never to be found with those who tend to lower their standards! Let every youth select associates who will keep him on tiptoe, trying to reach the heights. Let him never choose associates who encourage him to relax in carelessness."

Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball, ed. By Edward L. Kimball [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1982], 287

16 "Genuine friends often can provide spiritual shepherding. Note that I refer to genuine friends in the category of spiritual shepherds. Notice also that I did not include peers in that group. I readily acknowledge that peers in some cases can be and are an influence for good. . . . Unfortunately, so many times there are situations where peer influence has a definite negative effect. We read and hear of so many surveys and interviews where youth disclose that it was the influence of pressure of peers that led them to immoral and foolish behavior. Satan knows this. . . . He is aware of the tremendous influence a group of peers can have on an individual. There is a compelling desire to belong—to be one of the group. . . . Often the easiest and simplest nudging is that 'everyone is doing it' or 'it's the cool thing' or 'how do you know it's bad if you haven't tried it?' Don't be deceived. Don't be influenced with this kind of enticement. Keep your eyes above the crowd."

W. Eugene Hansen, *Ensign*, May 1996, [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1996], . 38-39

17 Face reality. Sometimes we wish we could fly from our troubles. King David did. He had been a good man, but he engulfed himself in great difficulties. It seemed to be more than he could bear. One day he cried, "Oh that I had wings like a dove! For then would I fly away, and be at rest" (Pa. 55:6). His guilt-fired emotions had gained the upper hand. He wanted to get away from everything. Some try to fly away physically, and others try to do so emotionally. That does not solve problems. The only true escape route is marked with the sign "personal responsibility."

Hugh W. Pinnock, in Conference Report, Apr. 1982 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1982], 17

Alma 39: 5-6

Immorality

18 "The power of procreation is not an incidental part of the plan of happiness, it is the key—the very key. . . . True love requires respect and reserving until after marriage the sharing of that affection which unlocks those sacred powers in that fountain of life. It means avoiding situations where physical desire might take control. Courtship is a time to measure integrity, moral strength, and worthiness. The invitation, 'If you love

me, you will let me,' exposes a major flaw in character. It deserves the reply, "If you really loved me, you would never ask me to transgress. If you understood the gospel, you couldn't!" . . . *In the universal battle for human souls, the adversary takes enormous numbers of prisoners. . . . Every soul confined in a concentration camp of sin and guilt has a key to the gate. The key is labeled **Repentance**. . . . The world being what it is, if you have already made a mistake, it can certainly be understood. It cannot, under the law, be condoned, but it can be understood. You must stop conduct that is immoral. You must stop it now! I know of no sin connected with transgression of the moral law which cannot be forgiven, assuming, of course, full and complete repentance."*

Boyd K. Packer, BYU Fireside, Mar. 29, 1992

- 19 "Every soul is entitled to the right to come into this world in a legitimate way—in the way the Father has willed that souls should come. Whosoever takes a course contrary to this is guilty of an almost irreparable crime. Is there any wonder, then, that the Lord places the violation of this covenant of marriage and the loss of virtue as second only to the shedding of innocent blood?"

Joseph F. Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 2:92-93

- 20 "Clearly God's greatest concern regarding mortality are how one gets into this world and how one gets out of it. . . . As for the taking of life, we are generally quite responsible. Most people, it seems to me, readily sense the sanctity of life and as a rule do not run up to friends, put a loaded revolver to their heads, and cavalierly pull the trigger. Furthermore, when there is a click of the hammer rather than an explosion of lead, and a possible tragedy seems to have been averted, no one in such a circumstance would be so stupid as to sigh, 'Oh, good. I didn't go all the way' But in the significance and sanctity of giving life, some of us are not so responsible, and in the larger world swirling around us we find near-criminal responsibility."

Jeffrey R. Holland, *On Earth As It Is in Heaven*, pp. 182-191

- 21 Elder Boyd K. Packer has taught: "There was provided in our bodies—and this is sacred—a power of creation, a light, so to speak, that has the power to kindle other lights. This gift was to be used only within the sacred bonds of marriage. Through the exercise of this power of creation, a mortal body may be conceived, a spirit enter into it, and a new soul born into this life." Further, this power "is a gift from God our Father. In the righteous exercise of it as in nothing else, we may come close to him." On the other hand, "God has declared in unmistakable language that misery and sorrow will follow the violation of the laws of chastity. . . . Crowning glory awaits you if you live worthily. The loss of the crown may well be punishment enough. Often, very often, we are punished as much by our sins as we are for them."

- 22 "Humanity will rise or fall through its attitude toward the law of chastity."

Mark E. Peterson, Conference Report, April 1969, p. 62

- 23 Think of it—unchastity is second only to murder. Perhaps there is a common element in those two things: unchastity and murder. Both have to do with life, which touches upon the highest divine powers. Murder involves the wrongful taking of life; sexual transgression may involve the wrongful giving of life, or the wrongful tampering with the sacred fountains of life-giving power.

Bruce C. Hafen, *New Era*, February, 2002, 10.

24 “There are at least three dangers that threaten the Church within. . . . They are flattery of prominent men in the world, false educational ideas, and sexual impurity. But the third subject mentioned—personal purity, is perhaps of greater importance than either of the other two. We believe in one standard of morality for men and women. If purity of life is neglected, all other dangers set in upon us like the rivers of waters when the flood gates are opened.”

Joseph F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine*, p. 313

25 “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. There may be momentary pleasure. For a time it may seem like everything is wonderful. But quickly the relationship will sour. . . . Love begins to die. Bitterness, jealousy, anger, and even hate begin to grow. All of these are the natural results of sin and transgression. On the other hand, when we obey the law of chastity and keep ourselves morally clean, we will experience the blessings of increased love and peace, greater trust and respect for our marital partners, [and] deeper commitment to each other. . . .”

Ezra Taft Benson, 1987-88 *BYU Devotional & Fireside Speeches*, p. 51

26 In exploiting the body of another—which means exploiting his or her soul—one desecrates the Atonement of Christ, which saved the 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.

Please never say: “Who does it hurt? Why not a little freedom? I can transgress now and repent later” Please don’t be so foolish and so cruel. You cannot with impunity “crucify Christ afresh” [see Hebrews 6:6]. “Flee fornication”[1 Corinthians 6:18], Paul cries, and flee “*anything like unto it*” [D&C 59:6; italic added], the Doctrine and Covenants adds. Why? Well, for one reason, because of the incalculable suffering in both body and spirit endured by the Savior of the world so that we *could* flee. We owe Him something for that. Indeed, we 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*”[1 Corinthians 6:19-20; italics added]. In sexual transgression the soul is at stake—the body and the spirit.

Jeffrey R. Holland, in Conference Report, Oct. 1998, 99-100; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 76.

27 “A quarter of a century ago historian John Lukacs perceptively warned that sexual immorality was not merely a marginal development but, instead, was at the center of the moral crisis of our time. Some thought Lukacs was overstating it, but consider the subsequent and sobering tragedy of children having children, of unwed mothers, of children without parents, of hundreds of thousands of fatherless children, and of rampant spousal infidelity. These and related consequences threaten to abort society’s future even before the future arrives! Yet carnalists are unwilling to deny themselves, even though all of society suffers from an awful avalanche of consequences!”

Neal A. Maxwell, *Ensign*, May 1995, p. 67

28 “Whenever you step over the line in an immoral act or in doing any other evil thing, the Church is that much weaker. . . . When you stand true and faithful, it is that much stronger. Each one of you counts. . . . If any of you has stepped over the line, please do not think all is lost. The Lord reaches out to help you, and there are many willing hands in the Church also who will help. Put evil behind you. Pray about the situation, talk with your parents if you can, and talk with your bishop. You will find that he will listen and do so with confidentiality. . . .”

There is hope for you. Your lives are ahead, and they can be filled with happiness, even though the past may have been marred by sin. . . . 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 to go forward with confidence and faith.”

Gordon B. Hinckley, *Ensign*, May 1996, p. 94

29

Sexual immorality is here identified as the third most serious sin, exceeded in seriousness only by the sin against the Holy Ghost and murder. When persons tamper with the procreative power they tamper with.” the sources of human life, with that which is at the heart and core of the plan of salvation. President Joseph F. Smith taught: “No more loathsome cancer disfigures the body and soul of society today than the frightful affliction of sexual sin. It vitiates the very fountain of life, and bequeaths its foul effects to the yet unborn as a legacy of death. (*Improvement Era*, vol 20, p. 739.)

President Smith also declared: “We desire with holy zeal to emphasize the enormity of sexual sins. Though often regarded as insignificant by those not knowing the will of God, they are in his eyes an abomination; and if we are to remain his favored people, they must be shunned as the gates of hell. The evil results of these sins are so patent in vice, crime, misery and disease that it would appear that all, young and old, must perceive and sense them. They are destroying the world. If we are to be preserved we must abhor them, shun them, not practice the least of them, for they weaken and enervate, they kill man spiritually, they make him unfit company of the righteous and the presence of God.” (*Gospel Doctrine*, pp. 275-76.) as to the effects of immorality upon families, see *Commentary* 2:23-24.

Murder, the unlawful killing of another human being with malice aforethought, is the second most serious sin. It is an abomination in the sight of God because it, like unchastity, involves the unlawful tampering with human life. It is a “sin unto death” (see 1 John 5: 16-17), an offense which is called the *unforgivable* sin. Joseph Smith taught: “A murderer, for instance, one that sheds innocent blood cannot have forgiveness” (*Teachings*, p. 339). It is unforgivable in the sense that it is not covered by the atonement of Jesus Christ; the guilty person will suffer for his or her own sin. “The call to repentance and baptism which includes murderers (3 Nephi 30) has reference to those who took life while engaged in unrighteous wars, as did the Lamanites, because they were compelled to do so, and not because they in their hearts sought the blood of their fellow men. On the other hand the Jews on whose hands the blood of Christ was found were not invited to repent and be baptized. (acts 3:19-21).” (Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, p. 520; see also *Teachings*, pp. 188, 339.)

“Satan is called Perdition, meaning he is the author of ruination and the father of lies. Those who bask in the light of heaven and come to know God, and who then sin against that light and come to fight the faith of their fathers with a viciousness and a vengeance known only to the ungodly—these become the *sons of perdition*. Their sin is blasphemy, contempt for and defiance against the Holy Ghost and his witness.” (Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millett, *The holy Ghost*, pp. 144-45.) One who sins against the Holy Ghost—who has the heavens opened and comes to know God, and then denies that witness, turns sour t the sweet light of the gospel, and becomes any enemy and apostate to the cause of truth—that person is guilty of denying the Holy Ghost, the most serious sin in all eternity, an offense which shall not be forgiven in this world nor in the world to come. This crime is called the *unpardonable* sin. It is unpardonable in the sense that it is not covered or pardoned by the atonement of Christ, nor may any amount of the guilty person’s suffering here or hereafter atone for or pardon the pernicious deed and make up for the misery and suffering to the Saints which inevitably follow in its wake. (For further information on this most serious offense against God and man, see JST, Matthew 12:26-27; Hebrews 6:4-6; 10:29; D&C 76:30-38; 132:27; *Teachings*, pp.24,67,156,357-58; see also McConkie and Millett, *The Holy Ghost*, pp. 143-48.)

Millet & McConkie, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, Vol. 3, pp. 289-291.

30 *All unchastity will someday be disclosed.* There comes a time when the fornicator, like the murderer, wishes he could hide—hide from all the world, from all the ghosts, and especially his own, but there is no place to hide. There are dark corners and hidden spots and closed cars in which the transgression can be committed, but to totally conceal it is impossible. There is no night so dark, no room so tightly locked, no canyon so closed in, no desert so totally uninhabited that one can find a place to hide from his sins, from himself or from the Lord. Eventually, one must face the great maker.

The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball 1982], 265-266.

31 Physical intimacy between husband and wife is beautiful and sacred. It is ordained of God for the creation of children and for the expression of love between husband and wife. God has commanded that sexual intimacy be reserved for marriage.

When you are 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 an eternal and loving family. You protect yourself from the spiritual and emotional damage that come from sharing sexual intimacy outside of marriage. You also protect yourself from harmful diseases. Remaining sexually pure helps you to be confident and truly happy and improves your ability to make good decisions now and in the future.

The Lord's standard regarding sexual purity is clear and unchanging. Do not have any sexual relations before marriage, and be completely faithful to your spouse after marriage. Do not allow the media, your peers, or others to persuade you that sexual intimacy before marriage is acceptable. It is not. In God's sight, sexual sins are extremely serious. They defile the sacred power God has given us to create life. The prophet Alma taught that sexual sins are more serious than any other sins except murder or denying the Holy Ghost (see Alma 39:5).

Never do anything that could lead to sexual transgression. Treat others with respect, not as objects used to satisfy lustful and selfish desires. Before 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 do anything else that arouses sexual feelings. Do not arouse those emotions in your own body. Pay attention to the promptings of the Spirit so that you can be clean and virtuous. The Spirit of the Lord will withdraw from one who is in sexual transgression.

Avoid situations that invite increased temptations, such as late-night or overnight activities away from home or activities where there is a lack of adult supervision. Do not participate in discussions or any media that arouse sexual feelings. Do not participate in any type of pornography. The Spirit can help you know when you are at risk and give you the strength to remove yourself from the situation. Have faith in and be obedient to the righteous counsel of your parents and leaders.

Homosexual and lesbian behavior is a serious sin. If you find yourself struggling with same-gender attraction or you are being persuaded to participate in inappropriate behavior, seek counsel from your parents and bishop. They will help you.

Victims of sexual abuse are not guilty of sin and do not need to repent. If you have been a victim of abuse, know that you are innocent and that God loves you. Talk to your parents or another trusted adult, and seek your bishop's counsel immediately. They can support you spiritually and assist you in getting the protection and help you need. The process of healing may take time. Trust in the Savior. He will heal you and give you peace.

If you are tempted to commit any form of sexual transgression, seek help from your parents and bishop. Pray to your Father in Heaven, who will help you resist temptation and overcome inappropriate thoughts and feelings. If you have committed sexual transgression, talk to your bishop now and begin to process of repentance so that you can find peace and have the full companionship of the Spirit.

Make a personal commitment to be sexually pure. By your words and actions, encourage others to do the same. *For the Strength of the Youth, 2011, pp. 35-37.*

32 Alma 39:5-6

Murder

[The Church defines murder as] “The deliberate and unjustified taking of human life.”

General Handbook 10-13

33 “. . . If a member of our Church, having received the light of the Holy Spirit, commits this capital crime [murder], he will not receive forgiveness in this world nor in the world to come. The revelations of God to the Church abound in commandments forbidding us to shed blood.”

Wilford Woodruff; as quoted in *Messages of the First Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1833-1964*, comp. by James R. Clark [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965], 3:205.

34 [The Telestial Kingdom] embraces those on earth who willfully reject the GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST, and commit serious SINS such as MURDER, ADULTERY, lying, and loving to make a lie 9but yet do not commit the UNPARDONABLE SIN, and who do not repent in mortality. They will be cleansed in the postmortal SPIRIT WORLD or spirit prison before the resurrection (D&C 76: 81-85, 98-106; Rev.22:15). Telestial inhabitants as innumerable as the stars will come forth in the last resurrection and then be ‘servants of the Most High; but where God and Christ dwell they cannot come” (D&C 76:1112).

Encyclopedia of Mormonism, ed. By Daniel H. Ludlow [New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1992], 4:1443

35 “Thou shalt not kill; and he that kills shall not have forgiveness in this world, nor in the world to come” (D&C 42:18).... At least concerning members of the Church, to whom this revelation, which is entitled “the law of the Church,” was addressed. We do know that there are murders committed by Gentiles for which they at least can repent, be baptized, and receive a remission of their sins (see 3 Nephi 30:1-2).

Bruce R. McConkie, *A Witness for the Articles of Faith* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1985], 231.

36 Even among willful murderers there are grades and categories... There are those who kill in drunkenness, in rage, in anger, in jealousy. There are those who kill for gain, for power, for fear. There are those who kill for lust. They certainly will suffer different degrees of punishment hereafter.

Spencer W. Kimball, *The Miracle of Forgiveness* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1969], 129-130.

37 “Behold, I speak unto the church. Thou shalt not kill; and he that kills shall not have forgiveness in this world, nor in the world to come” (D&C 42:18)

In the final analysis, only God, who can discern the thoughts of the heart, can judge whether a particular killing is an unforgivable murder or not.

Daniel H. Ludlow, ed., *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 2:971, s.v. “Murder”.

38 Alma 39:5-6

Deny the Holy Ghost

Denying the Holy Ghost is “an *unpardonable* sin because it cannot be paid for (or pardoned) either by the sinner himself or through the atonement of Jesus Christ.”

Daniel H. Ludlow, *Companion*, 222, emphasis in original.

39 The eyes can be deceived, as can the other physical senses, but the testimony of the Holy Ghost is certain. The sin against the Holy Ghost requires such knowledge that it is manifestly impossible for the rank and file to commit such a sin. Comparatively few Church members will... deny the Holy Ghost.

Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball, ed. By Edward L. Kimball [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1982], 23

40 “A sin that is unpardonable cannot be paid for either by the atoning blood of Christ or by the personal suffering of the sinner. The only sin that falls into this category is denying the Holy Ghost. . . . Alma identified denying the Holy Ghost as the most abominable sin. According to the Lord, individuals committing this sin do five things: (1) They ‘know my power, and (2) have been made partakers thereof, and (3) suffered themselves through the power of the devil to be overcome and (4) to deny the truth and (5) defy my power’ (D&C 76:31). The key to these requirements appears to be the power of the priesthood. An individual must bear and be a partaker of the priesthood and then defy that power. . . . A person must have made priesthood covenants with God and then have received knowledge and power beyond what the vast majority of us have received. . . . If they have lived on this earth and have received a mortal body, they shall come forth in the last resurrection with an immortal body; but that body will not be glorified. Instead they ‘go away into the lake of fire and brimstone, with the devil and his angels’ (D&C 76:36).”

Dean Garrett; as quoted in *The Book of Mormon: Alma, The Testimony of the Word*, ed. By Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate [Provo, UT; Religious Studies Center, BYU, 1992], pp. 157-160

41 [Denying the Holy Ghost] is more than denial; it is more than inactivity in the church; it is more than losing one’s testimony. As the revelations attest, such a person comes to *defy* the truth, to wage war against the Lord, His servants, and His work.

Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet, *The Holy Ghost* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1989], 146

42 “All sins shall be forgiven except the sin against the Holy Ghost; for Jesus will save all except the sons of perdition. What must a man do to commit the unpardonable sin? He must receive the Holy Ghost, have the heavens opened unto him, and know God, and then sin against Him. After a man has sinned against the Holy Ghost, there is no repentance for him. He has got to say that the sun does not shine while he sees it; he has got to deny Jesus Christ when the heavens have been opened unto him, and to deny the plan of salvation with his eyes open to the truth of it; and from that time he begins to be an enemy.” This is the case with many of the apostates of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

When a man begins to be an enemy to this work, he hunts me, he seeks to kill me, and never ceases to thirst for my blood. He gets the spirit of the devil—the same spirit that they had who crucified the Lord of Life—the same spirit that sins against the Holy Ghost. You cannot save such persons; you cannot bring them to repentance; they make open war, like the devil, and awful is the consequence.

Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 358

43 The word *pardon* as used in the scriptures means to be sanctified, to be clean, to reach a point where a broken law has no further claim upon a sinner. Thus, the most serious sin is *unpardonable* because the law will always have a claim upon the sinner, and the sinner will always remain unclean; he cannot ever regain the presence of God, for “no unclean thing can enter into his kingdom” (3 Nephi 27:19). All unpardonable sins are of necessity also unforgivable.

The word *forgiveness* as used in the scriptures, indicates one is “given something before.” Thus, when a person repents of a sin, Jesus Christ, through his Atonement, pays for (or atones for) part of the broken law *before* the person makes *full* payment. He is “fore-given” that part of the penalty paid for by Jesus Christ. Forgiveness is possible only upon repentance; those who refuse to repent “remain as though there had been no redemption made, except it be the loosing of the bands of death.” [Alma 11:41; read also D&C 19:15-20]

In Summary:

Deny the Holy Ghost	Unpardonable and unforgivable	Atonement does not pay
Shedding innocent blood Adultery with endowment	Unforgiveable but pardonable	Atonement does not pay. The person suffers
Immorality	Forgivable	Atonement pays when repentant

Monte S. Nyman, *The Record of Alma*, p. 501

Alma 39:8

- 44 “Do not take comfort in the fact that your transgressions are not known by others. That is like an ostrich with his head buried in the sand. He sees only darkness and feels comfortably hidden. In reality he is ridiculously conspicuous. Likewise our every act is seen by our Father in Heaven and His Beloved Son. They know everything about us. . . . I invite each one of you to thoughtfully review your life. . . . Is there a dark corner that needs to be cleaned out? . . . When it is quiet and you can think clearly, does your conscience tell you to repent?”

Richard G. Scott, *Ensign*, May 1995, p. 77

Alma 39:9

- 45 *Lust of Your Eyes*

“We must be very careful of the entertainment we allow into our homes. Parents sometimes allow their children to see and hear things that are objectionable because they have more and more difficulty finding a movie, videotape, or television program that does not contain offensive elements. Rather than ban entertainment, parents tend to permit their children to watch a movie with violence or profanity or sexual content, hoping their children will realize that Hollywood’s standards do not reflect those of the parents. The difference between Hollywood’s standards and those of most Americans is appalling, as shown in a 1991 study. ‘More than one hundred top television writers and executives were asked questions that paralleled a poll taken of average American viewers. The results:

- A whopping 85 percent of the country believes adultery to be wrong. But in Hollywood, it’s 49 percent.
- . . . 4 percent of the nation says it has no religious affiliation, compared to 45 percent in Hollywood.
- Some 76 percent of Americans feel [homosexuality is] wrong. In Hollywood, it’s 20 percent.
- Abortion rights are supported by 59 percent of the country [which is appalling] compared to Hollywood’s 97 percent.’ (Chris Hicks, *Deseret News*, 6/19/92)

Truly, parents and children will need to be diligent and cautious in choosing what type of entertainment to take into their homes.”

Joseph B. Wirthlin, *Ensign*, Mar. 1993, p. 71

- 46 “A bishop reported that he had observed that the spiritual level of the young priesthood bearers in his ward was declining. Through his personal interviews with them, he discovered that many of them were watching R-rated movies. When he asked them where they went to see such trash, they said, ‘. . . We watch them at home. We have cable television, and when our parents are gone we watch anything we want to.’ . . . The Lord and his living prophets are counting on you to avoid the trash that surrounds you in the media. . . . Temptations are all around us, and today with the advent of the Internet, they are increasing. There is much that is positive in the world of the media, but there is so much that is negative. If we permit ourselves to become involved with the negative, there will be much more cause for the devil to laugh and his angels to rejoice.”

Joe J. Christensen, *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, p. 40

47 The lust of your eyes. In our day, what does that mean? Movies, television, programs, and video recordings that are both suggestive and lewd. Magazines and books that are obscene and pornographic. We counsel you young men, not to pollute your minds with such degrading matter, for the mind through which this filth passes is never the same afterwards. Don't see R-rated movies or vulgar videos or participate in any entertainment that is immoral, suggestive or pornographic.

Ezra Taft Benson, *Ensign*, May 1986 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1986], 45.

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

H. Burke Peterson, *Ensign*, Nov. 1993, p. 43

49 Pornography, which is a seedbed for more blatant immorality, is no longer regarded as back-alley fare. In too many homes and lives, it is now regarded as a legitimate slice of entertainment. Pornography robs its victims of self-respect and of an appreciation of the beauties of life. It tears down those who indulge and pulls them to a slough of evil thoughts and possibly evil deeds. It seduces, destroys, and distorts the truth about love and intimacy. It is more deadly than a foul disease. Pornography is as addictive and self-destructive as illicit drugs, and it literally destroys the personal relationships of those who become its slaves.

Not one of us can afford to partake of this rubbish. We cannot risk the damage it does to the most precious of relationships—marriage—and to other interactions within the family. We cannot risk the effect it will have on our spirit and soul. Salacious videotapes, 900 telephone numbers, the filth found on the Internet, sensual magazines and movies—all are traps to be avoided like the deadliest of plagues.

Gordon B. Hinckley, *Standing for Something* [New York: Times Books, 2000], 36-37.

50 In its simplest terms, self-mastery is doing those things we should do and not doing those things we should not do. It requires strength, willpower, and honesty. As the traffic on the communications highway becomes a parking lot, we must depend more and more on our own personal moral filters to separate the good from the bad. Marvelous as it is, in many ways, there is something hypnotic about using the Internet. I refer specifically to spending endless time in chat rooms or visiting the pornography sites.

James E. Faust, in Conference Report, Apr. 2000 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2000], 56

51 "There is neither happiness nor peace to be gained from surrendering to the weakness of indulging in these things which degrade and destroy. When such material is on television, turn off the set. Stop being a boob in front of the tube. Avoid titillating videotapes as you would a foul disease. They are in the same category. Stay away from pornographic magazines and other destructive literature. There is too much of good to see, there is too much of wonderful reading to be experienced to waste time and destroy character and willpower in submitting to such destructive rot."

Gordon B. Hinckley, *Ensign*, Nov. 1992, pp. 51-52

52 Each person must keep himself clean and free from lusts.... He must shun ugly, polluted thoughts and acts as he would an enemy. Pornographic and erotic stories and pictures are worse than polluted food. Shun them. The body has power to rid itself of sickening food. The person who entertains filthy stories or pornographic pictures and literature records them in his marvelous human computer, the brain, which can't forget such filth. Once recorded, it will always remain there, subject to recall.

Spencer W. Kimball, *Ensign*, July 1978 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1978], 3-7.

53 Recently a certain moving picture was acclaimed the best of the year. I have not seen it, nor do I anticipate doing so. But I am told that it is laden with sex, that the use of profanity runs throughout.

Pornography... producers grow rich on the gullibility of those who like to watch it... You do not need a road map to foretell where indulgence will take you. Contrast that with the beauty, the peace, the wonderful feeling that comes of living near to the Lord and rising above...

This applies to you, my dear boys who are in this meeting. You are particular targets for the adversary. If he can get you now, he knows he may win you for a lifetime. There has been implanted within you wondrous powers and instincts for a divine purpose. However, when these are perverted, they become destroyers rather than builders. Gordon B. Hinckley, in Conference Report, Apr. 2003 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2003], 63

54 If we do not make good choices, the media can devastate our families and pull our children away from the narrow gospel path. In the virtual reality of large and small screens, family-destructive viewpoints and behavior are regularly portrayed as pleasurable, as stylish, as exciting, and as normal. Often the media's most devastating attacks on family are not direct or frontal or openly immoral. Intelligent evil is too cunning for that, knowing that most people still profess belief in family and in traditional values. Rather, the attacks are subtle and *amoral*—issues of right and wrong don't even come up. Immorality and sexual innuendo are everywhere, causing some to believe that because everyone is doing it, it must be all right. This pernicious evil is not out in the street somewhere; it is coming right into our homes, right into the heart of our families...

The new morality preached from the media's pulpit is nothing more than the old immorality. It attacks religion. It undermines the family. It turns virtue into vice and vice into virtue....

The long-cherished values of abstinence from intimate relationships before marriage and complete fidelity between husband and wife after marriage are denigrated and derided.

We see a rapid increase in cyberporn, involving sexual addiction over the Internet. Some become so addicted to viewing Internet pornography and participating in dangerous online chat rooms that they ignore their marriage covenants and family obligations and often put their employment at risk....

According to one social observer: "Television...has replaced the family, the school, and the church—in that order—as the principal [instrument] for socialization and transmission of values... Greed, debauchery, violence, unlimited self-gratification, absence of moral restraint...are the daily fare glamorously dished up to our children. (*At Century's End: Great Minds Reflect on Our Times*, ed. by Nathan P. Gardels [1995], 53).

M. Russell Ballard, in Conference Report, Oct. 2003 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2003], 15-17.

Alma 39:9

55 *Cross Yourself*

"Some people evidently read into this statement something that is not intended; they think it pertains to the practice of physically drawing a cross as it is done by members of some Christian churches.

"The meaning of the expression 'cross yourself' is clarified in other scriptures. For example, 3 Nephi 12:30 says: 'For it is better that ye should deny yourselves of these things, wherein ye will take up your cross, than that ye should be cast into hell.' In Matthew 16:24 the Savior says, 'If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.' Both of these scriptures indicate that to 'cross yourself' means to deny yourself. In the [Joseph Smith Translation] of the New Testament the Savior makes it absolutely clear that this is the meaning of the term: 'And now for a man to take up his cross, is to deny himself all ungodliness, and every worldly lust, and keep my commandments.' (Matthew 16:26.)"

A slightly expanded meaning to the phrase might be, "You have been going in this direction; now reverse your course and go in another direction." Or in other words, repent!

Daniel H. Ludlow, A Companion to Your Study of the Book of Mormon, p. 223

56 It is not possible to have a free ride on the road to joy, and there is no real joy that does not involve self-denial and self-discipline.

Joseph B. Wirthlin, in Conference Report, Apr. 1982 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of :Latter-day Saints, 1982], 33.

57 Some say they are born with some tendency. Whether you are born with them or you acquired them or you got them through over-medication, addiction, or any other way, what should you do? Resist them! You resist them and push them away. How long? As long as you live. There are some things that are a life-long battle.

Boyd K. Packer, CES Fireside for Young Adults, 2 Feb. 2003, 6; as quoted in Jack R. Christianson and K. Douglas Bassett, *Life Lessons from the Book of Mormon* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2003], 52.

Alma 39:10

58 *Counsel*

“As well as establishing worthy goals, charting the course prevents one from living an un-planned, haphazard life—a tumbleweed existence.”

Spencer W. Kimball, *Miracle of Forgiveness*, p. 233-234

59 Some counselors want to delve deeper than is emotionally or spiritually healthy. They sometimes want to draw out and analyze and take apart and dissect.

While a certain amount of catharsis may be healthy, overmuch of it can be degenerating. It is seldom as easy to put something back together as it is to take it apart.

By probing too deeply, or talking endlessly about some problems, we can foolishly cause the very thing we are trying to prevent.

You probably know about the parents who said, “Now, children, while we are gone, whatever you do, don’t take the stool and go into the pantry and climb up to the second shelf and move the cracker box and get that sack of beans and put one up your nose, will you?”

There is a lesson there.

Boyd K. Packer, in Conference Report, Apr. 178 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of L:atter-day Saints, 1978], 138-139.

60 **Alma 39:11**

Example

The way we live outweighs any words we may profess to follow.

Delbert L. Stapley, *Ensign*, November 1974, 20.

61 “I think the greatest crime in all this world is to lead men and women, the children of God, away from the true principles. We see in the world today philosophies of various kinds, tending to destroy faith, faith in God, faith in the principles of the gospel. What a dreadful thing that is.

“The Lord says if we labor all our days and save but one soul, how great will be our joy with him; on the other hand how great will be our sorrow and our condemnation if through our acts we have led one soul away from this truth.

“He who blinds one soul, he who spreads error, he who destroys, through his teachings, divine truth, truth that would lead a man to the kingdom of God and to its fullness, how great shall be his condemnation and his punishment in eternity. For the destruction of a soul is the destruction of the greatest things that has ever been created.”

Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 1:314

62 Just the way you smile or the way you offer to help someone can build their faith. And should you forget who you are, just the way you speak and the way you behave can destroy faith.

Henry B. Eyring, in Conference Report, Oct. 2002 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2002], 81.

63 LeGrand's [Richards] father's daily teachings so impressed the boy that he took responsibility to safeguard his mind be controlling what he allowed to enter it. He tells how one day "I walked away from the old Co-op corner, where we used to play our first games, and I resolved that no friend of mine would ever be able to accuse me of befouling his mind with dirty stories like I had heard there." And he has many times repeated the classic statement, "I can go back to the town where I was raised as a boy and can tell parents how to raise their children, and I don't need to worry about old women my age sitting down in the back saying, 'Yes, but you should have known him when we knew him as a boy.'"

LeGrand Richards, *Ensign*, July 1982 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1982], 7; material in this article comes from Lucile C. Tate's *LeGrand Richards: Beloved Apostle*.

64 [Gordon B. Hinckley related:] I talked with a young man recently returned from the war. He too had walked the jungle patrols, his heart pounding with fear. But reluctantly he admitted that the greatest fear he had was the fear of ridicule.

65 The men of his company laughed at him, taunted him, plastered him with a nickname that troubled him. They told him the things they reveled in. Then on one occasion when the going was rough, he faced them and quietly said, "Look, I know you think I'm square. I don't consider myself any better than any of the rest of you.... But I grew up in a different way. I grew up in a religious home and a religious town. I went to church on Sundays. We prayed together as a family. I was taught to stay away from these things. It's a matter of religion, and it's kind of a way of respecting my mother and my dad. All of you together might force me toward a compromising situation, but that wouldn't change me, and you wouldn't feel right after you'd done it."

One by one they turned silently away. But during the next few days each came to ask his pardon, and from his example others gained the strength and the will to change their own lives. He taught the gospel to two of them and brought them into the church.

Church News, 29 Apr. 1972, 14; as quoted in J. Rickard Clarke, in Conference Report, Apr. 1985 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1985], 95

66 Following the renovation of the Mesa Arizona Temple some years ago, clergy of other religions were invited to tour it on the first day of the open house period. Hundreds responded. In speaking to them, I said we would be pleased to answer any queries they might have. Among these was one from a Protestant minister.

Said he: "I've been all through this building, this temple which carries on its face the name of Jesus Christ, but nowhere have I seen any representation of the cross, the symbol of Christianity. I have noted your buildings elsewhere and likewise find an absence of the cross. Why is this when you say you believe in Jesus Christ?"

I responded: "I do not wish to give offense to any of my Christian colleagues who use the cross on the steeples of their cathedrals and at the altars of their chapels, who wear it on their vestments, and imprint it on their books and other literature. But to us, the cross is the symbol of the dying Christ, while our message is a declaration of the Living Christ."

He then asked: "If you do not use the cross, what is the symbol of your religion?"

I replied that the lives of our people must become the most meaningful expression of our faith and, in fact, therefore, the symbol of our worship.

Gordon B. Hinckley, *Ensign*, Apr. 2005 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2005], 3

67

Years ago, when we didn't have as many cars in the states as missionaries have now, or in England, some parents were permitted to furnish cars to their sons. I was then in charge of the Missionary Department, and a man came in, a contractor, road builder, and said, "I have a son in California riding a bicycle, and he's going to get killed if he isn't careful. I'd like to take a car to him." And so permission was granted for him to take a car. He came back a week later, and said, "Can I tell you what happened?"

He said, "I drove all the way to Los Angeles and found the place where he lived. It was about five or six in the afternoon. I knocked on the door. He came to the door, and he said, "Gee, Dad, is that the car? Thanks. Can I have the keys?" And his father handed him the keys, and he said, "We've got to go to a baptism. Why don't you go around the corner; there's a little restaurant. Get something to eat, and then come to the such and such meetinghouse, and we'll have a baptismal service, and you can be there."

The father said, "This boy's mother died when he was a child. I married again. There was somehow a great chasm of difference that grew between us, and I said to myself as he took the keys, 'He's the same selfish boy he always was.'"

He said, "I thought I wouldn't go to the baptismal service: I'd go back home. And then I thought, 'Well, I'd better go.' So I went around and got something to eat and arrived at the service late. And they were having a testimony meeting, and those who had been baptized were giving testimonies. And a man stood up and said, 'I am an old man, 75 years of age. I hold two university degrees. I have been a professional man. I've made good in the world. I thought I knew everything. And one day that young man and his companion knocked on my door. I invited them in because I didn't have anything else to do, and he told me things I had never heard before. Today I have literally been born again. I don't know who is responsible for his being in the mission field, but I'd like to thank whoever sent him. He has brought a new life to me. And then he bore testimony of the gospel. And then a woman stood and bore her testimony similarly."

And the man who was telling the story said, "They were talking about my son." He said, "I left there and threw away my cigarettes, and when I got home I threw out my coffeepot. I'm going to try to live worthy of my son." I saw that man in the Salt Lake Temple a year and a half later.

Discourses of President Gordon B. Hinckley, 1995-99[Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2004], 1:361-362.

Alma 39:12

68

Command my children to do good

Praise your children more than you correct them. Praise them for even their smallest achievement. Encourage your children to come to you for counsel with their problems and questions by listening to them every day. Discuss with them such important matters as dating, sex, and other matters affecting their growth and development, and do it early enough so they will not obtain information from questionable sources....

Parents are directly responsible for the righteous rearing of their children, and this responsibility cannot be safely delegated to relatives, friends, neighbors, the school, the church, or the state...

Youths of the Church and of the nation need more than physical comforts. We will need to leave them more than lands and stacks.

The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1988], 499-501.

69

We Love, Therefore We Teach. Teaching children is tough work. I recall the time my wife, Pat, said to me, "Sweetheart, why don't you put a little more into teaching the lesson for family home evening?" We had good lessons and times together, but she wanted a little more effort, you know, kind of like the Relief Society's lesson.... so I put more into it. I went to the bookstore and bought some Masonite, flannel material, characters for the story, Velcro, and colored pencils. I got the whole works. I made the flannel board, colored in the characters and things for the presentation, and prepared a lesson. I was ready to go. Monday night came. I was on fire. I started the lesson, and the children were in rapt attention for a minute; then a child said, "How long will this last?" "Just a few minutes," I

responded, and on I went. Not more than a minute went by when another child said, “Did you get donuts for treats?” I stopped and assured them that I had the donuts and continued the lesson. And then it happened—one of the older children, realizing the lesson was geared to the little ones, said, “Dad, I’ve got homework. How much longer?” That did it. I burst into tears and said, “I’ve worked for hours on this lesson and you don’t even care. You can’t even give me ten or fifteen minutes to help you.” Silence prevailed, and then Pat said, “Look what you have done to Daddy.” They all started to cry. They said they were sorry. I told them I was sorry, too. I added that I wanted to teach them because I loved them. Heavenly Father had asked me to help them to grow up in light and truth and know the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Ed Jolly Pinegar & Richard J. Allen, *Teachings and Commentaries on the Book of Mormon*, p. 339

Alma 39:13

Repentance

70 “True repentance only is acceptable to God, nothing short of it will answer the purpose. Then what is true repentance? True repentance is not only sorrow for sins, and humble penitence and contrition before God, but it involves the necessity of turning away from them, a discontinuance of all evil practices and deeds, a thorough reformation of life, a vital change from evil to good, from vice to virtue, from darkness to light. Not only so, but to make restitution, so far as it is possible, for all the wrongs we have done, to pay our debts, and restore to God and man their rights—that which is due to them from us. This is true repentance, and the exercise of the will and all the powers of body and mind is demanded, to complete this glorious work of repentance; then God will accept it.”

Joseph F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine*, p. 100-101

71 For a moment I speak to anyone who has succumbed to serious temptation. Please stop now. You can do it with the help from an understanding parent, bishop, or stake president. Serious transgression such as immorality requires the help of one who holds the keys of authority, such as a bishop or stake president, to quietly work out the repentance process to make sure that it is complete and appropriately done. Do not make the mistake to believe that because you have confessed a serious transgression, you have repented of it. That is an essential step, but it is not all that is required. Nor assume that because someone did not ask you all the important details of a transgression, you need not mention them. You personally must make sure that the bishop or stake president understands those details so that he can help you properly through the process of repentance for full forgiveness.

Richard G. Scott, in Conference Report, Oct. 1998, 89; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 69-70.

72 To you is extended the peace and renewal of repentance available through the atoning sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. In such serious matters the path of repentance is not easily began or painlessly traveled. But the Savior of the world will walk that essential journey with you. He will strengthen you when you waver. He will be your light when it seems most dark. He will take your hand and be your hope when hope seems all you have left. His compassion and mercy, with all their cleansing and healing power, are freely given to all who truly wish complete forgiveness and will take the steps that lead to it.

Jeffrey R. Holland, in Conference Report, Oct. 1998, 101-2; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 78

Alma 39*Conclusion*

73 “You parents of the willful and the wayward: Don’t give them up. Don’t cast them off. They are not utterly lost. The shepherd will find his sheep. They were his before they were yours—long before he entrusted them to your care; and you cannot begin to love them as he loves them. They have but strayed in ignorance from the Path of Right, and God is merciful to ignorance. Only the fullness of knowledge brings the fullness of accountability. Our Heavenly Father is far more merciful, infinitely more charitable, than even the best of his servants, and the Everlasting Gospel is mightier in power to save than our narrow finite minds can comprehend.”

Orson F. Whitney, Conference Report, 1929, p. 110

74 “I feel that [the Lord] will give that punishment which is the very least that our transgression will justify. . . . I believe that when it comes to making the rewards for our good conduct, he will give the maximum that it is possible to give.”

President J. Reuben Clark, *As Ye Sow*, Address given at BYU, May 3, 1955