

An Outward Expression of an Inward Commitment *

I can remember on one occasion the wife of President Joseph Fielding Smith commenting on the seemingly immodest dress she observed among some of the youth of the church. She was attending a conference somewhere and observed a young lady who was called on to bare her testimony. She related that the young lady had a beautiful testimony but to her disappointment, also wore a dress that was obviously too short. It made Sister Smith and many others very uncomfortable. It made her wonder how someone could have such a strong testimony, but, at the same time dress so immodestly.

(As a side note, Sister Smith is also credited with saying, "I know we are living in the last days because the end is in sight.")

I believe now, more than any other time in the history of the earth, Satan is being successful more than ever in debasing and devaluing the sanctity and importance of the body.

Paul teaches us, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" I wonder if we really understand what a fantastically wonderful doctrine and truth this is. Just like a temple building is the "House of the Lord" where the Lord can physically come and reside, likewise our bodies can be a holy and sacred place where the Spirit of God or the Holy Ghost can come and reside.

How often do we pray that we can have the companionship of the Holy Ghost or the Spirit to be with us. I hope this has not become some type of standard request in our prayers and we have failed to recognize what we are really asking for. Think about it, to actually have a member of the godhead be our companion! What a marvelous and priceless gift that is. We cannot take that beautiful gift for granted. We must be grateful every living minute of everyday for a loving Heavenly Father that cares so much for us that He provides this almost unbelievable gift.

We are taught that eventually there will be a reuniting of our spirits to our bodies in the resurrection. This alone indicates just how important and how sacred our bodies are. They will become an integral part of our being throughout eternity.

Knowing what we know about the sacredness of our temporal bodies, is there any wonder why Satan will try in all of his power and might to destroy them and denigrate them as he carries out his in-your-face rebellion against our Heavenly Father. Whether in the scriptures, in the talks of our church leaders or in the temple, we know that Satan is committed to the demise and destruction of Heavenly Father's children. And, he does a good job; especially in this day and age now that he has had almost 6,000 years of practice.

I believe one of the reasons we have access to the companionship of the Holy Ghost is because Heavenly Father knows how constant, intense and unrelenting the attack of the adversary is for each of His children.

Once while I was Bishop I had a conversation with our stake president about the amount of welfare we were providing some of our members. He told me how important the welfare program was and that it was the Lord's way of taking care of the temporal needs of his children. Then he said, "If we are going to error, then let's make sure we error on the side of being too

generous rather than not enough.” That attitude made all the sense in the world to me – go overboard to make sure you are doing the right thing.

I bring this up because I believe it has application in our dress standards. Maybe that same philosophy could be stated this way when it comes to modest dress: If there is a certain level of modesty that my Heavenly Father desires in the way I dress, then I want to make sure that I am going well beyond the boundary line that separates modesty and immodesty so that there is no question I am doing the right thing and pleasing my Heavenly Father.

I am afraid that too often we have young people who simply give in to the argument that there is nothing they can do because that’s the way the styles and fashions are today. Consequently, they acquiesce and try to make do with what the world has to offer. Perhaps their attitude ought to be, “To hell with what the world has to offer (because that is where they are heading), I am going to do everything in my power to make sure my dress is unquestionably modest – end of discussion, no debate, that’s the way it is, flat out zero tolerance for the garbage the world is promoting, period.”

That type of attitude coupled with righteous living goes a long way to opening the doors wide of our temple bodies to receive the Holy Ghost in our lives. I have been advised in my patriarchal blessing to “...Never do anything that will offend the spirit.” If we want this glorious gift of the Holy Ghost, then we need to make sure our testimony or inward commitment is consistent with our outward expressions. We should not expect the Holy Ghost to dwell with us if we are like the young lady with the short skirt and a strong testimony.

If the latest style for young men is to wear their pants down below their bum crack and show the world their cool underwear, then a righteous Aaronic Priesthood holder should indicate his allegiance to God by wearing his pants at a modest level, even a level that insures to those around him he is not just on the border of modesty. It becomes an outward expression of his inward commitment.

If the fashion world pushes immodestly tight clothing and tops that are designed to bare the midriff, then a righteous young lady is going to purchase and wear clothing that goes beyond the borderline of modesty, even if it means wearing “out-of-style” clothing or in some cases even boy’s clothing that might get the job done and still be considered feminine enough for a young lady to wear.

In all cases the true disciple of Christ is going to say that their relationship to the Spirit is monumentally greater than anything the world has to offer. In all cases they are going to chose going beyond the mark to make sure they are in compliance with Heavenly Father’s directives for modesty.

As a final point, what a tremendous opportunity to say the “Devil is dope” and to demonstrate to family, friends and the world that “I am *unquestionably* on the Lord’s side.”

* I believe these words, or something similar to them, have been coined by someone else. They did not originate with me.