




For the Strength of Parents


Helping Teens Follow Prophets: Dating

Loss of the Holy Ghost

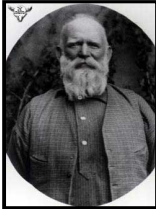
Elder Neal A. Maxwell wrote: “A lack of obedience to the leaders will, therefore, *mean that we will not have the precious promptings of the Spirit, which we need personally—so much and so often.* This potential loss would be reason enough for us to be obedient to the prophets, for apparently we cannot have one without the other. Vital as the words of the prophets are, these come to us only periodically. We need the directions of the Spirit daily, even hourly” (*All These Things Shall Give Thee Experience*, 104; emphasis added).




Willing to Follow at all Costs



Ephraim Hanks:
Frontiersman,
Disciple of Christ

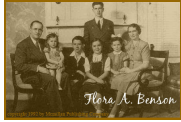


Ephraim Hanks: Obedient to the Spirit and the Prophet at all costs!




Doctrinal Foundations

“If you will follow the admonitions of the Lord and heed the counsel of His chosen servants in their callings as prophets, seers, and revelators, **I promise you that love at home and obedience to parents will increase; faith will be developed in the hearts of the youth of Israel and they will gain power and strength to combat the evil influences and temptations which beset them.** Each of our homes may veritably become a little heaven on earth” (Ezra Taft Benson, *Children’s Friend*, April 1957, 26; emphasis added).





Flora A. Benson



In the Name of Popularity & Cuteness!

- Parents think it’s cute when their children act like grown-ups!
- Many parents are willing to disregard prophetic counsel so that their children can be popular and part of the “in-crowd.”

What Are We Doing 40 Years Later?



My Brother now drives a beer truck!



And He's Lost his Hair
(And, Ok, I've put on a few pounds).

A Parable to Consider

"As two men walked across an eastern university campus, they were attracted by a crowd of people surrounding a large maple tree. They approached and noticed that the crowd was being amused by the antics of a fox-tailed squirrel circling the tree, climbing it, and running back down again. An Irish setter crouched nearby, intently watching the squirrel. Each time the squirrel ran up the tree out of sight, the dog would slowly creep toward the tree. The squirrel paid little attention as the dog crept closer and closer, patiently biding its time.



"People watching this entertaining drama unfold knew what could happen, but they did nothing until in a flash the dog, catching the squirrel unaware, had it in the grip of his sharp teeth.

The Bushy-Tailed Squirrel

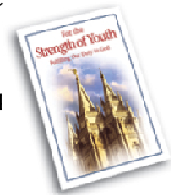


"The people then rushed forward in horror, forcing the dog's mouth open to rescue the squirrel. It was too late. The squirrel was dead. Anyone could have warned the squirrel or held back the dog. But they had been momentarily amused and watched silently while evil slowly crept up on good. When they rushed to the defense, it was too late.

"We see around us daily that which is portrayed in this parable. We sit idly by, watching as an insidious stream of profanity, vulgarity, demeaning behavior; a mocking of righteous ideals and principles invades our homes and lives through most types of media, teaching our children negative values and moral corruption. We then become upset when our children perform differently than we would wish, and social behavior continues to deteriorate" (David B. Haight, *A Light unto the World*, 134).

Dating

"Date only those who have high standards and in whose company you can maintain high standards. A young man and a young woman on a date are responsible to help each other maintain their standards and to protect each other's honor and virtue. You must honor the sanctity of the priesthood and of womanhood" (*For the Strength of Youth*, 24).



Dating Principles



"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 for this reason that the Church counsels against early dating" (President Gordon B. Hinckley, *For the Strength of Youth*, 24; emphasis added).

Principle #1

Date Only Those Who Have High Standards, and in whose company you can maintain your standards.



How Do They Measure Up?



“One of the best yard-sticks for knowing whether a certain person may be best for you is **to ask yourself what kind of an influence this person has on you. In their presence do you wish you were better than you are? Do you think some of your noblest thoughts?** Are you encouraged to goodly deeds? If this is so, that person could be worthy of greater consideration.

Measuring Up (Cont.)

“But if being in their company makes you tend in the opposite direction, you had best leave them.. **Young women, you are not required to lower your standards to get a husband.** Keep yourselves attractive, maintain high standards, place yourself in a position to meet worthy men, and be engaged in constructive work” (Ezra Taft Benson, *Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson*, [Bookcraft: Salt Lake City, 1988], 532; emphasis added).

Dating Those of Our Own Faith

“You young men, **fall in love with Latter-day Saint girls. And you young women, fall in love with Latter-day Saint boys. You will be happier if you do so.** You will be happier because you will understand one another and appreciate one another’s values, and you will be grateful all of your days if you will do that” (President Gordon B. Hinckley, fireside, Cebu City, Philippines, 31 May 1996; as cited in *Ensign*, July 1997, 73; emphasis added).



Dating Those of Your Own Faith



“Now, in saying this I am not suggesting that LDS boys date non-LDS girls, or vice versa. **Your chances for a happy and lasting marriage will be far greater if you will date those who are active and faithful in the Church.** Such dating is most likely to lead to marriage in the House of the Lord” (Gordon B. Hinckley, “Four B’s for Boys,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1981, 41; emphasis added).

Date only Those of Our Faith

“We must realize that we can no more have exaltation in the celestial kingdom without temple marriage than we can have membership in the Church without baptism.

“That means, then, among other things, **that when we begin serious and steady dating we will date Latter-day Saints. That is point number one.**

“Point number two: **When we date Latter-day Saints, we will date only good Latter-day Saints who are worthy to go with us to the temple.** Number three: That we definitely decide that we will go to the temple and receive the kind of marriage that is provided there, just as we would receive the kind of baptism which the Mormon elders give” (Elder Mark E. Petersen, October 31, 1962, *BYU Speeches of the Year*, 1962 6.)

Principle #2

Do Not Date Until You Are At Least 16 Years Old.



“In order to avoid difficulty and possible temptation, I suggest again the following standard. Any dating or pairing off in social contacts should be postponed until at least the age of 16 or older” (President Spencer W. Kimball, *Ensign*, November 1980, 96).

Not before Sixteen!

“Dating before then can lead to immorality, limit the number of other young people you meet, and deprive you of experiences that will help you choose an eternal partner” (*For the Strength of Youth*, 24).



Early Dating is Most Hazardous

“Dating, and especially steady dating, in the early teens is most hazardous. It distorts the whole picture of life. It deprives the youth of worthwhile and rich experiences. It limits friendships and reduces acquaintances which can be so valuable in selecting a partner for time and eternity” (President Spencer W. Kimball, as cited by Bishop Vaughn J. Featherstone, “Q&A: Questions and Answers,” *New Era*, Feb. 1975, 8–9).

When Are You Old Enough?

“When are you old enough? Maturity may vary from individual to individual, but we are convinced that dating should not even begin until you are 16. And then, ideal dating is on a group basis. Stay in group activities; don’t pair off.

Avoid steady dating. Steady dating is courtship, and surely the beginning of courtship ought to be delayed until you have emerged from your teens.

“Dating should not be premature or without supervision. You should appreciate your parents if they see to that” (Boyd K. Packer, “You’re in the Driver’s Seat,” *New Era*, June 2004, 5).

Meet Many People



“My beloved young people, you should be serious-minded. Life is not wholly for fun and frolic. It is a most serious business. You will do well to grow up as children, associating with both girls and boys for those first years. When you get in the teenage years, your social associations should still be general acquaintance with both boys and girls. **Any dating or pairing off in social contacts should be postponed until at least the age of 16 or older, and even then there should be much judgment used in selections and in the seriousness.**

The Proper Way

“Young people should still limit the close contacts for several years, since the boy will be going on his mission when he is 19 years old. There should be limited contacts and certainly no approach to the intimate relationships involving sex. There must never be any sex of any kind prior to marriage” (Spencer W. Kimball, “Marriage—The Proper Way,” *New Era*, Feb. 1976, 5).

What is a Date?

- A date is when you pair off with one person for the duration of an activity. It does not have to be a formal thing. It is when you pair up with one person, and stay with them for the length of the activity.
- So, when a young man comes over to my house, picks my daughter up and wants to take her down the street to get a slurpee – guess what, that’s a date. Especially when they hold hands on the way.
- Furthermore, if you go to a group activity, and then get a ride home from a guy– its just you and him in the car– you’ve just been on a date. Especially if he kisses you goodnight.
- In addition, if you go to a park, and make out with a guy, you’ve just been on a date!! Hello!!

How Do You Get a Boyfriend/Girlfriend?

- In your opinion, what makes somebody a “boyfriend,” or “girlfriend”?
 1. Dating them exclusively 32%
 2. Mutual Attraction/multiple dates 30%
 3. They kiss or hold hands 20%
 (“Dating Survey Results,” *New Era*, Mar. 2009, 38)

The Dating Test

Scenario One:

A fourteen year-old young woman meets a fifteen-year-old young man at a stake dance. They are together all evening, not dancing with anyone else. Is this a date?



The Dating Test

Scenario Two: A thirteen-year-old boy asks a girl of the same age to meet him at a high school homecoming game. Since he cannot drive, his parents not only take him, but buy a nice corsage for him to give to the lucky lady. Her mom also bought this little tiger a boutonniere. They are together for the duration of the game, and are seen holding hands and feeding each other corn dogs. Both say they are not on a date. What do you think?

The Dating Test



Scenario Three: A group of teenagers goes to play putt-putt golf. One couple has decided to pair off and play the back nine on their own. They are seen behind the windmill at hole 13, holding hands, and trading colored balls. What do you think?

Here is Why?

In a study conducted by two LDS Professors, they discovered the following:

Of the Girls who had begun dating at age 12,

91% had sexual relations before graduating from High School.

- For those who waited until 13, 56%
- What about the 14 year olds? 53%
- For those who waited until 15? 40%
- And for those who waited until 16? 20%
- (Source: *Church News*, 10 September 1988, 16).

Hanging Out

“Hanging out consists of numbers of young men and numbers of young women joining together in some group activity. It is very different from **dating...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.

Hanging Out (Cont.)

“If you do this, you should also hang out a sign, “Will open for individual dates,” or something like that. And, young women, please make it easier for these shy males to ask for a simple, inexpensive date. Part of making it easier is to avoid implying that a date is something very serious. If we are to persuade young men to ask for dates more frequently, we must establish a mutual expectation that to go on a date is not to imply a continuing commitment, otherwise you may crush a nervous and shy questioner. Finally, young women, if you turn down a date, be kind. Do not destroy him as a potential dater, and that could hurt some other sister” (Elder Dallin H. Oaks, “The Dedication of a Lifetime,” CES Broadcast, 1 May 2005, Oakland, California).

Willingness to Have Premarital Sex Based on Number of Dating Rules

Number	Percent Willing
5 Rules	33%
4 Rules	43%
3 Rules	60%
2 Rules	60%
1 Rule	62%
0 Rules	75%

(from Randal A. Wright, *25 Mistakes LDS Parents Make and How to Avoid Them*, [National Family Institute, 2006], 210).

Parents, Don't Be Afraid To Be Parents!

[Parents] “are you willing to stand at the crossroads with your child and protect him or her from the temptation and degradation that usually accompanies early and steady dating? Are you willing to do for your child what the Lord asks you to do....?” (Elder Mark E. Peterson, *Conference Report*, October 1959, 17).

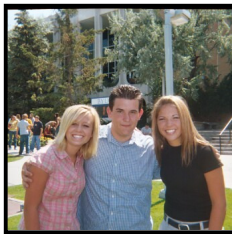


Principle #3

When You Begin Dating, Go In Groups Or On Double Dates



This is Not a Group Date!



This is not what the First Presidency Had in Mind!

Safety in Numbers

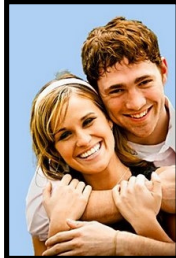
- “Group social activities should be provided as alternatives to early dating or activities that encourage teenagers to pair off...**Some youth who do pair off exclusively in their early teens are emotionally and socially immature.** That is one reason why the church counsels youth to date only after age 16, and even then not to pair off exclusively with one partner” (*Young Women Handbook*, 1988, 20; emphasis added).
- “**Physical and moral safety is increased in the multiplicity of friends**” (Spencer W. Kimball, *The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, 290; emphasis added).

Principle #4

Avoid Going on Frequent Dates with the Same Person

That's called "steady dating" and our prophets have asked us not to do that. Too many parents encourage this in the name of "cuteness and popularity."

"It is better, my friends, to date a variety of companions until you are ready to marry. Have a wonderful time, but stay away from familiarity. Keep your hands to yourself. It may not be easy, but it is possible" (President Gordon B. Hinckley, *New Era*, Jan. 2001, 13).



We Marry Who We Date

President Harold B. Lee said, **"The purpose of dating which leads to courtship and ultimately to marriage is a social process by which young people ultimately find their mates in marriage. It is a truism that we find our husband or wife among that company we frequent the most"** (*Ye Are the Light of the World*, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1974, 72).



The Importance of Timing

"As you go out on dates, you may think you are simply out to have a good time and to share the company of someone you like, doing some things you both like to do. That is not wrong or inappropriate in any way. But you should also remember that in your own way, you are searching for the one you will eventually marry, the one with whom you will spend your lifetime and all eternity. It seems to me that this dating, courtship, and marriage process is like baking bread: it needs careful measuring, sifting, and mixing. Then it needs time to rise. Then, finally, it's ready for the oven" (Vaughn J. Featherstone, "Q&A: Questions and Answers," *New Era*, Feb. 1975, 8-9).

Straight Talk on Steady Dating

- President Kimball said "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" (President Spencer W. Kimball, *Improvement Era*, December 1965, 760).
- "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 on the girlfriend back home. And after he returns honorably from his mission, he will be a better husband and father and priesthood holder, having first served a full-time mission" (Ezra Taft Benson, *Come, Listen to a Prophet's Voice* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1990], 17-18.)
- "Steady dating presents a real problem to most young men and women... There is plenty of time after high school to go steady... 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" (Howard W. Hunter, *Teachings of Howard W. Hunter*, 124).
- "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" (President Gordon B. Hinckley, *Ensign*, November 1997, 51).

The Steady Dating Test:

- Does your child talk to this person on the phone everyday?
 - Do they ever go out with any one else?
 - Do they date this person weekly, or twice a month?
 - Do they hold hands, or kiss each other almost every time your together?
 - Do they spend much of their time thinking of the other person?
 - Do they spend less time with your family because of him/her?
 - Has their school work suffered?
- Guess what, if you admit it or not, your child is steady dating.

Consequences of Steady Dating

- Social opportunities lessened
 - Family life disrupted
 - Insecurity usually results
 - Immorality increases
- "Mother, where were you when she [your daughter] was dating steady at fourteen? Were you off to work or were you just asleep? Or were you trying to have another young romance for yourself, by proxy? Where were you when your little girl started dating?" (Spencer W. Kimball, *Miracle of Forgiveness*, 223).

Steady Dating Leads to Tragedy

- Bruce Monson surveyed LDS High School Students for his Doctoral Dissertation
- He found that 31% of the students currently had a boyfriend or girlfriend
- Of those who were going steady, 94% had been involved in heavy, passionate, kissing sessions
- More than 1/2 had transgressed the law of chastity
- “Steady dating at an early age leads so often to tragedy. Studies have shown that the longer a boy and girl date one another, the more likely they are to get into trouble” (President Gordon B. Hinckley, *New Era*, January 2001, 13).

Limit Close Contacts

“Any dating or pairing off in social contacts should be postponed until at least the age of 16 or older, and even then there should still be much judgment used in selections and in the seriousness. Young people should still limit the close contacts for several years, since the boy will be going on his mission when he is 19 years old.

“Dating and especially steady dating in the early teens is most hazardous. It distorts the whole picture of life . . . I hope fervently that I am making clear the position of the Lord and his church on these . . . practices.” (“President Kimball Speaks Out on Morality,” *New Era*, Nov. 1980, p. 42.)



Steady Dating is the Source of Sin

“Steady dating is the source of much evil. The casual relationship grows rapidly into intimacies, develops heavy temptations, and stirs passions far beyond the ability of most young people to cope with. Nearly 40 percent of our unwed mothers are between fifteen and nineteen years of age. Even our finest young people will find difficulty in withstanding for a long period the temptations of the intimate, frequent association. And the best young men and women may be overwhelmed and led down the path of the sins of necking, petting, fornication, and other detestable and loathsome perversions and practices. (President Spencer W. Kimball, *The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, 289)

Even the Very Best Can Fall

“Now, our Latter-day Saint boys and girls are the finest in the world. There is no group anywhere from ocean to ocean that can even compare with them. And yet, there are too many misfortunes. There are too many who have lost themselves. I believe practically every boy and girl grows up with a desire to be righteous. I think youths are fundamentally good. But the devil knows how to destroy them. He knows, young fellows, that he cannot tempt you to murder or to commit adultery immediately, but he knows, too, that if he can get you to sit in your car late enough after the dance or if he can get you to park long enough at the end of the lane, (because he has had thousands of years of experience) *he knows that the best boy and the best girl will finally succumb and will fall. He knows that they do have a limit to their resistance*” (Spencer W. Kimball, “A Style of Our Own,” *BYU Speeches of the Year*, 13 February 1951; as cited by Thompson, L.G. in *Treasured Stories*, [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft], 1974, 114).

A Payday

“A few years ago, a father shared the following story with me. His oldest son had been attending Brigham Young University for approximately a year after his mission. During that year he had become engaged and was preparing to be married. About a week before his marriage, he went to Salt Lake City to spend an evening with his family. The father said, ‘He seemed very serious. He had always been so buoyant and filled with excitement. He was an absolute joy to have around.’ After about half an hour, the son went to his father and asked, ‘Dad, can I speak to you in the study?’ Usually, the father took his son to the study. The son waited until the father was inside, and then he closed the door (something the father usually did). The son went over and sat in the big easy chair, and the father was left to sit on a hard-backed chair. The father said that it was truly a role-reversal, and he wondered what he had done wrong. He said, ‘I felt like I was under the grilling lamp.’ Then the son said, ‘Dad, you know I am getting married next week.’

Payday

“The father thought tenderly about his son’s wedding and responded, ‘Yes, I know that, Son.’

“Then the son said, ‘Dad, I thought you and Mom would like to know I am as clean and pure as the day you brought me into this life.’ Tears glistened in his eyes, then tears glistened in the father’s eyes. He went to his son, hugged him, and kissed him on the cheek. He couldn’t speak because his heart was full. The father later said, ‘I would rather have heard those words than to have been called to the high place in which I now serve. I would rather know what my son told me than to have been given a promotion in my company.’ Home is where the greatest blessings come. Home is where we learn purity of heart” (Vaughn J. Featherstone, *Purity of Heart*, [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1982], 42-43).