

## Big Picture: The Path Towards The Temple

Tonight each of these girls has talked about small pieces of the theme. But what is the purpose of the theme? Where does it lead us? What is the “big picture” we are supposed to grasp from our theme? Tonight I want to talk about how everything the theme teaches us to do will lead us down one path, and that is the path towards the temple. When this Young Women’s theme and values were first presented many years ago after much fasting and prayer, they were not put together in a random order. They were put together with a purpose, in a specific order, because each value builds upon the next.

**Faith** in the Lord Jesus Christ is the first principle and ordinance of the gospel. Faith isn’t the first value because it’s the easiest – it’s the first value because it’s the foundation for all the other values, and for every other gospel principle. Elder Faust said, “Never before in the history of the world has the need for faith in God been greater. Faith will be our strong shield to protect us from the fiery arrows of Satan. This faith will be the sanctuary for our souls.”<sup>1</sup> When we have faith in Jesus Christ and faith that we are daughters of a Heavenly Father who loves us, we will have that shield to help protect us from temptation, and keep us making right choices on the path towards the temple. [TURN FAITH PIECE OF BIG PICTURE]

Upon this foundation of faith, we begin to see that each child of God has **divine nature**. We have inherited divine qualities from our heavenly parents. Elder Ballard said “Sisters, we, your brethren, cannot do what you were divinely designated to do from before the foundation of the world. There is nothing in this world as personal, as nurturing, or as life changing as the influence of a righteous woman.”<sup>2</sup> Divine Nature helps us to see that we can become more than we are now. As we grow in our divine nature, we understand more fully our roles as women and sisters in our homes and families, and we understand the roles we will someday fulfill as wives, mothers and eternal companions when we are sealed in the temple. [TURN DIVINE NATURE PIECE OF BIG PICTURE]

When we know that we are daughters of God who are of **infinite worth**, we come to understand God’s love and plan for us. Elder H. Burke Peterson said, “Do you think for a moment that Heavenly Father would have sent one of His children to this earth by accident, without the possibility of a significant work to perform?...My dear friends, you are a royal generation. You were preserved to come to the earth in this time for a special purpose. Not just a few of you, but all of you.”<sup>3</sup> Heavenly Father has a plan for each and every one of us. He doesn’t make mistakes. Everything he creates is beautiful and worthwhile. When we come to understand that the worth of our souls is great in the sight of God, we will have a desire to fulfill his plan for each of us, and that starts by entering the temple. [TURN INDIVIDUAL WORTH PIECE OF BIG PICTURE]

We have access to more **knowledge** in our day and age than ever before in the history of our world. We have inventions that save lives, improve quality of living, and take us places that were once never thought possible. Elder Faust said, “I do not believe that this great outpouring of knowledge happened by chance. All of this... knowledge did not come solely from the creative minds of men and women. Man has never discovered anything that God has not already known.”<sup>1</sup> It is our Heavenly Father who inspires our minds as we learn. When we develop a love for learning we will thirst for His knowledge as well,

and we will have a desire to go to the temple. There is no place on earth that we can receive more personal knowledge and inspiration from our Heavenly Father than in the temple. [TURN KNOWLEDGE PIECE OF BIG PICTURE]

Now that we have these other values as stepping stones, we are prepared to make good choices, we have a *desire* to make good choices, and we are prepared to accept the **responsibility for those choices**. Sister Sharon G. Larsen says, “Agency is the power to think, choose, and act for ourselves. It comes with endless opportunities, accompanied by responsibility and consequences. It is a blessing and a burden. Using this gift of agency wisely is critical today because never in the world’s history have God’s children been so blessed or so blatantly confronted with so many choices.”<sup>4</sup> But God does not leave us alone! He has given us his prophets, the scriptures, the For The Strength of Youth Pamphlet, and the guidance of loving parents and leaders, to help us make correct choices. When we choose to follow these helps that our Father in heaven has given us, and accept responsibility for our actions, we will be choosing a path that leads directly to the doors of the temple. [TURN CHOICE & ACCOUNTABILITY PIECE OF BIG PICTURE]

**Service** is an integral part of the church. We take meals to the hungry, we give blessings to the sick, we donate clothing to those in need, and provide shelter for the homeless. We give fast offerings, clean our ward buildings, and provide humanitarian relief around the world. The more we come to love our Savior, the more we will come to love those around us, and we will have a desire to serve them. This desire to serve will extend to every part of our lives, whether it be serving in the church, fulfilling a full-time mission, or serving in the temple. In the temple we covenant to consecrate our time and talents for the welfare of others. Elder Oaks said Temple work has “no motive other than love and service for our fellowmen, living and dead.”<sup>5</sup> It is perhaps the most unselfish act we can perform in this life. [TURN GOOD WORKS PIECE OF BIG PICTURE]

All the values we have talked about so far become a driving influence in our lives only as we embrace **integrity**, which is defined as making our actions consistent with our knowledge of right and wrong in all aspects of our lives. You may have heard the common saying, “Your actions speak so loudly, I cannot hear your words.” Learning to live with integrity prepares us for the sacred covenants we will make in the temple, by the way we learn to live consistent with our beliefs, no matter the situation. If honesty and integrity are more important than temporal wants or peer pressure, then our temple covenants will be as well. When we are true to the sacred principles of honesty and integrity, we are true to our faith, we are true to our covenants and we are true to ourselves. [TURN INTEGRITY PIECE OF BIG PICTURE]

Virtue is defined as high moral standards in our thoughts and our actions. There has never been a time in this world when the value of **virtue** has been under more attack. Everywhere we look, the world tells us that high moral standards are old fashioned and un-popular. But the Lord teaches us a virtuous woman has a price far above rubies. Sister Dalton says, “Your personal virtue will not only enable you to have the constant companionship of the Holy Ghost, but it will also enable you to make the decisions that will help you be worthy to enter the temple and there make and keep sacred covenants and receive the blessings of exaltation.”<sup>6</sup> [TURN VIRTUE PIECE OF BIG PICTURE]

## Conclusion

I testify to you, that when we strive to adopt each of these values into our lives and our character, the result will be a young woman who knows who she is, who loves the Lord, who cares for others, and who is worthy to enter the temple of the Lord. [TURN REST OF BIG PICTURE] The temple is the most important destination in our lives here on earth. Within the temple we receive ordinances without which we cannot return to live with our Heavenly Father. Within the temple we are eternally sealed to our families. We are entitled to special blessings. We are endowed with power from on high. We are blessed with an outpouring of His spirit. Can you see why every part of the theme points us in the direction of the temple? What an important, and sacred goal this is.

[HAND TEMPLE PICTURES TO YOUNG WOMEN]

We have a gift for each of you. It is a picture of yourselves within the temple. I challenge each of you to put this somewhere you can see it often. Let it be a reminder of your dedication to develop each of these young women values, and your goal of entering the temple.

I want to read you a quote from President Ezra Taft Benson, that is found in your personal progress manual. It says, "Give me a young woman who loves home and family, who reads and ponders the scriptures daily, who has a burning testimony of the Book of Mormon. Give me a young woman who faithfully attends her church meetings, who is a seminary graduate, who has earned her Young Womanhood Recognition Award and wears it with pride! Give me a young woman who is virtuous and who has maintained her personal purity, who will not settle for less than a temple marriage, and I will give you a young woman who will perform miracles for the Lord now and throughout eternity."<sup>7</sup>

To quote from Sister Laurel Christensen, "The next time you say the theme, say it slowly. Say it deliberately. Let your spirit feel every word. Stand in declaration"<sup>8</sup> that you are a daughter of God. That you will stand as His witness. That you choose His path, His plan, and His happiness. That you will strive to keep the Young Women values, and prepare to make and keep sacred covenants, receive the ordinances of the temple, and enjoy the blessings of exaltation.

In the name....

## References

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2. M. Russell Ballard, "Parents and Children: Listening, Learning, and Loving", *New Era*, Feb. 2011, 2–7.
3. H. Burke Peterson, "Your Life Has a Purpose", *New Era*, May 1979, 4.
4. Sharon G. Larsen, "Agency—A Blessing and a Burden", *Ensign*, Nov. 1999, 11.
5. Dallin H. Oaks, "Unselfish Service", *Ensign*, May 2009, 93–96.
6. Elaine S. Dalton, "Come Let Us Go Up to the Mountain of the Lord", *Ensign*, May 2009, 120–23.
7. Ezra Taft Benson, "To the Young Women of the Church," *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 84.
8. Christensen, Laurel. He Loves Us And We Love Him: You've Memorized It, Now Live It. Deseret Book, 2010.