

Sexual Purity

For the Strength of Youth (booklet, 2011)

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 temptation, 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 the 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.