

Warning – The Disintegration of the Family / Maintain and Strengthen the Family

Welcome & Introduction:

- Glad for this opportunity
 - Introduce myself
 - First real opportunity to speak on High Council and represent the Stake President.
 - On High Council in 1987-88
- Thank Bryce Barnett

Theme

- Read section on theme

Two Parts – will focus on each

Warning – what will happen if the family ...
Guidance or direction to maintain & strengthen..

President Richardson on what is our family:

President Richardson teaches: We have a tendency to think of a family as a father, mother and children and if that is not the case we might feel that “I’m not part of a family”. That is not true. If there is just a husband and wife, that is your family. If there is just a father or mother and children, that is your family. If it is just you, that is your family. We all belong to a family.

Talk first about the warning.

Warning concerns us all.

- Lots of Scriptures - I could have chosen many to support the proclamation – “Calamities foretold”
 - Mormon 8:29 – 37
- Do we live in such a time – Yes!
 - 53% of first child born are conceived or born out of wedlock (1994).
Figure was 17% 1930
- Disintegration of the Family Warning
 - What is a warning from a Prophet?

President Hinkley, September 1995 Relief Society Conference:

“I need not remind you that the world we are in is a world of turmoil, of shifting values. Shrill voices call out for one thing or another in betrayal of time-tested standards of behavior. The moral moorings of our society have been badly shaken. So many of the youth of the world, and likewise so many of their elders, listen only to the seductive voice of self-gratification.”

“How bitter are the fruits of casting aside standards of virtue”

- Liken us unto the Nephites
 - Mormon (Mormon 6:19-20)

O ye fair sons and daughters, ye fathers and mothers, ye husbands and wives, ye fair ones, how is it that ye could have fallen!”

But behold, ye are gone, and my sorrows cannot bring your return.

- Not just sexual morality
 - Mormon 8:31 – murders, robbing, lying
 - Physical & verbal abuse.
 - Repent if you have these problems. You have a loving Bishop and Family for support.

Talk now about the guidance or direction

- Not my intent to talk only of warnings and to heap more burdens upon you.
 - Christmas Season
 - Two reasons I love this season.
 - Thoughts turn to the Christ Child and his gifts to us.
 - My Family.
- Focus the rest of my talk on what is it we can do with our Family
 - From Proclamation – Strengthen the family
- Facing a new year
 - Many of us will make resolutions
 - Here are some thoughts on strengthening your family.
 - Take 1, some or all and resolve to do better in this area.
 - Taken from several sources:
 1. Joe. J. Christensen – April '95 conference
 2. Joe J. Christensen – Oct '93 Conference
 3. President Hinkley – Sept 95 Relief Society Conference

#1 – Pollution removal

Pollution removal

- Visualize – Clean glass... filthy water
 - If we had filthy water flowing out of our faucet, what would we do?
- We hear a great deal about polluted physical environment.
 - Cory and Cartoons
- Could argue that our Society is more concerned about physical pollution than moral. We really should be more concerned about our moral and spiritual environment.
 - President Packer “As we test the moral environment, we find the pollution index is spiraling upward.
 - Exhibit #1 - mass media.
 - Senator Robert D. Byrd said: "If we in this nation continue to sow the images of murder, violence, drug abuse,... perversion, [and] pornography... before the eyes of millions of children, year after year and day after day, we should not be surprised if the foundations of our society rot away as if from leprosy" (Michael Medved, Hollywood vs. America, New York: Harper Perennial, 1992, p. 194).
 - Marriage degraded – premarital, extra marital and even same sex marriage glamorized.
 - Filthy language
 - Not just problem for children. “Remember that anything that is not good for children is rarely good for adults.”
 - Isn't this a little bit like the filthy water in the faucet.
 - Exhibit #2 – Cheating.
 - Article in paper. I was amazed....
 - Daniel
 - Remove Pollution from our homes and prevent it entering – 4 things to do:
 1. Do not be afraid to set clear moral standards and guidelines. Be sure to say no when it is needed.

Elder Christensen

“Even though your children say, "Well, everyone else is going to stay out until one or two in the morning, and their parents don't care. Why can't I? Don't you trust me?" let them know that there are some things that, as members of your family, you simply do not do. Some parents seem to be almost pathologically concerned about their children's popularity and social acceptance and go along with many things that are really against their better judgment, such as expensive fads, immodest clothes, late hours, dating before age sixteen, R-rated movies, and so on. For children and parents, standing up for what is right may be lonely at times. There may be evenings alone, parties missed, and movies which go unseen. It may not always be fun. But parenting is not a popularity contest.”

2. Teach children to work and to take responsibility.
 - Cease to be idle
3. Create an environment in your family in which spiritual experiences can occur.
 - Family prayer
 - I pray feverently
 - Family home evening
 - Do something every week.
 - Scripture study

President Benson has said, "May I admonish you to participate in a program of daily reading and pondering of the scriptures. z.. The Book of Mormon will change your life. It will fortify you against the evils of our day. It will bring a spirituality into your life that no other book will"

President Marion G. Romney made to parents when he said:

"I feel certain that if, in our homes, parents will read from the Book of Mormon prayerfully and regularly, both by themselves and with their children, the spirit of that great book will come to permeate our homes The spirit of reverence will increase; mutual respect and consideration for each other will grow. The spirit of contention will depart. Parents will counsel their children in greater love and wisdom. Children will be more responsive and submissive to the counsel of their parents. Righteousness will increase The pure love of Christ... will abound in our homes and lives, bringing in their wake peace, joy, and happiness"

4. Follow the counsel of the prophets.
 - Listen to their messages at conference and re-read their counsel to us.
- Summary: If we had filthy water flowing out of our faucet.
- Yuck! - We would shut it off.
 - Replace it with clear, pure water.

#2 Strengthen our Marriage & Family

Like to give 8 specifics (Elder Christensen, Marriage and the Great Plan of Happiness, May 1995, Ensign)

1. Remember the central importance of your marriage.
 - I can do anything – yet my marriage is most important
 - My profession is computers & Internet. I've seen people get lost in it and lose their families
 - Teens – your family is more important than your friends are.
 - Ask "Who is your best friend(s)?"
 - My wife is my best friend. After that it is my brother Jim – even though he lives in Utah.
2. Pray for the success of your marriage
 - We should pray to become more kind, courteous, humble, patient, forgiving, and **especially**, less selfish.
 - In order to recognize our personal problems or weaknesses which hinder us from being better marriage partners, we should come to the Lord in prayer and reap the benefits of this powerful Book of Mormon promise: "If men come unto me I will show unto them their weakness. . . . For if they humble themselves before me, and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them" (**Ether 12:27**).
3. Listen
 - Example of how I have to stop and really listen
 - Brother Brent Barlow posed a question to a group of priesthood brethren: "How many of you would like to receive a revelation?" Every hand went up. He then suggested that they all go home and ask their wives how they could be better husbands.
 - Have any of you brethren ever had your wife say something like I heard recently: "Are you listening?"
 - Listening to Scott.
4. Avoid "ceaseless pinpricking." (as President Kimball called it)
 - Don't be too critical of each other's faults.
 - "Ceaseless pinpricking" can deflate almost any marriage.
 - My wife and I are different.
 - I'm an engineer. Things need to be exact. My wife is not that way.
 - Story of two different style plates in cupboard
 - Generally, each of us is painfully aware of our weaknesses, and we don't need frequent reminders. Few people have ever changed for the better as a result of constant criticism or nagging. If we are not careful, some of what we offer as constructive criticism is actually destructive.

- Story

Sister Lola Walters read in a magazine that in order to strengthen a marriage a couple should have regular, candid sharing sessions in which they would list any mannerisms they found to be annoying. She wrote:

"We were to name five things we found annoying, and I started off. . . . I told him that I didn't like the way he ate grapefruit. He peeled it and ate it like an orange! Nobody else I knew ate grapefruit like that. Could a girl be expected to spend a lifetime, and even eternity, watching her husband eat grapefruit like an orange? . . .

"After I finished [with my five], it was his turn to tell the things he disliked about me. . . . [He] said, 'Well, to tell the truth, I can't think of anything I don't like about you, Honey.'

"Gasp.

"I quickly turned my back, because I didn't know how to explain the tears that had filled my eyes and were running down my face."

Sister Walters concluded: "Whenever I hear of married couples being incompatible, I always wonder if they are suffering from what I now call the Grapefruit Syndrome" (ENSIGN, Apr. 1993, p. 13).

- I had a problem where I thought my wife was being unreasonable. But it turned out.....

5. Keep your courtship alive.

- Take time
- Our weekly date night.
 - No need to be expensive
 - The most fun we do is talk.
 - Our children know we do it.

6. Be quick to say, "I'm sorry."

- We all have differences of opinion. Our challenge is to be sure that we know how to resolve them.
- Very hard thing for me to learn.
 - Really mean it – not just to smooth troubled waters.

7. Learn to live within your means.

- "The American Bar Association . . . indicated that 89 percent of all divorces could be traced to quarrels and accusations over money" (ENSIGN, July 1975, p. 72).
- Pay tithing first – Prove the Lord
- Be willing to postpone or forgo some purchases in order to stay within your budget.
- Perform "plastic surgery" if necessary.

8. Be a true partner in home and family responsibilities.

- Put the partner in Marriage and family

- Don't be like the husband who sits around home expecting to be waited on, feeling that earning the living is his chore and that his wife alone is responsible for the house and taking care of the children. The task of caring for home and family is more than one person's responsibility.

1. Remember the central importance of your marriage. 05/95
2. Pray for its success.
3. Listen.
4. Avoid "ceaseless pinpricking."
5. Keep your courtship alive.
6. Be quick to say, "I'm sorry."
7. Learn to live within your means.
8. Be a true partner in home and family responsibilities.

A minute about single parent families.

I've talked a bunch about strengthening our marriage. Many things are still applicable. Yet as I prepared this talk I felt to say something specific to you and in thinking "what?" I came across words of our Prophet I'd like to share:

President Hinkley. Relief Society Address September 95.

Close with Testimony. Blessing for Jennifer.