

Susan Tanner:

In the premortal realm we learned that the body was part of God's great plan of happiness for us. As it states in the family proclamation: "Spirit sons and daughters knew and worshiped God as their Eternal Father and accepted His plan by which His children could obtain a physical body and gain earthly experience to progress toward perfection and ultimately realize his or her divine destiny as an heir of eternal life" ("The Family: A Proclamation to the World," Liahona, Oct. 2004, 49; Ensign, Nov. 1995, 102). In fact, we "shouted for joy" (Job 38:7) to be part of this plan.

Why were we so excited? We understood eternal truths about our bodies. We knew that our bodies would be in the image of God. We knew that our bodies would house our spirits. We also understood that our bodies would be subject to pain, illness, disabilities, and temptation. But we were willing, even eager, to accept these challenges because we knew that only with spirit and element inseparably connected could we progress to become like our Heavenly Father (see D&C 130:22) and "receive a fulness of joy" (D&C 93:33).

With the fulness of the gospel on the earth, we are again privileged to know these truths about the body. Joseph Smith taught: "We came to this earth that we might have a body and present it pure before God in the Celestial Kingdom. The great principle of happiness consists in having a body. The Devil has no body, and herein is his punishment" (The Words of Joseph Smith, ed. Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook [1980], 60).

Satan learned these same eternal truths about the body, and yet his punishment is that he does not have one. Therefore he tries to do everything he can to get us to abuse or misuse this precious gift. He has filled the world with lies and deceptions about the body. He tempts many to defile this great gift of the body through unchastity, immodesty, self-indulgence, and addictions. He seduces some to despise their bodies; others he tempts to worship their bodies. In either case, he entices the world to regard the body merely as an object. In the face of so many satanic falsehoods about the body, I want to raise my voice today in support of the sanctity of the body. I testify that the body is a gift to be treated with gratitude and respect.

Display the picture of a temple and have a class member read 1 Corinthians 3:16–17. Stress that we have been commanded to take good care of our bodies.

The scriptures declare that the body is a temple. It was Jesus Himself who first compared His body to a temple (see John 2:21). Later Paul admonished the people of Corinth, a wicked city teeming with all manner of lasciviousness and indecency: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are" (1 Cor. 3:16–17).

What would happen if we truly treated our bodies as temples? The result would be a dramatic increase in chastity, modesty, observance of the Word of Wisdom, and a similar decrease in the problems of pornography and abuse, for we would regard the body, like the temple, as a sacred sanctuary of the Spirit. Just as no unclean thing may enter the temple, we would be vigilant to keep impurity of any sort from entering the temple of our bodies.

Likewise, we would keep the outside of our bodily temples looking clean and beautiful to reflect the sacred and holy nature of what is inside, just as the Church does with its temples. We should dress and act in ways that reflect the sacred spirit inside us.

Display the "Knowledge" section of the puzzle

•Where in the scriptures can we find information about how to take care of our bodies? (D&C 89, the Word

of Wisdom.)

•According to the Word of Wisdom, what things should we not take into our bodies? (Wine or strong drink; tobacco; and hot drinks, specifically coffee and tea.)

The restored gospel teaches that there is an intimate link between body, mind, and spirit. In the Word of Wisdom, for example, the spiritual and physical are intertwined. When we follow the Lord's law of health for our bodies, we are also promised wisdom to our spirits and knowledge to our minds (see D&C 89:19–21). The spiritual and physical truly are linked.

I remember an incident in my home growing up when my mother's sensitive spirit was affected by a physical indulgence. She had experimented with a new sweet roll recipe. They were big and rich and yummy—and very filling. Even my teenage brothers couldn't eat more than one. That night at family prayer my father called upon Mom to pray. She buried her head and didn't respond. He gently prodded her, "Is something wrong?" Finally she said, "I don't feel very spiritual tonight. I just ate three of those rich sweet rolls." I suppose that many of us have similarly offended our spirits at times by physical indulgences. Especially substances forbidden in the Word of Wisdom have a harmful effect on our bodies and a numbing influence on our spiritual sensitivities. None of us can ignore this connection of our spirits and bodies.

D&C 88:15 : And the spirit and the body are the soul of man.

In addition to living the Word of Wisdom, a young woman can do many other things to take care of herself. Ask a class member to read Doctrine and Covenants 88:124.

•What does this scripture tell us about taking care of ourselves?

Ask one young woman to read aloud the last half of that scripture beginning with the word retire.

Put the puzzle piece labeled "Rest" on the tackboard or poster.

•Why do you think the Lord counsels us to retire early and arise early?

•What are the advantages of getting the proper amount of rest? (List responses on the chalkboard: do better in school, be happier, feel better, have more energy, look better.)

•How might too much sleep be harmful?

Ask the young women to turn to Doctrine and Covenants 42:41 to discover another aspect of taking care of themselves. Stress that physical as well as moral cleanliness is important. Add the piece labeled "Grooming" to the puzzle.

I remember well the insecurities I felt as a teenager with a bad case of acne. I tried to care for my skin properly. My parents helped me get medical attention. For years I even went without eating chocolate and all the greasy fast foods around which teens often socialize, but with no obvious healing consequences. It was difficult for me at that time to fully appreciate this body which was giving me so much grief. But my good mother taught me a higher law. Over and over she said to me, "You must do everything you can to make your appearance pleasing, but the minute you walk out the door, forget yourself and start concentrating on others."

There it was. She was teaching me the Christlike principle of selflessness. Charity, or the pure love of Christ, "envieth not, and is not puffed up, seeketh not her own" (Moro. 7:45). When we become other-oriented, or selfless, we develop an inner beauty of spirit that glows in our outward appearance. This is how we make ourselves in the Lord's image rather than the world's and receive His image in our countenances. President Hinckley spoke of this very kind of beauty that comes as we learn to respect body, mind, and spirit. He said:

“Of all the creations of the Almighty, there is none more beautiful, none more inspiring than a lovely daughter of God who walks in virtue with an understanding of why she should do so, who honors and respects her body as a thing sacred and divine, who cultivates her mind and constantly enlarges the horizon of her understanding, who nurtures her spirit with everlasting truth” (“Understanding Our Divine Nature,” Liahona, Feb. 2002, 24; “Our Responsibility to Our Young Women,” Ensign, Sept. 1988, 11).

Oh, how I pray that all men and women will seek the beauty praised by the prophet—beauty of body, mind, and spirit!

Put the puzzle piece labeled “Nutrition” on the tackboard or poster. Give each class member a sheet of paper and a pencil and ask them to list as many different fruits and vegetables as they can in two or three minutes. Then ask the young woman with the longest list to read it. Have the other young women add any different ones they have, and then have everyone add to their lists items they did not think of. Be sure the list includes citrus fruits and green and yellow vegetables.

- What kinds of food other than fruits and vegetables do we need each day? (Breads or grains; meat, eggs, poultry, or fish; milk and other dairy products.)

Stress variety. Often a young woman’s diet is insufficient because she eats only a few favorite foods. Refer to the long list of fruits and vegetables they have made and encourage them to try something new.

Ask the young women to turn their papers over and in one to two minutes make a list of foods they feel have little nutritional value.

- What does eating these foods do to your health and appearance? (Answers could include fatigue, susceptibility to illness, and weight gain.)

Emphasize that to feel and look their best, young women must limit or give up some of these things. Write on the chalkboard: “Give up something good for something better.”

- What is the “something better” we get by giving up nonnutritional food? (Stress that proper eating habits can improve skin, hair, eyes, teeth, and figure.)

Teacher presentation

Place the final piece labeled “Exercise” on the tackboard or poster.

Discuss the importance of active participation in sports, dance, jogging, walking, and other physical activities.

- Why do we need exercise?

- What are some enjoyable ways of getting enough exercise?

In addition to plenty of physical activity, formal exercises can often help us firm up our muscles or strengthen a particular part of the body. They also help us use the calories we take in. Suggest that each young woman select one exercise or activity that she feels would benefit her and plan to do that exercise or activity in the coming week.

Stress that physical fitness is linked to overall well-being in everyday life.

“I plead with you young women to please be more accepting of yourselves, including your body shape and style, with a little less longing to look like someone else. We are all different. Some are tall, and some are short. Some are round, and some are thin. And almost everyone at some time or other wants to be something they are not! But as one adviser to teenage girls said: “You can’t live your life worrying that the world is staring at you. When you let people’s opinions make you self-conscious you give away your power. ... The key to feel-

ing [confident] is to always listen to your inner self—[the real you.]” 8 And in the kingdom of God, the real you is “more precious than rubies.” 9 Every young woman is a child of destiny and every adult woman a powerful force for good. We should all be as fit as we can be—that’s good Word of Wisdom doctrine. That means eating right and exercising and helping our bodies function at their optimum strength. We could probably all do better in that regard. But I speak here of optimum health; there is no universal optimum size.” - Elder Jeffrey R Holland

We have put together a plan for taking the best possible care of our precious physical temples. We must work at this plan constantly until good habits become automatic. (Take away a section of the puzzle.) Our bodies cannot function at their best or look their best unless each part of the plan is followed. (Return the piece to its place.)

Elder Delbert L. Stapley said: “There is a close relationship between physical health and spiritual development. ... When one’s physical health is impaired by disobedience to God’s eternal laws, spiritual development will also suffer” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1967, p. 74; or Improvement Era, Dec. 1967, p. 77).

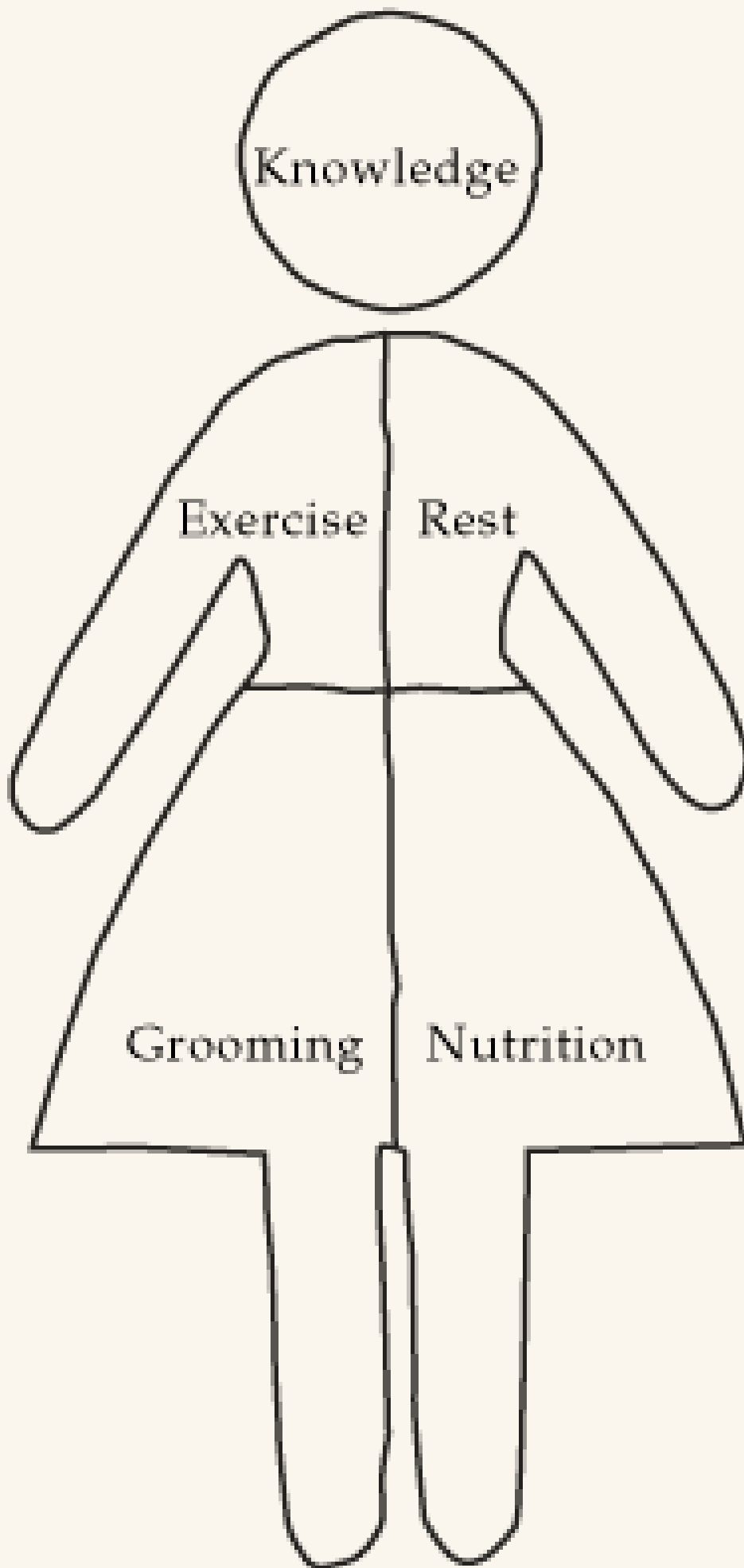
In what ways will caring for your body now affect your future health? How will developing healthy habits in your teens prepare you to bear and raise children?

What are some ways that people in the world harm their bodies? In times of temptation to misuse our bodies, how can we respect them instead?

How can good physical health contribute to good emotional health?

How is our agency compromised when we don’t take care of our bodies?

How do eating disorders jeopardize health, feeling the Spirit, and the future?



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