

An Aaronic Priesthood Holder Cherishes Womanhood

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OBJECTIVE Each young man will understand the high calling of women and his need to honor and respect them.

PREPARATION

1. Prayerfully study Genesis 2:24; 1 Corinthians 11:11; Jacob 2:28, 31–35; Alma 56:45–48; and Doctrine and Covenants 18:10; 121:41–46; 131:1–4.
2. Materials needed:
 - a. Copies of the scriptures (each young man should bring his own).
 - b. Pencils for marking scriptures.
3. Interview various sisters in the ward to discover how they think men should honor and respect them. Be prepared to share your observations with the quorum.
4. Optional activity: A follow-up panel discussion with the young women could be organized to discuss ways young men and young women should treat each other as true followers of Jesus Christ.

NOTE Be sensitive to each young man’s family situation and adapt the lesson as needed.

**SUGGESTED
LESSON
DEVELOPMENT**

Introduction

Quotation

Read and discuss the following statement by President Spencer W. Kimball: “As an indication of the importance the gods gave to women, the Lord said,

“ ‘Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.’ (Gen. 2:24.)

“Do you note that? She, the woman, occupies the first place. She is preeminent, even above the parents who are so dear to all of us. Even the children must take their proper but significant place” (“The Blessings and Responsibilities of Womanhood,” *Ensign*, Mar. 1976, p. 72).

Women and Men Have God-Given Differences

Quotation and discussion

Read the following statement by Bishop Victor L. Brown:

“In the scriptures we read, ‘So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.’ (Gen. 1:27.) The Lord defined some very basic differences between men and women. He gave the male what we call masculine traits and the female feminine traits. He did not intend either of the sexes to adopt the other’s traits but, rather, that men should look and act like men and that women should look and act like women” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1971, p. 56; or *Ensign*, June 1971, p. 55).

- Is there any evidence that Satan is trying to change the divine roles Heavenly Father originally intended for men and women?
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An Aaronic Priesthood Holder’s Mother Stands at the Center of His Life

Discussion

- Why should a young man have profound respect for his mother?

Emphasize that the young man’s mother gave him life, encourages him on to high accomplishments, overlooks his faults and failings, and is usually the last to give up hope for him if

he goes astray. She also washes and presses his clothes, cooks his food, keeps the house clean, nurses him when sick, and does much to establish the quality of the home he lives in.

Share some of the experiences from your relationship with your mother that illustrate the above qualities of motherhood. Invite the young men to share examples from their home life that illustrate these qualities.

Story

In your own words, relate the following story to the young men:

Elder Frank Croft was a missionary in the state of Alabama. Because he persisted in his legal rights guaranteed under the Constitution of the United States in preaching righteousness unto the people, he was forcefully taken to a secluded spot of the backwoods for the purpose of receiving lashings across his bare back at the hands of armed and vicious men. Having arrived at the place where they had concluded to administer the torture, Elder Croft was commanded to remove his coat and shirt and bare his back. He was then tied to a tree to prevent his moving while he received his lashing until the blood would flow.

Having no alternative, he complied with the demands of the mob, but in so doing, a letter he had recently received from his mother fell from his coat. A short time before, he had written his parents a letter, condemning mob violence and mistreatment of the elders. In his mother's letter she counseled: "My beloved son, you must remember the words of the Savior when He said, 'Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you and say all manner of evil against you falsely for my name's sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad for you will have your reward in Heaven for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.' Also remember the Savior upon the cross suffering for the sins of the world when He uttered these immortal words, 'Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.' Surely my boy, they who are mistreating you Elders know not what they do or they would not do it. Sometime, somewhere they will understand and then they will regret their action and they will honor you for the glorious work you are doing. So be patient, my son; love those who mistreat you and say all manner of evil against you and the Lord will bless you and magnify you in their eyes and your mission will be gloriously successful. Remember also, my son, that day and night, your mother is praying for you always."

Elder Croft, tied to the tree, was so situated that he could see the leader of the mob, who had picked up the fallen letter and had decided to read it before giving word to his men to start the lashing. The elder observed the hardness of his features, the cruelty in his eyes. He then realized that no sympathy could be expected from him. He closed his eyes while waiting the moment when the beating would begin. He thought of home and loved ones and in particular, of his beloved mother. Then he uttered a silent prayer in her behalf. Opening his eyes, a moment or two later, feeling that the leader had had time to finish reading the letter, he was amazed to see that the man had retired to a nearby tree stump and having seated himself, was apparently re-reading the letter; but what was more amazing to the elder was the change in the man's countenance. He would read a line or two or a paragraph and then sit and ponder. Deep down in the elder's conscience was the hope that the man's heart had been touched by the loveliness and beauty of his mother's letter.

To Elder Croft, it seemed an interminable time had elapsed when the mob leader arose and approaching the helpless elder said: "Feller, you must have a wonderful mother. You see, I once had one too." Then, addressing the mob he said, "Men, after reading this Mormon's mother's letter, I just can't go ahead with the job. Maybe we had better let him go." Elder Croft was released and went his way. The loving influence of his mother seemed very near in his heart and mind. (See Arthur M. Richardson, *The Life and Ministry of John Morgan* [Nicholas G. Morgan Sr., 1965], pp. 267–68.)

Scripture and discussion

Have the young men read Alma 56:45–48. Encourage them to mark these verses.

Remind the quorum that the honor given their mothers by Helaman's two thousand stripling warriors is a good example of what kind of men we should be. We need to view women in our lives properly and honor and serve them. The way we treat our mothers and sisters is usually the way we will treat our wives and daughters. We must exercise care to cherish them.

- What does it mean to make someone feel respected and cherished?

Interview results	Help bring out that it is one thing to be liked or accepted but quite another thing to feel respected and cherished. To feel respected and cherished is to feel esteemed and valued.
	Tell the young men you have asked several women in the ward how they think men should honor and respect them. Report the results of your interviews.

An Aaronic Priesthood Holder Honors the Young Women He Knows

Scripture and discussion

Have a few of the young men read Jacob 2:28, 31–35.

- How does Heavenly Father feel about virtue and chastity?
- How do you think Heavenly Father feels toward young men who take advantage of young women?

Discuss what true manhood with the power of the priesthood is, according to Doctrine and Covenants 121:41–46. Discuss how we should conduct ourselves around others.

- What benefits result from respecting women?
- How does the way a young man treats the young women he dates reveal his attitude toward women and toward himself?

Point out that a young man's attitude toward young women reflects his own attitude toward women in general. How he treats them shows whether he regards them as daughters of God and potential wives and mothers or simply as something for his own pleasure and physical gratification. A young man may see himself as a priesthood bearer and a son of God, an eternal personality, and the future father of an eternal family; or he may see himself as a creature primarily interested in satisfying his appetites. He may, of course, be somewhere between these two positions but usually will be oriented more one way than the other.

Each Aaronic Priesthood holder should realize that he chooses the type of young woman he will marry long before he chooses the specific person. He is attracted to a certain type of young woman and will probably marry that type. The young man should keep in mind that she will then do much to set the tone of their home and bear and teach their children.

The more a young man honors young women, holding them in high esteem and seeking the most spiritual, competent, and kind among them, the better is his chance of marrying such a person.

- How can you help young women keep the commandments?

Explain that after a young man marries, he will have the obligation as a husband and father to help his family obey the commandments of the Lord. He also has the responsibility before marriage to help young women to keep the commandments.

- How will you honor each woman and young woman you associate with?

Chalkboard discussion

Summarize the young men's responses on the chalkboard, including the following:

1. Keep language respectful always.
2. Be good company. Help her obey the commandments.
3. Accompany her to respectable places and to good entertainment.
4. Respect her virtue by avoiding physical intimacies.
5. Respect parents' wishes and be reasonable in behavior and hours.
6. Travel safely, and do not show off. Ride with friends who drive safely.
7. Treat her as an equal.
8. Be a friend, and enjoy her companionship.
9. Take her to church, and learn of her spiritual depth.
10. Show proper manners and respect.

Scripture explanation	Have one of the assistants to the quorum members read and explain Doctrine and Covenants 18:10. He should remind the young men how important and valuable each soul is in the sight of God. Anyone who encourages one of the daughters of God to do wrong is under serious condemnation and needs to repent.
Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What characteristics foster mutual respect and admiration between men and women?

Men and Women Stand Together as One

Scripture and discussion	<p>Have the young men read Doctrine and Covenants 131:1–4, Genesis 2:24, and 1 Corinthians 11:11. Suggest that the young men mark and cross-reference these scriptures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do these scriptures tell us is necessary to achieve exaltation? <p>Help the quorum understand that a man cannot stand alone before the Lord but that a man and his wife must stand together as one. Challenge the young men to respect and cherish the women in their lives and to prepare themselves to walk beside their future wives as partners in the Lord.</p>
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Conclusion

Quotation	<p>President Joseph Fielding Smith once said:</p> <p>“There is nothing in the teachings of the gospel which declares that men are superior to women. . . . The most noble, exalting calling of all is that which has been given to women as the mothers of men. Women do not hold the priesthood, but if they are faithful and true, they will become priestesses and queens in the kingdom of God” (<i>Doctrines of Salvation</i>, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1954–56], 3:178).</p>
Challenges	<p>Issue the following challenges to the young men:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do some specific things for the next month to show your mother extra respect and honor. 2. Show your sisters (if you have any) special consideration and honor this next week, and be prepared to tell about your experience in the next quorum meeting. 3. Treat every young woman you know as an equal, and always show her respect.