

*The Savior taught us that we need not tolerate evil. "Jesus went into the temple of God, . . . and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers."*

**T**olerance is a virtue much needed in our turbulent world. But we must recognize that there is a difference between *tolerance* and *tolerate*. Your gracious tolerance for an individual does not grant him or her license to do wrong, nor does your tolerance obligate you to tolerate his or her misdeed. That distinction is fundamental to an understanding of this vital virtue.

### Two Great Commandments

Our highest priorities in life are to love God and to love our neighbors.<sup>1</sup> That broadly includes neighbors in our own family, our community, our nation, and our world. Obedience to the second commandment facilitates obedience to the first commandment. "When ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God" (Mosiah 2:17).

### Baptism Transcends Background

On every continent and across isles of the sea, the faithful are being gathered into The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Differences in cultural background, language, gender, and facial features fade into insignificance as members lose themselves in service to their beloved Savior.

Only the comprehension of the true



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fatherhood of God can bring full appreciation of the true brotherhood of man. That understanding inspires desire to build bridges of cooperation instead of walls of segregation.

Intolerance seeds contention; tolerance supercedes contention. Tolerance is the key that opens the door to mutual understanding and love.

## Risks of Boundless Tolerance

Now may I offer an important note of caution. An erroneous assumption could be made that if a little of something is good, a lot must be better. Not so! Overdoses of needed medication can be toxic. Boundless mercy could oppose justice. So tolerance, without limit, could lead to spineless permissiveness.

The Lord drew boundary lines to define acceptable limits of tolerance. Danger rises when those divine limits are disobeyed. Just as parents teach little children not to run and play in the street, the Savior taught us that we need not tolerate evil. “Jesus went into the temple of God, . . . and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers” (Matthew 21:12; see also Mark 11:15). Though He loves the sinner, the Lord said that He “cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance” (D&C 1:31).

Real love for the sinner may compel courageous confrontation—not acquiescence! Real love does not support self-destructing behavior.

## Tolerance and Mutual Respect

Our commitment to the Savior causes us to scorn sin yet heed His commandment to love

our neighbors. Together we live on this earth, which is to be tended, subdued, and shared with gratitude.<sup>2</sup> Each of us can help to make life in this world a more pleasant experience.

The First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles issued a public statement from which I quote:

“It is morally wrong for any person or group to deny anyone his or her inalienable dignity on the tragic and abhorrent theory of racial or cultural superiority.

“We call upon all people everywhere to recommit themselves to the time-honored ideals of tolerance and mutual respect. We sincerely believe that as we acknowledge one another with consideration and compassion we will discover that we can all peacefully coexist despite our deepest differences.”<sup>3</sup>

Together we may stand intolerant of transgression but tolerant of neighbors with differences they hold sacred. Our beloved brothers and sisters throughout the world are *all* children of God. He is our Father. His Son, Jesus, is the Christ. His Church has been restored to the earth in these latter days to bless all of God’s children. ■

*From an April 1994 general conference address.*

## NOTES

1. See Matthew 22:36–40; John 13:34–35; 15:12, 17; Romans 13:8; 1 Thessalonians 3:12; 4:9; 1 Peter 1:22; 1 John 3:11, 23; 4:7, 11–12; 2 John 1:5.
2. See Genesis 1:28; D&C 59:15–21; Moses 2:28; Abraham 4:28.
3. Statement of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Oct. 18, 1992; as quoted in “Church Exhorts Ethnic, Religious Tolerance,” *Church News*, Oct. 24, 1992, 4.



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