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Teachers can influence their students not only by what they say but also by how they live.

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Roles of Support

L. Jill Johnson

L. Jill Johnson is the wife of Paul V. Johnson, Church Educational System administrator.

This address was given at a CES satellite training broadcast on August 4, 2004.

I am grateful for this opportunity to thank all of the people who labor in this educational program of the Church—so thankful for my association with you. I hope you feel how your lives of righteousness are needed by the youth of the Church in these latter days. Clever lessons or media production, though important, will never be a substitute for a life of righteousness lived by a teacher who truly loves our Heavenly Father and His Son and those entrusted to their care.

We are directed in this work by living prophets. These men place great trust in us to represent our Savior, Jesus Christ, who directs them. Through them we receive instructions for holding up the light of His gospel to the great army of young people who will be in seminary and institute classrooms all across the world. I am aware that as I speak to you, many of you will be in the front of those classes, but many more of us will be the support system for those who teach. For those employed teachers, as students sit in your classes and as the Spirit teaches them, they learn. But they will also observe your lives. They will notice how the gospel makes you loving, happy, and interested in them.

They will notice how much you love your family. Seeing the love and respect you feel for your family will make impressions that can give them hope for the future and a faith in His promises to them that obedience brings forth the blessings of heaven. For those of this group who are not as visible to the students, we can still be a great blessing to

them. As we live righteously, the Holy Ghost can guide us in our roles of support for those who teach, and we will be an influence for good in our families and neighborhoods. The challenge for all of us is to conform with exactness and honor to those teachings we have received from God through His authorized servants, to keep our lives pure, and to strive for freedom from earth stains so that we can have the presence of the Holy Ghost to guide us in each decision.

In the night sky there are many lights. Some of these points of lights are dim, others are brighter, and others are brighter still. The challenge is to be the guiding lights to the youth of the Church, leading them to the greater light of our Lord and Savior. Our love for Him will empower us to represent Him. As the ancient prophet Abinadi declared in the book of Mosiah, “He is the light and the life of the world; yea, a light that is endless, that can never be darkened; yea, and also a life which is endless, that there can be no more death” (Mosiah 16:9).

Let us, therefore, do as all the prophets ancient and modern have taught us. Our choices to follow them will be the power source of our light in a world of gathering darkness. The power in the Savior’s Atonement can make up for our own imperfections and inabilities. But that help can only come as we truly seek, ask, and give up our selfish desires as a sacrifice is given up upon an altar.

We were recently in one of the Church’s visitors’ centers, and the missionary there asked us to envision what this world would be like now if a teenaged boy had not gone into a grove of trees to pray. What if he had not been taught from the Bible in his youth? What will our world be like in another two hundred years if our youth are not taught from the holy scriptures, if they are not taught to pray with a sincere heart and real intent? As Abinadi concluded his teachings, he declared, “Teach them that redemption cometh through Christ the Lord, who is the very Eternal Father” (Mosiah 16:15).

This is His Church, and we will receive power to feed His lambs only as we make choices to follow Him and leave all worldly enticements behind. We can be a light to the youth in these latter days as we follow His teachings, trying to love as He loves and keeping our eye on His chosen servants in these latter days.

I bear my testimony that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is His Church and that we are led by men who are called by Him to give us instruction for our day. We will be blessed to accomplish the work given us only as we are obedient and humbly follow Him. **RE**