Teachings Concerning
Controlling Thoughts

Man Is What He Thinks

Proverbs 23:7
For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he.

George Albert Smith
As a child, thirteen years of age, I went to school at the Brigham Young Academy. ... I cannot remember much of what was said during the year that I was there, but there is one thing that I will probably never forget. ... Dr. [Karl G.] Maeser one day stood up and said:

"Not only will you be held accountable for the things you do, but you will be held responsible for the very thoughts you think."

Being a boy, not in the habit of controlling my thoughts very much, it was quite a puzzle to me what I was to do, and it worried me. In fact, it stuck to me just like a burr. About a week or ten days after that it suddenly came to me what he meant. I could see the philosophy of it then. All at once there came to me this interpretation of what he had said: Why of course you will be held accountable for your thoughts, because when your life is completed in mortality, it will be the sum of your thoughts. That one suggestion has been a great blessing to me all my life, and it has enabled me upon many occasions to avoid thinking improperly, because I realize that I will be, when my life’s labor is complete, the product of my thoughts. (Sharing the Gospel with Others, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1948, pp. 62–63.)

Ezra Taft Benson

Thoughts lead to acts, acts lead to habits, habits lead to character—and our character will determine our eternal destiny. (“Think on Christ,” Ensign, Apr. 1984, p. 10)

David O. McKay

- Your tools are your ideals. The thought in your mind at this moment is contributing, however infinitesimally, almost imperceptibly to the shaping of your soul, even to the lineaments of your countenance even passing and idle thoughts leave their impression. Trees that can withstand the hurricane, sometimes yield to destroying pests that can scarcely be seen except with the aid of a microscope. Likewise, the greatest foes of the individual are not always the glaring evils of humanity but subtle influences of thought and of continual association with companions. (Quoted in Spencer W. Kimball, The Miracle of Forgiveness, pp.104-105)
- The thoughts that a youth harbors during the formative period in his life will determine into which class he falls -- whether he is a listless infusorian, a firefly youth with regards to good intentions, or an outstanding Sequoia in the realm of character. (Gospel Ideals, p.409)

Spencer W. Kimball

- Every thought that one permits through his mind leaves its trace. Thoughts are things. Our lives are governed a great deal by our thoughts. (The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball, p.154)
- We are responsible for our thoughts. What goes on in our minds is not really private, in a sense, because it affects our behavior and our attitudes toward others and toward life. (The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball, p.163)
- Substitute habits, change environment. Change comes by substituting new habits for old. You mold your character and future by thoughts and actions. (The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball, p.172)

Thoughts Come Out of the Heart

Matthew 15:18-20
But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man.
For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:
These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashed hands defileth not a man.

Mark 7:20-22
And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man.
For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit,
lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness:

All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.

**Brigham Young**

The origin of thought and reflection is in ourselves. We think, because we are, and are made susceptible of external influences, and to feel our relationship to external objects. Thus thoughts of revenge, and thoughts of blessing will arise in the same mind, as it is influenced by external circumstances. (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, p. 52)

**We Decide What Thoughts We Entertain**

**Ezra Taft Benson**

The mind has been likened to a stage on which only one act at a time can be performed. From one [page 11] side of the wings the Lord, who loves you, is trying to put on the stage of your mind that which will bless you. From the other side of the wings the devil, who hates you, is trying to put on the stage of your mind that which will curse you.

You are the stage manager—you are the one who decides which thought will occupy the stage. Remember, the Lord wants you to have a fullness of joy like His. The devil wants all men to be miserable like unto himself. You are the one who must decide whose thoughts you will entertain. You are free to choose—but you are not free to alter the consequences of those choices. You will be what you think about—what you consistently allow to occupy the stage of your mind.

Sometimes you may have difficulty driving off the stage of your mind a certain evil thought. To drive it off, Elder Boyd K. Packer suggests that you sing an inspirational song of Zion, or just think on its words. Elder Bruce R. McConkie recommends that after the opening song, you might preach a sermon to yourself. In fact, he says the finest sermons he has ever preached have been preached to himself.

We should not invite the devil to give us a stage presentation. Usually with our hardly realizing it, he slips into our thoughts. Our accountability begins with how we handle the evil thought immediately after it is presented. Like Jesus, we should positively and promptly terminate the temptation. We should not allow the devil to elaborate with all his insidious reasoning.

It is our privilege to store our memories with good and great thoughts and bring them out on the stage of our minds at will. When the Lord faced His three great temptations in the wilderness, He immediately rebutted the devil with appropriate scripture which He had stored in His memory. (“Think on Christ,” *Ensign*, Apr. 1984, pp. 10–11)

**Must Focus on the Solemnities of Eternity**

**D&C 43:34**

Hearken ye to these words. Behold, I am Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world. Treasure these things up in your hearts, and let the solemnities of eternity rest upon your minds.

**D&C 84:60-61**

Verily, verily, I say unto you who now hear my words, which are my voice, blessed are ye inasmuch as you receive these things; For I will forgive you of your sins with this commandment— that you remain steadfast in your minds in solemnity and the spirit of prayer, in bearing testimony to all the world of those things which are communicated unto you.

**Ezra Taft Benson**

Take time to meditate. Ponder the meaning of the work in which you are engaged. The Lord has counseled, “Let the solemnities of eternity rest upon your minds” (D&C 43:34). You cannot do that when your minds are preoccupied with the worries and cares of the world. (*Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson*, p. 390)

**Marion G. Romney**

- In all dispensations the Lord has counseled his people to keep in their minds and thoughts the truths he has revealed to them. To the early Saints of this dispensation he said: “... let the solemnities of eternity rest upon your minds.” (D&C 43:34.) [Conference Report, April 1960, p. 111]
- The world and its ills crowd upon us through our media, our technology, and our life-style until we eat and sleep, rest and work, travel and wait with schedule in hand, always at top speed, and through it all we find little time to search out the counsel of the Lord. The remedy is to be had in complying with the Lord’s counsel to “let the solemnities of eternity rest upon [our] minds.” (D&C 43:34.) If we will be obedient to the Lord’s counsel to study the scriptures, the solemnities of eternity will indeed rest upon our minds. We will turn to the Lord in righteousness in our prayers, in our scripture study, and in our family discussions. Further, we can be
informed as to the counsel of the Lord with respect to each of our assignments. For we are not, like the world, left in the dark without a rudder, to be ever learning and never able to come to a knowledge of the truth. We know with certainty where the counsel of the Lord is to be found: (1) in the written word of the Lord, the scriptures; (2) in the counsel of the living prophets; and (3) through personal inspiration and revelation to each of us for guidance within the scope of our own assignments or circumstances. Drinking deeply from these springs of living water will bless each member of the Church. Don’t let yourselves be too busy or too tired to so drink. The added strength, wisdom, and inspiration which comes therefrom will repay your efforts a thousandfold. (“Seek Not to Counsel the Lord,” Ensign, Aug. 1985, 5)

Solemn Thoughts Necessary to Find Out Things of God

Joseph Smith

A fanciful and flowery and heated imagination beware of; because the things of God are of deep import; and time, and experience, and careful and ponderous and solemn thoughts can only find them out. Thy mind, O man! if thou wilt lead a soul unto salvation, must stretch as high as the utmost heavens, and search into and contemplate the darkest abyss, and the broad expance of eternity -- thou must commune with God. How much more dignified and noble are the thoughts of God, than the vain imaginations of the human heart! None but fools will trifle with the souls of men. (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p.137)

Let Your Thoughts Be Directed to God

Alma 37:36
Yea, and cry unto God for all thy support; yea, let all thy doings be unto the Lord, and whithersoever thou goest let it be in the Lord; yea, let all thy thoughts be directed unto the Lord; yea, let the affections of thy heart be placed upon the Lord forever.

Brigham Young

The religion that we have embraced must last a man from Monday morning until Monday morning, and from Saturday night until Saturday night, and from one new year until another; it must be in all our thoughts and words, in all our ways and dealings. (Discourses of Brigham Young, pp.233-234)

David O. McKay

A willingness to give God the glory is a sure means of subduing selfishness. Faith, therefore, is a foundation element in true character building; for an upright character is the result of continued effort and right thinking, the effect of long-cherished associations with God-like thoughts. He approaches nearest the Christ spirit who makes God the center of his thoughts and acts, and who can say in his heart, “. . . not my will, but thine, be done.” (Luke 22:42.) [Gospel Ideals, p.350-351]

God Knows Our Thoughts

D&C 6:16
Yea, I tell thee, that thou mayest know that there is none else save God that knowest thy thoughts and the intents of thy heart.

D&C 33:1
Behold, I say unto you, my servants Ezra and Northrop, open ye your ears and hearken to the voice of the Lord your God, whose word is quick and powerful, sharper than a two-edged sword, to the dividing asunder of the joints and marrow, soul and spirit; and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Isaiah 55:7-9
Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

For my thoughts [are] not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.

For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

D&C 88:109
And then shall the second angel sound his trumpet, and reveal the secret acts of men, and the thoughts and intents of their hearts, and the mighty works of God in the second thousand years—

**Brigham Young**

God is here: his influence fills immensity. He has his messengers throughout all the works of his hands. He watches every one of his creatures; their acts, their affections, and thoughts are all known to him; for his intelligence and power fill immensity. Not that his person does, but his Spirit does; and he is here teaching, guiding and directing the nations of the earth. (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, p.32)

**John Taylor**

We may deceive one another, as in some circumstances, counterfeit coin passes for that which is considered true and valuable among men. But God searches the hearts and tries the reins of the children of men. He knows our thoughts and comprehends our desires and feelings. He knows our acts and the motives which prompt us to perform them. He is acquainted with all the doings and operations of the human family, and all the secret thoughts and acts of the children of men are open and naked before him, and for them he will bring them to judgment. (*The Gospel Kingdom*, p.231)

**Ministering Angels Know Our Thoughts**

**Joseph Smith**

Concerning Brother James Adams, it should appear strange that so good and so great a man was hated. The deceased ought never to have had an enemy. But so it was. Wherever light shone, it stirred up darkness. Truth and error, good and evil cannot be reconciled. Judge Adams had some enemies, but such a man ought not to have had one. I saw him first at Springfield, when on my way from Missouri to Washington. He sought me out when a stranger, took me to his home, encouraged and cheered me, and gave me money. He has been a most intimate friend. I anointed him to the patriarchal power -- to receive the keys of knowledge and power, by revelation to himself. He has had revelations concerning his departure, and has gone to a more important work. When men are prepared, they are better off to go hence. Brother Adams has gone to open up a more effectual door for the dead. The spirits of the just are exalted to a greater and more glorious work; hence they are blessed in their departure to the world of spirits. Enveloped in flaming fire, they are not far from us, and know and understand our thoughts, feelings, and motions, and are often pained therewith. (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p.325)

**God Will Judge Our Thoughts**

**Alma 12:14**

For our words will condemn us, yea, all our works will condemn us; we shall not be found spotless; and our thoughts will also condemn us; and in this awful state we shall not dare to look up to our God; and we would fain be glad if we could command the rocks and the mountains to fall upon us to hide us from his presence.

**Brigham Young**

- Time and the ability to labor are the capital stock of the whole world of mankind, and we are all indebted to God for the ability to use time to advantage, and he will require of us a strict account of the disposition we make of this ability; and he will not only require an account of our acts, but our words and thoughts will also be brought into judgment. (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, p.301)

- This is a subject I have reflected upon a great deal, and I have come to the conclusion that we shall be judged according to the deeds done in the body and according to the thoughts and intents of the heart. (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, p.382)

**Righteous Actions Must Have Corresponding Righteous Thoughts**

**David O. McKay**

Thoughts are the seeds of acts and precede them. Mere compliance with the word of the Lord, without a corresponding inward desire, will avail but little. Indeed, such outward actions and pretending phrases may disclose hypocrisy, a sin that Jesus most vehemently condemned.

“O generation of vipers,” he exclaimed, “how can ye, being evil, speak good things?” (Matt. 12:34.) The Savior’s constant desire and effort were to implant in the mind right thoughts, pure motives, noble ideals, knowing full well that right words and actions would eventually follow. He taught what modern physiology and psychology confirm -- that hate, jealousy, and other evil passions destroy a man’s physical vigor and efficiency. “They pervert his mental perceptions and render him incapable of resisting the temptation to commit acts of violence. They undermine his moral health. By insidious
stages they transform the man who cherishes them into a criminal.” (Gospel Ideals, p.382)

Gospel Requires Purity in Thought

Mosiah 4:30
But this much I can tell you, that if ye do not watch yourselves, and your thoughts, and your words, and your deeds, and observe the commandments of God, and continue in the faith of what ye have heard concerning the coming of our Lord, even unto the end of your lives, ye must perish. And now, O man, remember, and perish not.

D&C 121:45
Let thy bowels also be full of charity towards all men, and to the household of faith, and let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly; then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God; and the doctrine of the priesthood shall distil upon thy soul as the dews from heaven.

Lorenzo Snow
God is feeling after us. God is now feeling after us, and will disclose our secret thoughts. It would be well to purify and prepare ourselves, and in the language of the Psalmist, call upon God, saying, “Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” (Teachings of Lorenzo Snow, p.120)

Joseph F. Smith
As reasonable beings, as men and women of intelligence, we cannot but admire and honor the doctrine of Jesus Christ, which is the doctrine of God, and which requires of every man and woman righteousness in their lives, purity in their thoughts, uprightness in their daily walk and conversation, devotion to the Lord, love of truth, love of their fellowman, and above all things in the world the love of God. These were the precepts that were inculcated by the Son of God when he walked among his brethren in the meridian of time. He taught these precepts; he exemplified them in his life, and advocated continually the doing of the will of him that sent him. (Gospel Doctrine, p.95)

Unclean Thoughts Lead to Unclean Acts

Gordon B. Hinckley

Be clean in mind, and then you will have greater control over your bodies. It was said of old, “As [a man] thinketh in his heart, so is he” (Prov. 23:7). Unclean thoughts lead to unclean acts. I remember going to President McKay years ago to plead the cause of a missionary who had become involved in serious sin. I said to President McKay, “He did it on an impulse.” The President said to me: “His mind was dwelling on these things before he transgressed. The thought was father to the deed. There would not have been that impulse if he had previously controlled his thoughts.” (“Be Ye Clean,” Ensign, May 1996, p. 48)

Russell M. Nelson
Since thoughts precede deeds, you must first learn to control your thoughts. “As [a man] thinketh in his heart, so is he.” (Prov. 23:7.) [“Self-Mastery,” Ensign, Nov. 1985, p. 30]

Evil Thoughts Are Sinful

Bruce R. McConkie
Evil thoughts are sinful. (Prov. 15:26; 24:9.) They are an abomination in themselves, and they lead to further wickedness. Evils are not committed until they have been thought out in the heart. "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness." (Mark 7:21-22; Matt. 15:19; Luke 6:45.) "Behold, I will bring evil upon this people," saith the Lord, "even the fruit of their thoughts." (Jer. 6:19.) It was only after "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen. 6:5), that he sent the flood of Noah to cleanse the earth. (Mormon Doctrine, p.792)

Genesis 6:5
And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

Psalms 10:4
The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts.

Evil Thoughts Are More Destructive Than War
David O. McKay

More destructive to the spreading of Christian principles in the minds, particularly of the youth, than battleships, submarines, or even bombs, is the sowing of false ideals by the enemy. . . . Misrepresentation, false propaganda, innuendoes soon sprout into poisonous weeds, and before long the people find themselves victims of a pollution that has robbed them of their individual liberty and enslaved them to a group of political gangsters. Let us draw a lesson from this. So it is with evil thoughts that may be permitted insidiously to enter and to find lodgment in the human mind. (Gospel Ideals, p.284)

Sex in One’s Thoughts is Inappropriate

Spencer W. Kimball

All sex activity outside marriage is sin. The early apostles and prophets mention numerous sins that were reprehensible to them. Many of them were sexual sins -- adultery, being without natural affection, lustfulness, infidelity, incontinence, filthy communications, impurity, inordinate affection, fornication. They included all sexual relations outside marriage -- petting, sex perversion, masturbation, and preoccupation with sex in one’s thoughts and talking. Included are every hidden and secret sin and all unholy and impure thoughts and practices. One of the worst of these is incest. (The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball, p.264)

If Thoughts Are Clean Then Temptation is Easily Resisted

David O. McKay

Temptation does not come to those who have not thought of it before. Keep your thoughts clean, and it will be easy to resist temptations as they come. (Gospel Ideals, p.401)

Strength of the Church Lies in the Purity of Thought of its Members

David O. McKay

Now, what do we mean by the world? It is sometimes used as an indefinite term. I take it that the world refers to the inhabitants who are alienated from the Saints of God. They are aliens to the Church, and it is the spirit of this alienation that we should keep ourselves free from. We are told by Paul not to conform to the fashions of the world. Titus was warned not to partake of those things, the evils of the world, and to “Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.” (II Tim. 2:22.) Purity of heart -- Zion is the pure in heart, we have been told, and the strength of this Church lies in the purity of the thoughts and lives of its members, then the testimony of Jesus abides in the soul, and strength comes to each individual to withstand the evils of the world. (Gospel Ideals, p.153)

Pondering and Proper Thoughts Important Part of Healing

Robert D. Hales

While I was lying in my hospital bed and for several weeks at home, my physical activity was severely restricted by intense pain which disabled my weakened body, but I learned the joy of freeing my mind to ponder the meaning of life and the eternities. Since my calendar was wiped clean of meetings, tasks, and appointments, for a number of weeks I was able to turn my attention away from matters of administration to matters of the eternities. The Lord has told us, “Let the solemnities of eternity rest upon your minds” (D&C 43:34). I discovered that if I dwelt only upon my pain, it inhibited the healing process. I found that pondering was a very important element in the healing process for both soul and body. Pain brings you to a humility that allows you to ponder. It is an experience I am grateful to have endured. (“Healing Soul and Body,” Ensign, Nov. 1998, 14)

Even Our Thoughts Can Effect Others

David O. McKay

There is another responsibility correlated and even coexistent with free agency, which is too infrequently emphasized, and that is the effect not only of a person’s actions but also of his thoughts upon others. Man radiates what he is, and that radiation affects to a greater or lesser degree every person who comes within that radiation. (Gospel Ideals, p.302)

True Repentance Requires Thinking New Thoughts

Spencer W. Kimball
Very frequently people think they have repented and are worthy of forgiveness when all they have done is to express sorrow or regret at the unfortunate happening, but their repentance is barely started. Until they have begun to make changes in their lives, transformation in their habits, and to add new thoughts to their minds, to be sorry is only a bare beginning. (The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball, p.87)

To Know God Requires That Our Thoughts Be Like His

Mosiah 5:13
For how knoweth a man the master whom he has not served, and who is a stranger unto him, and is far from the thoughts and intents of his heart?

Man Must Learn to Control Thoughts

Wilford Woodruff
We are taught to cultivate our minds, to control our thoughts to thoroughly bring our whole being into subjection to the spirit and law of God, that we may learn to be one and act as the heart of one man, that we may carry out the purposes of God upon the earth. (The Discourses of Wilford Woodruff, pp.10-11)

The Future of a Nation Determined by the Thoughts of the Young

David O. McKay
Victor Hugo said: “The future of any nation can be determined by the thoughts of its young men between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five.” Thus it is easy to understand why the Lord designates Zion as “... the pure in heart (D. & C. 97:21); and only when we are such, and only when we have such shall Zion “... flourish, and the glory of the Lord shall be upon her.” (Gospel Ideals, p.335)

Cast Away Idle Thoughts

D&C 88:69
Remember the great and last promise which I have made unto you; cast away your idle thoughts and your excess of laughter far from you.

Psalms 119:113
I hate vain thoughts: but thy law do I love.

The Effect of Media Upon Our Thoughts

Joseph F. Smith
It would be difficult to estimate the harmful influences upon the thoughts, feelings, and actions of the young, brought about by the practice of reading dime novels. Books constitute a sort of companionship to everyone who reads, and they create within the heart feelings either for good or for bad. It sometimes happens that parents are very careful about the company which their children keep and are very indifferent about the books they read. In the end the reading of a bad book will bring about evil associates.

It is not only the boy who reads this strange, weird and unnatural exciting literature who is affected by its influence, but in time he influences others. This literature becomes the mother of all sorts of evil suggestions that ripen into evil practices and bring about an unnatural and debased feeling which is ever crowding out the good in the human heart and giving place to the bad. It was Shelley who said that “strange thoughts beget strange deeds,” and when our children are reading books that are creating strange and unusual and undesirable thoughts in their minds we need not be surprised to learn that they have committed some unusual, some strange, or unnatural act. It is in the thoughts and feelings that we have to combat the evils and temptations of the world, and the purification of our thoughts and feelings should be made the special effort of every father and mother. Fuller once wrote, “It seems my soul is like a filthy pond where fish die soon and frogs live long.” It is remarkable how easy it is to learn sin and how hard it is to forget it.

A story is told of an English officer in India, who one day went to the book shelf to take down a book. As he reached his hand up over the volume his finger was bitten by an adder. After a few hours the finger began to swell. Later on the swelling went into his arm, and finally the whole body was affected, and in a few days the officer was dead. There are adders concealed in many a cheap and trashy book, and they are always common in dime novels. Their effects upon our souls are poisonous, and in time they are sure to produce a moral and spiritual death. * * * The influence of these novels is all the more dangerous because the feelings and thoughts which they engender in the heart and mind are more or less hidden and the evil consequences of such reading frequently does not manifest itself until some overt and horrible act is the result of months and
sometimes years of imagination and wonderment. Let the Saints beware of the books that enter their homes, for their influences may be as poisonous and deadly as the adder which brought death to the English officer in India. (*Gospel Doctrine*, p.324-325)

**L. Tom Perry**

Have the courage to turn off unfit television programs, and stay away from movies and videotapes that would fill your mind with thoughts of evil and violence. Remember, the scripture has said, “For as [a man] thinketh in his heart, so is he.” (Prov. 23:7.) [“I Confer the Priesthood of Aaron,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1985, p. 48]

**Control Words Before You Can Control Your Thoughts**

**Brigham Young**

If you first gain power to check your words, you will then begin to have power to check your judgment, and at length actually gain power to check your thoughts and reflections. (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, pp.267-268)

**Master Feelings to Master Thoughts**

**Brigham Young**

Experience has taught us that it requires time to acquire certain branches of mechanism, also all principles and ideas that we wish to become masters of. The closer people apply their minds to any correct purpose the faster they can grow and increase in the knowledge of the truth. When they learn to master their feelings, they can soon learn to master their reflections and thoughts in the degree requisite for attaining the objects they are seeking. But while they yield to a feeling or spirit that distracts their minds from a subject they wish to study and learn, so long they will never gain the mastery of their minds. (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, p.250)

**Proper Thoughts Produce Self-Respect**

**Joseph F. Smith**

Among the strong helps to gain self-respect are personal purity and proper thoughts which are the bases of all proper action. (*Gospel Doctrine*, p.334)