

Be Strong and of good courage....

In order to help our young women, we only need to look to the scriptures to offer some great example of strength and courage.

A young boy named David went to take some corn and bread to his brothers who were fighting the Phillistines. As he heard the giant, Goliath, calling out to the Israelites, David asked them why they were running from him when the Lord was on their side. David later told King Saul that he could slay Goliath. He had killed a lion and a bear amongst the sheep and he knew he could slay Goliath. He told him that the Lord was on their side and he knew he could do it. So David, a young boy with no training in warfare and wearing no armour, approached Goliath, a giant of a man who had grown up training in warfare. He came simply with a sling and some stones. What gave David the strength and the courage to stand before this giant? Was it his sling or his stones? No. David BELIEVED in these items, but his courage and strength came from the fact that he knew he was well trained and prepared in using a sling. He had practiced using his sling over and over while tending sheep. More importantly, he knew the Lord was on his side.

Our youth today face many giants. Can they like David approach them with a sling and some stones? With training and practice and knowing the Lord is on their side, I believe they can.

Stones: Just as David picked 5 correct stones to slay Goliath, so too, can our YW pick up correct stones to slay their giants. Their values are their stones. With Faith, Divine Nature, Individual Worth, Knowledge, Choice & Accountability, Good Works, Integrity and Virtue, they can slay every giant that comes their way.

Slings: The stones will not do any damage without a sling or a means of putting their ammunition into action. Some of the slings that will allow you to use your stones are : Sunday lessons, weekly activities, Girls Camp, Personal progress, Youth Conference, etc.

Training: Their attendance, or their action, is the training and practice. We can provide a sling and stones, but they must be willing to train. As they attend and participate, they will be using the sling and the stones over and over to prepare themselves, and to be fully trained and well prepared to stand before a giant.

When they understand that the Lord is on their side, that they are doing His work, that they are prepared with all that is needed, that they are well trained; they will be able to slay the giants in their life.

Here is one example of how a value or stone can slay a giant:

At the High School this year, the theme is “Touch Gold.” What originally started with the football team, has spread to the whole school. There is a strip of gold with the words “Touch Gold” over every doorway. As the kids and teachers walk around the school and in and out of doorways, you can see them reach up and “touch gold.” What does this mean? I asked a few of our youth what “touch gold” meant to them. I was told by a couple of young freshman football players that touching gold meant that they were promising to do their best on and off the field. That they would do nothing that would bring disrespect to their family, team, or self. As they touch gold, it brings them a sense of respect and unity. Knowing others are committing gives them strength, too.

Another senior football player said, “it’s going out of your way to do the small things. Making sure that you’re doing what is expected. It’s about being extraordinary. It’s also about making a name for yourself—becoming legendary so that whenever someone talks about you, it’s something to be proud of.”

One of our young woman told me that “reaching gold is about reaching my fullest potential, doing the best I can, and reaching for the top or the gold.”

Now think about this....they are REACHING UP. They are committing each time they touch gold to elevate their thinking, to improve who they are. I would like to propose another reason to touch gold or another symbol. The value Virtue is gold. Sis. Elaine Dalton said, “The color of virtue is gold because gold is pure. It shines. It is soft, not harsh or brash. It is precious. Gold must be refined. Virtue is a pattern of thought and behavior based on high moral standards. It encompasses chastity and moral purity. Virtue includes modesty—in thought, language, dress, and demeanor. Virtue provides an anchor on the path leading to our Heavenly Father’s presence. The paths of virtue lead to happiness in this life and in the life to come. The paths of virtue lead to strong families. The paths of virtue contain the foundation stones for the blessings of eternity. They lead to the temple.”

Are these things not similar to what the youth are saying about “touching gold?” What if our youth touched the gold of virtue every day? What if when they leave their rooms or their house, they “touch gold” to remind and commit them to living a virtuous life—one that leads them to the temple?” I would propose that we

have a great opportunity to teach our kids to “touch gold” and commit to virtue.

Virtue is the crescendo value. Virtue is what gets you to the temple. Our goal, in all that we do, is about getting them to the temple. God is there. Peace is there. We are to be rescuing them and bringing them to the temple.

Sisters, we are working with the best of the best—those the Lord has saved for this time because of their strength and courage. In the October 2009 visiting teaching message, we read by: **Elder Neal A. Maxwell**: “Reserved by the Lord for this time, [the rising generation] must now be *preserved* ... and *prepared* for their special moment in human history! They have been *held back* to come forth at this time, but now they need to be *pushed forward* to meet their rendezvous. ...

“Youth are not unlike prospective converts. There are those critical moments when their souls begin to tilt—toward the Lord or away from Him. These moments of decision cannot always be created, but when they occur, they must not be wasted. More often than not, these moments will occur in quiet and reverent conversation with parents, grandparents, a bishop, an adult leader, or a righteous peer” (“Unto the Rising Generation,” *Ensign*, Apr. 1985, 8, 10).

**Also from the visiting teaching message was this quote by Elder Ronald A. Rasband of the Presidency of the Seventy**: “Our rising generation is worthy of our best efforts to support and strengthen them in their journey to adulthood. ... In every action we take, in every place we go, with every Latter-day Saint young person we meet, we need to have an increased awareness of the need for strengthening, nurturing, and being an influence for good in their lives” (“Our Rising Generation,” *Liahona and Ensign*, May 2006, 47).”

When my visiting teachers shared this message with me, I just sat there and cried. What we are doing for these youth DOES make a difference.

A week ago, Sis Dalton told a young woman in Puerto Rico that the same message follows her wherever she goes and it was found in a picture in the corner of the room. I looked back and the picture was of Esther. She said, "this is the message: "You HAVE come to the kingdom for a time such as this." She said that the youth of today were special spirits and they were strong. Satan would try to tempt them, but they are strong and beautiful.

Later while visiting, Sis. Dalton said that one of the greatest blessing of her calling was the gift of seeing them how Heavenly Father sees them and how He loves them. I would like to add my witness to that. If you have not yet experienced that on behalf of your young women, ask to be shown. Pray so you will know. I promise it will help you in directing them and loving them no matter what. May we open the scriptures and share the examples of strength and courage. May we live OUR lives to be examples of strength and courage, and may we help them to take their sling and their stones and prepare them to slay the giants in their life.