

The Fantasy and the Reality of Your Royal Identity

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It is truly an honor and a privilege to be here with you today. When I was invited to speak at the devotional, I decided to ask my children what they felt was most important for BYU students to know. My eleven-year-old son, Nathan, said to tell you to *not* vote for a particular presidential candidate, who shall remain unnamed. My only daughter, Hannah, age eight, has three brothers. She felt that the most important thing to say should be directed at all the men and boys here in the audience in regard to their bathroom hygiene. Hannah and Nathan both offered some pretty sound advice, but I was particularly touched by the response from my five-year-old, Aidan. He said it was important to know that “God is special—and you are special.”

I pondered Aidan’s words for some time. How can we know that we are special? More important, how can we know who we truly are?

Today I would like to talk about your royal identity.

When Elaine S. Dalton was the Young Women general president, she said:

Like the king’s son, each of you has inherited a royal birthright. Each of you has a divine heritage. “You are literally the royal daughters of our Father in Heaven.” Each of you was born to be a queen.¹

What does it mean to be truly royal and what are the eternal implications of being royal?

I study the effect of media on children and families. I just finished a study on the effect of the superhero and princess culture on children. If you have ever been around a preschool child, you know that both superheroes and princesses are very popular with this age group. In fact, many children this age say that they would like to *be* a superhero or a princess when they grow up.

I have been thinking quite a lot about superheroes and princesses over the past few years, and I would like to structure my talk with these two groups in mind. I will mainly be directing my comments on superheroes to the men in the room and my comments on princesses to the women. However, there are many overlaps in both categories, and I hope you can find things that apply to you in both sections.

Superheroes

I would first like to talk about the fantasy and reality of superheroes. Some of the most

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popular movies of all time have featured superheroes. Why are superheroes so popular today? Superheroes are pretty cool. We would like to imagine ourselves being able to fly faster than a speeding bullet, see through buildings, or be almost invincible. But there are definitely some fantasies and fallacies that are portrayed by superheroes in popular media.

Hypermasculinization

Because of your royal identity, you will one day have more power than the most powerful superhero. You have the potential to become limitless. As cool as superheroes are, they are not always the greatest of role models in terms of power. First of all, superheroes tend to embody a hypermasculinization that is stereotypical and that I believe is not very helpful. They are often brash, arrogant, angry, and aggressive, and they take a lot of risks. Some of them misunderstand or abuse their power. It seems that to be a superhero or even to be a man, one needs to embody some pretty negative behaviors.

Bishop Gérald Caussé spoke out on the troubling portrayal of superheroes in the media in a recent BYU devotional:

The world values the cult of the invincible. Superheroes, from Batman to Superman, abound in our media. This ideology leads to dangerous behavior. We see people who want to hide their problems under the appearance of strength through boasting, aggressiveness, or abusive behaviors. Some are so obsessed with outperforming others that they turn to drugs or other stimulants in order to do so. Still others lose themselves in egotism and self-admiration. These forms of pride lead to disappointment, ineffectiveness, or worse.²

Prescribing a one-size-fits-all mentality that is largely influenced by the superhero culture may be damaging to our young boys and men. Weaknesses are not tolerated, and humility,

empathy, emotional connection, and softness are not valued under this approach. Indeed, I feel like some of the most damaging words you can say to a young boy who is showing softness or is in emotional pain is “be a man” or “man up.” In my opinion, the hypermasculinization we so value in the superhero culture is a complete distortion and takes us away from understanding our royal identity.

The Muscular Ideal

Part of accepting your royal identity is understanding the purpose of your body here on earth. Another fantasy that takes us away from our true identity is very common in the superhero culture and is called the muscular ideal. Superheroes in popular media tend to look very similar. They are extremely muscular and have broad shoulders and small waists. Research suggests that exposure to these types of images and media models is related to body dissatisfaction and depression in men.

We almost never talk to men about their body image. There are quite a few conference talks on this topic directed to women, but for some reason we ignore the men. Indeed, we know that “the spirit and the body are the soul of man,”³ so this is not insubstantial. Your body is a gift from your Heavenly Father, and I strongly believe that one of Satan’s primary attacks on your esteem is to diminish your respect for your body. He will try to make you feel like you aren’t good enough or that you don’t measure up.

Sister Susan W. Tanner, former Young Women general president, said:

[Satan] seduces some to despise their bodies; others he tempts to worship their bodies. In either case, he entices the world to regard the body merely as an object. In the face of so many satanic falsehoods about the body, I want to raise my voice today in support of the sanctity of the body. I testify that the body is a gift to be treated with gratitude and respect.⁴

Men, please do not worry about trying to conform to the muscular ideal we see in the superhero culture. Please do not view your body as merely an object meant to be honed to ultimate perfection. When I picture Christ, I picture the ultimate superhero—but I do not picture Him as being particularly muscular, as men are portrayed in the media today. You are created in the express image of our Heavenly Father and are His royal heir. That means our bodies look like His. In the eternities, I cannot imagine everyone walking around looking like they are on steroids! Instead, I imagine individuals of different shapes and sizes and an acceptance as our royal identities are made clear.

Russell M. Nelson, president of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, said:

The marvel of our physical bodies is often overlooked. Who has not encountered feelings of low self-esteem because of physique or appearance? Many people wish their bodies could be more to their liking. . . .

Your body, whatever its natural gifts, is a magnificent creation of God [see Psalm 8:3–5; see also Hebrews 2:7, 9]. It is a tabernacle of flesh—a temple for your spirit [see 1 Corinthians 6:19]. A study of your body attests to its divine design.⁵

Do not buy into the fantasy of the superhero culture when you think about the profound gift of your body from your Heavenly Father. Your acceptance of your body is a key part in understanding your royal identity.

Now on to the realities of becoming a superhero.

The Reality of a True Villain

In every superhero story there is also an ultimate villain: the Joker, Loki, Magneto, or Lex Luthor. One of my favorite superhero stories is from the animated film *The Incredibles*.⁶ If you remember the story, there was a little boy named Buddy who wanted more than

anything to be a superhero, but he didn't have any real superhero power. He became angry and decided to devote his life to trying to destroy the real superheroes and prove how much smarter and more powerful he was than the Incredibles. Buddy changed his name to Syndrome and ended up becoming a very evil person, even though he started out wanting to help others.

There is a very real and very evil villain in the story of our lives. Satan will try anything to turn you to his dark side. Just like Buddy, he started out with a different name, Lucifer, but his name was changed to Satan when he became truly evil. The irony is that Satan could have become powerful if he would have trusted in his Father in Heaven and in Jesus Christ's plan. Instead, he was too impatient and power hungry, which ultimately led to his undoing.

Luckily, in our story we know the ending in the ultimate battle between good and evil. There will be a final showdown someday. Even though Satan will be more powerful than any villain we see in the superhero culture today, Christ *will* win the day. Good *will* conquer evil. This gives me great hope and comfort as I look at the evil of the world and sometimes despair. Even when I think Satan has won over the hearts of mankind, I know that this will not be our final destiny.

The Characteristics of a True Superhero

I would now like to focus on the characteristics of becoming a true superhero, of truly embracing the qualities that will prepare you to become royal someday. Batman, Captain America, Iron Man, and Spider-Man all have some excellent redeeming qualities, yet they pale in comparison with the ultimate superhero: Jesus Christ.

When I think of a real superhero, I imagine someone who is empathetic. He is someone who is "willing to mourn with those that mourn . . . and comfort those that stand in

need of comfort.”⁷ He is soft, gentle, tender, and kind. He understands his emotions and he uses them to bless the lives of others. We see none of the arrogance or brashness portrayed in the media—instead we see humility and an understanding and acceptance of one’s own weaknesses.

One of my favorite characteristics of a true superhero is being a defender. Many of the superheroes portrayed in the media are wonderful defenders. Unfortunately they typically defend others in a violent way. I study bullying in childhood, and there is a small group of children who are termed “defenders.” These children see someone picking on someone else and are willing to stand up for the victim, to get a teacher, and to tell the bully to stand down. Defending someone against the schoolyard bully takes a unique type of bravery and courage.

I once saw a news article about some truly amazing children from the Bridgewater, Massachusetts, area. Danny Keefe, age six, suffered a severe brain hemorrhage after birth, and his parents worried that he might have some serious developmental delays. Danny wears a jacket, a tie, and a fedora to school every day and has some speech problems. He is also the official “water coach” for the Peewee Football League Bridgewater Badgers, an older group of fifth-grade boys.

Some of the kids at school started picking on Danny for the way that he spoke and for his choice in outfits. The boys on the football team heard about this and decided to show their support for Danny by starting a Danny Appreciation Day and dressing up just like Danny. The quarterback of the football team said:

*We heard that Danny was getting picked on, so we thought that we would all have a day to dress up like Danny. We thought we would all come to school like Danny and sponsor Danny to show Danny that we love him—that we love him very much.*⁸

In my view, these boys are superheroes—better, in fact, than so many of the superheroes we see in the media. They were able to defend someone who was being hurt without resorting to aggression themselves.

I just finished doing a study on superheroes and defending in preschool boys. We found that boys did *not* pick up the defending themes in superhero media and that they were no more likely to be defenders than their peers who were less into the superhero culture. In fact, they were actually more aggressive than their peers! However, I suspect that one way to learn how to become a defender would be to study and try to emulate Christ—the Ultimate Defender of mankind.

One of my favorite stories in the New Testament is that of the woman caught in adultery:

And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst,

*They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act.*⁹

This was a pretty serious crime, and there was no doubt that she was guilty. The law at the time allowed for her to be stoned to death—a truly terrible way to die. She must have been so afraid.

*But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not.*¹⁰

The scribes and Pharisees continued to press Him, and in His kind and wise manner He said, “He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.”¹¹

By His very example Christ defended the woman, and the crowds, “being convicted by their own conscience,”¹² left her alone.

Later, Christ asked:

Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?

*She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.*¹³

My Boys

I want so badly for my three boys to understand what it means to be a true superhero:

- To be kind, honest, and true.
- To defend those who cannot defend themselves.
- To honor the priesthood and to be righteous defenders of Christ’s authority.
- To understand where true power comes from and to respect the true source.
- To each love and respect their future wife and to be kind, gentle, and understanding fathers.
- To serve those around them and to show integrity for their values even as the world tries to knock them down.

My greatest hope for my boys is that they understand their royal identities as sons of God and live their lives in a way that would make Him proud.

Princesses

Now, on to the princesses. For some reason we are obsessed with royalty. I did my graduate work in England and then worked there for a few years before we moved to Utah. It was so interesting to live in a country that had a queen and a royal family. I watched people become obsessed when Prince William married Kate Middleton—and then become even more obsessed when she gave birth first to Prince George and then to Princess Charlotte. We see this same level of obsession in the media world. For example, the Disney Princess line earns around \$3 billion each year.¹⁴ Our own research suggests that 96 percent of preschool girls view Disney princess media and 82 percent play with Disney princess toys.¹⁵

One reason I think we are obsessed with royalty is because it speaks, in part, to the royalty

within each one of us. Stop and think about this for a second. You are the child of a loving heavenly king and queen—each of us is a very real prince or princess in our own right. Speaking to the young women, President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, second counselor in the First Presidency, said:

*You are truly royal spirit daughters of Almighty God. You are princesses, destined to become queens. Your own wondrous story has already begun. Your “once upon a time” is now.*¹⁶

When a king or queen is crowned, there is a grand ceremony. They are given the crown jewels, a scepter, and a diadem as marks of their royalty. The scriptures also use powerful imagery to speak to our royal destiny. Pay attention to these words:

*But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.*¹⁷

Also, referring to gaining a knowledge of the Book of Mormon, we are told:

*And those who receive it in faith, and work righteousness, shall receive a crown of eternal life.*¹⁸

Our family lived in England for six years, so we have been to London quite a few times. We visited an exhibit at the Tower of London that displays the crown jewels and the royal scepter that Queen Elizabeth was given at her coronation. I remember looking at these things and being enchanted by their beauty. I reflected on what an amazing experience that must have been for Elizabeth to have had that crown put upon her head and the scepter placed in her hand as she became the queen of England.

Each one of us will have this experience one day if we are righteous and endure to the end. I get chills when I think about what it will be like to receive not a crown and scepter of jewels but, as it says in the scriptures, “a crown of eternal

life.” That one is going to blow the biggest diamond on earth completely out of the water.

We Are All Princesses

My name, Sarah, actually means “princess” in Hebrew. Until I turned thirty and decided I needed to grow up a little, my email address was princess-sarah. So I have been thinking about this princess thing for a very long time, and I always felt like my name represented something important and something special. However, you don’t need to be named princess to actually be one.

One of my favorite stories is from the film *A Little Princess*.¹⁹ If you remember, this was the story of Sara Crewe, a rich little girl who ended up losing her father and living in an orphanage. One day the headmistress was being particularly mean to Sara and told her that she was not a princess anymore. Sara stood up straight and tall and told her:

*I am a princess. All girls are! Even if they live in tiny old attics, even if they dress in rags, even if they aren’t pretty or smart or young, they’re still princesses.*²⁰

These words are beyond true. No matter our circumstances in life, we are princesses or princes of a royal family, destined to become queens and kings someday. Just think of what that means for your life. How does that change the way you think about your identity and the way you manage your life?

I recently saw a beautiful picture of a girl wearing a crown. Her head was held high and her eyes were closed. Written on the picture were these words:

*Sometimes, on dark days, I think, “Nobody cares and nobody’s coming.” Then I remember who sends thoughts like that, and I **straighten my crown.***²¹

I would like to now talk about a few fantasies about being a princess.

Waiting for a Prince on a White Horse

One of the most predominant storylines about princesses involves finding true love. In many of the stories, a prince rides up on a white horse to sweep the princess off her feet. He seems perfect in every way, and it is love at first sight. They kiss and ride off into a beautiful sunset together, ready to live happily ever after. Though beautiful, I think this storyline is misleading in a number of ways. First of all, I believe that the youth of today are too concerned about finding their prince and expecting him to be perfect.

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said:

As we visit with young adults all over the Church, often they will ask, “Well, what are the characteristics I should look for in a future spouse?” as though they have some checklist of “I need to find someone who has these three or four or five things.” . . .

*The list is not for evaluating someone else. The list is for you . . . and what . . . you need to become. And so if there are three primary characteristics that [you] hope to find in an eternal companion, then those are the three things [you] ought to be working to become. Then [you] will be attractive to someone who has those things. . . . You are not on a shopping spree looking for the greatest value with a series of characteristics. You become what you hope your spouse will be, and you’ll have a greater likelihood of finding that person.*²²

Instead of focusing so much on finding your prince, I would suggest you focus more on becoming a princess. And I don’t mean a bratty, materialistic, helpless type of princess. I mean a daughter of God who is secure in her royal identity, who loves to learn and to help others, and who has a strong testimony of Jesus Christ. Good things will happen when you focus more on becoming the right person and less on finding the perfect person.

The Thin Ideal

One other fantasy about being a princess has to do with the way they generally look in the media. Each represents what is termed the “thin ideal.” They all have a similar body shape with an impossibly tiny waist, large eyes, and lustrous long hair. Research shows that internalization of the thin ideal as portrayed in the media can be damaging, having an impact on girls’ body image, self-esteem, and self-worth. We start this internalization with our very youngest girls, dressing them up as princesses and complimenting them because they are so “pretty.” I believe there is too much appearance-based talk that happens with our young girls and not enough that focuses on their true, royal identity. Similar to what we discussed about superheroes and the muscular ideal, this talk leads to a view that there is one size that fits all. Women tend to have greater body image issues than men, and I believe that one of Satan’s greatest weapons is aimed at making women feel bad about and reject their bodies.

Indeed, Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said, “One would truly need a great and spacious makeup kit to compete with beauty as portrayed in media all around us.”²³

One of my favorite princess movies is *Brave*.²⁴ If you remember the story, Merida is an independent young princess in Scotland. Her mother is constantly telling her how a princess should behave and tries to arrange a marriage with a host of lackluster princes. There are three princes who each decide to have an archery contest to win Merida’s hand in marriage. Merida is forced to wear a corset and to watch her fate be decided by men she barely knows.

My very favorite part of the entire movie is after the three men have shot their arrows. Merida comes up, gives a royal grunt, and stretches to rip her dress apart so she can move more flexibly. She then pulls out a bow and arrow and says, “I am Merida, firstborn

descendant of Clan DunBroch. And I’ll be shooting for my own hand!”²⁵ She then gets a perfect bullseye.

Here Merida was taking charge of her royal future. Yes, she was meant to become queen, but she had learned that she didn’t need to let others dictate the way she looked or decide her own fate. She went on to discover her true identity—that being a princess meant being *herself* and not some contrived princess from fairy tales long ago. She would also find love on her own terms.

To the women in this room, I cannot say this strongly enough: love who you are. And part of that means loving your body with every blemish, stretch mark, and perceived flaw. Do not waste any more of your precious time obsessing over the way you look.

In the film *Miss Representation*, Katie Couric aptly stated:

*If women spent more time helping a sick neighbor or volunteering at a homeless shelter, focusing on how to use all their energy to solve some of the world’s problems—if they spent a tenth of the time thinking about those things that they do thinking about their weight, I mean, I think we’d solve all the world’s problems in a matter of months.*²⁶

Yes, we want to be healthy, but this means very different things for each person, and body acceptance may be difficult to achieve for some of us. Our Father in Heaven loves us for who we *are*—in fact, I believe He cares very little about our current dress size or how we look in a bathing suit. Remember, we are created in the image of our heavenly parents. We don’t know much about our Heavenly Mother. We don’t know what she looks like or even much about who she is as an individual. I can’t wait to meet her someday. I have so many questions for her! I do believe that my body looks like hers in a way. I want to be respectful and true to her image and to the way that she lived her life. Now I have the gift of my body on this earth.

Falling Asleep and Being Rescued by a Prince

I would like to discuss one last fantasy that has a ring of truth. In many of the stories, such as those of Sleeping Beauty or Snow White, the princess falls asleep and is rescued by a prince. Ladies, we are *not* on this earth to fall asleep! Our Heavenly Father has a much bigger fairy tale in store for us.

He has asked us to serve our communities and our families and to mother and nurture the children in our care, whether they are our own children, nieces, nephews, or other children in our sphere of influence. He has asked us to learn and to grow. My advice would be to get as much education during this time of your life as you can. Rely on the Spirit as you make decisions about your education and your career.

One of my favorite quotations of all time is by President Gordon B. Hinckley in a talk called “How Can I Become the Woman of Whom I Dream?”:

Find purpose in your life. Choose the things you would like to do, and educate yourselves to be effective in their pursuit. For most it is very difficult to settle on a vocation. You are hopeful that you will marry and that all will be taken care of. In this day and time, a girl needs an education. She needs the means and skills by which to earn a living should she find herself in a situation where it becomes necessary to do so.

Study your options. Pray to the Lord earnestly for direction. Then pursue your course with resolution.

The whole gamut of human endeavor is now open to women. There is not anything that you cannot do if you will set your mind to it. You can include in the dream of the woman you would like to be a picture of one qualified to serve society and make a significant contribution to the world of which she will be a part.²⁷

I resonate so much with this quotation. Our personal circumstances necessitated that I be the primary earner for our family. This was a difficult decision, and we spent many, many

nights on our knees in prayer. Many people were supportive, but others were judgmental and condescending when I started working full-time at BYU.

My favorite scripture is Proverbs 3:5–6. It says:

Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.²⁸

I believe that promise with all my heart. I am beyond lucky to have found a man who is my true equal, who understands, as it says in the family proclamation, that we “are obligated to help one another as equal partners.”²⁹ I trusted in the spiritual promptings we received that helped me know that I was meant to be at BYU. Because of the choices I made earlier in life and the education I felt prompted to receive, I am becoming the type of scholar that I know Heavenly Father needs me to become. Your path and your future might be very different than mine. Rely closely on the Spirit and trust in the Lord with all your heart when deciding what is right for your family.

Regardless of your circumstances, we need women who can speak up and speak out. In a beautiful talk entitled “A Plea to My Sisters,” President Russell M. Nelson said:

*My dear sisters, whatever your calling, whatever your circumstances, we need your impressions, your insights, and your inspiration. We need you to speak up and speak out in ward and stake councils. We need each married sister to speak as “a **contributing** and **full** partner” as you unite with your husband in governing your family. Married or single, you sisters possess distinctive capabilities and special intuition you have received as gifts from God. We brethren cannot duplicate your unique influence.³⁰*

Do not be afraid to share your experiences and your insights—in a class or in a

calling—especially when you are in a leadership position. We need your voices! We need you all. We need the single sisters, we need the mothers, we need the widows, we need the grandmas, we need the aunts, and we need the daughters. We need the women who work and we need the women who stay at home with their children.

I love this quote by Sister Ruth L. Renlund—Elder Dale G. Renlund’s wife—who said, “One thing I’ve always felt strongly about is that there’s no one way to be an LDS woman.”³¹ We have many roles, but we have one thing in common. We are daughters—and, I would add, princesses—of a Heavenly Father, who loves us.³² And we love Him. And He needs the women of the Church more in this time than in any other. We are not here to fall asleep.

In our princess study we asked preschool girls who their favorite princess was and why. The vast majority chose Rapunzel, likely because the movie *Tangled*³³ had just come out. The number one reason why they liked Rapunzel was because of the way she looked, with the two most common answers being because she was pretty or because she was blonde. There was only one girl in the entire study who chose Mulan³⁴ as her favorite princess. When asked why, she answered boldly, “Because she saves China.”

God has asked us not only to save China but to fight for and defend our brothers and sisters across the entire world. We simply cannot do this if we fall asleep and do nothing.

My Girl

My little princess is my daughter, Hannah. I hope she knows that she is treasured by both her parents and by her Father in Heaven. I hope she truly understands her royal identity and that being a princess isn’t just about dressing up in fancy dresses. I hope understanding this becomes a core part of her identity. I hope she understands that being a daughter of a

heavenly King is knowledge that will help her get through the hard times that she will surely experience in her life. I hope she knows that being a princess comes with the responsibility to care for others, to be brave, and to be of good courage. Being a princess comes with the responsibility to not fall asleep but to truly do good in this world.

The Prince of Peace

I would like to end with one reality to the princess tales. Even though we are not here to fall asleep, we will be rescued by a prince. And not just any prince. He goes by many names, but one of my favorites is the Prince of Peace. I love my Savior Jesus Christ. I know without a shadow of a doubt that He atoned for my sins. He descended below all so that He could know exactly what we are going through. He sacrificed all so that I could live.

Christ has rescued me so many times in my life. This last year we experienced the death of a beloved niece, Nona. I am sure that I will experience more difficult things, but I have had no more painful moment in my life than watching my sister bury her only child, a princess she and her husband had so fervently wanted.

I remember one day while I was working in my office that I was so sad that I couldn’t seem to work. I remember shutting down my computer, crawling under my desk, curling up in a little ball, and just sobbing. I felt like nothing could ever be right in the world again.

I began to pray for comfort and understanding. The Spirit filled the room and penetrated my heart so that I could barely breathe. I realized that Heavenly Father had also lost a child, and I imagined the pain He must have felt as He watched His Beloved Son on the cross. I was given an assurance that my niece, our little princess, was destined for royalty and that the bands of death were nothing compared to the “happily ever after” that she was currently experiencing.

Conclusion

We are each of royal birth—princesses and princes in our own right. We have the potential to have greater power and reach than the most powerful superhero portrayed in the media today. Let us not waste this precious gift. Instead, let us let it shape our identity and be a comfort to us when we are going through our hardest moments. I hope that realizing you are “royal” changes the very way that you see yourself, your body, your family, your life, and your destiny.

Normally in a talk I would end by saying that I hope you all live happily after. Instead I will end using these more appropriate words: in the name of the Prince of Peace, even the Savior Jesus Christ, amen.

Notes

1. Elaine S. Dalton, “Remember Who You Are!” *Ensign*, May 2010; quoting Ezra Taft Benson, “To the Young Women of the Church,” *Ensign*, November 1986.

2. Gérald Caussé, “For When I Am Weak, Then Am I Strong,” BYU devotional address, 3 December 2013.

3. D&C 88:15.

4. Susan W. Tanner, “The Sanctity of the Body,” *Ensign*, November 2005.

5. Russell M. Nelson, “We Are Children of God,” *Ensign*, November 1998; see also Russell M. Nelson, “The Magnificence of Man,” *Ensign*, January 1988.

6. See *The Incredibles* (2004).

7. Mosiah 18:9.

8. Tommy Cooney, quoted in Jamescia Thomas, “Peewee Football Team Creates Appreciation Day for Bullied Boy,” *Good Morning America*, ABC News, 25 November 2013, abcnews.go.com/blogs/headlines/2013/11/peewee-football-team-creates-appreciation-day-for-bullied-boy.

9. John 8:3–4.

10. John 8:6.

11. John 8:7.

12. John 8:9.

13. John 8:10–11.

14. See Jenna Goudreau, “Disney Princess Tops List of the 20 Best-Selling Entertainment Products,” *Forbes*, 17 September 2012, forbes.com/sites/jennagoudreau/2012/09/17/disney-princess-tops-list-of-the-20-best-selling-entertainment-products.

15. See pages 8 and 10 of Sarah M. Coyne, Jennifer Ruh Linder, Eric E. Rasmussen, David A. Nelson, and Victoria Birkbeck, “Pretty as a Princess: Longitudinal Effects of Engagement with Disney Princesses on Gender Stereotypes, Body Esteem, and Prosocial Behavior in Children,” *Child Development*, in press.

16. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Your Happily Ever After,” *Ensign*, May 2010.

17. Hebrews 1:8.

18. D&C 20:14.

19. See *A Little Princess* (1995); based on Frances Hodgson Burnett’s book *A Little Princess: Being the Whole Story of Sara Crewe Now Told for the First Time* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1905).

20. IMDb’s page for quotes for *A Little Princess* (1995), imdb.com/title/tt0113670/quotes; see also “*A Little Princess* Movie Clip: All Girls Are Princesses,” youtube.com/watch?v=fWPRhRM1V7I.

21. Posted in Shanelle Brittni, “Waiting on Your Prince,” Anything Christian—The Online Resource, 3 February 2016, anythingchristian.com/blog/waiting-prince; emphasis in original.

22. David A. Bednar, in “Elder and Sister Bednar—Episode 1,” *Conversations*, Mormon Channel, 7 April 2009, 31:26–32:47, mormonchannel.org/listen/series/conversations-audio/elder-and-sister-bednar-episode-1.

23. Jeffrey R. Holland, “To Young Women,” *Ensign*, November 2005.

24. See *Brave* (2012).

25. IMDb’s page for quotes for *Brave*, imdb.com/title/tt1217209/quotes?ref_=tt_ql_trv_4; see also “Merida: Shooting for Her Own Hand,” youtube.com/watch?v=olCi-T-QJzw.

26. *Miss Representation* (2011); see also The Representation Project, therepresentationproject.org/film/miss-representation.

27. Gordon B. Hinckley, "How Can I Become the Woman of Whom I Dream?" *Ensign*, May 2001.

28. Proverbs 3:5–6.

29. "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," *Ensign*, November 1995.

30. Russell M. Nelson, "A Plea to My Sisters," *Ensign*, November 2015; quoting Spencer W. Kimball, "Privileges and Responsibilities of

Sisters," *Ensign*, November 1978; emphasis in original.

31. Interview by Nollie Haws with Ruth Lybbert Renlund, "Just Call Me Ruth," 12 May 2010, The Mormon Women Project, mormonwomen.com/interview/just-call-me-ruth.

32. See Young Women theme, in *Young Women Personal Progress* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2009), 3.

33. See *Tangled* (2010).

34. See *Mulan* (1998).