

7- “His eyes and disarming smile gave me the impression that he was harmless, so I quickly left him and started to move toward the table. The suspect was now behind me. At that instant, I had the distinct, powerful impression come into my mind: ‘Beware of the evil behind the smiling eyes.’

8- “I immediately turned back toward the suspect. His hand was in his large front pocket. Instinctively I grabbed his hand and pulled it from his pocket. Only then did I see, clutched in his hand, the semiautomatic pistol ready to fire. A flurry of activity followed, and I disarmed the man.”<sup>2</sup>

9- Later, in another case, the drug dealer was convicted of murder and boasted that he would have also killed my friend had he not turned around at that very moment.

10- I have often thought of the communication that came into his mind: “Beware of the evil behind the smiling eyes.” This is what I want to talk to you about tonight.

11- Let’s begin with what we know. Good comes from God; evil comes from the devil.<sup>3</sup> They are not, however, equal forces that are fighting each other in the universe. At the head of all that is good is the Christ—He who is the Only Begotten of the Father, who created our world and numerous others. Our Redeemer is a resurrected and perfect being.<sup>4</sup> I know He lives.

12- The devil, on the other hand, “persuadeth men to do evil.”<sup>5</sup> “He [has] fallen from heaven, ... [has] become miserable forever,”<sup>6</sup> and now works “that all men might be miserable like unto himself.”<sup>7</sup> He is a liar and a loser.<sup>8</sup>

13- The power of the Savior and the power of the devil are not truly comparable.<sup>9</sup> On this planet, however, evil has been allowed a position of influence to give us the chance to choose between good and evil. The scripture says: “God gave unto man that he should act for himself. [And] man could not act for himself ... [unless] he was enticed by ... one or the other.”<sup>10</sup>

14- The choice between good and evil is at the very heart of our experience on earth. In the final review of our lives, it will not really matter if we were rich or poor, if we were athletic or not, if we had friends or were often forgotten.

15- We can work, study, laugh and have fun, dance, sing, and enjoy many different experiences. These are a wonderful part of life, but they are not central to why we are here.<sup>11</sup> The opportunity to choose good over evil is precisely why we are here.<sup>12</sup>

16- Not one of us would say, “I want to choose evil.” We all want to choose the right. However, the choice of good over evil is not always easy, because evil frequently lurks behind smiling eyes. Listen to these warnings:

17- “Take heed ... that ye do not judge that which is evil to be of God.”<sup>13</sup>

18- “Ye must watch and pray always lest ye enter into temptation; for Satan desireth to have you.”<sup>14</sup>

19- “Satan hath sought to deceive you, that he might overthrow you.”<sup>15</sup>

20- The message is: Beware of the evil behind the smiling eyes!

21- I know a few young men who began with every intention to stay firm in their loyalty to the Savior but who slipped from the path because they did not see the evil behind eyes that appeared quite harmless. They saw the fun, the pleasure, the acceptance, but they did not see the other consequences.

22- How, then, can we discern the evil behind something that doesn’t appear evil?

23- You already know the answers, but here are a few thoughts:

24- First, talk to your parents. Does that sound like a revolutionary idea? We fathers know we are far from perfect, but we love you, and along with your mothers, have a deep interest in your choosing the right.

25- Next, follow the prophet. These 15 men we sustain as prophets, seers, and revelators are given divine power to see what we sometimes do not see. President Hinckley has given us clear and specific counsel about the evil behind the smiling eyes.<sup>16</sup> And you have the inspired guidance in the booklet *For the Strength of Youth*.<sup>17</sup> As you apply President Hinckley’s counsel, the Lord has promised that He “will

disperse the powers of darkness from before you.”<sup>18</sup> You will see the evil behind the smiling eyes, and its appeal will leave you.

26- Very importantly, let the Holy Ghost be your guide. The Lord has promised us that as we live righteously, the still, small voice will come into our mind and into our heart.<sup>19</sup> You have felt this influence. You know this voice.<sup>20</sup>

27- The gift of the Holy Ghost is a spiritual gift. It is sensitive and will not be associated with unworthiness. You cannot offend or ignore it one day and expect it to strengthen you the next day. But as you heed its promptings and remain righteous, it will grow stronger within you. The Holy Ghost warned my friend of physical danger; the Holy Ghost will also warn you of spiritual danger.

28- Finally, gain your own testimony of the Savior. Pray passionately. Read the Book of Mormon when no one is watching. Take time alone to think about who Jesus really is and how His life and sacrifice are important to you.

29- Remember the example of the young Joseph Smith. When he lit the candle at night to read the Bible, it was because he wanted to. When he went into the grove to pray, he went alone.<sup>21</sup>

30- As we increase our understanding and love for the Savior, His light will illuminate everything around us. We then will see evil for what it is.<sup>22</sup>

31- I know that Jesus Christ is our Savior. Words cannot describe His greatness and glory, His majesty and magnificence. He appeared with His Father to the Prophet Joseph Smith. President Gordon B. Hinckley is the prophet of God today. Brethren, we hold His holy priesthood. As we remain worthy, we will be blessed to see the evil behind the smiling eyes. I so testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

#### NOTES:

1. “A Chosen Generation,” *Ensign*, May 1992, 69.
2. Personal correspondence, Mar. 7, 2005.
3. See Moro. 7:12.
4. See Luke 24:36–39; John 1:14; 3 Ne. 12:48; D&C 76:23–24.
5. Moro. 7:17.
6. 2 Ne. 2:18.
7. 2 Ne. 2:27.
8. See D&C 93:25; see also Bible Dictionary, “Devil,” 656.
9. See Moses 1:1–22.
10. 2 Ne. 2:16.
11. See Gordon B. Hinckley, “A Prophet’s Counsel and Prayer for Youth,” *Liahona*, Apr. 2001, 30; *Ensign*, Jan. 2001, 2; “Converts and Young Men,” *Ensign*, May 1997, 47; “Living Worthy of the Girl You Will Someday Marry,” *Ensign*, May 1998, 49.
12. See 2 Ne. 2:27.
13. See Moro. 7:14.
14. 3 Ne. 18:18.
15. D&C 50:3.
16. See *Liahona*, Apr. 2001, 30; *Ensign*, Jan. 2001, 2.
17. See [www.lds.org](http://www.lds.org). Click on “Serving in the Church,” “Aaronic Priesthood/Young Men,” “For the Strength of Youth.”
18. D&C 21:6.
19. See D&C 8:2.
20. See D&C 18:36.
21. See JS—H 1:11–20.
22. See Moses 1:1–22.

## Beware of the Evil behind the Smiling Eyes

NEIL L. ANDERSEN

*Of the First Quorum of the Seventy*

April 2005 General Conference

As we increase our understanding and love for the Savior, His light will illuminate everything around us. We will then see evil for what it is.

1- Tonight I speak to you young men, you whom President Gordon B. Hinckley has described as “the finest generation.”<sup>1</sup> Across the world we see your goodness. I pray that you will feel that my words are personally for you, a son of God, working hard to do what’s right.

2- I’d like to tell you of an experience of a faithful Latter-day Saint who is a good friend of mine. I’ll refer to him only as “my friend” for reasons you will understand.

3- Working as a special agent for the FBI, my friend investigated organized crime groups transporting illegal drugs into the United States.

4- On one occasion, he and another agent approached an apartment where they believed a known drug dealer was distributing cocaine. My friend describes what happened:

5- “We knocked on the door of the drug dealer. The suspect opened the door, and upon seeing us, tried to block our view. But it was too late; we could see the cocaine on his table.

6- “A man and a woman who were at the table immediately began removing the cocaine. We had to prevent them from destroying the evidence, so I quickly pushed the drug suspect who was blocking the door to the side. As I pushed him, my eyes met his. Strangely, he did not appear angry or afraid. He was smiling at me.