



Come Listen to
a Prophet's Voice

Following the Crowd

BY PRESIDENT GORDON B. HINCKLEY



President Hinckley tells of a time he learned about having the courage to make his own decisions.

The year we enrolled in junior high school, the building could not accommodate all the students, and so our class was sent back to the elementary school. We were furious. We'd spent six years in that building, and we felt we deserved something better. The boys of the class all met after school. We decided we'd go on strike.

The next day we did not show up. But we had no place to go. We couldn't stay home, because our mothers would ask questions. We didn't think of going downtown to a show. We had no money for that. We didn't think of going to the park. We were afraid we might be seen. We just wandered about and wasted the day.

The next morning, the principal, Mr. Stearns, was at the front door of the school to greet us. He told us that we could not come back to school until we brought a note from our parents. Striking, he said,

was not the way to settle a problem. If we had a complaint, we could come to the principal's office and discuss it.

I remember walking sheepishly into the house. My mother asked what was wrong. I told her. She wrote a note. It was very brief. It was the most stinging rebuke she ever gave me. It read:

"Dear Mr. Stearns,

"Please excuse Gordon's absence yesterday. His action was simply an impulse to follow the crowd."

I have never forgotten my mother's note. I resolved then and there that I would never do anything on the basis of simply following the crowd. I determined then and there that I would make my own decisions on the basis of my standards and not be pushed in one direction or another by those around me. That decision has blessed my life many times. ●

From an April 1993 general conference address.



