

## The Law of Chastity

The purpose of Sunday School is to inspire class members to learn, teach, and live the gospel of Jesus Christ every day.

Through His prophets, God has taught that the “sacred powers of procreation are to be employed only between man and woman, lawfully wedded as husband and wife” (“[The Family: A Proclamation to the World](#),” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 129). The Old Testament contains many examples of individuals who were blessed as they lived this law and many examples of individuals who suffered as a consequence of violating the law. Studying the examples of Jacob’s sons will help us understand how living the law of chastity brings blessings into our lives.

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### Prepare

As you study the examples in [Genesis 34–39](#), consider asking yourself:

- How has living the law of chastity been a blessing in my life? How has it blessed the lives of others I know? How will my efforts to be chaste in thought and deed help me as I prepare to teach this principle?
- What consequences of sexual immorality do we see in the world today?
- How can the examples in these chapters help class members do to grow in their understanding of the blessings that come when they live the law of chastity?
- How will I inspire class members to learn, teach, and live this doctrine?

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### Encourage personal and family scripture study

Each week you have the opportunity to encourage class members to have meaningful scripture study, individually and with their families. You could do one of the following:

- Invite one or more class members to share ideas about how to teach children the law of chastity. As part of this discussion, you could invite class members to review the counsel on [sexual purity](#) in *For the Strength of Youth*.
- Invite class members to share how they have acted on impressions they received during a previous class or during their personal scripture study.
- Ask class members to share stories they know from [Genesis 34–39](#) that teach the importance of the law of chastity. This activity could take the majority of the time in class.

#### Teaching in the Savior’s Way

Jesus Christ used the scriptures to teach about His mission. He taught His disciples to think about scriptures for themselves and to use them to answer their questions. How can you help class members turn to the scriptures to understand that God’s promises are sure?

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### Learn together and invite to act

Follow the guidance of the Spirit as you select one or more of these activities or create your own based on the scriptures in this outline and the needs of your class.

- **What is the law of chastity? Why is it important to live it?**  
Several days before class, you could invite two or more class members to study one of the general conference talks in “Additional learning resources,” below. Ask them to come to class prepared to share what the law of chastity is and what their study of the assigned talk has taught them about living this law. Class members could then read [Genesis 39:1–20](#) to learn about Joseph’s reasons for remaining chaste. What else do class members learn about remaining chaste from Joseph’s example?
- **What can we learn from Jacob’s sons about living the law of chastity?**  
You could write *Decisions determine destiny* on the board. Class members could tell about decisions they have made that have influenced who they are today. You could invite class members to read [Genesis 39:1–20](#) individually and identify (1) the decision Joseph made, (2) why he made this decision, and (3) the short- and long-term effects of the decision. You could also contrast Joseph’s moral courage with the immoral choices of Reuben (see [Genesis 35:22](#); see also [1 Chronicles 5:1](#)) and Judah (see [Genesis 38](#); see also

“Additional learning resources,” below). What might have happened to Joseph, Reuben, and Judah if they had made different choices? What do we learn from these examples that we can apply in our lives?

- **How can living the law of chastity bless individuals, families, and society?**

You could write the following questions on the board or on small pieces of paper that you hand out to class members:

- *How has living the law of chastity been a blessing in your life? How can it bless our families? How can it bless our community?*
- *What consequences of sexual immorality do we see in the world today?*
- *What can we do in our communities to help teach and reinforce chastity and virtue?*

After studying these questions for several minutes, class members could share answers in small groups and then with the entire class.

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## Learning and living the gospel every day

Encourage class members to think about what they have learned and felt today. What do they feel impressed to do? For instance, they could:

- Share with their families something from today’s discussion.
- Continue studying this doctrine and act on what they learn.
- Commit to being chaste in their thoughts, words, and actions.

During the coming week, you could send class members suggestions for home study in preparation for next week’s discussion. Encourage them to consider using one of the ideas listed under “Basic Scripture Study Strategies” or “Family Study Ideas” as they review these resources.

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## Additional learning resources

- [Exodus 20:14](#); [1 Corinthians 6:18–20](#); [Jacob 2:28](#); [Alma 39:3–5](#); [3 Nephi 12:27–30](#); [D&C 42:23–25](#); [121:45](#)
- Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, “[Personal Purity](#),” *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 75–78
- Elder David A. Bednar taught: “The power of procreation is spiritually significant. Misuse of this power subverts the purposes of the Father’s plan and of our mortal existence. Our Heavenly Father and His Beloved Son are creators and have entrusted each of us with a portion of Their creative power. Specific guidelines for the proper use of the ability to create life are vital elements in the Father’s plan. How we feel about and use that supernal power will determine in large measure our happiness in mortality and our destiny in eternity” “[We Believe in Being Chaste](#),” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2013, 41–44
- Elder Russell M. Nelson, “[Decisions for Eternity](#),” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2013, 106–9
- Video: “[I Choose to Be Pure](#)” (4:20)

## Additional insights

- Why does the Old Testament include the account of Judah and Tamar? (See [Genesis 38:1–30](#).)  
“With typical honesty, the Old Testament includes the sordid tale of Judah’s incestuous relationship with his daughter-in-law. There seem to be several reasons for its inclusion here. First, once again are illustrated the effects of the covenant people forgetting the importance of marrying in the covenant. Unlike his father, grandfather, and great-grandfather (Jacob, Isaac, and Abraham), Judah was not concerned about intermarriage with the Canaanites. . . . Second, the story shows the lineage of Judah from which the Messiah would eventually come (see [Matthew 1:3](#); [Luke 3:33](#)). An additional lesson here shows that ancestry is not the determiner of one’s righteousness. Finally, the truth that failure to honor one’s commitments often leads to greater trouble is clearly shown. Had Judah faithfully kept his promise to Tamar, the seduction would never have taken place.

Likewise, had Judah been faithful to the laws of morality, he never would have sinned with Tamar” ([Old Testament Student Manual: Genesis–2 Samuel](#) [2003], 94).

- Why was Tamar expected to marry the brothers of her husband? (See [Genesis 38:5–11](#).)  
“Ancient customs of the Middle East provided that a brother of a deceased man should marry his widow. Under [Moses](#) this custom became law (see [Deuteronomy 25:5–10](#)). The purpose of such a marriage was to produce a male heir for the dead man and thus perpetuate his name and memory. It was regarded as a great calamity to die without a son, for then the man’s lineage did not continue and also the man’s property reverted to someone else’s family (through daughters, if he had any, or through other relatives). It may be that Onan, who by virtue of the death of his older brother would have been next in line for the inheritance of Judah, refused to raise up seed through Tamar because the inheritance would have stayed with the elder son’s family. He went through the outward show of taking Tamar to wife but refused to let her have children. Thus when Judah failed to keep his promise to send the youngest son to her, Tamar resorted to deception in order to bear children” ([Old Testament Student Manual](#), 94–95).