

## **Agency in Progression**

### **PART II: Identifying the Hinge Points**

President David O. McKay said, “Classify [the things of which Satan tempted Jesus with after fasting], and you will find that under one of those three nearly every given temptation that makes you and me spotted ... comes to us as:

- (1) a temptation of appetite
- (2) a temptation to pride
- (3) a temptation for the world”

(in Conference Report, Apr. 1911, 59)

Are there or are there not major hinge points, major decisions which you and I have to make in our lives regarding appetite, pride and the world? Yes. Are there little decisions feeding into each of these? Obviously. Are these the “hinge points” of this life? Yes. Just like previously discussed, the small decisions we make in each category determine which wolf gets larger and thus which wolf wins the battle at the hinge point (large decisions).

It is established doctrine that men and women have different strengths and weakness; together the sexes help each other due to their complementary strengths. It is easy for members to accept that the sexes possess different strengths as truth, but if one is true they are both true, thus we also have to accept that the sexes have different weaknesses (and therefore are prone to different temptations generally speaking), and thus face different major choices (once again, generally speaking). A choice that might be extremely important for a man might not be an important choice for a woman and vice versa (eg. Going on a mission).

(1)Appetites of the flesh come in two main forms: sexual and physical (food, sleep etc). The two main hinge points here are 1. Will you or will you not wait to have sex until you are married and only have sex with your spouse? 2. Will you or will you not live the Word of Wisdom which includes being able to “run and not faint” as well as “eat all things in moderation”? Examples of small choices that feed into this hinge point are dating in couples, not necking, wearing modest clothing, exercising, limiting treats and sugar etc. Choosing the right is visually seen in healthy looking individuals with healthy marriages. And choosing the wrong is visually seen in individuals being obese and having failed marriages due to sexual immorality. Men historically have shown a weakness towards sexual appetites and women more physical. Thus we find that women who can control their physiques are considered desirable and virtuous to a man, just as a man who can control his sexuality is to a woman. We find in the world more sexually out of control men and women who espouse “chocolate is better than sex”.

(2) Pride is choosing any other path other than the Lord’s path. The Lord makes his way known through the keys of the priesthood and through personal revelation. The choice of choosing another way over the Lord’s way can either be a direct choice in choosing yours over the Lord’s or, the second way, is we indirectly choose another way over the Lord’s by choosing to follow those without keys over those with keys. The reason why we directly or indirectly make this choice not to follow the Lord is due to a

perceived superiority (ie. “I know better or he/she knows better.”) These perceived notions of grandeur come in two forms “I know better, he/she knows better because of experience, personal knowledge” or “I know better, he/she knows better because that person has a higher perceived weighted title (king/professor/etc.)” The two main hinge points here are 1. Do you or do you not gain a testimony of priesthood keys? 2. Do you or do you not gain a testimony of personal revelation? Examples of small choices that feed into this hinge point are saying daily prayers, listening to your father, listening to your bishop, seeking for revelation in your prayers, asking your father/bishop for advice and following it, getting baptized, going on a mission, and most importantly feasting upon the words of God. Choosing the right is reflected in sustaining of keys and hearkening unto personal revelation after diligent scripture study. Choosing the wrong is visibly seen in not following or murmuring against the keys because the individual is “too young, too inexperienced etc” or the perceived title isn’t “important enough” (ie. Father vs professor). It is also reflected in not following personal revelation. Historically men have been far more prejudiced in regard to experience- they are far more anti-authoritarian making them far less likely to follow orders from those they can’t evaluate firsthand and far more likely to be bamboozled by people who can put on a façade of higher intelligence and experience. Women are far more authoritarian and far less interested in people’s experience. They have a harder time following orders from people with experience that have perceived lower title weight, and thus are far more likely to be bamboozled by people who throw around hefty titles (ie. professor/CEO etc). The church shows more men having problems with young, inexperienced keys (ie. Elders, young bishops etc.) and being bamboozled by “knowledgeable friends.” Women have more problems with titles that they don’t believe are important enough to warrant more revelation that they themselves can receive (ie. Fathers, deacon quorum presidents etc.) and being bamboozled by people with hefty titles that don’t mean anything (ie. scholars).

(3) The world comes alluring in two different forms: power among our peers and riches of the world. The two main hinge points here are 1. Will you or will you not choose parenthood over worldly status? 2. Will you or will you not choose family life over materialistic social lifestyle? Examples of small choices that feed into this hinge point are prioritizing education over starting a family, choosing to get married in the temple, choosing baby clothes over a wedding dress, starting a family as early as possible, learning self-reliance over dependence, saving money vs spending money, having no more clothes than you need- donating the rest, minimalistic jewelry (things with special meaning only), while on your mission not chasing after zone leader titles vs tracting/working, stopping the habit of asking people “what is your job or title?” etc. Choosing the right is visually seen in men putting fatherhood first and women being minimalistic. And choosing the wrong is visually seen in men pursuing success outside of the home at the expense of the home and women pursuing things for the home over kids in the home. Historically men have desired and/or fell victim to power, stature, position, authority among men, and the desire to rule over others. Historically women have been much more prone to materialism ie. clothes, fancy cars, big houses etc. while on the other hand they have shown a readiness to give up power and position to stay home with their children. And the world shows more men pursuing stature/power in career and women pursuing the next shoe.

This does not mean that just because you are a certain intelligence that is male or female that you will be guaranteed to have these strengths and/or weaknesses; rather, on a whole, generally speaking, these things hold true. Regardless of gender, you are accountable to make the right decision for every hinge point.