“Should girls go on missions?”
Answer/Arthur S. Anderson

This involves two questions: Would the mission be good for the girl, and would the girl be good for the mission?

The answer to the first question is almost universally yes. Nearly any girl with a positive attitude and a desire to serve will benefit greatly from mission service. She can build her testimony, firm up her direction in life, develop a spirit of tolerance and love, build self-confidence and a positive attitude, come to an appreciation of home, parents, and family, and see more clearly the importance of choosing a husband who will go with her not only to the temple but also to the celestial kingdom. She will feel the joy and satisfaction that comes from unselfish, full-time service to others.

Would the girl be good for the mission?

This question cannot be answered in a general way. It’s an individual matter. Today’s typical lady missionary is an energetic, young (usually just turned twenty-one), enthusiastic girl who will, traditionally, participate in about twice as many conversions as will the average elder. She is usually in the mission field because she has a desire to serve, not because she is compelled by social pressure.

My mental photo album of lady missionaries is filled with pictures of sisters like Ruth Price of West Jordan, Utah, whom our well-organized greeting committee passed up at the airport (we thought she was an airline stewardess); Sister Candy Lippard from Hickory, North Carolina (now in the Texas South Mission), an energetic, blonde, former high school cheerleader and a convert of three years who counted every day until she was twenty-one and could go on a mission; and Sister Connie Sue Berrett from Roberts, Idaho, a registered nurse of considerable experience who left an interesting, remunerative career to serve on a mission. The list could go on and on.

A girl who enters the mission field to find a solution to her personal problems is likely to feel very out of place in such company. The vigorous schedule of the mission field affords little time or place for eccentric behavior or personal problem solving.

On the subject of girls and missions, I consulted my board of advisors—three of my children: Leola (an adopted daughter), who served in the North Carolina-Virginia Mission; Roger, who returned this
year from service in the Washington Mission; and Greg, currently serving in the California Central Mission. Here are their capsule comments:

Leola: “There are certain people who are more approachable and more responsive to sisters. We found this especially true in military areas where the husband is away and the wife usually will not let men into her home.”

Roger: “The lady missionaries in our mission were hard-working, conscientious, and always cheerful.”

Greg: “There isn’t much time to write; I’ve got to run. I’m tired! Why? Because we worked with the sisters today, and they worked us into the ground. Sisters surely ‘spark’ the zone.”

Greg suggested reading the fourth section of the Doctrine and Covenants as an aid to making a decision about missionary service: “Therefore, if ye have desires to serve God ye are called to the work.”

Note the two requirements: desire and commitment. It is the desire to serve God that should motivate a sister (or an elder) to accept a mission call. If the desire to serve him is strong enough, the missionary will understand that it is a 100 percent commitment to “see that ye serve him with all your heart, might, mind and strength.” (D&C 4:2.) If your heart isn’t in it, there is little reason to put your physical self in it. It is that 100 percent commitment that makes missionary service a happy, productive experience. Without that commitment it can be a long, miserable time.

And the rewards? “… he that thrusteth in his sickle with his might, the same layeth up in store that he perisheth not, but bringeth salvation to his soul.” (D&C 4:4.) “… Great shall be your joy with him [the convert you helped to influence] in the kingdom of my Father!” (D&C 18:15.)

“How and by what means can I know when I have found the right person to marry? How many values must I compromise? My boyfriend (a returned missionary) and I can make each other happy, but we argue a lot.”

Answer/Darwin L. Thomas

These and similar questions are asked in many contemporary western societies where “free mate-selection” systems (the person getting married has the major responsibility for choosing his mate) have developed. In some societies people have never had to ask these questions because parents have had the responsibility of finding the right person for their Jane to marry. This is not so in our circumstances. Jane has to make that decision.

Some say that Jane will “know in her heart” when the right person comes along. Others say that if Jane is wise, “she will not let her heart run away with her head.” The basic dilemma that many people experience in selecting a mate is reflected in the conflicting advice contained in the above bits of folk wisdom; namely, how much should one rely on feelings and emotions and how much on analysis and reason. Western societies emphasize the importance of the feeling side (you’ll know in your heart when you are really in love), whereas parents choosing a mate for their child underscore the rational, analytical components (he comes from a good family; he is intelligent and hardwork-
The Latter-day Saint in the mate selection process should be aware of both aspects and try to determine if the decision to marry rests solely on feelings or emotions. If he or she cannot at times coldly and rationally analyze the other person's strengths and weaknesses, then perhaps feelings and emotions are dominating the relationship to the exclusion of reason and analysis. It is possible for reason to dominate in the mate selection process, but this rarely happens in our society.

Just saying that careful thought as well as feelings are important in choosing a mate still leaves unanswered what one should think carefully about. Here the best answer from both the scriptures and social scientists seems to be, “Think carefully about what the two of you have in common.” One way to get a perspective on this is to climb up his family tree and look around. Studies seem to show that people who marry within their own group (religion, ethnic background, and socio-economic status) seem to get along better. Do you have similar values? Are you friends? Do you enjoy the same types of people and the same types of activities? Do you agree on issues concerning children? You may not be able to answer yes to all of these questions, but you will at least know which questions come up with no answer. This may force you to ask about the possible risks involved if you were to marry.

By this time you may be asking, “Why all this emphasis on careful thinking and reasoning? Isn’t this putting too much emphasis on man’s own reasoning powers to the exclusion of God’s influence in the lives of people? Can’t I just ask God in prayer and then know if my fiancé is the right person?”

The scriptures tell us that we should be anxiously engaged in a good cause and do many things of our own free will (D&C 58:26–29). Furthermore, we are counseled that it is not good to be commanded in all things. Surely the selection of an eternal companion is a good cause, as well as being a very important part of the necessary earth-life experience that we came here to obtain. It obviously requires a good portion of analytical contemplation along with fervent prayer.

Many times questions of finding the right one imply that there is a one and only, and as soon as that person is found then eternal bliss will result. This type of thinking tends to overemphasize the element of discovery and underestimate the element of creation. In most instances, acts of creation must follow the moment of discovery, if that discovery is to ever be an important one. This seems especially true for selecting an eternal companion. One can know when he has found the right person by (1) thinking clearly and searching it out in his own mind, (2) seeking God’s assistance through prayer for a confirmation of one’s own efforts, and (3) resolving that the finding of a mate is but the beginning of an eternal creation. One cannot create without effort. Thus, you may have found the right person now, but without the willingness on your part and his to work at it, you may discover that at some time in the future he will turn into the wrong person. Look not only to the past (what kind of person each of you is) but also the future and ask what the two of you are willing to
become. Answers to the latter question may more accurately tell you if he is the right person for you to marry.

If you have thought carefully about what you and your prospective mate have in common and have selected one who shares many ideals with you, then there should be few if any real values that you hold that will have to be compromised. Indeed, you should receive from your mate the assurance, well-being, and peace of mind necessary to live according to your values. Two people sharing eternal values and committed to a lifetime of effort together should experience few destructive arguments. Disagreements you will have as the two of you work together. But, if you resolve your differences constructively, you should increase in that oneness of purpose that will lead unto eternal lives.

“What about study and recreation on Sunday?”

Answer/Terry Warner

Whoever asks himself this question (and I have on occasion asked it of myself) is in danger of never finding the answer. Because of the way the question is phrased, he will in all probability look for the answer in the wrong place.

The question says, in effect, “Is it wrong to study and play on Sunday?” When one thinks about these wholesome activities, he may not be able to see anything wrong with participating in them on the Sabbath. After all, they are permissible on the other days of the week.

But if a person asks the question in a different way, he can find what I believe is the answer. When I think back on my Sundays in high school, college, and graduate school, I cherish the memory of those when I enjoyed the Lord’s Spirit while carrying out my stewardship or visiting someone in need or reading the scriptures. The others I either regret or have forgotten. They were the Sundays when I did things that were (like studying) not wrong in themselves but were things that kept me from partaking of the special Spirit of that day. Instead of asking, “Are studying and recreation wrong on Sunday?” it is more helpful to ask, “Will studying and recreation keep me from a full measure of the Sabbath’s blessings?” The answer to the second question is that anything that interferes with these blessings is unworthy of the Sabbath.

Some think that they need to study on Sunday like their fellow students in order to keep up; graduate school students especially tend to feel this way. This thinking seems to me erroneous. What is needed in such circumstances is quality study time, time in which one is clear of conscience, is alert, and is reasonably confident. Simply adding more quantity on Sunday won’t necessarily give a person additional quality time; on the contrary, in Sunday study a student tends to lose the clarity and alertness and sense of the Lord’s active support that he needs for his study time to be profitable. On the other hand, if he partakes of the Lord’s peace-giving and renewing Spirit on the Sabbath, the inner obstacles that can make study inefficient—the restlessness and procrastination and guilt—will usually be minimized the rest of the week.

“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.” It is by sacrifice that one makes things holy. In this case, a student sacrifices his Sunday to the Lord, giving up activities that are not intrinsically wrong in any way in order to carry a measure of that day’s holiness with him through the coming days.