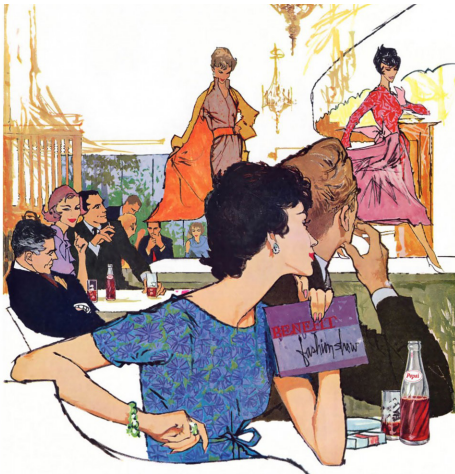


The Life Changer

Study Series

Christian Behavior: Relationships, Dress and Entertainment

In previous lessons we learned that there is a spiritual war being waged for the hearts and minds of all humanity. Satan is trying his best to not only deceive humans into sinful living, but to believe lies about God's character and plan of salvation. We also learned that when we choose to be on God's side as



a follower of Jesus Christ, we become enemies of Satan. In close conjunction with this fact, we learned that when we seal our decision to be a follower of Jesus with baptism, our old personalities, values, lives, and attitudes die. In biblical language, the old man dies and we become new creatures.

Lesson 17

So how does this affect our lives? Does it change the way we spend our time? Should it change the way we dress and how we spend our money? Does becoming a new creature affect our choice of friends? Should it have a bearing upon what we choose to look at and listen to? Let's see how the Bible answers these questions.

① Q1. What has God called us out of and into? Read 1 Peter 2:9.

A. _____

God has called us out of darkness. Metaphorically speaking, before we become a follower of Jesus we are living in spiritual darkness. We didn't realize that we are at war with God and living a life destined for eternal destruction.

② Q2. What has God called us to be? Reread the beginning of 1 Peter 2:9.

A. _____

God has called us to be a royal priesthood, a holy people.

③ Q3. As holy people, what road are we to walk on? Read 1 John 2:6.

A. _____

Being a follower of Jesus means that we not only follow His teachings, but we also walk the road that He walked. We must live like He lived.

④ Q4. What was the foundation of Jesus' life? What was His walk based on? Read Ephesians 5:1, 2.

A. _____

Jesus walked, that is, He lived in love. Everything He did was based on love. Every thought He had, every miracle He performed, and every word He spoke was rooted in love for others and love for God. If Jesus' thoughts and actions were motivated by love for others and God, is it possible that our thoughts and actions could be motivated by something else?

② Q5. What are we not to love? Why? Read 1 John 2:15-17.

A. _____

The Bible says we are not to love the world. What does that mean? It doesn't mean that we are to stop loving the people of the world because it is written, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). John explained what he meant in 1 John 2:15-17 by describing the principles of selfishness, pride and lust. Those principles are contrary to the self-sacrificing love of God. If we love the things of the world it means that the old values of "darkness" didn't die. We must be spiritually born again if we want to inherit eternal life.

② Q6. What three areas can the things of the world be divided up into? (Hint: reread verse 16).

A. _____

On the most basic level, the love of worldly things is based on pride and lust. How does that work? It typically starts with a desire for something that we don't have and that we think we need. Next, we try to figure out a way to get it either through buying, taking, or stealing. After obtaining the item, we then show it off to others to increase our position or feel good about ourselves. Short of a miracle, the process is a cycle that just doesn't stop. And contrary to popular opinion, the things unbelievers obtain never really make them happy or fill the void of emptiness in their hearts. Can you think of where the first act of lust and pride took place?

If you remember, Satan became proud of his appearance and position in heaven, and lusted after God's position to the point that he began telling lies to the other angels. Eventually he infested humanity and this world with those same lies. We know that the devil is the prince of this world (John 12:31) and that the whole world is under his sway (1 John 5:19). Therefore it is quite simple to see that our love should be directed towards heavenly things, not worldly things.

⑦ Q7. What should our thoughts be consumed with? Read Colossians 3:1-3.

A. _____

Jesus wants us to be thinking about heavenly things. Paul, in a letter to the Philippians, gave us an excellent description of what heavenly thoughts look like.

⑧ Q8. What are some adjectives that describe heavenly things? Read Philippians 4:8.

A. _____

Heavenly things are true, honest, just, lovely, virtuous, and pure. In a moment we will talk about several things that don't fit this description. But let's first find out what our part is in thinking heavenly thoughts.

⑨ Q9. What are we to do with thoughts that are contrary to the kingdom of God? Read 2 Corinthians 10:5.

A. _____

God wants us to control our thoughts. He wants us to actually put forth effort towards controlling what we choose to dwell on. Is this something we do with our own power? No, we do it with the power of the Holy Spirit. In fact, real willpower is the result of our will working in conjunction with the Holy Spirit. This is the only way that we can control our thoughts. Of course it also helps to control where thoughts come from, namely what we look at and listen to.

⑩ Q10. What does God want us to stay away from? Read Ephesians 5:3-7.

A. _____

God wants us to stay away from worldly things like adultery, coveting, and jesting. He doesn't want us to be around it, talk about it (Ephesians 5:11, 12), watch it (Psalm 101:3), listen to it, or do it! He doesn't even

want us to hang out with people who condone those things. Let's remember that this is not a suggestion. God wants us to stay far away from these things and the people who do them. The Bible is very clear; if we love the world then we are His enemy (James 4:4).

What does this look like on a practical level?

If someone wants to watch a movie with us, we need to know what it is about before we watch it. If it is full of magic, sex, stealing, drug and alcohol use, and/or other ungodly activity then we need to stay away from it. If a television show comes on that has women dancing and gyrating their bodies in a sexual manner, we need to turn it off. If a song or movie is full of curse words, we need to cut it off. If we really want to be a holy people, then we need to stay far away from these types of entertainment because they put thoughts in our heads that are most definitely not pure, honest, true, and lovely. Unfortunately, it may also mean that we can't hang out with the same people.



Shining Stars Series (Philippians 2:14-16)



One day during lunch, Mert, Yusuf, and Ece were sitting on a bench at the university. Mert and Yusuf were talking about how they felt after learning these Biblical truths. They were in agreement that life would be so much harder if they didn't have each other.

"Mert, I know exactly what you are saying. Sometimes, I just feel so weird around our friends. Some of the things that I used to like and find interesting aren't appealing anymore, and most of their jokes just aren't funny," Yusuf said.

"Yeah, and I am running out of excuses for not wanting to go the movies. Seriously, as if I want to watch a movie about people getting hacked up with a saw or getting revenge. It just seems like most entertainment is about death, sex, and spiritualism. Don't get me wrong, I didn't mind those things before. But, now I get uncomfortable when I read about them or see them on the screen," Mert added.

“I feel the same way guys.” Ece nodded.

Mert and Yusuf looked at her rather surprised. Ece had been coming to the studies lately but hadn’t said much. This was the first time she was expressing her own feelings on the topics.

“Before I started studying the Bible, I liked dressing up in tight clothes, putting lots of make-up on, and attracting the stares of men. But now I realize that those men weren’t attracted to me, they were attracted to my body. You will never know how creepy I felt when I realized that. Now, my friends are wondering why I wear different clothes. I can’t believe how blind I was before. I guess the saying is true, “a slave to fashion” and sin! I am not saying I want to cover my head or wear a long coat in the summer, but I appreciate more some of my friends’ desire to dress modestly.”

“I don’t know Ece, I think you would look kind of cute in a long coat” Mert said jokingly.

“Mert! Stop it,” Ece said laughingly while raising her hand to slap his arm.

“Well I gotta go to class. Keep the faith!” Mert said as he stood up.

“See you later Mert.” Ece and Yusuf waved goodbye.

Yusuf turned to Ece and said, “Ece, I am rather shocked. First, I feel bad as your boyfriend that you liked getting looks from guys. What does that say about us? Second, I didn’t know that you were really...” Yusuf hesitated.

“Really what?”

“I didn’t know that you were taking these things that seriously.”

“I didn’t really know that I was seeing things differently either. It’s kind of like I woke up. As for other guys, I wasn’t interested in them, I was just pumping up my own ego I guess.”

They sat quietly for a time. Ece could see that her words had hurt

Yusuf and that it would take him some time to settle down. She was relieved when he finally spoke.

“The problem, as I see it, is that we may actually have to cut ties with some of our friends. That is, if they don’t change too.” Yusuf said.

“Yeah, I know. I have a feeling it may be harder than we think.” Ece replied.

❓ Q11. Who does God not want us to be yoked to? What does He want us to do? Read 2 Corinthians 6:14-18.

A. _____

It is a fact that our friends have influence over us. If our friends drink alcohol, there is a good chance that we will also drink alcohol. If our friends watch pornography, there is a good chance that we will watch it when we are with them. If our friends lie, cheat, and steal, there is a good chance that we may engage in those behaviors. Paul summarized it quite well in his letter to the Corinthians.

❓ Q12. What does God say bad friends do? Read 1 Corinthians 15:33.

A. _____

In short, God doesn’t want us to keep company with non-believers and blatant violators of His law. He doesn’t want us to enter into business with them and if we aren’t married already, He doesn’t want us to marry outside of our faith.

Of course, God wants us to have a positive influence in other people’s lives and share the gospel with non-believers, which means we must spend time with them. But we don’t want that time to be centered on activities that are spiritually oppressive, depressive, or straight up demonic. God has pulled us out of the darkness! Why would we want to go back into it?

How does this standard of thinking and living impact the way we dress? If we stay away from things that are rooted in, and encourage, pride and lust would we want to spend money on attention-getting clothes and

jewelry? Do we want our women and girls to dress in a way that will cause others to lust after them?

① Q13. How does God want Christian women to dress? Read 1 Timothy 2: 9, 10.

A. _____

God wants women to dress in a way that would glorify Him. He doesn't want them to wear tight clothes that would sexually entice men or decorate themselves with either cheap or costly jewelry and make-up. He wants them to concentrate on having the inward beauty of a clean heart and pure mind.

Likewise, God doesn't want men to spend money on fancy watches, gold chains, and overpriced, name-brand outfits. On the most practical level, God wants us to use the money He blesses us with to live simple, healthy lives and to help others. How can we spend hundreds of lira on showy apparel when our brother is starving? Does that type of purchase give any indication of where our thoughts are?

① Q14. How should women apply the principle of simple, plain, modest dress?

A. _____

① Q15. What is the most basic principle behind not adorning ourselves with gold and jewelry?

A. _____

The Bible is very clear that we are all slaves. Our master is the one we choose to obey. In the world there are two masters: God and Satan. We show that God is our master when we obey His standards. We show that Satan is our master when we believe his lies and order our lives around the worldly standards that he has established.

① Q16. What do we present our bodies as? Read Romans 12:1, 2.

A. _____

① Q17. According to Romans 12:2 what are we not to be conformed to?

A. _____

When we choose to follow Jesus there will be sacrifices. He may ask us to give up that weekly card game with our friends. He may tell us not to go out with certain friends. He will tell us to stop wearing those big gold earrings, little plastic pearls, and necklaces. He may even tell us to quit our job and find something more in line with His standards. But we don't need to worry because Jesus has already prayed for us.

① Q18. What did Jesus ask God to do? Read John 17:15-21.

A. _____

Jesus asked God to protect us. He knows what it is like to live on this planet. He knows the temptations we face on a daily basis. He knows that we will be ridiculed for being different. He knows that we need his help. We live in a dangerous and dying world. We have relatives, friends, and neighbors who need to know the truth about God's character and plan of salvation in Jesus Christ. They need to see that Jesus is in the business of changing people's lives. Is there a better way to show them than by shunning ungodly entertainment, dress, and behaviors? Jesus says that we are the light of the world (Read Matthew 5:14-16).

① Q19. Will you let your light shine?

A. _____

Call to commitment through prayer.

For further study read: Luke 11:34-36 and James 1:27.

Notes



Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 2:1-5)



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