

Social Success - “well favored”

Presentation, poise, relationships with others

2896: no spots, blots, or stains

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Chapter Two

Appearance

Appearance - “handsome, beautiful” - Making The Most Of What You Are

“Eye has not seen, nor ear heard,
neither have entered into the heart
of man the things which God has
prepared for them that love Him.” (1
Cor. 2:9)

You are a child of the King of Kings! God made you, saved you, loves you! You can use what you have to bring Him glory. The difference between Babylon and the Kingdom of God is that God’s standards are never fads, you don’t have to compete to accomplish and achieve and what you are outside is never as important as your inside life. Yet your features, coloring, height, and body shape or figure can all contribute something to His purposes for you. Let’s start with *who you really are*.

Our **sense of personal worth** is based on what we think the *most important person* in our life thinks about us. Your Father is the Lord of the Universe. Hold your head high! You are a special subject of His love and care. So what if you are different? So what if you don’t look in others’ eyes as cool as your brother, or have the talents of the girl next door? None of these things matter because you are made to be His treasure! You are important to Him.

BIBLICAL ACCEPTANCE vs. CULTURAL IMAGES

I can hear you say it: You’re not all that you could be. So? Neither is anyone else. But you can and must make the most of your best points and work to improve the others.

When God made you He broke the mold. Why do so many kids dress *just like* some rock, movie or TV star they admire? Because they *want to be different*. Excuse me? You don’t need to copy someone else to be special. You already *are* different. You have different fingerprints than anyone else in the world. Your brainwaves and retinal patterns are utterly unlike anyone else. Even the hair on your head is different from that of your twin brother or sister if you have one. Yet your world keeps telling you to *find* yourself, *discover* yourself, *express* yourself. *Who else can you be but yourself?* As C. S. Lewis said “There is very little chance of you turning into a cabbage.” The problem many teenagers face is not that they can’t “be themselves”. The real problem is that the self they know (or think they know) *they don’t like at all*. What if you are unhappy with yourself? What if you don’t **like** what you are?

“GOD DON’T MAKE NO JUNK”

Social science talks about the problem of coming from a “dysfunctional” home. Who *isn’t*? *All of us hurt in one way or another*. After Adam and Eve, nobody got a perfect deal. Some things that happen to us are not at all what God intended for our life. (Gen. 5:20) Not even Jesus came from a perfect home situation. He was born in a barn. The government tried to kill Him more than once. The legitimacy of His birth was questioned. He grew up in a nothing town. He went missing from his family at twelve and He seems to have lost his earthly Dad early in life. His closest friends abandoned Him when He needed them most and one of His friends betrayed Him. All the world ever gave Jesus was a cave to be born in, a cup of vinegar and a cross to die on. Though He was God and rightful Ruler of all, He chose to come here in a way no one can ever say He had all the breaks. Though He was rich He laid aside all His rights and privilege so we through His poverty might become rich. (2 Cor. 8:9)

You may feel like you have nothing. Yet you and I were born with some special talents, gifts and attributes no one else in all history ever had or will have. Never feel inferior because you don’t live up to *someone else’s* potential. All God calls you to do is to

live up to your own.

Peter asked Jesus what another disciple was going to do. Jesus said "What is that to you? Follow Me." (John 21:21-22) In other words, it doesn't matter to you what I'm doing in *their* life. You listen to Me and do what I want for your life. What is great and good in your life you can thank God for. What is a limit or a hindrance can be worked on, improved or simply accepted as a means of trusting God's grace to carry us when we can't carry ourselves. God doesn't make junk and He never junks what He makes. Let's get it straight right from the start: *No matter what you have or don't have right now in your life won't stop His purposes for you if you put it all in His hands.* What you can become by His power is your gift to God.

LIVING WITH UNCHANGEABLE LIMITATIONS

Some things you can (or must) change. This book will help you do just that. If you carry out some of the Bible secrets we share with you here, you will not only do well. You will be the utter *best you can be* in those areas. There are truths God shows us in His Word and in His world that are filled with power and life. His Word and His Spirit can change things no one else can change. You can be well and strong and happy. You can break bad habits and have a heart and mind and spirit that are strong and will carry you in His service in a wonderful way. Bad things you felt before you always had to live with can go away forever. Selfish and stupid habits of the heart and health can be changed into laws written on your heart that will carry you to places of influence and command you never dreamed possible. (Ps. 25:14)

But all of us have limits. We will never be God. The temptation to play God is to try to be like Him *without Him*. God will never let us go to the place where we no longer need His help. *There is no such place*. In each of our lives we have limits. To find what these personal limits are and to live in them is a big part of growing up in God. Blessed is the one who knows what he can never do, and doesn't mind. (John 15:5)

DYING TO WIN

Your world tells you to win you must be invulnerable and invincible. It tells you to learn to be independent, stand on your own two feet, listen to no one. Your world is also full of it. *God says the exact opposite.* He says to win we have to know our **weaknesses** and know how quickly we can fall. He says to triumph we must learn to trust Him, to expect His help, to be a

continual learner. God delights in taking those the world writes off as losers and making them utterly awesome. Your unchangeable limitations are also a great blessing in disguise. They are opportunities for others to see you serve an invisible Someone who can make anyone who hangs with Him the greatest mover and shaker of them all. (1 Cor. 1:26-31)

So HOW DO YOU START? What do you do that begins to make the difference? Do the *exact opposite* of what your world tells you. Focus on yourself and you will wind up with nothing more than yourself. You will stay stuck with all your in-built and inbred hassles and hindrances. A man wrapped up in himself makes a pretty small package. Jesus never said "Find yourself." He said "*He that finds his own life will lose it*". (Matt. 10:39) Jesus never said "Express yourself, be popular." He said "*Except a corn of wheat fall to the ground and die it abides alone.*" Jesus never said "Explore yourself". He said "*He that loves his life shall lose it.*" (John 12:24-25).

Understand this: When an infinite God expresses Himself finitely it always comes out different. The SECRET OF BEING DIFFERENT is simple: *don't* try to be yourself!

Forget yourself. Give yourself away to Jesus. *Deny yourself* - with all its limitation and hurt and small and shabby ambitions. Give up your life to the Infinite God and His eternal purposes. Lose your life in Him. Seek only to serve Him and others for Him. Set the pitch of your heart to learning and knowing Him, and making His glory great in the eyes of others. Let Him express His personality and power through you. And this I promise you: you will become utterly, wonderfully unlike anyone else in history. You will find that in losing your life you find it forever. (Mark 8:34-36; I John 2:15-17)

SIT, WALK, STAND

Lets take a look at the WAY YOU MOVE and carry your physical frame. How do you sit? How do you walk? How do you stand? **Posture** is important because your body speaks to people. The way you carry yourself is a message. A well-trained athlete whose body is in harmony is a picture of grace. The way you hold and position your body can communicate poise, confidence, strength, alertness and class - or something else!

What does *your* body say to people when you sit or stand or enter a room? Do you want to change it? Do

this to help:

Stand neither slouched nor stiff, not slumped over like a sleepy dog nor ruler-straight like a soldier (unless you are in the military). To show confidence, you should stand with your feet pointed directly forwards. Keep your shoulders level and straight, hands free and - very importantly - your knees *slightly bent*. This slight break both removes tension from your legs and back. It translates to others as **ease and authority**. To get the idea of holding your head high, stand butt-flat against a wall, with both your heels and shoulders also touching it. Think of a string from your spine through the back of your head, like God's hand is holding you up from heaven. To deliberately straighten and align your body like this before you enter a room will give you a sense of strength and security.

Walk like a forgiven child of God. Cut out any learned moves that are silly, sexually suggestive or slumpy. Learn a lesson from the military. The very first thing you learn is how to hold yourself when you stand and when you move. *Why does an army teach its soldiers how to march?* An army doesn't learn to march for the actual battle itself, but as a preparation for battle. An army march trains men to show confidence, courage and concentration. They are to show in their presentation no visible fatigue, fear or weakness; no stooped shoulders, defeated posture. Every movement is decisive, clean, nothing is allowed to look sloppy or lazy. You see that focused, poised and disciplined walk on all great tennis champions between points; what Jim Loehr calls the "matador walk."

Sit the same way. Don't slump back in a chair, nor perch on its edge as if you are uptight or desperate. Sit directly in the middle of the chair, feet firmly on the floor, body leaning slightly forewords. Next time you are in an important meeting try this. You will find you can move easily, turn to attend whoever is talking and project a sense of ease, strength, attention.

The WAY you sit at a desk, typewriter or computer is also important. Wrong posture can hurt you and create both eye and wrist strain. Set up your keyboard and chair right. You should be able to write or type with your arms level slightly bent forewords, any display you use level with the top of your head, and your feet flat on the floor. (*See the section under Aptitude for relaxation breaks during intense study.*)

DRESS - "MAN MAKES THE CLOTHES"

Now let's look at **dress** - what you choose to wear. Clothes have become centrally important in many kid's lives. They take up a huge amount of our money, attention and time. Are they really that important? What does God have to say about dress?

No one can set a pattern of clothes that meet a "Christian" standard. What we accept for one reason in one land may be totally unacceptable elsewhere for a different reason. What Christians wore a hundred years ago may be weird today. But dress is very important. It is an **outward sign** of our inward choices and life-styles. It gives a visual cue of the life we like to live and the kind of person we show we are. Like a label on a can, dress tells people something about the contents inside. You may of course be quite different than you seem. But dress badly or wrongly and you may send people messages you don't intend.

When Jesus spoke about John the Baptist, He asked the people what they expected to see in him: "But what did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft, expensive clothes? Those who are dressed in style and luxury live in palaces." (Luke 7:25) John didn't wear clothes of popular culture; he wore a camel-hair coat you'd never find at the local fashion counter! But his **clothes said something** to the watching world. *What he was, was part of His message.*

What YOU WEAR is part of YOUR message. You say something to people by the way you dress. It is one of the first sermons anyone hears when they first meet you. Now, what does your sermon say? Does it give the right kind of message? Draw peculiar attention? Does it say something good about what a friend of Jesus is like?

When the first man and woman sinned, they made for themselves the first set of clothes. This "fig-leaf fashion" wasn't right for the cold night of judgment about to fall on the first sinning pair. God stepped in and clothed them properly. God's first step when He faced them with their sin was to clothe them His way. (Gen. 3:7, 21)

The people who "overcome by the Blood of the Lamb" in the book of Revelation are known by their clothes. Their dress is part of their testimony. (Rev. 3:4-5) The distinguishing marks of BABYLON, the "mother of harlots" was her CLOTHES and jewelry; what she looked like outside was an integral part of what she was inside. The Bible opens with humanity

being clothed, and closes with similar scenes. Your dress is important to God. It is not just a hang-up of previous religious formalism. Even Christ's death was related to clothes; He was stripped to die, and the soldiers cast lots for His garments (Matt 27:35)

The world uses dress and fashion to inject its spirit and morals, its ethics and values (or lack them). Our way of dressing tells us something of our control or influence by this world. As time draws to a close, dress will become more and more perverted. Satan has two poles to push us in clothes. He either tries to strip us or make us look silly. We must stand as Christians and dress in a way that will speak, as loudly as our words, what is clean and valuable and real. Every day, the way you dress will say something to the world about Jesus and you. (I Tim. 2:9; Mat 6:28-29)

Now, you don't have to dress to impress. No Christian has to put on special clothes to feel like a special person. You know you are already. You can afford to dress in a way that is clean and comfortable, without having to follow the world around you, whether the current craze of the ever-shifting fashion world, or the subculture in rejection of it. But remember: **What you look like will tell the world something about God.** Make it count. Learn to dress in a way that honors Christ. Here are rules for any kind of style in dress:

TASTE IN DRESS

(1) Be **CLEAN**: Clothes can be old, second-hand, cheap, or very ordinary; but should never stay dirty. Keep them washed, as neat, and clean as your life-style allows.

(2) Be **SIMPLE**: Avoid complex trimmings, complicated styles. Let your dress preach the kind of Gospel Jesus said was so simple a child could understand it.

(3) Be **SENSIBLE**: Don't follow the latest fad just because it is in at the moment. Fashion-slavery is a sign of a crowd-serving, worldly heart.

GENERAL RULES FOR DRESS

(1) Dress to commend the Gospel. You are a "Living Bible."

(2) Dress for what you're doing. Don't waste God's money on useless extras.

(3) Dress to suit your personality. Ask God to help you choose your clothes.

(4) Never look sexually suggestive. (Burn your old clothes if they are.)

(5) Never look cheap. God's beauty is an inner mark you can't buy in a store.

FOUR BIG MISTAKES IN DRESS:

(1) **Too much**. Follow the latest trends and you will find people more interested in your clothes than you. (2) **Not enough**. Dress sloppy, dirty, and unkempt and you say something about your life you may not like. Casual isn't messy. (3) **Perfect isn't**. Too carefully starched, ironed and buttoned looks stiff. A well-dressed person should always look comfortable in their clothes. (4) **Minor mistakes** make a big difference. Get the rest right but one thing wrong (like cuffs too short or long or the wrong color) and you look unfinished. Take the time to get stuff that matches up in size and color.

The Bible only gives us guidelines in dress; it does not tell us what to wear, but it does tell us how to wear it.

(1) **DRESS TO DISPLAY JESUS** in your life: "The adornment of a Christian woman is not a matter of elaborate hair-styles, expensive clothes or costly jewelry, but the living of a good life." (I Timothy 2 :9) The Greek word used for dress here is from a word that also means "to appease, put down." Dress should not stir up attention to your body; it should only set you off as a person in the sight of others. Clothes should be a backdrop not a showroom. Dress modestly for Jesus.

(2) **DRESS TO DRAMATIZE THE INNER YOU**: Extremes in dress are signs of a lonely, self-centered heart. "Moreover, "Jehovah said, "Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with outstretched necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and make a tinkling with their feet; ...beauty of their anklets ... the pendants and the bracelets ... the headbands and the ankle chains ..." (Isa. 3:16-24). Avoid dressing in such away that people notice you because you look fashion-conscious or even too perfect. Too much attention to dress shows up to others as if your **clothes are wearing you**, not the other way around. No one should notice a Christian's clothes before his or her face. They should reinforce not overwhelm. *If you're not on stage, you don't need costumes.*

(3) **DRESS TO PLEASE JESUS**: "And I, John saw the

holy city, new Jerusalem (God's people) coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." (Rev. 21:2) "Don't be concerned about the outward beauty that depends on jewelry, or beautiful clothes, or hairstyles. Be beautiful inside, in your hearts, with the lasting charm of a gentle and quiet spirit which is so precious to God." (1 Pet 3:3-4)

Dress each day in the kind of clothes you would be happy to wear in heaven, if you were going "home" that day. As you look in the mirror, ask yourself, "Will Jesus be happy about what I'm wearing?" Dress to make Jesus proud of you.

TATTOOS, RINGS & BODY PIERCING

Many consider these as edge fashion accessories; cool pictures, shapes or words that you make a permanent part of your life. What does God say about these in His Book?

Tattoos were well known in Jesus day. Both men and women were marked by their masters much like a cowboy brands cattle; something permanent and painful that forever identified them with the one that ruled them. A slave in Hebrew days who had worked off his six year debt in the service of his boss was to go free on the seventh year - no one could be a servant of another legally for more than that. But sometimes a slave didn't want to leave. Law could no longer hold them, but love might. Hebrew law made provision for such a situation. The master pierced his ear. From then on much like a wedding ring, the slave's pierced ear was testimony to his voluntary love-slavery to his master. (Ex 21:2-6)

Similar situations are true today. Many people put themselves through the pain and permanence of a tattoo. They say it gives them a sense of uniqueness. A macho image like that of a tattoo is a self-imposed record of bravery: pain faced and made permanent part of my life. This way the ear, nose, nipple, genital or other body parts are made the target of a tattooers' needle or a body-piercing specialist. When you see someone with a body ring or tattoo, you are to think: *There goes someone who is not afraid to go against the crowd. There goes someone who is both daring and slightly dangerous. There goes someone who has voluntarily faced pain, stared it in the face, and now flaunts it for fun.*

Does God say anything about this? Yes, He actually does. Although neither the patterns or the tools of our time existed in Jesus day, people like us got rings

and tattoos too.

If you consider using these ancient arts on your body, (and that by choice, not coercion of another), as with all such questions you must ask yourself:

(1) *Why am I doing this?* Is it to feed a habit, build an image, show somebody?

Those set apart for God's service in the Old Testament were to be seen as special because of their calling and God's touch on their lives. Only their clothes spoke of their special calling. Idol-worshippers marked themselves by odd ways they wore their hair or beards or marked their skin: "Neither shall they shave their heads, nor suffer their locks to grow long; they shall only poll their heads." (Ezek. 44:20). But hair is not the issue. Samson grew his hair long as a sign of his obedience to God; Paul shaved his head for the same reason. (Num. 6:5; Acts 21:)What is core is your *heart motive*. Is it for the Lord's sake? Is it what He told you to do? Is it what will mark you as His man or woman?

(2) What *risks* am I taking? AIDS transmitted from a dirty or improperly sterilized needle? Permanent tissue damage? Unsightly and embarrassing words or pictures if you ever want to alter what seemed so cool then, but maybe dumb, trite or just plain ugly to you or others later? (Rom. 12:1-2; Col. 4:5)

(3) Did Jesus give me *permission* to mark up the body that belongs to Him? Will what is done ultimately draw attention to Him or just to me?

"They shall not make baldness upon their head, neither shall they shave off the corner of their beard, *nor make any cuttings in their flesh.*" (Lev. 21:5) "You are the children of the LORD your God: *you shall not cut yourselves*, nor make any baldness between your eyes for the dead." (Deut. 14:1)

The only records of tattoo and other forms of flesh-piercing or cutting in scripture are those of men who linked their lives with the occult and devotion to the dead. God takes a very dim view of this. (1 Kings 18:28; Jer. 16:6; Mar 5:5) Demon worshippers practice *self-mutilation*. It is part of the Devils' hatred & jealousy of God's design of our bodies. At the end of time, the Beast seeks to mark bodies of those that follow him to destruction & torment. (Rev 13:16-17; 14:9-11; 16:2; 19:20)

If you have done or are thinking of doing something

for fun that will mark your body forever in a way that dishonors God, consider it a serious mistake. If you have pierced body parts that you feel now brings dishonor and disrespect for His temple, take whatever steps you must to undo the damage. You were made to reflect His glory. All you do must honor Him. And unlike the slogan of the abortionist, your body is *not* yours. “You are not your own” says the Scripture “but you are bought with a price. So glorify God in your body which is God’s and your spirit which is God’s.” (I Cor. 6:19-20)

BUYING CLOTHES

Clothes can be costly. What can you do to build a wardrobe that looks really good, lasts well and doesn’t date? Here are some guidelines:

(1) Never buy anything the **first time** it appears. One-season fads date quickly. Use the same rule for everything you buy not unique or on sale: **wait for a year**. If its still there later and you still like it, buy it. Don’t buy anything you plan to throw away. You won’t do it. Buy what you need and get out of the store before you make a mistake.

(2) Don’t buy something just because it is on sale unless it fits you and your other clothes *now*. Don’t buy with an idea that sometime in the future you’ll find something to match it. But always head for the clearance and sale rack first if you know what you want. Buy at the end of a season. Good clothes are always in style whatever year.

(3) Find something basic you really like? Fits and looks great on you? If you can afford it, **buy more than one**. Try on each one. Sizes and fit vary slightly. Flaws show up if you don’t rush to save time and wind up with something you can’t use.

(4) Keep in mind **what you look like** and **what you do**. Don’t spend God’s money on a lot of stuff you’ll hardly ever use. If you wear work clothes mostly, you won’t need a closet full of ties. Tell your family what you need for presents.

(5) Buy **natural** fabrics - cotton, linen, wool, silk. They always look classy. Men, cut the jewelry. If its not good enough to keep in a bank, throw it away. If you’re going to wear a chain, keep it under your shirt. Girls, choose accessories carefully.

(6) Check seams (secure?) Loose, hanging threads or buttons? (shoddily made.) Suits or jackets: crumple

fabric to see if it recovers well. Belts should have five holes, the actual length measured from the central hole. *Avoid the unusual*; it dates too quickly.

CHOOSING CLOTHES - GUYS

PANTS

Casual: Jeans, cords and khakis made of cotton *shrink*. Err when you buy on the side of a little looseness and length. Avoid cords if you are heavier; it bulks you out even more. Elastic and side-tabbed waistbands look old.

Dress-Up: Stick with navy blue, gray, black or subtle tweed. Test the belt and shoes you want to wear with them. **WAIST:** secure but not tight; can you slip three fingers flat between the band and your shirt? If you want to look taller, don’t have cuffs. Angle hems with slightly more fabric in back than in front. **CUFFS:** even all round. You need only a slight break onto the shoe; too big makes pants look sloppy.

JACKET

Casual: Should be like casual shirts - loose, comfortable and full. Leather, wool or cotton, except for track suit/warm-ups. **SWEATERS:** buy bulkier than your size.

Dress: Suit jackets should last a long time; buy and fit carefully. Take the shirt, shoes and belt you want to wear with you and try it with them. Sizes vary with maker. **CLASSY BASICS** are a good navy blazer, solid-color cotton blend lightweight sports coat and a well-fitted lightweight suit.

Tall and slender: European close-cut suits tend to fit better on tall and slender men.

Short and stocky: Looser American suits fit better; a more natural look, sloped shoulders and more elbow room. Two-button jackets can make you look slimmer. Avoid three or four button jackets if you are heavier. Double-breasted styles look good on anyone, but *not* buttoned.

A **jacket collar** should lie flat against the back of your neck and shoulders and let show a quarter inch of shirt collar. Get the **RIGHT LENGTH** by your arms: curl your fingers with arms loosely at your side. The bottom edge of the jacket should fit in the cup of your fingers, and the jacket should show a quarter-inch of shirt cuff.

SHIRTS

Casual: T-shirts should be tank-top, thicker woven cotton. White is cool and you can wear them under a shirt or on their own. Long-sleeved mock turtle T-shirts look good under blazers and sports coats. No V-necks. Minimize the slogan shirts.

Dress: Check size each time you shop; your body shape changes. Collars should be comfortable, not tight enough to mark your neck nor so loose it hangs away.

TIES

Take your time buying this! If you are *sure* an unusual tie will work with your suit or jacket go for it. Otherwise stick with the plain and simple, small subtle designs or solid classic colors. **Wide** tie knots can make your face look fuller; **narrower** knots slim it. A **knotted** tie should fall dead center, to just touch the top of your belt buckle. Check to see it hangs right and even: drape it over your hand in half. If the small end falls directly in the center of the large, it is made and cut right. Ties vary in length a lot. Take one that already fits you well and use it to size another.

HAIR STYLES - GUYS

All of us have different shaped faces. Experiment with styles that flatter your features. Think of your particular facial shape. Style your hair to balance it out. Build it fuller in the areas you want to emphasize. Keep it thin in the places you want to minimize. Wayne & Emily Hunter suggest the following styles to help you look the best:

If your face is **long and narrow**, wear your hair flatter on top and fuller at the sides. Shorten the look of your face by wearing your hair lower on your forehead.

If your face is **round and full**, lengthen it by lifting your hair higher on the crown and flatter at the sides, or show your ears. Draw your hair higher one side than the other, part your hair more to one side or cover one side of your forehead.

Heavy jaw-line and narrow forehead: build fullness above your temple and ears and cover more of your forehead.

Narrow chin-line, broad forehead: draw your hair down more to one side, keep hair at your temples thinned and use a diagonal instead of a center part.

Square face: round it off by lifting hair at the top of your head and drawing it closer in at the sides to minimize facial width. Diagonal part. Not flat on top or full at sides.

If your **ears stick out** too much, don't flatten your hair above them. Let the hair grow out more to cover the gap between the outer tip of your ears and the side of your head.

High, slanted or receding forehead: Conceal by covering. Draw hair forward.

Prominent or protruding forehead: Keep hair flat, smooth and un-bulky over it.

Prominent nose. Some hair down on forehead. **Short nose:** draw hair back.

Tall: Have enough bulk at the top of your head to balance. **Short or heavy;** avoid bulky high hairstyles that overpower. Keep hair neatly trimmed and moderate.

Your hairstyle should help you look fully masculine. (*Man In Demand* pp. 83-87)

CHOOSING CLOTHES - GIRLS

Here are a few guidelines girls to help you pick the right kind of clothes. If you are not average height or weight, they will help you make the most of your best points and not draw attention to your bad ones:

If you are SHORT.

Choose clothes with vertical patterns, THIN motifs and fabrics. Use thin belts, straight-lined or accordion pleated skirts. You look best not wearing big, busy prints or a lot of different colors. A neutral shoe helps; it lengthens the leg/foot line. Hems should be kept around the knee. THINK tall! You are big in God's eyes. Don't feel funny because you are little. Most Christian guys like to feel protective and strong. Your size can help them feel like that when they are with you. Avoid horizontal stripes or wide accessories that will shrink you further.

If you are TALL:

Pick out dresses with horizontal lines, large-patterned prints, bulkier fabrics. Buy longer jackets when bought individually, use wide belts, slightly flared or soft-pleated skirts. Watch out for too-long skirts that

can stretch you out or vertical stripes. And if you are tall; remember God made guys like that too, who feel funny with normal-size girls and absolutely ridiculous with short girls. Cultivate a gentle spirit. Learn to speak with softness, so you don't seem imperious or self-sufficient in your height.

DARK colors conceal and slim; BRIGHT colors do the opposite. Pick according to your hair color, skin tone and favorite colors.

If you have a lot of red in your face, stay away from reds, fuschias, red-purples. If your complexion is more sallow, avoid yellows and yellow-greens at all cost. If your face is very pale, whites wash you out.

Choose the **weights** of your clothes wisely according to the work you are doing and where you will be. MEDIUM WEIGHT clothes span more seasons. Keep your hem lines about half-an-inch shorter than your coat hem-lines on normal dresses.

PROBLEM FIGURES

You want to look nice, but your ancestors dropped the ball on you genetically. Use these tips to help visually correct a figure:

NECK: **Short** - Use minimum-clutter lines; "V" shaped necklines. **Long** - Polo-type necklines; wear collars or scarves when you can.

ARMS: **Plump**—Use loose sleeves, not too short; just capping shoulders, end at muscled area just above the elbow or the wrist.

Long: Cut by your sleeve at the thickest point. No sleeveless styles.

BUST: **Flat**: Use lighter, floatier fabrics; avoid clinging material. **Large** - Fluid, unbroken lines to hips—no high-waisted tops.

WAIST: **Long** - Disguise by low-waisted bodice.

Short - Better over-all balance with a shaped leather belt; fit below waist on lower curved edge.

THIGHS: Can be hidden to some extent by a flared skirt.

You can lengthen your shortness a bit by a slim dress with a not-too-long skirt.

FEET: If they are a little long, shorten with higher heel; this also lengthens ankle-to-knee.

HANDS: Large - Use a glove for special occasions 3-4" above wrist. Beige is preferable to white.

Small—Don't wear chunky rings, watches, jewelry.

ACCESSORIES

At least one set in a basic color: black, brown, white, navy, or gray. A beige dark enough for winter, light enough for summer is the best compromise. If you want an extra set, get them in a brighter set of colors but be sure the shades match each other.

If you like a motif or pattern that is popular one season, buy a scarf or pin in it, not a whole dress you'll only get to wear once then have to hide in the back of your closet.

SHOES. Heavier—Use a more solid heel. No tight, thin shoe-straps!

Taller—More medium heels. You don't need to always wear flats.

HANDBAGS: Spend as much as you can afford to get a good-looking one. A good bag dresses the plainest outfits and lasts for years. Get a shape that doesn't date. Stay away from over-stuffed or over-large bags; they are not suitcases.

ABOVE ALL: Dress modestly. Don't dress sensually. Dress like a woman, but dress like the princess of the Royal Family you are. Preserve your unique femininity. Don't try to copy maleness; stay away from rugged, tweedy or chunky fabrics. Keep your dresses delicate, swishy, and female. God made you a woman; be proud of it.

HAIR CARE: GIRLS

Shampoo and WASH at least twice a week. BRUSH it well; "fifty strokes" for cleanliness and shine! Wear it trimmed and tidy. No loose straggly bits; it can have that billowy "wind-blown" look but not the be-draggled one. Stay away from elaborate styles; they are a waste of God's money, and don't last. Your hair is your glory. The Bible says it is a covering and a protection for you, an outward sign of spiritual understanding that you are protected by your Christian brothers who love Christ. If you can wear it long, do so; it can become a crown of beauty to you.

“... If a woman have long hair it is a glory to her; for her hair is given her for a covering.” (1 Cor. 11:15)

COMPLEXION COLORS

There are many systems for choosing what colors look best on you. Because God made us all so different, there are thousands of color combinations possible that match your natural hair color, your eyes and your complexion. One such system uses four nature categories to help you decide on what looks best for you; **Color Seasons**.

Your skin is translucent. The color just under it is your true complexion, the key that determines range and depth of the colors that look best on you. Cool season skins WINTER and SUMMER are **blue or gray** undertoned. Warm seasons AUTUMN and SPRING are **golden** (not sallow) or **peach** undertoned. Hold a piece of white paper near your palm or stomach. Does your skin look bluer, grayer, more ivory or peach?

The COLOR of the clothes you pick will determine the kind of effect you create by the message of your dress. Choose those that enhance your appearance and you will look your best. Either get an specialist to help you out in this, or a book so you can see in detail what looks great for you. What colors made you feel good as a kid? Any clothes colors that drew compliments? Remember what you've looked best in before, or the ones you liked wearing all the time. How about your favorite week-end clothes? Forget style for a moment. Think about the colors that really seem to help you.

Here is a CHART summary from one good system to help you pick clothes that match your kind of hair, eyes and skin-coloring. Pick the color sets you feel most enhances your own special looks. It will help you choose what you wear wisely in a way that will best naturally complement what God has given you.

Winter: Blue skin undertone; gray-beige or very white skin; no visible pink or rosy cheeks. Most olive skinned, black and oriental people are Winters.

Hair: Medium to dark brown or black. Often white-blond as a child; turns prematurely gray or white; ash toned sometimes with red highlights visible in sunlight.

Eyes: Deep black-brown, red-brown, green, blue or hazel (brown smudge around pupil). High contrast

between whites of the eye and the iris, unlike a Summer.

Colors: Navy, Royal Blue, Blue-Red, Burgundy, Black, Pure White. You look good in strong, clear colors. Think contrast, sharp, pure and clean, true or blue undertone, icy, intense, vivid, never muted or dull.

Summer: Often visible pink in skin; some very fair and pale. Black Summers have soft, grayish tone to their skin, which is fairly light.

Hair: As a child often white to ash-blond; darker as a teenager. At high school, hair roots are light ash (grayish) brown. Bleaches quickly in the sun, sometimes to gold.

Eyes usually blue, green gray or hazel with a cloudy, softer look in the iris. Some Summers have soft rose-brown or grayed brown eyes.

Colors: Blue-Red, Blue-Green, Medium or Powder Blue, Rose-Brown, Soft White. Think blended, subtle, blue or rose tone, soft contrast, muted or grayed no pure white or black. Avoid camel, yellowish beige or greens, tans & browns, gold, orange, peach.

Autumn: Golden skin undertone. Fair-skinned ivory or peach; true redhead often with freckles; or golden beige from medium to deep copper. Peach, not pink cheek color.

Hair: Range from auburn to copper, strawberry blond to carrot-top, dark gold blond to warm brown, sometimes charcoal. Red or gold highlights. Matte, not shiny finish.

Eyes golden brown or green with orange or gold star-streaks; some clear glass green, some olive cats-eye green. A few vivid blue (turquoise) steel or extremely pale blue.

Colors: Dark Chocolate Brown, Mustard, Khaki, Rust, Moss Green, Teal Blue, Warm Beige. Warm, rich, spicy, gold and earth undertones; colors muted by brown, gray or gold. Oyster (beige) white, dark charcoal brown, golden/gray greens. No black, gray.

Spring: Ivory, peachy pink or golden beige; gold undertone. Rosy cheeks, blush easily. Golden tan freckles come easily. Some clear, creamy skin; clear, bright quality.

Hair: Flaxen, honey, yellow or strawberry blondes,

taffy red or golden browns. No ash-tone like Summers; as children many Springs are blond and darken with age.

Eyes: Often clear blue, green, teal or aqua, often with gold flecks. Some golden-brown or topaz. Hazel eyes contain golden brown, green & gold. A few deep blue/steel gray.

Colors: Camel, Gold-Brown, Light Clear Gold, Ivory, Turquoise, Peach, Apricot.

When you buy clothes look for warm, clear, pure, light to bright colors, that are alive, energetic, friendly and extroverted with yellow undertones. Ivory, creamy whites, no black. Light on all greasy, bright navy, true blue to periwinkle (blue-violet); aquas, turquoise; yellow-greens. Orange-red but no dark reds they make your face look harsh and aged. All peach, coral, apricot and salmon shades, warm pinks (yellow not blue.)

TEST **solid** colors held under your face in natural bright daylight. To compare seasons, hide one color over one from the other season. Check the effect when you peel it off to reveal the other. Swap their order and do it again. Look at your FACE, not the color.

A **RIGHT COLOR** for you smoothes and defines your face. It minimizes shadows, circles, wrinkles and lines. It brings out a healthy glow in your skin and makes your eyes sparkle. Your face stands out, the color in the background harmonizing with it.

WRONG COLORS do the opposite; they make your face look pale, sallow or dirty. They accentuate wrinkles, lines shadows under your eyes, blotches or scars. They dull your eyes, prematurely age your face. The color will look too strong or weak, pushing your face back. It will clash with the tone of your face.

RED, YELLOW, or WHITE are not usually good for the timid, shy, or plump person: **RED** "heats up" high color complexions. Soft, pale **BLUES** can look too "pretty-pretty" with bows or frills. **BLACK** emphasizes **YOU**, so groom carefully if you are one who can wear this color well. No hard crimson or too-pastel shades.

For "camouflage" colors, try **BEIGE** or **GRAYS**. Anyone can wear these colors, but they do nothing for you - too much will make you "fade away." Add accessory colors to make them live; choose ones to

"play up" your own complexion. (*Source:* Carol Jackson)

SLEEP

One of the all-time best things you can do for your looks is to get **plenty of sleep**. Too many teenagers stay up too late and then have to get up too early. You need at least 7-8 hours of sleep every night when you are growing. It will differ a little from person to person; but what a difference that extra hour makes to your looks and vitality!

Get a good, firm **MATTRESS**; you're going to spend *a third of your life* on it. Pass on those stuffed with plastic or rubber foam; they gradually deteriorate, develop holes and ruts and give off toxic gases. A good mattress should feel at first a little too firm. The **WAY YOU SLEEP** affects your entire posture and even health over your life-time. Learn to sleep either on your back or curled to one side like a baby does in the womb. Don't sleep on your face or your arms. Develop **REGULAR SLEEP** habits; try to go to bed and get up the same time each day. No big meals two hours before bed.

If you **can't sleep** because you're thinking about something you might forget, **WRITE IT DOWN** or record it on a tape recorder at the side of your bed. Then leave it for the Lord to take care of until the following morning. If you find it **hard to sleep**, don't worry about it. Get up. Sit in a comfortable chair, lie on a couch, read a book, drink some warm milk, take a short, relaxing walk, take a bath, watch TV play some relaxing music. Talk to God. Catherine Booth as a child suffered from a curved spine and never knew a pain-free night in her life. She used her sleeplessness to read, and finished the Bible right through eight times by the time she was twelve. Len Ravenhill the great writer on revival had a similar problem and used the time to pray hours a night. If your sleeplessness goes on again next night, go to bed even later, not earlier.

Learn to take a **cat-nap**. Many world leaders know the power of short rests in the day. If you get tired, take a quick, quiet time out, but never for more than an hour. Don't over-sleep. It can make you just as sluggish as too little sleep.

The Bible says two things about your sleep:

(1) Deep, peaceful and restful sleep is a **GIFT OF GOD** for those He loves. "He gives His beloved sleep." (Psalms 127:2). "If we walk wisely with God, and listen

to His counsel, our sleep shall be sweet.” (Proverbs 3:4).

(2) **TOO MUCH** sleep can make our lives poor and unproductive: “Love not sleep lest you come to poverty.” (Prov. 20:13) “How long will you sleep, O sluggard? How long ...? A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep; so shall your poverty come as a robber, and want as an armed man.” (Proverbs 6:9-11)

Sometimes you may have to **TRAVEL** a long time without a bed. You can even learn to **SLEEP UP-RIGHT!** You can learn to do this in a car, bus, train or plane, even though it seems strange or hard at first. The ability to sleep at will for short periods of time is well worth learning. It may help especially if you are prone to motion sickness.

The tricky part in learning to sleep upright is what to do with your head. When it slumps, it wakes you up. You can buy a small fold-up, blow-up air pillow that drapes around your neck and won't fall down when you move. On a plane, train or bus see if you can get a window seat. Rest your head on one or more pillows against the wall. If you can tilt your seat back a little, put a pillow behind your head, and another down low at the small of your back at seat level. If you have access to a *lot* of pillows, add another one under each arm rest, pull up your knees to rest your feet on your hand-carry case or bag from under your seat, and jam another between your knees and the seat in front of you. Totally cushioned at all the pressure points, you should get as comfortable a snooze as possible under the circumstances.

JET LAG & TRAVEL TIREDNESS

One of the blessings of modern missions is the ability to get to another nation quickly. This fast travel brings with it another form of stress we call *jet lag*. Your body keeps an internal record of the time cycle set by the sun in the place you live. When you move fast to another nation with a totally different time zone, your body has to catch up. Jet lag and long travel can make you tired and worn out, or awake at the wrong time when you most need to sleep.

How can you minimize the shock to your system? What can you do to look and feel your best when you have to travel a long way?

(1) Drink **plenty of water** or juice before, during and after your journey. Plane cabins have specially dry air

and you can dehydrate quickly. Drink at least one large glass every two or three hours. Don't wait till you feel thirsty. By then you may be already dehydrated. Take your own juice or water if you know it might not be available.

(2) **Don't eat a big meal** before you travel, and eat only lightly during the trip. When you arrive, do the same thing for the first day. Eat something watery and refreshing.

(3) Try to get in the day before you are due to start work. The key is to **get out in the sunlight** of the country you arrive in as soon as you can. Some form of outside exercise is great. Stay out for at least half-an-hour to an hour. The light helps reset your internal circadian clock quicker. If you can swim for a little while or relax in a hot bath when you arrive, do it. Don't plan on anything stressful your first day in.

(4) Travel in **one direction** when you fly is always harder than the opposite one. Studies show that the flow of magnetic fields of the earth seem to affect our sense of equilibrium. It will be easier for you to adjust for a small difference in time than one that will put you six hours out of synch. Start your body on the new zone even before you leave. Get up earlier or stay up later than normal a few days before you leave. If you fly all night and arrive early morning, don't take more than a 90-minute nap when you arrive. Stay up until 9 or 10 at night or later to make your system aware you are on a new schedule. Then don't let your body lapse back to your past time zone.

(5) Use a **watch with two time zones** or a spare one set to the zone you came from. Your body will have slump down times late afternoon and early morning (2-3 a.m. and p.m.). Plan to arrange your schedule so as to avoid crucial work these equivalent times if possible. If you're not too excited over the trip itself, work later than normal the night before the flight so you will begin a long trip already sleepy.

(6) Extra pressure in a plane creates visible **swelling** in your feet and legs. Wear light, comfortable shoes and socks and cool clothes that can bear crinkling or wrinkling well. Carry a light jacket in case the cabin temperature is too cold. If you are prone to blood clots, take a couple of aspirin before the trip to help thin out your blood. Don't take travel drugs or sleeping pills; they hinder you adjusting quickly. *Melatonin*, a substance from the pineal gland that regulates sleep can help you sleep; use only 3mg. or less.

SUNLIGHT

Sunshine is another key ingredient in looking and feeling good. We all know how much better you can look with a nice tan. Sunlight helps heal and sterilize the skin as well as warm and color it. Sunlight can be like a vitamin for the skin. Unfortunately because of the changes and growing damage to the protective layers of our outer atmosphere since the Fall and the Flood, sunlight in many places is too strong and can hurt you instead of help you.

Don't feel you have to look like some sunscreen model to be healthy. Always take a hat for long times in the sun. If you do want a tan, **do it gradually**. Don't expose unprotected skin for more than 20-30 minutes to sunshine when you start. The worst hours are between 11:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. The active ingredient in sunscreen is *para-amino-benzoic acid*. You can get it from a pharmaceutical supply house. It can be used topically or taken orally as a daily supplement in tablet form.

You can make your OWN SUNSCREEN lotion that is pollutant free by dissolving a crushed 500 mg. PABA tablet in a tablespoon of grain alcohol. Add to a NATURAL MOISTURIZER mixture: a tsp. of apricot kernel or olive oil, 400 mg. of Vitamin E, 2 tsp. pure vegetable oil glycerin in a cup of water and a small amount of lysine and Vitamin C. Thicken and bind the oils and PABA with a gel made from a tsp. of sodium alginate slowly dissolved in a cup of heated water in a non-metal pan. (Takes half-hour).

Watch also your **eyes**. If you are going to have to spend a lot of time outdoors, get a pair of good SHADES or sunglasses that filter out both forms of ultraviolet light. You should be able to see things clearly and without glare and without having to squint or screw up your face if they are doing their job. Good glasses shouldn't just darken everything. Some can actually make things look brighter but minus the glare. Take your time to find a pair that both feel and look good on you, and take care of them. If you wear prescription lenses, you can also buy clip-on shades to fit over your glasses.

Things like the way you look and dress, the way you prepare yourself physically to meet others are important. But what can you do if you don't *have anyone* to meet? You've taken some time to get your physical appearance and presentation down right. Now let's look at how you *appear to others*, and see what we can do to improve there.

LONELINESS

The problem of loneliness has affected many people at many times, and sometimes with good reason. Before we look at any reasons why, and how, and to who these things happen, let me ask you something. Being alone is usually a time of depression, right? Not necessarily. If you thought of being alone as a time to leave old things in the past, and prepare to make new friends, wouldn't it seem easier? One main factor in loneliness, could be the fact that you're not a very friendly person. The Bible says when you show yourself friendly, you will usually be befriended. (Prov. 18:24)

This is not always the case, but it at least opens up the door for others to find out about you. Maybe if you are reading this section of the book you are thinking that you don't *want* friends right now. Well, maybe that's the problem. The desire for friendship must exist to conquer loneliness. God must heal your heart of hurt from bad friendships and broken relationships before you can be free to start again.

LOOK AT YOURSELF AND ASK WHY YOU ARE LONELY

Sometimes you get treated by someone as annoying, obnoxious, threatening, timid, or just plain boring. You may not be any of those things at all, but it hurts when no one seems to want you around. If you are snubbed or rejected by those you try to know better, take it bravely. Not even Jesus was loved by everybody. He said "If they hate Me they also will hate you." (John 15:19-20) Sometimes people don't like you because you try too hard, or you just don't fit their circle of interests and goals.

Take such rejections with a grain of salt. Not all of your loneliness has a spiritual root. LEARN from a snub. Maybe there is something you can change. A rejection now you learn from may open a door later to touch many more for the Lord. Ask Him to show you your low points, or things that you should change in order to relate better. You can even **ASK** people you would like to get to know what they don't like about you. Say something like this: "Look, I like you. I know there's a lot in my life that I need to know to be a better person. I'm sure you can see things I can change. Is there something you see I can do differently? There is nothing wrong with being to the point. Just keep in mind the feelings others and the fact that they have problems too.

SOLITUDE - THE LAB OF SPIRITUAL STRENGTH.

The problem of loneliness can be overcome in PRAYER. You can use times of feeling alone to pour out your heart to Jesus. David as a boy felt lonely and rejected. Often alone with no one but his sheep, David learned friendship with God. He said, *"When my mother and father forsake me, the Lord will take me up."* And the God whose eyes run to and fro through the whole earth to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is perfect towards Him, chose David out of all Israel to make him its greatest King. God called David *"a man after My own heart."* (Acts 13:22)

Some of the GREATEST SPIRITUAL TIMES of your life will come when you are all alone with God. No great man or woman of God ever lived without learning to seek God in the silence. Don't despise the discipline of aloneness. A.G. Sertillanges said: "All great works are prepared in the desert, including the redemption of the world. The precursors, the followers, the Master Himself all obeyed or have to obey one and the same law. Prophets, apostles, preachers, martyrs, pioneers of knowledge, inspired artists in every art, ordinary men and the Man-God all pay tribute to loneliness, to the life of silence, to the night." The monk Thomas à Kempis wrote: "The great holy men where they might, fled men's fellowship and chose to live to God in secret places. One said: As oftentimes as I was among men I came back less a man, that is to say, less holy ... Leave vain things to the vain, Shut thy door on thee and call to thee Jesus thy love; dwell with Him in thy cell for thou shalt not find elsewhere so great a peace." (*Spirit Of The Disciplines*, Dallas Willard, pp. 101, 162) The ABILITY TO STAND ALONE is in Bill Gothard's words the "evidence of an eminently superior life-style." Without it there would have been no Book of Daniel. God seeks out those who dare stand alone.

MAKING FRIENDS

He who shows himself friendly, will be himself befriended.

It seems easy enough, huh? Often we are so afraid of rejection from the people we desire friendship with, that we build up a defensive wall. We end up cutting ourselves off from the very people we desire friendships from. The key here is: **DON'T BE AFRAID OF TRYING, AND FAILING.**

We all make mistakes at some points in this mortal life, but learning is what it's all about. Give both yourself and the people you want to get to know better a chance.

Perhaps you have had trouble making friends before. You may be shy or not feel that people will like you. It is true that some people in the world will never like you. If you live for Jesus, there will be runaways from God's love that will not want to know you too well (in case you get through to them about their lost souls). You will meet bitter people who have been hurt and do not trust anyone. Christians don't expect to be popular with everyone. But Jesus had many friends. He was a supremely friendly, understanding person. You could come to Him and always be sure of a welcome. *"God so loved the world."*

The world has a funny idea of Christians. They think of us in terms of being too weird; not tolerant of other faiths; not able to enjoy a little "fun" in life. The world always creates a miserable picture of Christianity. But remember, that is not why the Pharisees criticized Jesus. They said He was the "Friend of publicans and sinners." (Luke 7:34) Sinners liked Him too much. Jesus had a knack of mixing with people and building them up even when he was putting down their wrong.

HOW TO BE MORE FRIENDLY

(1) First, get properly clean before God. If you are holding on to fear, guilt, anger, or worry, you will give off bad vibes wherever you go. Surrender your fears and worries to God. If you have been hurt, forgive. If you have things to get right, do it. You must be clean or you will always be afraid to meet people in case they spot your secret sins. Remember the Christian is to be totally clear of hidden wrong. Be as transparent as a mountain stream. God has given you the promises and power to be free. Go to Him first and get your heart clean. This is the first step to making friends. Do it now!

(2) Learn to **forget yourself**. Shyness is only a form of pride. One of the big reasons people don't make friends is that they try too hard. They do crazy things and say too much to be real. People get "scared off" when you try too hard to be friendly. You can never be natural by thinking all the time, *"I wonder what he thought of what I just said; I wonder if she thinks I look okay; I wonder if he can see my zit?"* RELAX! Be natural. Be yourself, zits and all. Be a loving "just-who-you-are."

You can do two things to help CONQUER SHYNESS. First, think of some time when you really felt *at home*, relaxed and at ease with someone. Carry it in your heart and mind. Remember how you felt. Think about how easy it was to talk, to say things that people listened to and liked you for. And when you meet someone new, first bring back to your mind that feeling of happiness. Practice living in your attitudes of that time. You will find your tenseness draining away; you will be more relaxed and free.

One of the best ways to stop thinking of yourself when you are trying to make friends is to change your way of THINKING ABOUT THEM. Instead of thinking what you can GET from the friendship of this person, think of how you can GIVE to them. Think of what GOD is doing in their life; how you can be of help to them; what you can do to serve them in Jesus. God has been dealing in some way with this person; you are there to help Him in His work. Don't worry about what *they* might be thinking of you. Concentrate on THEIR NEEDS. This is the way to project a real spirit of friendship; in thinking about them and their needs you will forget your own shyness. A man asked John Wesley: "How is it with your soul?" He said "*I forgot I had one.*"

Another way to make friends, especially with those who are HARD to like, is to make a LIST of the good things you can find out about them. Write down what you might find attractive, or pleasing, or praiseworthy in them, even if they are full of faults. Then PRAY for them, Ask God to bless them, to help them. Thank God for the things you have found out that were nice about them. You will be surprised at how much you can find if you open your heart! Ask Jesus to love them into a solution of their problems through you if possible. Make yourself available to Him for it.

MORE BIBLE WAYS TO MAKE FRIENDS

(1) Do what Jesus did. Say their names. LEARN THEIR NAMES and remember them; then say a friendly "Hi!" to them, even if they don't say it to you first. Go out of your way to make this a habit of your life. To help you remember the name of someone you meet, say it back to them again when they tell you. Use it straight away in your talk with them two or three or more times. Repeating it will help you to remember. People like you to use their first names. Write it down after you have met them to remember even better. They will almost always like you if you remember their name; it means you found them important enough to remember. *God knows our names*

and values us. If you want to be a likable Christian, do the same for others.

(2) SHOW YOURSELF FRIENDLY. (Proverbs 18:24) Every Christian must go out of his or her way to help others in studies, in jobs needing doing, in introductions. You can choose to be a friend. Think, "If Jesus loves this man or woman, I can love them and care about them too. If I can help them, I will offer to. God has left me here to serve, and this is someone I can show His love to." (Proverbs 17:17)

(3) LOOK OUT FOR THE LONELY and neglected. Jesus said to give parties to people who never have them. (Luke 14:12-14) The world is filled with people that others pass by without even looking at. Make it your ministry to say a kind word to at least one new person every day. All around you there are people who have no friends, with no one to care for them or even notice. Some have been hurt, and have hurt others in return so much that they are sour, bitter and drive away all their friends. You be a light in their darkness. You speak kindly to them despite their rude ways. Some you brush past today may go down the road to suicide, death, and hell tonight. Will they say, "No man cared for my soul?" (Psalms 142:4) Be one of the first to meet newcomers to church, or school, or work. Don't just hang with your own little clique.

(4) When you do talk to people, DON'T TALK ABOUT YOURSELF. *Talk about them.* Be really interested in them, but not nosy; give them the feeling you enjoy being with them. Look them in the eyes, and smile. Ask them about their problems, their needs, their work. LEARN TO BE A GOOD LISTENER; learn to make people feel important when they are with you. Learn to build them up and make them feel worthwhile. Of all people, the Christian knows that man is worth something. We know that people are not nothings. We know they are important and valuable, because they are made in God's image. We can love them because God made us all, and we are related by His creation. This lonely man is made in our Father's image. This lonely girl is made a tiny finite copy of my great Creator's love and wisdom. I can love them and make them feel important, because they are important to God and, therefore, to me.

MAKING FRIENDS WITH CHRIST'S FRIENDS

Of course, your closest friends will be Christ's friends. Although we will be free to find out what most people love and want to do, the problems they have, and what God is doing in their lives, our closest friends

will only be a small circle of people. They will be the ones we REALLY ENJOY sharing things with; those we spend a great deal of time with. Close friends are people we can share our deepest feelings and hopes with, people we can really fellowship with. We feel more free to help such friends grow spiritually by throwing in our efforts with them in some task for God.

We can expect them to lovingly show us if we are doing something wrong, and they will expect us to do the same thing. We cannot have too many close friends; there is not enough time to share everything with many in one lifetime. But this “inner circle” will be close to our hearts, and we must make sure they are Christ’s friends.

UNITY in prayer comes only by a close, common bond of understanding, affection, and friendship. Jesus put His team of disciples together on that basis. Your closest friends should be people of similar interests, people who think like you in most situations. They should also be ones with a similar spiritual level of growth in God. They should be ones with whom you can share new discoveries of the work and Word of God in your lives.

Sam Shoemaker pointed out that true UNITY is not just two people who agree in the same things; it is more like a pyramid, where two people form one line, the common task or ministry they have together forms the third corner of the base, and God forms the peak. When we walk with God together, under His control, and doing a common task He has set us, we will really begin to know the joys of Divine friendship. With friends who are Christ’s friends, we can know God’s love demonstrated every day.

POPULARITY AND YOU

It isn’t good to be too popular! The Bible warns us of this many times. “He that makes many friends does it to his own destruction; but there is a friend that sticks closer than a brother.” (Proverbs 18:24) “Woe unto you when all men speak well of you.” (Luke 6:26) The world will hate the true Christian because of the truth he bears. But there is no reason why we shouldn’t be looked up to and liked AS PEOPLE. Here are a few more things to help you be more popular:

- (a) Admit your mistakes cheerfully.
- (b) Listen to what others say, even if you are right.
- (c) Be a good WINNER and a good LOSER. Don’t moan or brag.

(d) Make a “bad habit” list, and ask God’s help to fix them.

(e) Don’t call older people by their first names.

(f) Think of ways to make other people feel important.

(g) When talking with people who disagree, agree with them as much as you can.

(h) Avoid saying a direct, “No, you’re wrong!” Use, “Well, that’s interesting, but have you ever thought of it this way?” Use facts, not willpower to win an argument.

(i) Never put someone down by “proving them” wrong. Always make it easy for them to change their minds about what they said gracefully, so they won’t feel like Charlie Brown. If you are not sure where they stand, give them the benefit of the doubt. Say, “Well, you probably didn’t mean (state position) did you, because... (give facts).”

COMMITMENT

Both RESPONSIBILITY and ABILITY come with commitment. (Ps. 37:5) Without it the world could not function properly. In our time, commitment in key areas like marriage and family and business has been practically abolished. Many who grow up in unstable homes are afraid to get married, to accept a commitment to someone for a lifetime. Without commitment in a job, even our services cannot function properly. Yet both people who work (and their bosses who give them the job) simply check out when things get tight or tough. Society is full of people who are committed to no one and nothing. This is one of the reasons why our world is falling apart.

Someone who has no sense of real future cannot give themselves to anything or anyone. Take away a SENSE OF FUTURE and three things happen to you: (1) You make no long-term **plans**. (2) You forge no long-term **relationships** and (3) You take no **risks**. A man without a sense of future cannot plan for it. The apostle Paul said, “*I am ready*.” (Rom 1:15) The word he used is not just the word for being prepared or trained. It is the word which means having a *future mind*. When a generation is robbed of its future, it is also robbed of its ability to commit itself to win in the long run. It makes cynics and casuals of a culture. (Prov. 11:7; 13:12; Jer. 18:12) As Type O`Negative say on their album *Bloody Kisses*: “No Hope = No Fear”.

No one can give you a future like God. As the old song says “I don’t know what the future holds, but I know who holds the future.” Your first commitment must always be to Him. “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a

future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.” (Jer. 29:11-13 NIV) With that commitment comes hope and a future, and with hope through Jesus comes no fear. *“Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord and whose hope the Lord is.”* (Jer. 17:7)

FORGIVENESS

“Forgive us .. *as we forgive those* who trespass against us.” (Matt. 10:12-15)

Ever said that prayer? If so, you better not be bitter against anyone! God has a real problem with bitterness. It totally goes against His whole plan for salvation for us. With forgiveness comes healing and relief. True forgiveness is putting a problem to rest and allowing both parties involved to exist once again in harmony. The whole Christian walk is about being forgiven, forsaking sin, and forgiving others. Without forgiveness, there would be no real relationship with God.

Few young people realize how much freedom from bitterness changes a whole appearance. Few sins in the world damage your looks as badly as unforgiven hurt. If you don't learn how to forgive and refuse to when someone wrongs you, it will mark your face as well as your heart and make you really ugly. *Remember what happened to the pretty Queen who became a wicked witch because she hated Snow White.*

WHAT IF IT WASN'T YOUR FAULT? It rarely is. Jesus was hurt, and He never did anything wrong at all. It is always harder to forgive when you know you are right and the other person is really wrong. The easy temptation is to plan on getting back somehow at the one who hurt you. But it is **not what God says**. (Rom. 12:19) It is OK for God to avenge His servants; it is *not* OK for you to try to do it for yourself. The way you respond when you get hurt is one of the greatest, hardest tests you ever have to pass if you are going to be all the man or woman God wants you to be.

John Bevere believes an OFFENSE against us is a TEST to let you show God you really trust Him. He says tests and trials *locate* us, or determine where we are spiritually. They show the real condition of our heart. How you react under pressure is how the REAL YOU reacts. “Offenses reveal the weakness and breaking points of our life. Often the point where we think we are strong is our place of hidden weakness.

It will stay hidden until a powerful storm blows away the cover”. He says, “God tests His servants with obedience. He deliberately places us in situations where the standards of religion and society would appear to justify our actions. He allows others, especially those close to us, to encourage us to protect ourselves. We may even think we would be noble and protect others by avenging ourselves. But this is not God's way. It is the way of the world's wisdom.” (*The Bait Of Satan*, p.60).

The way you LEAVE any relationship or group is the way you will ENTER the next one. Blow it by failing to forgive and you become an **offended person**. You will judge everything you meet through the shades of unforgiveness. You will not only have to deal with the hurts of any new relationship, but also the hurts of the last one re-lived.

FORGIVENESS BREAKS THE VICIOUS CYCLE. God never says to forgive *as long as* the other person repents, or *as soon as* things get better. When we give our lives to Jesus we **give up the right to retaliate** for ourselves. We let Him fight our battles. We clear out the files of hurt done to us completely. Peter said “Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Seven times?” Jesus said “How about *seventy times seven*?” (Matt. 18:21-22) What did He mean? *Lose count*. Let go and let God. Burn the list of what they did and let them go.

Learn the parable of the unforgiving debtor. (Matt. 18:23-35) **God owes you nothing**. You owe Him everything. You could not pay your debt and He let you off Scot-free. Now don't go round demanding that someone else owes you and *they* had better pay. You even have *no right* to expect better treatment because you've been a good kid and others are just plain rotten. You gave up your rights at the cross when you gave up your life to God. Leave it to Jesus. Forgiveness is never an option.

Jesus said it DIDN'T MATTER HOW BAD it was. **All** sins can be forgiven except blaspheming of the Holy Spirit. Some are afraid they did this, but don't even know what it is! (Matt. 12:32-32; Mark 3:28-29; Luke 12:10) If someone attributes a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit (designed to bring them to Christ) to an unclean spirit, they are in danger of grieving away the only Person who can make Christ real to them. God has no other plan of salvation than the Person of His Son through the drawing of the Holy Spirit. Grieve Him away (Who makes Christ real and known to you) and God has no further answer. (Eph. 4:30) If you feel

“convicted” you might have done this, *you haven’t*. Conviction means God is still dealing with you. It is sure proof that whatever *else* you may have done, grieving away the Holy Spirit isn’t it.

You will be hurt many times in your life. FRIENDS have power to hurt you even more than foes. *Grief and pain are proportional to intimacy*. Those closest to us are sometimes the ones who fail us so deeply. EVERYONE in life gets hurt. Sometimes you are partly to blame and sometimes you are completely innocent. The hurt you might deserve and the one you know you don’t both hurt the same.

You may not be able to do anything to stop what happens to you, but you can ALWAYS do something about how you react to it. Refuse to let it make you hard. Give up your pain and anger to God. Let Him fight for you. God gives us no other choice. Forgive and be forgiven. You have **no right to hold on to wrong**, even if that wrong is caused by another. You cannot help the hurt. God never asks us not to feel bad when something awful or wrong happens to us. But you can help *what you do when you are hurt*. Forgive. Determine to lean wholly on the grace of Jesus. When they hurt Him, He did not retaliate; when he suffered, he did not threaten back. Instead, he, “entrusted Himself to Him who judges justly.” (1 Pet 2:23)

MAKE FORGIVENESS A DAILY THING, LIKE CLOCKWORK, TO FORGIVE WHOEVER, WHENEVER, FOR WHATEVER, NO MATTER WHAT.

HAPPINESS

Finally, the best thing you can do to help your general appearance is to be really, genuinely happy. No matter how plain or how ordinary your face is, a smile and a genuinely happy heart and attitude can transform it into something beautiful. Happiness never comes in a bottle. It is a by-product of holiness; a relaxed continuous trust in the wisdom, truth and Person of God. (Psa. 146:5; Prov. 3:13, 18; 29:18; John 13:17).

Look at the faces of those that turn away from God and truth. Learn the lesson time tells in the lines the years draw when we walk away from His laws. It is clear that sin brings pleasure or no one would sin. Yet the Bible tells us that this pleasure never lasts; it is for a season, then like leaves in the Fall, it all dies and drops to the ground. (Heb. 11:25) The Devil has some laughing young people, but no happy old people.

You can’t fake true happiness. If you want to change your face, you can. What you are like within will eventually change your looks without. (Prov. 15:13; 17:22). Give up your tears, your guilt, your hurts to Jesus. Let Him heal your heart. And you will find something wonderful happens to your face. And it will get better forever. (Neh. 8:10)

THANKFULNESS

What makes a happy heart? What is the single best thing you can do to look your best from day to day? The answer may surprise you. *Develop the habit of being thankful*.

Look around. Are you dead? Does Jesus still love you? Do you still have the ability to serve God? These alone are reason enough to be thankful. But are you really?

Learn to love what you have been given, and also be thankful for what you have been kept from. Many have taken for granted all the many opportunities and blessings God gave them. Thankfulness is the one grace that guards your heart with humility. *A proud person is never grateful*. Why should he be thankful when all he has is what he did for himself? It is a mark of the last days that men will be ungrateful. (2 Tim. 3:1-2)

Thankfulness is something God appreciates, as he has done so much for us. The least we can do is thank Him for what He has done for us! To give thanks for your food like Jesus did is not just a formality; it should be a day-by-day reminder that all we have comes from Him. What do we have that we have not been given? (1 Cor. 4:7)

Gratitude is linked with **contentment** and *lack of contentment* is one of the great sins of the modern world. If we had no one else at all to compare ourselves with besides God, our values would be much different. “Needs” today are largely made-up lies and loaded on you by clever advertising. We have a floating set-point for what is O.K. and the only direction it can go without God is *up without limit*. G. K. Chesterton said “There are two ways to get enough. One is to accumulate more and more. One is to desire less.”

In our “age of envy” covetousness is cool. We take even really dumb advertising lies seriously and give ourselves over to the lust of *better* and *more*. But both lies and envy are deadly serious SIN in Scrip-

ture. (Ex. 20:17; Deut. 5:21) Envy is a corrosive poison that rots and kills (Prov. 14:30; Job 5:2). How else can a kid get murdered for nothing more than having a pair of shoes someone else wants?

The Bible shows us ENVY is even more dangerous than violence (Prov. 27:4) Envy made Joseph's own brothers plot to kill him and sold him into slavery. (Acts 7:9) It was the root sin behind the betrayal of Jesus (Matt 27:18) and the theological religious riots against Paul. (Acts 13:45) A great deal of argument among even religious leaders comes out of simple arrogance and envy. (I Tim. 6:4) How much that goes on today in our world comes from lack of contentment and gratitude to God!

MAKE A HABIT OF THANKING GOD DAILY.

This keeps you closer to God by staying in an atmosphere of prayer, and also reminds you of what He has done for you. It will guard your heart against **darkness, depression and dangerous fantasy**. (Rom. 1:21-22) It will help keep you content and grateful. It will give you power over the idol of "more". Giving thanks recognizes the power and mercy of God in your life.

A thankful heart is the condition of fearless witness and worship. Over thirty times in the Bible we are told to "Give thanks" to the Lord. (Ps. 118:1-29; Ps. 136:1-3) "*In everything give thanks for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.*" (I Thess. 5:18) "*Godliness with contentment is great gain.*" (I Tim. 6:6)

Let this old hymn of gratitude be your song and your prayer:

"Great is Thy faithfulness, oh God my Father
There is no shadow of turning with Thee
Thou changest not, Thy compassions they fail not
As Thou hast been Thou forever will be
Great is Thy Faithfulness, great is Thy faithfulness
Morning by morning new mercies I see
All I have needed, Thy hand hath provided
Great is Thy faithfulness Lord unto me."

Learning To Live In Love

"If you've never seen a relationship that lasts forever, you tend not to believe its possible" (Olivia Newton-John)

You were born in a generation that never learned how to really love. "Who needs a heart when a heart can be broken?" God wanted us to learn to love by seeing both our parents first love each other and then us. You were supposed to learn how to love Him by seeing your dad really love your mom and then your really parents love you.

Then an entire generation of parents dropped the ball. Like our very first parents, they didn't do what He said and did what He said not to. You happened to born in a world that has blown it big-time. The one good thing that has come from the bad things that have happened to marriages, homes and families all over your world is this: You know that when people say that sex is the "real answer" to loneliness and lack of love, they are either plain stupid, not looking at what is going on or they lie. Kids today hate divorce and hate child abuse. When you've been through it yourself, you don't wish it on anyone. Yet how do you stop the vicious cycle? How do break the chain? "*You have two fears*" says Josh McDowall "*The fear that you'll never be loved. The fear that you'll never be able to love.*"

If your parents divorce you can go through all your life wondering what *you* did to make them break up. People telling you it wasn't your fault doesn't change the sense of guilt. Worse than death, divorce goes on and on and on to hurt you through all the hoped-for holidays and high points of your life. *God hates divorce*. (Mal. 2:16) It breaks the bond He built to shelter you from many of the worst feelings a kid can ever experience. If your parents have split up you already know what I mean. The worst pain of your life and your greatest fear is all around the same thing: *losing your family*.

Now, here you make a choice. *Do you want this to happen to you?* Do you want to pass on the same pain to those who will learn from your life?

What's Love Got To Do With It?

When was the last time your media ever told you the truth about sexual sin? No one on TV pays the price of illicit sex. No one in the movies gets herpes or AIDS when they jump into bed with their fun current partner of the moment. Nobody that sings the songs connects their "I want your sex" life-style with the constant pain, crazy rages and suicide. No one on video gets hurt, blown apart at heart or devastated when they casually throw away their future with their virginity. MTV plugs sexual songs, cultivates sexual situations, pushes you into "safe sex". Then it offers the almighty cure: *use a condom*. True lies. "Sex cures loneliness. Sex makes you feel good about yourself. Sex makes you happy. Sex is like a box of chocolates." *Excuse me?*

In the movies everybody is pretty, everybody looks good, everybody has great sex with anybody, anytime with no consequence. *Pretty Women* marry millionaires. (There's no sequel, because the marriage only lasts as long as the credits.) On screen, the famous "sexually active" athlete always gets the girl and he lives happily ever after. In real life he gets AIDS or goes to jail for rape or murder.

Only once in a long while will a man's single casual "*Fatal Attraction*" threaten his future peace of mind, his job, his home, the life of his whole family. Only once in a blue moon will you ever see what a "*Kramer vs. Kramer*" divorce does to a child and to both parents. Only now and then will a man from a people who "*Once Were Warriors*" learn that violence and immorality in a family lead to destruction and death.

Such rare exceptions to the rule of fantasy always hit a nerve. Somewhere deep in our souls we know what God says is true: "*Shun immorality. Every sin a man commits is outside the body. But he that commits sexual wrong sins against his own body.*" (I Cor. 6:18-19) And judgment comes like Jason, when kids out only for a little illicit sex-play run into something wholly unexpected, terrifyingly impassive and invariably fatal. "*The soul that sins it shall die.*" (Ezek. 18:4)

Sleep with someone and *you sleep with everyone they've slept with*. Give yourself to someone sexually and you give away part of your soul that you will never get back.

Sex is never just sex. God says sexual sin is like nothing else in the book. It can hurt you physically,

mentally, emotionally and spiritually. It can screw up your life in ways you would never have dreamed. Blow it here and you blow it big-time. "If we persist in sexual sin with the thought that one day we will get right with God, we should remind ourselves that God may still be there to forgive and restore ...but *we* may not be." *You cannot compensate by sacrifice what you lose through disobedience.* (Ed Cole)

SEVEN REASONS TO SAVE SEX FOR MARRIAGE:

(1) Debt:

Over a million teenage girls get pregnant every year. Free love isn't free. Each baby born to a teen outside of marriage demands more than \$100,000 in government welfare. The cost of teenage child-bearing in the US alone in a single year is over 16.5 BILLION dollars! But the cost is much higher than that. What price do you put on a hurt heart? How much is a mind worth without peace? Who counts the cost of a shattered and shamed self, a lost trust, ruined respect or a broken dream? What does it really cost to bring an unwanted baby into the world, or even worse to take its little life because it interferes with someone's personal pursuit of pleasure? Free sex is never free. Someone always pays. Promiscuity has an awful price. "*You are not your own.*" (I Cor. 6:19-20)

(2) Disease:

Twenty years ago there were two sexually transmitted diseases. Now there are twenty-nine. Every nine months they find a new one. Twelve million people contract a sexual disease every year in the US alone; 33,000 a day. Some, like AIDS, will kill you in just a couple of years. Some will just make you *wish* you were dead. Some will hurt your children.

"If you were the Devil" said one AIDS researcher "You couldn't conceive of a disease more disruptive and disturbing than one sexually transmitted that kills within a short period and for which there is no treatment." There is only one way to be sure you don't get acripler or killer disease through sex but no one wants to say it:

Marry a virgin as a virgin yourself and both of you live with the same love all your life.

That's God's plan. If you take a long look at the ugly alternatives, it looks like He knows what He's talking about. (Prov. 5:15-20)

True sexual freedom doesn't just mean "never having to say you are sorry". It *never* means the ability to sleep with anyone as often as you like. *You can't love someone you fear*. Real sexual freedom means to be able to love without walls, without caution, without cares; to be able to trust the one you love without reservation and without hesitation. All this is possible in marriage - and only in marriage. (Prov. 27:21-27)

(3) Disappointment:

She did it because he said he "loved" her. He pushed her into it because he wanted to prove he was a real man. Her friends said it was all right as long as she really loved him. His friends told him everybody else had and what was he waiting for? Everybody said even if it doesn't work out it won't matter. *And they were utterly wrong.*

Sex is never casual. Sex is God's gift, and nothing God ever gives is casual. Because sex itself is so deep, sexual hurt is never shallow. What you do and what you learn in sex builds a pattern, burns a memory that will last you for life. Short of the healing hand of Jesus, scars from sexual sin *never* go away. Each time you link your body and your soul to someone else, the re-runs start of everything you have done before with anyone else. That is why "try before you buy" is such a stupid idea when it comes to sex. In the trying is the buying. You cannot just learn sex casually from someone and then divorce it from someone else you want to really care about in the future. Every hurt, every disappointment, every rejection carries over to the next time. You can't avoid the re-runs.

(4) Distrust:

What's so wrong with giving in before marriage? What difference does a piece of paper make? If you love someone enough to get engaged, what harm can it be to get in a little early? How else will you know that you are compatible? If you love someone, *why wait?*

"Not all of passion is love and not all of love is passion". (Ed Cole).

One thing is sure; the very best way to hurt a growing friendship is to violate the rules that set up your trust. *Over half of all engagements break up.* Many shatter precisely because the couple thought early sex wouldn't make that much difference. A broken engagement without sexual involvement means some pain and sadness, but rarely loss of friendship and

certainly no sense of sin. The guilt, anger, mutual loss of respect and embarrassment that go with broken engagements triggered by premarital sex is pain few want to live with.

Think of God's love-laws as a shelter within which you will share together the best friendship, the best spiritual life and the best sex possible. He has reserved sex for one place and one place alone; marriage. Only in marriage can you build a home for real trust and total openness to each other. Only in marriage can you create the kind of life-long commitment you give to each other, "in sickness and health, for richer or poorer, till death do us part." Only in marriage can you be totally open and vulnerable to someone else knowing they will never leave you, laugh at you or let you down. *The reward of the trustworthy is more trust.* Living together outside of marriage is a commitment not to make a commitment. Staying on your best behavior you never really take off your mask. You never get real before each other and God.

The fence of no sex before marriage is a key test of trust. Keep your gate locked from all others and from each other until God gives you the key in your public, sacred vows. But jump that fence early, and you violate that trust. You will never be sure from that time on if you can trust either your partner or yourself. You will always live with the secret question: *If we jumped the fence once and broke the rules, who says it won't happen again? If we couldn't trust ourselves to hold back before marriage, how can we ever be sure it can't happen to either of us after marriage?* And that fear hurts love. (1 Jn. 4:18)

(5) Dilution:

Every sexual act is a *giving away of yourself*. Do it with a dozen and you tear away twelve parts of your secret inner self that you will *never* get back. Why do you think so many people with multiple sexual partners feel so empty and disappointed that they move on to someone else? What you are looking for is MORE. God designed sex to be an investment in each others' lives forever. To love someone is to work for their highest good. Sex in loving marriage builds long-term wholeness. Sex in marriage is God's way of making two people "one". (Gen. 4:1) The Bible word for sexual intimacy is to "know" another; to be close and share on the most deep and lasting level a man and woman can experience. (Eph. 5:20-32) You can love and be loved forever! But every sexual act with a stranger strains or shatters the bond you build with

the one you want as the love of your life. The ghosts come back to get you. (Prov. 5:16-20)

(6) Dependency

Sexual sin addicts. Sex, divorced from commitment and care, carries its own in-built emotional black hole. *Addictions form when you try to derive lasting pleasure from something that cannot in its very nature satisfy.* Sex outside of God's loving laws can never fully satisfy. Go the wrong way on this from the start, and you will find that sex can hook you worse than any drug, and with as dangerous consequences as any chemical. (Eph. 5:3-9)

Sexual addiction doesn't have to involve someone else. You can become sexually addicted by masturbation, visual or audio pornography. Sexual sin is not always **fornication** or sex with an unmarried person. (1 Cor. 6:18) Sexual sin can be **adultery** (sex with someone married and not to you) (Matt 5:7-8) **sodomy** or **lesbianism** (sex with someone of the same sex) (Lev. 18:22, Rom 1:24-32) and any form of near-sex that allows anything except actual intercourse. (Rom 13:13-14)

The Bible says: "Don't you know that you are God's house of worship and [that] the Spirit of God is living in you? If anyone ruins His temple, God will waste them; for God's temple is holy, *and you are that temple.*" (1 Cor. 3:16) A temple is a place filled with God, where you walk with care. You don't go casually where you clearly don't belong.

Deep in the core of your life Jesus dwells. Far below the stream of words, ideas, fears, worries and imaginations, *He lives in you.* You can learn to dive down through the clutter of the crowd in the outer court of the surface of your life and commune with the Living God. Learn to pull out from the crowd. Anywhere, at any time, you can go where God is. Learn to wait on Him in the stillness and hear His voice. Let God show you what He sees when He calls sexual wrong *sin*. We only really learn by revelation or results.

Get it straight: those who aren't right or real with God won't run or rule with Him. Scripture says "Don't be fooled: no one who is immoral, an idol-worshiper, adulterer, sissified or a sodomite - will share in His Kingdom. Thieves, drunks, greedy people or those who so hate others they put them down or rip them off won't make it." (1 Cor. 6:9)

Sex is so powerful and fundamental in life that

misused it becomes wholly devastating. Nothing hurts as much as the guilt, pain and addiction of immorality. Only Christ can heal the scars it makes and marks on life.

As with drugs, the worst part of the hook is never physical. What really hurts is what it does to your mind and feelings. The Bible word "*concupiscence*" means to be so turned on you cannot turn off. (1 Thess. 4:3-8) Sex in violation of God's law shuts the door to Heaven and opens the gates of Hell. Get hooked on sex and only God's mercy can get you free and healed. If you don't want to get hooked, stay away from hookers. (Prov. 5:1-23)

(7) Divorce:

You know what you are looking for. You think you know where to look for what you need. *Not to be lonely anymore. Not to feel left out, unwanted, unloved. To belong to someone wonderful. To be safe. To be cared for forever.* Maybe even marriage. But when so many marriages crash and burn all around you, you need to do it right the first time.

Does sex outside of God's laws for love lead to closeness, care and commitment? Quick answer: *No way.* Almost without exception, pre-marital sex ruins friendships and puts the lid on any chance of long-term love. Promises flow freely in the heat of the moment, but in the cold light of the morning after, caresses often turn into contempt. "*If you love me, you'll prove it,*" puts pressure on you to perform or be rejected. The right response to such glandular fever is this: "*If you really love me, you won't ask me to.*" A single night of compromise isn't worth a lifetime of regret. Making love doesn't make him love you.

The test of true love isn't sex but *trust*. "If you love someone, you will always be loyal to them no matter what the cost. You will always believe in them, always expect the best of them and always stand your ground in defending them." (1 Cor. 13:4-7 Living Bible)

Sex outside of marriage invariably leads to some kind of hurt, and hurt over sex sets a pattern for any future partner. *Breaking up is hard to do.* Do it often in dating and you set a precedent for your future. The pattern of dating and discarding carried into marriage is called divorce. So you hate what happens in a divorce? So does God. (Mal. 2:15-16)

Do you want your life to be different?

Listen carefully: You can have a marriage that lasts. You can have a family that doesn't break up. You can stay married to one person and love them for as long as you both live. Learn from those who failed. Then don't do what they did. STAY CLEAN. Save yourself for the special someone God can bring along at the right time. You are worth the wait.

Give yourself to somebody who isn't the right person and you can't get back what you lose. As one guy put it: "It's like giving someone a million dollars and later finding out you gave it to the wrong person. Now they're gone and so is your money. Gone for good. You don't have it anymore. And the person who should have had it will never get it."

There's only one first time. Let it be with the one you'll spend the rest of your life discovering together.

A WORD FOR THE SINGLE

It's O.K. to be single. To choose not to marry because your calling, vocation or life-style points in a different direction, or because you just haven't found someone you want to spend the rest of your life with is not weird. Some of God's greatest are men and women who lived without marriage. It is the choice of many today. Some had many friends, close to them for a lifetime. Yet for one reason or other, they decided to live single.

To be single and to have the grace to live single without sexual involvement is a gift God can give to those few who make the choice to share their deepest and most intimate love with God alone. (Matt. 9:12; Luke 18:29) Christian singles can feel lonely at times, but are never alone. They learn Jesus is the true source of all love and friendship, and free up their time to pay undivided attention to a world without His love. (Isa. 56:3-5) There are places singles can go that are out of range for those with the responsibility of a family. In difficult or dangerous times or situations, a single can do things and dare things that would put someone married in unnecessary risk. At the edge of the end of time, many will choose to remain unmarried for the Kingdom's sake. As Paul the single who became the greatest figure in the early church other than the disciples put it:

"I wish everyone could get along without marrying, just as I do. But we are not all the same. God gives some the gift of a husband or wife, and others he gives the gift of being able to stay happily unmarried. So I say to those who aren't married and to widows

— better to stay unmarried if you can, just as I am. But if you can't control yourselves, go ahead and marry. It is better to marry than to burn with lust." (1 Cor. 7:7-9)

"Nevertheless, each one should retain the place in life that the Lord assigned to him and to which God has called him. This is the rule I lay down in all the churches. ...Keeping God's commands is what counts. Each one should remain in the situation which he was in when God called him." (1 Cor. 7:17-20 - The Living Bible)

HOW TO GET CLEAN

"Flee forbidden longings, those lusts that lure you when you are young. Press instead into what is real and right in character: conviction and faithfulness, unselfish affection. Rest content in Him with those who also call on the Lord's help for a clean heart." (2 Tim 2:22)

You may have already deeply, terribly blown it. You may have failed in this area and hurt God, yourself and only God knows how many other people. But Jesus can do what no one else can do. He can heal you in levels no one else can see or understand. He can make a girl who has given away her sexual purity clean again, inside and out. He can give a guy back his manhood and dignity, and give him power to be a promise-keeper. He can restore what is eaten away and give you courage to face the world with a new set of eyes. But you must do things His way now and not turn back to what hurt you before.

The steps you take to being clean in Jesus' sight are the same basic steps you take to become a real child of God. *Confession. Repentance. Forgiveness. Trust. Cleansing.* See the appendix "*How To Become God's Child*" for these steps.

Three extra things will help when you are being healed by Jesus from sexual sin.

(1) **Expect miracles not magic.** God's forgiveness is real and immediate; true healing may take time. You can be cured at once; recovery from the damage may take time. Don't be discouraged if it does. You may have many battles, but with Him you will win the war. Trust Him. Rest in the real and ongoing grace of Christ. When David sinned sexually in Scripture he hurt more than himself. The things he did had consequences, and forgiveness does not always stop consequences. (2 Sam. 12:9-14)

Sin *hurts*. Do wrong and you almost always affect others (even unborn generations) even though you stop it and even after you repent and get right. Live with it. Expect God to show you what you need to be fully free, no matter what it takes. The big miracle is always this: God loves and **really forgives**. Jesus died, stripped bare and humiliated and cut off from friendships and family for our sake. When He rose from the dead, He rose clothed forever with light and power and majesty to make us friends with God and put us in His own forever family. You are made fully whole. You become not just a forgiven sinner, but a **new creation** in Christ. (2 Cor. 5:17) *“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from **all** unrighteousness.”* (1 John 1:9)

(2) **God is faithful.** Your cleansing is not by your own devotion or your own determination. Power over sin comes from a fresh revelation of Christ at your own point of humble (even desperate) need. Victory over sin never comes by self-effort or self-discipline. You commit your life to Jesus; He commits His life to you.

He can keep you for the long haul. Hang your life and your love on His mercy. And remember: You may have times of struggles, doubts and tears, but Jesus never changes. His love and commitment to you is not based on your final faithfulness to Him, but on His own unchanging character. God references all His actions to His own lovely value. When you finally hit bottom, Jesus is already there. *“If we believe not, yet He is faithful; He cannot deny Himself.”* (2 Tim. 2:13)

(3) **Enlist a friend.** In the time of His greatest test and temptation, Jesus asked His closest disciples to be with Him in the garden to pray. He Himself was God. His Father was God. He had God the Holy Spirit’s power without measure in His life as a man. *What did He need friends for?* Learn the lesson: even Jesus was not ashamed to ask for friends to be near when He most needed to be strong. If you have a close friend who knows you well enough to pray for you when you face a big battle, he is a friend indeed. (Ecc. 4:9-10).

