

=THE CHRISTIAN'S BEHAVIOR=

Lesson 10

Toward Meeting New People

AIM: to train my pupils to be well prepared to meet new people.

POINT OF CONTACT: Proverbs 4:23 says, "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." A good point of contact might be to bring a huge heart to class. Talk about the fact that the way the Christian behaves and talks is determined only by what he is like on the inside. The condition of a good Christian's heart could be illustrated with labels being placed on the heart while discussing point I.

INTRODUCTION: This week's lesson points to the fact that the Christian should possess wisdom and prudence. Proverbs 8:11, "For wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it." There is no excuse for any Christian's lack of wisdom; it is his for the asking. See James 1:5. Proverbs 8:12 tells about wisdom's companion—prudence. Prudence is putting wisdom to action. In the lesson for today let us consider the wisdom and prudence which should be connected with the Christian's meeting of new people.

I. HOW A CHRISTIAN SHOULD PREPARE TO MEET NEW PEOPLE.

1. By having proper attitudes. Proverbs 4:23, "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." Proverbs 23:7a, "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he." See also Proverbs 16:23.
 - 1) As an individual before God, each person is on an equal plane with every other person. See Proverbs 22:2. No Christian is to feel superior or inferior to the possessions or wealth of another; no man is better than any other in the sight of God. A Christian is to look everyone in the eye—he is not to look up at anyone; he is not to look down on anyone.
 - 2) A Christian is not to be proud or arrogant. Romans 12:3 says that every person is "not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think."
 - 3) A Christian is to assume the position of kind esteem toward others. He is to remember that if others appear not to possess good Christian qualities, he himself did not possess these qualities until after he became a Christian. Read Proverbs 1:7, II Corinthians 5:17; Philippians 2:13. He is to think of others as being deserving of honor. See Philippians 2:3.
 - 4) A Christian is to have the attitude of neither judging nor condemning others for anything—dress, actions, language, etc. Proverbs 28:5, 6; Luke 6:37.
2. By having knowledge. Proverbs 18:4.
 - 1) A Christian's first step toward obtaining knowledge is to fear the Lord. Proverbs 1:7.
 - 2) A Christian should have knowledge about many different subjects. (This is preparation for conversation with people from all walks of life.) Varied, up-to-date knowledge is obtained by reading such periodicals as *U.S. News and World Report*, *Reader's Digest*, the daily newspaper, and by viewing the news and current events programs on television. Background material is obtained through being a good student in school. A good knowledge of the Bible is important. Notice Colossians 3:16a. Among those people whom a Christian might meet are some who need to know how to be saved. A Christian should have the plan of salvation well in mind for the opportunity of witnessing.
3. By practicing good conversation. If a Christian at all times practices speaking appropriately, he will speak properly at the time that he is being introduced to someone. Colossians 4:6 teaches us to mix our speech with grace and to season it with salt so that we may know how to answer every man. Grace is "looking with kindness and favour upon others"; salt seasons and does good. See Ecclesiastes 10:12.
4. By having a good appearance.
 - 1) A Christian should be clean and neat wherever he goes. Recall from the first lesson in this series the fact that Hebrews 10:22 instructs us that our bodies are to be washed. This would include clean fingernails, clean and combed hair, clean teeth. Review the teaching about length of hair, also. Ladies and girls are to be femininely dressed; boys and men are to be dressed as gentlemen. All are to be dressed modestly.
 - 2) A Christian has confidence if his appearance is proper. His Christian testimony can be better maintained if his appearance meets God's standards.

II. HOW A CHRISTIAN SHOULD MEET NEW PEOPLE IN PERSON.

1. With proper posture. He should stand and sit without slouching.
 - 1) If an elderly man or a man superior in rank comes into a room, the girls and ladies as well as men will stand. They will remain standing throughout the introduction.
 - 2) If an elderly man or a man superior in rank is already seated when the girls and ladies enter, the man may remain seated while the ladies and the girls are introduced to him.
 - 3) If a lady is being introduced to other men, the men will rise whether the ladies are sitting or standing. Boys will remember to rise to ladies and to men. Girls will rise to ladies.
 - 4) If two ladies are being introduced to each other, and if they are of equal rank and nearly equal age, they may or may not rise to each other. If an older lady or a lady superior is being introduced to another lady, the younger lady or the lady of the inferior rank rises to greet the other.
 - 5) If ever in doubt, respect and courtesy can never be in error.
2. By shaking hands sometimes. (The handshake should be firm and not lingering.)
 - 1) Men usually shake hands with each other.
 - 2) Ladies sometimes shake hands with each other. If one lady extends her hand to another, the other should shake hands.
 - 3) Ladies never shake the hand of a man unless the man first extends his hand. This is contrary to popular etiquette teaching, but it is in keeping with God's regulations concerning the modest behavior of a lady. Read I Timothy 2:9. The popular rule also states that a lady need not remove the glove that she is wearing, but if the removal of the glove can be done quickly and graciously, the handshake is warmer and more personal.
3. With proper conversation.
 - 1) By the person who is doing the introducing: He introduces each of two people separately. He first presents the younger person to the older or the one of less rank to the one of superior rank. He may say, "So-and-so, I would like to have you meet _____." Then he will turn to the other and address him: "_____, this is _____." He will use any titles by which the people are known. For example, Brother, Doctor, Pastor, our president, the secretary of our group, our teacher, etc. are titles which may be used. He will always use Mr. and Mrs. or Miss for adults when introducing children to them. If an adult is introducing non-titled adults to each other, he will give their full names: "Bill, this is Peter Peterson. Pete, this is Bill Jones." In one or two statements he will then tell each something about the other in order to make the introduction complete.
 - 2) By the person who is being introduced: He will "speak up" in a friendly manner. See Proverbs 11:11. He will not push himself upon superiors, however. (Proverbs 25:6, 7) His answer should be audibly spoken: "How do you do, _____ (repeating the person's name)." "I'm happy to meet you" or "I've been wanting to meet you" can also be used with the person's name. The reply should be according to the sincere feelings of the persons being introduced, but always pleasantly stated. The persons being introduced may spend some time together after their introductions. The Christian should not talk too much at the first meeting of someone. (Proverbs 17:27, 28; 29:11) His conversation should be appropriate. (Proverbs 10:32; 15:23) The good Christian will remember that certain kinds of conversation are not at all acceptable, such as gossiping, using the Lord's name lightly, repeating "shady" or dirty jokes, and telling half-truths or lies. The Christian should be interested in the conversation of the other person. If the Christian feels it necessary to make any remarks, these should be on the subject of the discussion. Remembering that he can learn from others, he will be a good listener to facts. If he wants to pay any compliments, he should be sincere and honest. (Proverbs 20:19)
 - 4) Christian girls and ladies should let the boys and men lead in conversation—that is, girls to boys and ladies to men. Young boys should not be bold to ladies; of course, girls will not be bold to men.
4. By the Christian who is introducing himself to a new person. In travel or in church or at school or on the job, a new person might be sitting or working near the Christian. The Christian can never be

wrong in being friendly and kind. He could start out by giving his own name, or, he could start the conversation by discussing a common problem or incident that is taking place at the moment.

III. HOW A CHRISTIAN SHOULD MEET NEW PEOPLE OVER THE TELEPHONE. See Proverbs 16:24; Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 4:6. The telephone is a marvelous invention, designed for business and pleasure of parties who are not in each other's presence. The telephone, however, has been much misused. Christians ought to meet people over the telephone with as much care as they would in person.

1. With proper answering. To pick up a receiver and say, "Hello," is acceptable. It is better, however, if the person picking up the receiver identifies the station that is answering. In business it is normal procedure for the operator or the receptionist to answer: "Good morning" or "Good afternoon" and then to give the name of the company. In the home a person could answer, "Hello, Smiths," or "Good morning, this is _____ speaking."
2. With clear speaking. Speak right into the receiver, holding it opposite the mouth and not against it.
3. With friendly tones. One need not be "sugary," but one can be as hospitable over the phone as he would be at the door. Even though the day might be busy and filled with many problems, the caller rates courtesy.
4. Without banging the receiver. When ending the telephone conversation, the Christian should be conscious that he can be offensive with the hard hanging up of the receiver.
5. With knowledge of handling nuisance calls. The criminal-type calls are on the decrease since new electronic devices have been invented which can trace criminal calls whether the caller hangs up or not. The Christian should know that he is to call his telephone company and his police station to report any kind of nuisance calls. All of the states now have laws against obscene, threatening or interfering calls, with penalties ranging up to \$1,000 and ten years in jail. Congress passed a bill making such calls a federal crime. The Christian should never be guilty of making such calls. Children should be taught not to betray identity nor any facts of the household to anyone whom they do not know. Nuisance calls of young people should be handled firmly.

IV. HOW A CHRISTIAN SHOULD MEET PEOPLE AT THE DOOR. Read Colossians 4:6.

1. The outside door should be kept locked at all times. This is for self-protection. FBI reports indicate that the crime rate has been increasing greatly. This behooves Christians to be cautious of strangers who come to the door.
2. Christians should be courteous at their door. God's wisdom will enable them to know any dangers that might be involved.

CONCLUSION: Even in the area of meeting new people, Christians should remember that their behaviour is to coincide with Bible teaching. They never know when they will meet someone new, so they should be prepared for this meeting at any time.