

=THE CHRISTIAN LIFE=

Lesson 17

The Christian's Behavior Toward the Opposite Sex

AIM: to teach my class that God has set a code of behavior for Christians toward the opposite sex, and what that code is.

POINT OF CONTACT: Have models or pictures of the following objects: a bar of soap, a car, a chair, a hanger, and a door. Display these objects and tell your class that, strangely enough, our lesson for today centers around these five objects.

INTRODUCTION: God intended from the beginning that men be different from ladies, and that boys be different from girls. God created man, and then He made woman from man. In thought patterns and attitudes as well as in physical construction, God intended that men and women, boys and girls have different traits from each other. For this reason Christian boys and men are to behave as Christian boys and men; Christian girls and ladies are to behave as Christian girls and ladies. Boys and girls associate with each other just as men and ladies work and fellowship together.

Children and young people, especially, should have ideals to whom they can look and whom they can imitate. Boys ought to look up to the pastor, their Christian dads, and their Sunday school teachers. Girls ought to look up to their Christian mothers and their Sunday school teachers. Jeremiah 13:23 says: "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil." If a certain pattern of behavior for good is not set when a person is young, it may be too late to change character traits when a person gets older. Thoughts and behavior toward the opposite sex need to be set or changed in everyone's life according to God's code of behavior. Christian girls, boys, men, and women should display the best associations with each other in keeping with a good Christian testimony.

- I. THEIR PERSONAL APPEARANCE SHOULD BE PROPER BEFORE EACH OTHER. Read Deuteronomy 22:5. More than we realize, the way that we are dressed determines the manner with which other people treat us. Clothing could make the difference between a boy treating a girl in the right or wrong way, or a girl acting toward a boy properly or improperly.
  1. Girls are to wear dresses. Slacks, regardless of their name, are masculine garments. It is an abomination unto the Lord for girls to be dressed as boys and for ladies to be dressed as men.
    - 1) The dress of girls and ladies is to be modest, I Timothy 2:9. The word "modest" means "seemly guise." Christian ladies' and girls' costume or guise is to be the kind of dress that would be conventionally proper for a Christian to wear. "Seemly" also indicates "good-looking" and "handsome dress."
    - 2) A wicked girl or woman can be known by her style of dress. The harlot in the Bible days was distinguished by the slit in her dress—the slit revealed the thigh of her leg. The dress of Christian ladies and girls should be designed so that it would not cause unholy thoughts in the minds of men who see them. Dresses should not be so short as to reveal the thigh. Dresses should be cut modestly around the neck and shoulders.
    - 3) The attire of girls and ladies is to be appropriate to the occasion. A Christian lady should not look out of place, thus drawing attention to herself. She should not wear clothing which is too fancy for the occasion nor too sporty. Plain skirts and tailored blouses, for example, should not be worn to a fancy restaurant for an evening meal. A fancy dress which was purchased for the Sweetheart Banquet would not be worn to a basketball game, nor for a day in school.
  2. Boys are to be dressed as boys. It is an abomination to the Lord for boys to be dressed as girls. (Place emphasis upon the word "dressed" for boys, also. Their clothing is to cover them and to fit correctly.)
    - 1) Clothes should not be chosen to fit the "fad" of the day. Christians are in the world, but they are not to be of the world. How can a Christian shine as a light in the world when the world leads the Christian to follow its ways?
    - 2) Clothes should be chosen to fit the occasion. For church, for going out to eat, or for going to a special occasion, a shirt and tie are to be worn with dress trousers and coat or sweater. Shoes are always to be shined. Socks should always be worn.

3. Both sexes are to be clean physically and mentally.
  - 1) Whatever has to be done daily to keep clean, should be done. It is recommended that bathing daily and washing face and hands several times a day are good standards for Christian cleanliness. Deodorant should be used. Hebrews 10:22 admonishes that Christians are to draw close to God with not only clean consciences, but also with washed bodies. Good grooming also includes clean hair and teeth; pressed, clean clothing; and shined shoes. If a garment needs mending or repair of any kind, these should be cared for before the next wearing.
  - 2) Whatever bad, secret thoughts are hidden within a Christian, will no doubt be revealed when associating with the opposite sex. These secret thoughts will be revealed sooner or later unless the Christian flees from them and asks the Lord for forgiveness from them. The Psalmist asked for forgiveness and deliverance from secret thoughts and sins, Psalm 19:11-14. Just as soap is a cleansing agent for the body, so the Bible is the cleansing agent for the mind, Psalm 119:9, 11. Proverbs 16:3 also teaches us that by doing God's will we will think right. Remembering Bible verses that have been hidden in the heart is the deterrent to sin whenever temptation does come.
4. The hair style of both sexes is dictated by God. Boys are not to wear long hair, and girls are not to wear hair cut masculinely short, I Corinthians 11:6-15.
5. The posture of both sexes is to be good. Both sexes should practice good posture. This applies when standing, sitting or walking. Practice so that nothing about your bearing is immodest or out of proper feminine or masculine character, as the case may be.

II. THEIR BEHAVIOR WITH EACH OTHER IS TO APPEAR TO BE RIGHT AS WELL AS TO BE RIGHT. Every Christian, male or female, is to "abstain from all appearance of evil," I Thessalonians 5:22. Be afraid to do wrong, Proverbs 28:14. Be afraid that you might do wrong; be self-disciplined in all things, Proverbs 25:28. Have a good conscience, I Peter 3:16.

1. On dates, Christians should never sit in parked cars together. Develop a strong hatred for sin and wrongdoing, Psalm 97:10. Do not stray from the straight path of God's ways, Proverbs 4:26, 27.
2. Married Christians, be careful when you are around someone of the opposite sex who is not your wife or husband. Be careful not to be alone together in cars and restaurants. Do not walk down the street with a member of the opposite sex to whom you are not married.
3. Christians, in associations with members of the opposite sex, be careful about your speech and actions with each other. A good rule to follow is, "Keep your hands to yourself." The Bible says, "Let the words of my mouth...be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD...," Psalm 19:14.

III. THEIR BEHAVIOR TOWARD EACH OTHER SHOULD BE IN KEEPING WITH GOD'S INTENDED CHARACTERISTICS FOR THEM.

1. Boys and men, give honor to girls and ladies as being the weaker vessels. Peter wrote this when he was telling husbands how they ought to act toward their wives, I Peter 3:7. Ephesians 5:25-31 describes the deep love that Christian husbands should have for their wives. Boys and young men are to develop attitudes of protectiveness and concern for girls and ladies.
  - 1) Boys and men open building doors for girls and ladies to enter ahead of them.
  - 2) Boys and men open car doors for girls and ladies to enter into the side which is opposite the driver's side.
  - 3) Boys and men are ready to help carry heavy packages for girls and ladies.
  - 4) Boys and men, in making decisions, remember that girls and ladies can help decide because they "think" with their hearts.
  - 5) Boys and men, remember that you are the leaders. Therefore, you need to take responsibility and be capable of making decisions.
  - 6) Young men, you are the aggressor in choosing young ladies to accompany you on dates. (Do not date anyone whom you would not marry, Proverbs 18:22.) Do not wait until the last minute to ask anyone for a date. Date only Christians. Proverbs 10:16 teaches us that everything that an unsaved person does is wrong because he or she is not led by the Lord.

- 7) Young men, when going on a date, go to the door of the girl's house. Be prepared to have a short conversation with her parents. Ask the girl's parents what time the girl should be home. Be sure that the parents understand all the details in connection with the occasion—the place where you are going, what activities will take place there, etc.
- 8) Young men, when you are in the company of your mothers, sisters, and girl friends, help them in whatever way that you can. Help them put on their coats, for instance. Hold the coat straight so that they can gracefully find the sleeves.
- 9) Young men, when on a date, you pay the expenses. If you go some place to eat, the girl will wait for you to suggest a dish so that she can learn what you can afford to spend. Be sure to plan well enough so that you can afford to pay whatever expenses you might incur.
2. Girls and ladies, look to boys and men for leadership. In I Timothy 2:9 and 11 we read that ladies are to learn in silence with all subjection. God said that Eve's desire would be to her husband.
  - 1) Girls and ladies, when approaching a door in the presence of males, give them the opportunity to open the door for you. Step aside so they can reach the knob and open the door without bumping you. Say, "Thank you."
  - 2) Girls and ladies, allow the gentlemen to open the car doors for you. (Practice getting into and out of the car in a ladylike fashion.) Say, "Thank you," for the help given you.
  - 3) Girls and ladies, graciously accept help with packages. Say, "Thank you."
  - 4) Girls and ladies, remember that males by nature have more practical wisdom than you have. Do not let your heart-thinking become unreasonable; do not become contentious, Proverbs 27:15.
  - 5) Girls and ladies, remember that males are by civil law and by God's law held responsible for caring for their own and for any business transactions made in their home. Wives are to be subject unto their own husbands in everything, according to Ephesians 5:24. Girls and ladies, become accustomed to being answerable for everything you do and every dime you spend. Esther gained favor because she did not ask for more than was offered to her, Esther 2:15. Girls, never practice extravagance, Proverbs 19:14.