

=THE CHRISTIAN'S BEHAVIOR=

Lesson 1

Introductory Lesson

AIM: to teach my pupils that each of us constantly needs to groom his heart and body in accordance to principles set down in the Word of God.

POINT OF CONTACT: Discuss briefly with your class: What are the schedules of your days? Do you spend any time looking at yourselves? The looking should include inward as well as outward examination. An unknown author has penned:

“By all means use some time to be alone,  
Look at thyself, see what thy soul doth wear.  
Dare to look in thy closet, for ‘tis thine own,  
And tumble up and down what thou findest there.  
Look at thy actions—question motive,  
Check thy mistakes and find the cause.”

You could have a “magic mirror.” It could be made of poster paper, shaped like a hand mirror with a handle. Within the frame divide the “mirror” into sections and have written in the sections:

Am I clean on the inside?  
Am I clean on the outside?  
Am I dressed properly?  
Do I have a pleasing appearance?

Over the “mirror” put pieces of aluminum foil that are cut to fit the sections. As each point of the lesson is discussed, uncover the appropriate section of the “mirror.”

INTRODUCTION: We are starting today a series of character-training lessons. Let’s begin at the most obvious place—with ourselves as individuals. From the time that a person is just a small child he is continuously making decisions about himself: How should I dress? How should I wear my hair? How should I act? Good character is evidenced when the right decisions are made and the right actions are displayed as a result of asking these questions. What is good character? Brother Hyles has said: “Character is when right becomes a habit.”

What are the origins of the standards of behavior? There are two sources: First, uninhibited behavior comes from the Devil. Second, any limitations that are placed upon man’s natural behavior and thinking are either directly or indirectly a result of the presence and power of God in the world. How does good character come to people? How can good and right be done?

I. LOOK FOR TRAINING—WHERE SHALL WE GO FOR OUR AUTHORITY?

1. To the Word of God—the Bible. II Timothy 3:16, 17.
  - 1) Every word of the Scriptures was given by God to men who wrote it down. II Peter 1:20, 21; Matthew 5:18.
  - 2) All of the Bible is profitable for our instruction in right living. Reading the Bible will cause us to see wherein we have done wrong; it will also teach us how to do right. “The Bible is the world’s outstanding book on manners. Within its incomparable contents are to be found not only the rules of life, but also the source of power with which to obey them.”
2. To our conscience. Romans 2:14, 15. What is conscience? It is “the sense or obligation to do right or be good.” Conscience is something within a person that tells him whether he is doing right or wrong. The knowledge of right or wrong is written on the heart of even the person who has not received the law of God.

II. LOOK AT THE MIRROR—WHAT IS THE CHARACTER OF EACH ONE OF US?

1. We are naturally no good. Romans 3:10-19, 23. Apart from the power of God and the influence of godly people, no one can have and maintain good character.
2. We can become justified. If we have trusted Jesus as our Saviour from sin and its power over us, we have been washed from natural and past sins. Romans 3:24-26. We can be cleansed from present sins by confessing them to God. I John 1:9. We receive justification and cleansing as gifts of our salvation. Jesus warns us, however, to keep our hearts, thoughts, and motives right, because our character is determined by the condition of our hearts. Proverbs 23:7; Matthew 15:18-20. It is not natural or easy to have good character. We have to work for it. Romans 7:22-25.

III. LOOK INTO THE AUTHORITATIVE WORD OF GOD—HOW DO WE COMPARE? We should be in body as well as in spirit that which would glorify God. I Corinthians 6:19, 20.

1. We should be physically clean. Hebrews 10:22 instructs us that our bodies should be washed with pure water. Filth is a mark of the person who has turned away from God. Psalm 14:3.
  - 1) At least one daily bath or shower is necessary to maintain clean bodies. Fatigue, food wastes, and heat cause poisons to come through the pores onto the skin; we become dirty on the outside just from normal body functions. Added to this dirt is, of course, the dirt that we accumulate from the normal activities of everyday life. Application of deodorant is also necessary.
  - 2) Many times a day the hands need to be washed. There are germs and dirt in the air and on objects. These germs could cause our bodies to become sick and also to cause others to become ill. One of the instructions which a doctor gives when there is illness in the family is: Wash your hands often.
  - 3) Give attention to the fingernails. It is a known fact that dirt harbors germs. Dirty fingernails could ruin the testimony of a person who is witnessing to one who cannot concentrate upon the presentation of the plan of salvation because of being repelled by the dirty fingernails of the soul winner. (This could be said about any phase of cleanliness or good appearance where the soul winner is lacking.)
  - 4) The face should be cleansed more than once a day. People who have skin problems, especially, are taught by doctors that it is important to keep their skin clean.
  - 5) The teeth should be cleaned at least twice a day. Food left between teeth decays. This decay contains germs that eat at the teeth and form cavities. Thought should always be given to having a mouth that does not smell bad and offend other people.
  - 6) A clean handkerchief or tissues should be carried always. This is an important item to aid in personal cleanliness.
2. We should be properly clothed. The story of the man from whom Jesus cast many devils ends with the man being "...clothed, and in his right mind." Read Mark 5:15.
  - 1) Our clothing should adequately and properly cover our bodies. Certain styles of clothing definitely mark the wicked person. Proverbs 7:10 tells us that a harlot is recognizable by her clothing. The style that marked her as such was that which revealed her thigh. Girls and women should know that bad style and fit of clothing cause men to have evil thoughts toward them. By the same token, boys and men should wear properly-fitting clothing.
  - 2) Our clothing should be appropriate to the person. Girls and women should wear their own kind of clothing, and boys and men should wear men and boys' clothing. The Bible definitely commands this. See Deuteronomy 22:5. Romans 1:26-32 shows us what can happen as a result of some women wanting to act and dress like men and some men wanting to dress and act like women. Terrible sex acts as well as aggressive women and sissy men are resulting. Someone has said, "Clothes do not make the man, but they influence his manners."
  - 3) Our clothing should be appropriate to the occasion. Extra fancy dress is no more appropriate in school or at a football game than a plaid shirt is at a formal dinner. Our clothing certainly need not be expensive; it should fit well, be neat and clean and appropriate to the occasion.
3. Our hair should be worn properly. In I Corinthians 11:6-15 we find definite teaching to men and women regarding their hair style. We are taught that a lady's hair should be worn long and that it is a shame for a man to have long hair. Length is a relative determination, but even (as the Scripture

says here) the conscience can recognize the feminine hair style of a man and the masculine hairdo of a woman. Hair should always be neat and combed.

Conclusion: When we look at our outward appearance, does it match what we as Christians ought to be on the inside? Do our cleanliness, our style of dress and hair bear out the testimony which we give concerning the presence of Christ in our lives? We need to give consideration to these characteristics constantly. Do we have good character concerning appearance and being physically clean?