

Reform

Habitat

Clothing

Cleanliness

Food

Thoughts

Steward-
ship

Language

Work

Time
management

Exercise

Partnership

Contact
with others



The Principles of Reform

Part 2

An Example from the New Testament - The Lord's Supper

In the New Testament, as well as in the Old, God used the school of practical life in order to impart valuable lessons to His people. One example is the Lord's Supper, of which Paul writes: "For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes." *1Corinthians* 11:26.

The Lord's supper consists of the preparatory service and the following communal meal. In the preparatory service the believers wash each other's feet as Jesus washed the disciple's feet (see *John* 13:15). As they do so, they search their own hearts (see *1Corinthians* 11:28). In this simple act in the hygiene class, they express their respect for one another and also for God, whom we can truly serve only when we are "washed." The external washing simply points us to the cleansing of heart, which we receive through the ministry of Christ and His church. As such it is a practical exercise in humility and it also adds value to the daily school of cleanliness.

Both external and internal cleanliness has an effect on our sense of dignity. In the classroom of external cleanliness we learn the care and perseverance which we need in order to maintain the purity of the inner person. In order for our senses and thoughts to be acceptable to God they have to be repeatedly "washed." For this purpose we need the word of God (the water) and the service of our fellows. If we keep to ourselves, we are limited by our own viewpoint, but when we gather together with others we gain a broader perspective, our interest in others is awakened, and our pride is humbled.

The supper which follows the footwashing consists of a piece of unleavened bread and the unfermented juice of the vine. The believers eat and drink these together to commemorate the broken body and spilt blood of Christ.

"Our Lord has said, 'Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you. . . . For My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed.' *John* 6:53-55. This is true of our physical nature. To the death of Christ we owe even this earthly life. The bread we

eat is the purchase of His broken body. The water we drink is bought by His spilled blood. Never one, saint or sinner, eats his daily food, but he is nourished by the body and the blood of Christ. The cross of Calvary is stamped on every loaf. It is reflected in every water spring. All this Christ has taught in appointing the emblems of His great sacrifice. The light shining from that Communion service in the upper chamber makes sacred the provisions for our daily life. The family board becomes as the table of the Lord, and every meal a sacrament." *The Desire of Ages*, 660.3.

The simple bread and grape juice teach us that it is only through the sacrifice of Jesus that we can eat and drink every day. This knowledge imparts a mental attitude that we need for the church service just as much as for the family board. We really need to learn this spirit and have it deeply embedded in our lives. Every day we sit at the table and live by the merits of the death of Christ. Are we aware that our eating and drinking habits are reflecting either the image of Christ or the image of the enemy of souls?

There is hardly a better place where we can manifest the spirit of God than at the dining room table. Thankfulness, contentment, joyfulness, patience, care and consideration for others, self-forgetfulness, willingness to serve, self-control, and temperance can all be learned in this school of life. Human beings, from infancy, can practice all these qualities if we accept the classroom of diet as an instrument which our divine Teacher uses to educate and form us. A person who, through the flesh and blood of Christ, has learned to be content will also be able to withstand the difficulties and trials of life.



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The Temptation

Jesus' temptation in the wilderness was an extremely difficult test. As a child and youth He had learned to trust God and feel grateful in every situation. Just think of the circumstances before and after His birth. Mary, His first teacher, did not impart anxiety or unrest to her unborn baby. Although she had reason enough to be concerned, for example when Joseph was unable to find more than a stable for her, or when they had to flee to Egypt, her faith held firmly and restfully in God's care.

When, at the age of thirty, Jesus finally heard the call to public ministry, He faithfully obeyed, just as He had learned in His school of life. After His baptism, He was led into the wilderness by the Holy Spirit so that He could prepare Himself for His coming ministry. But this time of prayer was connected with a test. The devil was permitted to tempt Him there, as we read in *Matthew* 4:1–11 and *Luke* 4:1–13.

To fast for forty days was certainly a trial in itself, but then Jesus was further challenged to use His own initiative to make Himself something to eat. The classroom of human needs took Jesus to His very limits. When Jesus was physically weak and mentally exhausted the tempter taunted Him with concealed mockery: "Help yourself! If you are the Son of God, then prove it, by using your own strength to create what you need to live!"

Although brought to the verge of death by hunger, Jesus rejected this suggestion. He would never distrust His Father's care, nor would He ever leave His role as a dependent Son. Jesus learned obedience through suffering (see *Hebrews* 5:8). In the classroom of food He showed that man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God (see *Matthew* 4:4). Jesus proved that submission to the will and word of God is more important than physical life.

"In the presence of the witnessing universe, He testified that it is a less calamity to suffer whatever may befall than to depart in any manner from

"With Christ, as with the holy pair in Eden, appetite was the ground of the first great temptation. Just where the ruin began, the work of our redemption must begin. As by the indulgence of appetite Adam fell, so by the denial of appetite Christ must overcome."

The Desire of Ages, 117.3.

the will of God." *The Desire of Ages*, 121.1.

"In order to impress upon man his obligations to obey the law of God, Christ began His work of redemption by reforming the physical habits of man. The declension in virtue and the degeneracy of the race are chiefly attributable to the indulgence of perverted appetite." *Testimonies for the Church* 3:486.2.

For us today, the classroom of diet is an important beginning for our character formation and our salvation. God instructed not only Jesus through these simple means, but also us. In this school we are to learn that all things have their special time and that everything must rest on two or three witnesses. In regard to food, we cannot rely on our subjective impressions alone. The word of God provides the most important witness, followed by the testimony or counsel of people of experience who bear their responsibility faithfully. Building on these witnesses, our own body shows us what is good for us. We are not to be led by our feelings and appetites.

This classroom helps teach us the important truth that we are not alone in this world. We are dependent on others, and others are dependent on us. This principle holds true even in our relationship to God. It is easy to understand that we, as needy human beings, are dependent on God. But God has also made Himself dependent on us to a certain extent, in that He needs our cooperation.

"In God's great plan for the redemption of a lost race, He has placed Himself under the necessity of using human agencies as His helping hand. He must have a helping hand, in order to reach humanity. He must have the cooperation of those who will be active, quick to see opportunities, quick to discern what must be done for their fellow men."

Selected Messages 1:99.5.

For further study:

Read the description of Jesus' first temptation in *The Desire of Ages*, 114.1 ff.

From Infancy

As we have already seen in the example of Jesus, character training through the school of life begins in the womb. The faith or unbelief of the mother, as well as all her feelings and personality, leave their stamp on the child even before it is born. When this passive phase ends with the birth of the baby, the active school begins.

Whereas we are fed passively in the womb, feeding becomes the first active classroom in the life of the infant. The very first efforts, struggles, privation, order, and well-being of an infant are all connected with food and cleanliness. Sometimes we even wonder why such a little creature has to struggle so much.

But God has so created humanity that we have to eat, and that we have to work in order to eat. God could have created us differently. He could, for example, have made us so that we could take in our food with the air we breathe. So why has God given us the school of food, which begins with the very first day we are born? Because He wants to educate us! He wants to teach us things that we could not learn in any other way. No explanation, however extensive, could replace the practical learning that we experience through our own bodies. We learn most effectively by experiencing things ourselves.

When the mother faithfully imparts God's purpose, the child can learn many valuable principles in the classroom of food. She is the source of food for the child, just as God is the Source of life for us. She is the one who can correctly evaluate the needs of the child and solve any problems that may arise. In a similar way, only God knows our real needs and can successfully solve all our problems. If the mother takes on the guidance of the child following divine principles, then the little one will experience peace and joy. In this way it learns to trust its heavenly Father as well as to find rest and security in His wisdom and power. In other words, the mother imparts the first and most impressive lessons of Sabbath Rest to the growing child.

"So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you ..."

Deuteronomy 8:3.

Unfortunately, what often happens is that the baby, through its crying, actually leads the mother. The little one is regularly bothered with discontent or discomfort. But instead of distinguishing its real needs from the imaginary needs, the mother continually tries to satisfy the child's feelings. But such a process only makes things worse. The little one feels, quite correctly, that its mother is unable to recognize and resolve the real problem, and sees no other alternative but to take matters into its own hands. However, this is completely beyond its abilities and therefore only increases its frustration. The result is still more unrestrained, inconsolable crying.

Worse still, the infant realizes that it can get its own way if only it cries for long enough. And later the child can strengthen its demands by stamping its feet, defiance, and sulking. As well as this it also learns that the food it is immediately given in reaction to its crying, brings a certain kind of satisfaction, which lays the foundation for innumerable problems. The child is soon convinced that all problems can be solved by satisfying the appetite, which is actually the beginning of many different kinds of addiction.

Little children cannot make intelligent decisions, as they know only their feelings, which quickly change. There is nothing wrong in this, for God made us in such a way that our understanding develops with time. The mother needs to cooperate with these laws in the right way, and in the beginning she will make the decisions for her child. She has to teach it, in a practical way, to submit its feelings to reason, and also how to make intelligent decisions. To do so she uses the natural trust that the child has, as well as the school of food.

Trust is engendered by obedience, while disobedience destroys trust. The mother decides when, how often, and how much, the child will eat or drink. She is guided in so doing by following God's spiritual and natural laws. She encourages her child to submit by submitting herself to God. And she requires the same obedience from the child that she herself ren-



The mother's obedience to the law of God strengthens her child's trust in her. Unbelief will only lead to the destruction of the child's trust.

ders to God. As a result, her actions and her words have authority. What she requires of her child she does herself, while remaining true to her role of mother. She thus accompanies her child until it reaches adulthood and has to make its own decisions in life.

To be submissive is a particular attitude to life. It is only when we ourselves have learnt to submit that we can pass it on to others. And it is only when we have the spirit of submission that we can be a part of God's kingdom. "Through humility and self-surrender we may become heirs with Him." *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, 17.2. "Self-surrender is the substance of the teachings of Christ. Often it is presented and enjoined in language that seems authoritative, because there is no other way to save man than to cut away those things which, if entertained, will demoralize the whole being. *The Desire of Ages*, 523.3.

The Marriage at Cana

Right at the beginning of His public ministry, Jesus worked a miracle in the area of eating and drinking. He had been strengthened by the angels after the temptation in the wilderness. Then He went back to the Jordan, where John was preaching, and chose the first of His disciples. "From the Jordan, Jesus had returned to Galilee. There was to be a marriage at Cana, a little town not far from Nazareth; the parties were relatives of Joseph and Mary; and Jesus, knowing of this family gathering, went to Cana, and with His disciples was invited to the feast." *The Desire of Ages*, 144.2.



When the grape juice that had been provided ran out before the feast was over, the hosts were in danger of falling into disgrace. But just at that moment, Jesus asked the servants to fill the stone jars with water. Then He said to them, "Draw some out now, and take it to the master of the feast." *John* 2:8. When the master tasted it, he found it to be much better than the original juice and could not restrain his amazement. But when the attention of the people was drawn to Jesus, He had disappeared.

We all know the story of the marriage at Cana, as reported in *John 2*. At this marriage, Jesus' "power was put forth to add to the joy of a wedding feast. Thus He showed His sympathy with men, and His desire to minister to their happiness. In the wilderness of temptation He Himself had drunk the cup of woe. He came forth to give to men the cup of blessing, by His benediction to hallow the relations of human life." *The Desire of Ages*, 144.1.

When Jesus turned the water into wine He demonstrated various principles from the kingdom of God. (For a more detailed study read chapter 15 from *The Desire of Ages*.)

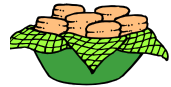
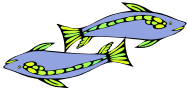
- God honors the trust of His children (in this case Mary) and strengthens their faith (in this case the disciples), in the physical and the spiritual sphere.
- He is happy when people are joyful, and does everything to achieve this.
- He does not recognize legalism, but He does help wherever there is a real need.
- His gifts renew life and enable the recipient to receive even more.

Jesus used the marriage feast to demonstrate his dedication to humanity,

- because He loves us and wants to take us home as His bride,
- because He wanted to give a symbol of His death - Jesus' baptism is represented by water, but His death on the cross is represented by wine, which is better and higher than anything that we can do,
- because He wanted to give His disciples the opportunity to tell others about their relationship to Him. Even though they did not yet fully understand Jesus' ways, they could still testify to how Jesus had impressed them.

How different our lives would be if we would recognize the Giver whenever we eat and in all the other areas of our lives, if we would use His gifts conscientiously and with appreciation, and give Him all the honor He is due! Then nothing could stand in the way of our peace and joy.

The Feeding of the Five Thousand



Another important event where Jesus worked a miracle in connection with food was the feeding of the five thousand. (See *John 6*.) "You give them something to eat!" Jesus commanded His disciples. But how could they do that? They clung to Jesus in their helplessness and He showed them the way.

We have all received specific gifts from God, just as the young boy had five loaves and two fish. When he consecrates them to the Lord, without considering his own needs, then Jesus can multiply these gifts so that they will be a blessing to others. When we learn to do our part in co-working faithfully with God, without becoming independent, then God can pour out rivers of blessing through us.

It was important that Jesus did not serve the people special delicacies, but that He instead multiplied the simple food that provided their daily sustenance. In this way the people were not distracted from what Jesus really wanted to communicate. "The simple food passed round by the hands of the disciples contained a whole treasure of lessons. It was humble fare that had been provided; the fishes and barley loaves were the daily food of the fisher folk about the Sea of Galilee. Christ could have spread before the people a rich repast, but food prepared merely for the gratification of appetite would have conveyed no lesson for their good." *The Desire of Ages*, 366.1.

It was also important that the people experienced the real value of the meal. "And never did people enjoy the luxurious feasts prepared for the gratification of perverted taste as this people enjoyed the rest and the simple food which Christ provided so far from human habitations." *The Desire of Ages*, 366.1. What was it that made this meal so valuable? The people learned to be content with what God provides. In so doing they

"He who taught the people the way to secure peace and happiness was just as thoughtful of their temporal necessities as of their spiritual need."
The Desire of Ages, 365.4.

found rest.

God not only wants to give us this rest in regard to diet, but also in all aspects of life. He wants to be our Guide through life. But before God can guide us, we have to entrust ourselves to His care and faithfully fulfill our duty, without taking over His responsibility. It is exactly this co-working that we find so difficult! We often swing between two extremes - either we do nothing, or we try to manage everything by ourselves. We often want to do the things that God has promised to do, but neglect those things that are our responsibility.

But God has clearly defined our position in this co-working, and it is only when we faithfully fill our place that the blessings can freely flow. "In feeding the five thousand, Jesus lifts the veil from the world of nature, and reveals the power that is constantly exercised for our good. In the production of earth's harvests God is working a miracle every day. Through natural agencies the same work is accomplished that was wrought in the feeding of the multitude." *The Desire of Ages*, 367.3.

The miracle of the feeding of the five thousand was designed to draw the people's attention to the fact that God's working is of primary importance. By a single word God could easily do humanity's part, but instead He has called us to be co-workers with Him. "Men are called upon to cooperate with God in the care of the grain and the preparation of the loaf, and because of this they lose sight of the divine agency. They do not give God the glory due unto His holy name. The working of His power is ascribed to natural causes or to human instrumentality. Man is glorified in place of God, and His gracious gifts are perverted to selfish uses, and made a curse instead of a blessing." *The Desire of Ages*, 367.3.

The privilege we have of cooperating with God is the very thing that makes us proud and independent. That is hard to understand, but nonetheless true. We can see illustrations of it every day as, for example, in a self-willed child. The mother could do the work herself more quickly and efficiently if she were to do it alone. But she rejects the simpler and faster method in favor of giving her child the chance to learn. She wants to give her child the opportunity of co-working, so that it will be occupied productively and develop its abilities. She gives the child a place in her work, under her leadership. But the child does not want to be led. It imagines it knows everything better than the mother, and only wants to do the work that it likes, and in the way that it thinks best. Before long, the child

claims not to need the mother any more. "I can do this by myself, go away!" it says, disrespectfully. Does not this self-exaltation lead to a loss of joy and success right from the beginning? As far as our relationship to God is concerned, this is certainly the case. What He intended to be a blessing to us becomes a curse, when we use it selfishly.

Jesus invited the Jews to eat with Him for a number of reasons - to teach them to appreciate God's power; to show them the uselessness of their own works; to lead them in paths of orderliness and to teach them to gratefully cooperate with God; and in order for them to experience the reward of inner contentment. Through this meal Jesus revealed how dependent on God they were. And we can learn the same lesson at our own tables, when our meals are conscientiously dedicated to Jesus.

Martha's Busy Work

One day Jesus showed the difference between anxious care and working in faith. As we read in *Matthew 6*, God does not want us to worry about our food and clothes. Like the flowers and the birds, we are to gratefully accept from God's hand what He has provided for us. In making this comparison, Jesus did not mean that we should no longer sow, reap, toil, or spin, but that we should cheerfully and trustingly fulfill our part of the work, just as the birds and flowers do. As we carry out the tasks that God has given us, we should also manifest the same spirit of contentment that the flowers and birds reveal. Of course, our duties are very different from those of the birds and flowers because animals and plants cannot reason. We, on the other hand, are intelligent creatures and have the ability to make decisions and use our reason in co-working with our heavenly Father. But in matters of consistency and trust, we can learn from the birds. And the flowers can teach us modesty and a meek character.

"The great Provider for man and beast opens His hand and supplies all His creatures. The birds of the air are not beneath His notice. He does not drop the food into their bills, but He makes provision for their needs. They must gather the grains He has scattered for them. They must prepare the material for their little nests. They must feed their young. They go forth singing to their labor, for "your heavenly Father feedeth them." And "are ye not much better than they?" Are not you, as intelligent, spiritual worshipers, of more value than the birds of the air? Will not the Author of our being, the Preserver of our life, the One who formed us in His own divine image, provide for our necessities if we but trust in Him?" *Steps to Christ*, 123.1.



When Jesus visited the home of Lazarus, Martha, and Mary for the first time, this was the lesson that He taught them. He had come to bring the kingdom of God close to them. But while He was talking, Martha was busy with the duties of a host. In fact, she was so involved in her work that she did not notice to what extent she had distanced herself from her Guest until she asked Him, rather accusingly, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me." *Luke* 10:40.

What was Martha's real problem? Was it wrong to prepare the food? Should she not have provided a meal for her hungry guests? Should she not have spoken to Jesus about her anxiety? She obviously did not have peace in her heart, nor was she in harmony with Jesus - but why not?

"Martha was anxious to provide for their comfort, and in her anxiety she forgot the courtesy due to her Guest." *The Desire of Ages*, 525.1. How is it possible that Martha dedicatedly cared for her Guest, but at the same time forgot the courtesy due to Him? Is that not a contradiction? Or was Martha's care for her Guest not quite as selfless as it appeared?

In her own mind, Martha had knowingly forfeited the pleasant conversation and taken up the tedious work so that her Guest would feel comfortable. But did that make Jesus feel comfortable? It was not wrong to work and serve the guests, but it was wrong to make the work the center of attention.

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It was also wrong to try and involve Jesus in her own world.

Martha's slight reproach showed that she did not understand Jesus' kingdom and that she wanted to establish her own kingdom, her own view of life. She really believed that she was in the right and that Jesus and her sister were in the wrong. Furthermore, the Saviour should use His authority in order to carry out her wishes. That was indeed discourteous!

"In her anxiety she forgot the courtesy due to her Guest."

How often have men and women seen their part of the work as being so important and have tried to bind others into their own ideas! How often has the spirit of submission and courtesy been lacking when some necessary work had to be done! How often have we gone forward in self-will, instead of faith, in order to fulfill our duties, or even to avoid them.

Jesus did not condemn Martha for her mistake, but He immediately went to the heart of the problem. He answered her in friendly, patient words, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her." *Luke 10:41, 42.*

"The 'one thing' that Martha needed was a calm, devotional spirit, a deeper anxiety for knowledge concerning the future, immortal life, and the graces necessary for spiritual advancement. She needed less anxiety for the things which pass away, and more for those things which endure forever." These words confirm that our daily duties have the purpose of forming our characters in God's image, because God's character is the only thing that endures forever.

"Jesus would teach His children to seize every opportunity of gaining that knowledge which will make them wise unto salvation. The cause of Christ needs careful, energetic workers. There is a wide field for the Marthas, with their zeal in active religious work. But let them first sit with Mary at the feet of Jesus. Let diligence, promptness, and energy be sanctified by the grace of Christ; then the life will be an unconquerable power for good." *The Desire of Ages*, 525.2.

We need to be aware of this lesson in the preparation of every meal, and in every other task that is necessary in order to maintain life. Our work can be a blessing to us and to others only when it is done in the right spirit and we put every effort into it. It is not a question of ourselves and

our wishes, our views and our goals, our appetites and our preferences, but of God's kingdom! "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you." *Matthew 6:33*. It is at the table that it is manifest whom we serve.

Jesus' Graveclothes

Another practical classroom for our character training is our clothing. One event that serves as an example of this is at the resurrection of Christ. He had been dressed in graveclothes in the tomb, and when the angel called Him He folded the clothes with His own meticulous hand.

"Mary had not heard the good news. She went to Peter and John with the sorrowful message, 'They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulcher, and we know not where they have laid Him.' The disciples hurried to the tomb, and found it as Mary had said. They saw the shroud and the napkin, but they did not find their Lord. Yet even here was testimony that He had risen. The graveclothes were not thrown heedlessly aside, but carefully folded, each in a place by itself. John 'saw, and believed.' He did not yet understand the scripture that Christ must rise from the dead; but he now remembered the Saviour's words foretelling His resurrection.

"It was Christ Himself who had placed those graveclothes with such care. When the mighty angel came down to the tomb, he was joined by another, who with his company had been keeping guard over the Lord's body. As the angel from heaven rolled away the stone, the other entered the tomb, and unbound the wrappings from the body of Jesus. But it was the Saviour's hand that folded each, and laid it in its place. In His sight who guides alike the star and the atom, there is nothing unimportant. Order and perfection are seen in all His work." *The Desire of Ages*, 789.2, 3.

The resurrection was an extremely important moment in the history of heaven and earth. Jesus, the Commander of the angels, had humbled Himself as a Man and permitted His crucifixion. He had made every effort and considered no sacrifice too great in order to reveal the loving character of God in contrast to the enmity of Satan. It had cost Him everything. But

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death could not hold Him captive forever because Christ, who had taken on sinful flesh, had also overcome sin in the flesh.

Therefore, God's righteousness was perfectly justified in Christ's deliverance from the grave. All heaven rejoiced, while the believers on earth did not yet understand what had happened.

In comparison to the significance of the resurrection, the graveclothes were totally unimportant. We could ask why Jesus even bothered with the graveclothes at such a historic moment. Did He not have more important things to do than taking care of "clothes" that had outlived their usefulness?

"In His sight who guides alike the star and the atom, there is nothing unimportant." What does that mean? Were the graveclothes just as important as the resurrection? No, of course not. But at the same time they still had an important work to do - they were a faithful witness to the resurrection of Christ.

"In His sight who guides
alike the star
and the atom,
there is nothing
unimportant."

The Desire of Ages, 789.3.

John saw how the graveclothes had been carefully folded, and through the working of the Holy Spirit he recognized the signature of his Master. He saw the Creator of the stars, whose character is also revealed in the smallest atom. God does not change. He is the same in great things as He is in small. His selfless love and infinite wisdom is

revealed in both spiritual and temporal matters. As the Son of man Jesus manifested the same care and dedication in His daily responsibilities as He did in His role as the Son of God in the government of heaven.

In handling the graveclothes in the way He did, Jesus gave the believers the message of the gospel. Whoever wanted to believe could do so. And those who did not want to believe would find enough reasons to doubt. And so it will always be on this sinful earth.

"Those who are careless and untidy in dress are seldom elevated in their conversation and possess but little refinement of feeling. They sometimes consider oddity and coarseness humility."

Child Guidance, 415.3.

The Outward Appearance is a Message Bearer

And still today, our outward appearance is the bearer of a silent message. From our head to our feet we express our values and goals. Therefore we should ask ourselves the following questions:

- Does the message that we give through our outward appearance, our clothing, our hairstyle, our facial expression, etc. express a message of life, or not?
- Does our outward appearance point to Him who has made us to be content, firm personalities in Him, or do they point others to ourselves, to our unbelief, or to our own thoughts?
- Can others understand our message if they want to? In other words, do we speak to them in their own language or do we make it unnecessarily difficult for them?

There are several examples in the Bible which clearly show that we do give a message through our outward appearance. We have already mentioned the skin tunics that God made for Adam and Eve. The prophets also wore specific clothing which revealed their office to everyone. And concerning John the Baptist, Jesus said, "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? But what did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Indeed those who are gorgeously appareled and live in luxury are in kings' courts. But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and more than a prophet." *Luke 7:24-26*. "And John himself was clothed in camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist." *Matthew 3:4*.

"John separated himself from friends and from the luxuries of life. The simplicity of his dress, a garment woven of camel's hair, was a standing rebuke to the extravagance and display of the Jewish priests, and of the people generally. His diet, purely vegetable, of locusts and wild honey, was a rebuke to the indulgence of appetite and the gluttony that everywhere prevailed" *Testimonies for the Church 3:62.1*.

Elijah also had a distinctive outward appearance. "Then he [the king]

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said to them, 'What kind of man was it who came up to meet you and told you these words?' So they answered him, 'A hairy man wearing a leather belt around his waist.'" By this simple clothing the Lord's messenger was immediately recognized by the rebellious king. "And he said, 'It is Elijah the Tishbite.'" *2Kings* 1:7, 8.

Samson, who was consecrated to God from birth, is another example. When his mother was informed of her coming pregnancy, she was told, "Now therefore, please be careful not to drink wine or similar drink, and not to eat anything unclean. For behold, you shall conceive and bear a son. And no razor shall come upon his head, for the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb; and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines." *Judges* 13:4, 5. At that time, when a man wore his hair long it signified that he had consecrated himself to a special ministry for God. (See also *Judges* 16:17 and *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 562.2.) Of course, in modern western society when a man has long hair it expresses something completely different.

Women also showed their standing, and their intentions, through their clothing. For example:

- Judas' daughter-in-law, Tamar. "So she took off her widow's garments, covered herself with a veil and wrapped herself, and sat in an open place which was on the way to Timnah; for she saw that Shelah was grown, and she was not given to him as a wife. When Judah saw her, he thought she was a harlot, because she had covered her face." *Genesis* 38:14, 15. (Read *Genesis* 38 for the context of this scripture.)
- Absalom's sister, Tamar. "Now she had on a robe of many colors, for the king's virgin daughters wore such apparel." *2Samuel* 13:18. (Read the whole chapter for the context.)

Another form of order that God has given His people on earth determines that there be a distinct difference between men's and women's clothing. By this means any changing of roles was avoided. "A woman shall not wear anything that pertains to a man, nor shall a man put on a woman's garment, for all who do so are an abomination to the Lord your God." *Deuteronomy* 22:5. The message behind the women's clothing was,

"I am a woman." And the message behind the men's clothing was, "I am a man." This subject will be considered in more depth later.

To be continued...

Uta Dura

Things to think about:

Can you find any other examples in the word of God that confirm that the outward appearance conveys a message?

"And it shall be in that day that every prophet will be
ashamed of his vision when he prophesies;
they will not wear a robe of coarse hair to deceive."

Zech. 13:4

"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing,
but inwardly they are ravenous wolves."

Matthew 7:15

"John separated himself from friends and from the luxuries of life. The simplicity of his dress, a garment woven of camel's hair, was a standing rebuke to the extravagance and display of the Jewish priests, and of the people generally. His diet, purely vegetable, of locusts and wild honey, was a rebuke to the indulgence of appetite and the gluttony that everywhere prevailed" *Testimonies for the Church* 3:62.1.

For further study:

A leper was to show the danger from his disease by wearing torn clothes. "Now the leper on whom the sore is, his clothes shall be torn and his head bare; and he shall cover his mustache, and cry, 'Unclean! Unclean!'" *Leviticus* 13:45.

Tearing clothes was a special act which expressed:

- Sorrow (*Leviticus* 10:6; *Joshua* 7:6; *2Samuel* 1:11; *Esther* 4:1; *Job* 1:20)
- Repentance (*1Kings* 21:27; *Ezra* 9:3; *Joel* 2:13)
- Abhorrence and shock, especially in cases of blasphemy (*Numbers* 14:16; *Jeremiah* 36:24; *Matthew* 26:65; *Acts* 14:14)

A specific message was also contained in the shaking out of clothes. "But when they opposed him and blasphemed, he shook his garments and said to them, 'Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean. From now on I will go to the Gentiles.'" *Acts* 18:6.

The wedding garment was a robe given to the guests for the feast by the host himself. "But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment. So he said to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?' And he was speechless." *Matthew* 22:11, 12. (See also *Christ's Object Lessons*, 309.3.)

The dress customary for feasts was different to the common daily dress. (See *Genesis* 45:22; *Judges* 14:12; *2Kings* 5:5.)

The dress used at events of public honor also played a special role. (See *Esther* 6:7-9; *Luke* 15:22.)



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