

Reform

Habitat

Clothing

Cleanliness

Food

Thoughts

Steward-
ship

Language

Work

Time
management

Exercise

Partnership

Contact
with others



The Principles of Reform

Part 3

Practical Applications

It has become evident, through many examples of both the Old and the New Testament, that in the education of His people God used the schools of both diet and clothing. Today, His ways are still the same. He still uses the practical areas of life to train human beings and give them firm personalities. The condition of success is that we wholeheartedly accept these schools.

Parents often ask how they can best train their children - which school, or even country, they should be sent to, so that they can receive a balanced development. The parents also pray a lot for the young minds, so that faith and loyalty will guide them in life. There is nothing wrong in this, but no amount of occupational training or prayers can replace what the parents can do for themselves and for their children by using the various areas of daily life as a classroom. "There is an eloquence far more powerful than the eloquence of words in the quiet, consistent life of a pure, true Christian. What a man is has more influence than what he says." *The Ministry of Healing*, 469.1.

"What human power can do divine power is not summoned to do. God does not dispense with man's aid. He strengthens him, co-operating with him as he uses the powers and capabilities given him." *The Desire of Ages*, 535.3.

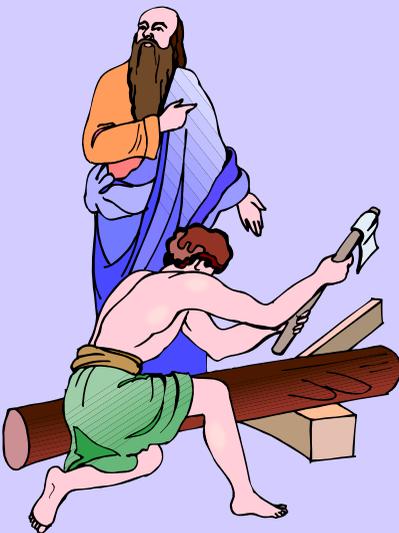
It is obvious that daily life does not consist only of worship, church services, and prayer, but also includes practical duties, responsibilities and tasks. God's purpose for us is that we will co-work with Him and demonstrate a consistent influence in the practical areas of life. He has especially given us the task of witnessing to His character in all that we say and do. He enables us to do this, but He never does for us what we must do for ourselves. God will not shape the influence of our lives without our diligent effort to do good. "Through the grace of God and their own diligent effort they must be conquerors in the battle with evil." *The Great Controversy*, 425.1.

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When Paul noticed that his ministry was drawing to an end, he wrote to his spiritual son, Timothy, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith." *2Timothy* 4:7. What does he mean by "the good fight"?

In Paul's first recorded letter to Timothy he encouraged him to "flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. I urge you in the sight of God who gives life to all things, and before Christ Jesus who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate, that you keep this commandment without spot, blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ's appearing." *1Timothy* 6:11-14.

Therefore, we can see that the good fight means to keep the laws of God's kingdom by faith in the blood of Jesus. It means to reveal the character of God every day in our thoughts, feelings, and actions, and to separate everything from our lives which contradicts the eternal principles. Whether we are called to be preachers or listeners, parents or children, leaders or helpers, or even martyrs, we should all live out the word practi-



"Jesus is our example... He lived to please, honor, and glorify His Father in the common things of life. His work began in consecrating the lowly trade of the craftsmen who toil for their daily bread. He was doing God's service just as much when laboring at the carpenter's bench as when working miracles for the multitude. And every youth who follows Christ's example of faithfulness and obedience in His lowly home may claim those words spoken of Him by the Father through the Holy Spirit, 'Behold My Servant, whom I uphold; Mine Elect, in whom My soul delighteth.' Isa. 42:1."

The Desire of Ages, 74.4.

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cably - at the table as in the pulpit, in our outward appearance as well as in our contact with others, in our homes as much as in the church service, in our handling of time, money and all the other gifts that God has bestowed upon us. We all need to put effort into applying the principles of true religion in practical life.

"Jesus carried into His labor cheerfulness and tact. It requires much patience and spirituality to bring Bible religion into the home life and into the workshop, to bear the strain of worldly business, and yet keep the eye single to the glory of God." *The Desire of Ages*, 73.3. Jesus was just as faithful in preaching the gospel at home as He was in His public ministry. It is true that there are different levels of preaching, but no matter which level a person carries out his service, the main thing is that the gospel, which is as unchangeable as God Himself, be preached.

Cooking

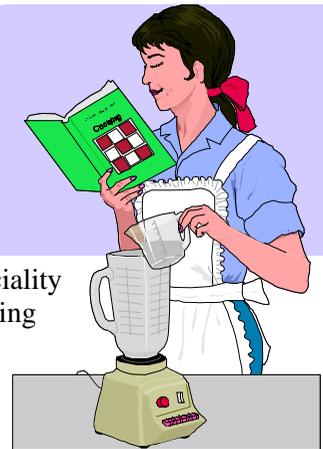
"It is a sacred duty for those who cook to learn how to prepare healthful food. Many souls are lost as the result of poor cookery. It takes thought and care to make good bread; but there is more religion in a loaf of good bread than many think. There are few really good cooks. Young women think that it is menial to cook and do other kinds of housework, and for this reason many girls who marry and have the care of families have little idea of the duties devolving upon a wife and mother.

"Cooking is no mean science, and it is one of the most essential in practical life. It is a science that all women should learn, and it should be taught in a way to benefit the poorer classes. To make food appetizing and at the same time simple and nourishing, requires skill; but it can be done. Cooks should know how to prepare simple food in a simple and healthful manner, and so that it will be found more palatable, as well as more wholesome, because of its simplicity." *The Ministry of Healing*, 302.3, 4.

How many women, and men too, avoid making the effort and taking

the time to prepare tasty, healthy meals with plenty of variety? They think that every other duty is more important than this silent, continuous ministry. They always have some excuse as to why they have a "quick and simple" meal on the table. In doing so, they are unaware that "simple" does not mean easy. Simplicity does not exclude care and effort. Quite the opposite is the case, because true simplicity requires even more skill and effort. Unbalanced meals, or eating "simple" ready-made foods, which have been prepared without regard to the health principles, is not a satisfactory solution. A woman may have a lot of work to do, but if she forgets self and gives herself unreservedly to her duties, she will see that angels are by her side to help her in the fulfillment of all her work.

"The Lord is served as much, yes, more,
by the faithful home worker as by the
one who preaches the Word."
The Truth About Angels, 16.1.



Often a mother suffers under the superficiality and selfishness of her children, without realizing that she does her own work in the same superficial and egotistical manner. Because she feels too weak and lacking in moral power to meet these continual challenges, she will avoid the duties that seem difficult and unpleasant to her. Do we similarly avoid what we do not feel like doing? But no matter what we find difficult, we should ask ourselves how we relate to it. Do we take up unpleasant duties with joy, faith, and self-forgetfulness, or do we save ourselves the inconvenience by skillfully passing on the responsibility to someone else? Children learn more from what we are than from what we say. If our behavior is in harmony with what we say, then our words will have authority.

On the other hand there is danger of the meal preparation being given too much importance. It should be a completely natural duty, not a means of proving oneself or gaining a superior position in the family. When the

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woman tries to show her superiority in the preparation of meals, she is more concerned with her own reputation than the wellbeing of her family or her guests. Although she gives herself fully to the task of cooking, and is no doubt very skillful at it, she does not offer a selfless service out of love, even though she might not realize or admit it. Naturally, God cannot bless such conduct. He has a different goal for humanity. "In heaven their fitness as workers is measured by their ability to love as Christ loved and to work as He worked." *The Acts of the Apostles*, 550.3.

True self-forgetfulness can be exercised in the daily challenges of life, and is especially seen in certain situations. Guests, for example, may provide such an opportunity. Is the woman afraid that she might make a fool of herself? Is she anxious or restless, worrying that what she has to offer is not good enough? Or is she uncaring, expecting her guests to be content with whatever she gives them?

God wants her to be sincerely happy because He has given her an opportunity to serve others and open her home to them. He wants her to accept the challenge in faith, and to create an atmosphere which would be worthy of the angels. "Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels." *Hebrews* 13:2.

We can test ourselves by the emotions of our heart, to see who we are really working for - ourselves or other. Are we working for our own glory or for the glory of God? Of course, this does not apply only to the task of cooking. If we want to grow, we cannot avoid the work of self-criticism. We must be honest with ourselves and give all our problems, fears, and needs to God. Then we can go forward in faith and accept the practical exercises that God has given us for our education. God can change us. He permits us to face challenges that are not too difficult for us, but hard enough so that we will become stronger. As in the physical sphere, our mental and spiritual muscles also grow only by use.

"So today, while the humble worker for God is following his employment, angels stand by his side, listening to his words, noting the manner in which he does his work.... If he trusts constantly in God, these angel watchers will not allow his work to deteriorate. They will

not permit it to be warped into lines that will imperil the cause of God. The Lord is looking upon the work that comes from the hands of His people. He will judge every piece of work, to see of what sort it is."

In Heavenly Places, 237.4.

Fating

The preparation of food is followed by fellowship at the table with Christ, the angels, and usually other people. A well-ordered, friendly atmosphere, filled with gratitude, will make the mealtime one of the most blessed family events of the day. If the meal is prepared according to the best of one's knowledge and ability, it will serve to advance the health and edification of all. This is the condition for heaven's blessing. Our efforts are not the blessing itself, but merely bring us to the place where we can receive God's blessing. Whatever we do can never be enough. Nevertheless, He accepts our sincere, dedicated efforts and grants us His blessing. If we intentionally avoid putting effort into our work God cannot bless us, because He would then be encouraging us to walk in wrong paths.



How often do families fall short of making the most of the family board? Children, young people, and adults often permit themselves to eat when and what they desire, and to satisfy their appetite in a way that is mindful of neither God and the angels nor others. Good manners, consideration and respect for oneself and others are lost sight of. Instead of honoring the cross of Christ in every loaf of bread, they accustom themselves to irregularity, lack of discipline, love of power, and covetousness. All

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this leads to a love of so-called "freedom", which is actually not true freedom at all, but is really nothing less than egotism.

"Faith is ours to exercise, but joyful feeling
and the blessing are God's to give."

Early Writings, 72.1.

"Many parents, to avoid the task of patiently educating their children to habits of self-denial, indulge them in eating and drinking whenever they please. The desire to satisfy the taste and to gratify inclination does not lessen with the increase of years; and these indulged youth, as they grow up, are governed by impulse, slaves to appetite. When they take their place in society, and begin life for themselves, they are powerless to resist temptation. In the glutton, the tobacco-devotee, the wine-bibber, and the inebriate, we see the evil results of erroneous education and of self-indulgence."

Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene, 76.1.

Cleanliness and Order

"The truth is refining and elevating, and believers must understand that even though they are poor, they need not be unclean in their persons or in their homes.... Teach them that those who serve God and keep His commandments must keep their souls pure and clean, and that this purity must extend to their dress, their homes, their cooking utensils, their floors, because the ministering angels from the courts of heaven must have every evidence that the precious truth which has been received into the heart has made a decided reformation in the life." *Testimonies to Southern Africa, 86.2.*

The essence of true cleanliness is to differentiate between the pure and

impure, and the purpose of cleanliness is to facilitate the presence of God and the angels. Of course, cleanliness is a blessing for everyone, but for the Christian it is also a condition of communion with heaven. Real cleanliness is a protection against disease, guards against feelings of inferiority, and is an exercise in self-discipline and single-mindedness, which in turn safeguards against licentiousness in every form. In fact, we do ourselves a great favor when we make cleanliness and order habitual.

The essence of true cleanliness is to differentiate between the pure and impure.

When we practice cleanliness we also serve others. It is considerably more pleasant to sit in a clean chair or sofa, to eat from a clean table, to sleep in a clean bed, to use a clean bath and dry oneself with a clean towel. Likewise, it is more pleasant to drive in a clean car, to come to a clean workplace, to meet a clean person, to talk with someone who has clean breath, and so on. The list could be made much longer, but these examples should suffice to make the point. Cleanliness is a real virtue which uplifts and ennobles men and women. Her twin sister is called order, and she has similar qualities.

But cleanliness and order also have spiritual goals. They are instrumental in drawing the atmosphere of heaven closer to us. "Before gathering at Mount Sinai to listen to the proclamation of the law by the voice of God, the people were required to wash both their persons and their clothing. This direction was enforced on pain of death. No impurity was to be tolerated in the presence of God." *The Ministry of Healing*, 279.1.

"He [God] is no less particular now than He was then. He is a God of order, and requires His people now upon the earth to observe habits of strict cleanliness. And those who worship God with unclean garments and

**Cleanliness and
order are twin
sisters**



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persons do not come before Him in an acceptable manner.

He is not pleased with their lack of reverence for Him, and He will not accept the service of filthy worshipers, for they insult their Maker. The Creator of the heavens and of the earth considered cleanliness of so much importance that He said, 'And let them wash their clothes.'" *The Story of Redemption*, 138.2.

"God is a God of order. Everything connected with heaven is in perfect order; subjection and thorough discipline mark the movements of the angelic host. Success can only attend order and harmonious action. God requires order and system in His work now no less than in the days of Israel. All who are working for Him are to labor intelligently, not in a careless, haphazard manner. He would have his work done with faith and exactness, that He may place the seal of His approval upon it." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 376.1.

"To each student in the home I would say, Be true to home duties. Be faithful in the discharge of little responsibilities. Be a real living Christian in the home. Let Christian principles rule your heart and control your conduct. Heed every suggestion

made by the teacher, but do not make it a necessity always to be told what to do. Discern for yourself. Notice for yourself if all things in your own room are spotless and in order, that nothing there may be an offense to God, but that when holy angels shall pass through your room, they may be led to linger because attracted by the prevailing order and cleanliness. In doing your duties promptly, neatly, faithfully, you are missionaries. You are bearing witness for Christ. You are showing that the religion of Christ does not, in principle or in practice, make you untidy, coarse, disrespectful to your teachers, giving little heed to their counsel and instruction. Bible religion, practiced, will make you kind, thoughtful, faithful. You will not neglect the little things that should be done. Adopt as your motto the words of Christ: "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much.'" *Testimonies for the Church* 6:171.2.

"The minister has his line of work, and the mother has hers. She is to bring her children to Jesus for His blessing. She is to cherish the words of

"God requires order and system in His work now no less than in the days of Israel."
Patriarchs and Prophets, 376.1.

Christ and teach them to her children. From their babyhood she is to discipline them to self-restraint and self-denial, to habits of neatness and order. The mother can bring up her children so that they will come with open, tender hearts to hear the words of God's servants. The Lord has need of mothers who in every line of the home life will improve their God-given talents and fit their children for the family of heaven.

"The Lord is served as much, yea, more, by faithful home work than by the one who teaches the word. As verily as do the teachers in the school, fathers and mothers are to feel that they are the educators of their children." *The Adventist Home*, 236.2.

Cleanliness and order have mental, spiritual, and health benefits, as the above quotations show. When we learn to separate the pure from the impure in external matters, we will also be able to do the same with our inward thoughts and feelings. The one has an influence on the other. God is the source of true purity. There is nothing impure in Him. It is sin that is impure. When sin stained heaven, God made clear rules of separation so that its influence could not spread out indefinitely.

Cleanliness and order have mental, spiritual, and health benefits.

Just as cleanliness and order cost heaven a lot of effort, sacrifice, and power, so they also cost us exertion, dedication, and zeal. And as with the food preparation, many people - including believers - evade the work. They think they can afford to be negligent. "Nobody sees it anyway. Apart from that, I do not have the time. There are other, more important things to do. Who is interested anyway, and even if they are it is not their business." These are the arguments that are often heard, but which are all "fig-leaves." The real reason is that I do not want to, it is too much effort for me, I am lazy, and I do not want anybody to take a closer look at my life.

We need to realize that such an attitude indicates that we are trying to avoid the school of life. However, this is not possible. We are all in a classroom and we are all learning every day, so it is our decision as to whether we learn the right or the wrong. If in the daily school of simple duties we fail to develop a character that will stand throughout eternity, then we are ignoring a God-given privilege. In doing so we reject the

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cross of Christ, which is given to us so that we may have another opportunity to choose the right course and be trained in His service.

"The neat, orderly and careful boy has an invariable rule; "A place for every thing, and every thing in its place." Go into his room at any hour, you will find everything in order. He can go in the dark and lay his hands upon anything that he wants, so that he never runs the risk of setting the house on fire by carrying a light into his bed-room. He never leaves a thing at random where he happens to be using it, but always puts it where it belongs. When he undresses, every article of his clothing is folded and laid together in the order that it will be wanted in the morning, so that he loses no time in hunting for it. He is equally careful of his person. He never considers himself dressed, till he has washed his hands and face, cleaned his teeth, and combed his hair; and he never thinks of setting down to the table with dirty hands. He learns to keep his clothes neat and clean. He never forgets to use the scraper at the door, to remove the mud from his feet, and he makes it an invariable rule never to pass a mat without wiping his shoes. He never says, like the sloven, "I didn't think," to excuse himself. He would consider it unpardonable in him not to think; for what is the ability of thinking worth, if it never comes when it is wanted. The neat, orderly boy makes himself agreeable to his mother, or guardian, and friends, who are always glad to see him coming home. And home is a delightful place to him, because he meets with smiles and pleasant words. But the sloven exposes himself to sour looks and chiding, by his dirty habits; and he finds home a disagreeable place, because he makes it so.'

"We want you, dear boys, to be patterns of neatness and order."

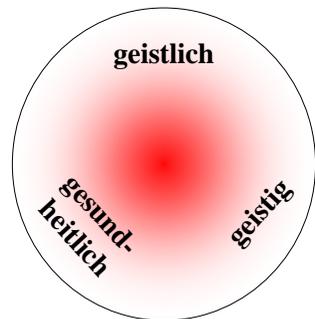
An Appeal to the Youth 72.3-73.1.

clothing

As already mentioned, cleanliness and order play a role in the clothing, and also in the whole outward appearance, which includes the shoes as well as the hairstyle, the face, the hands and the fingernails. But while it is important to be clean and orderly, that is not the whole picture. More is necessary to produce a good outward appearance, and the message that goes with it.

People often have their particular preferences in clothing. This is even true of small children. We may like one thing and not something else - but why? We often like a dress or a hairstyle today, but not two weeks later - why is this? Most people cannot answer why this is so. "Our likes and dislikes are a matter of feeling," they say, and continue to live with their vague, changeable attitude.

In actual fact, our outward dress does have something to do with feeling comfortable, but that does not mean that there are no standards or laws that can guide us. As no other classroom can, clothing teaches us to make decisions from an intelligent standpoint, and to be consistent. In this context the three aspects of human nature also play a role.



The Health Aspect

From a health point of view, clothes and shoes should be practical as well as comfortable. They should not compress or misshape any part of the body so that it can no longer perform its function without difficulty. At the same time, they should provide strength and form wherever necessary. Movement, the breathing of the lungs and the skin, protection, warmth, and support are the needs of the body which clothing should sustain. We cannot expect the muscles, joints, and organs to perform their functions freely if we do not create the right conditions for them.

Healthy clothing also means suitable clothing. There are various kinds of work and each presents different demands on the body. This is where we need to apply our reason and choose the clothing that is most suitable

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for the different tasks. Apart from this there are also different weather conditions, climates, and seasons. We need to think about these things and learn how we can meet these demands in the healthiest way.

For example: on cold days it is not wise to concentrate all the insulation on the trunk, and leave the limbs less protected. Quite the opposite is the case, for when we clothe our arms, legs and feet better than the trunk it stimulates the blood circulation at the center of the body. The abdomen feels a little cold and the brain receives the signal to heat up the body. The heart pumps stronger and brings blood and warmth to the extremities. As these are well insulated they do not lose this warmth immediately.

Vigorous exercises achieve the same results, which is why a person who works physically hard needs less insulation on the extremities. But similar to the person who works at a desk, he also needs to take care that the trunk does not have too much clothing that would cause an accumulation of blood there, which in turn would lead to sickness. To dress healthily means to cover the body with equal layers of clothing.

The Mental Aspect

The health or physical aspect of dress must be complemented by the mental and spiritual aspects. The mental or intellectual area includes aesthetic considerations, a good fit, dignity, harmony of style and color, as well as practicability. Clothing which fulfils only the health requirements but is not pleasant or becoming conveys an impression of superficiality or legalism. A person who wears such clothes is avoiding the effort of reaching a higher standard and of pleasing others. If we behave this way in regard to our clothing, how much more will we do so in our work or in contact with others!

We will not provide fixed rules to determine what a good fit, and dignified, harmonious, practical clothing is. We each must decide for ourselves what is most fitting for the event or for the day's activities. But nobody needs to dress superficially or indifferently for any kind of work. For example, a worker who has to deal with dirt every day can still take care that his clothing is a good fit, is fresh each morning, and presents an orderly picture. His clothing may indeed become dirty while he is carrying out his work, but that is the reason he has work clothes. The question then arises as to how he should dress after work. Does he change his dirty

clothing or does he expect others to accept him just as he is.

The retort "They should try working themselves for once, and not look down on me!" sounds defensive and almost aggressive. It is a fact that many excuse their laziness by claiming that it is not possible to do otherwise. But if we want to grow in character we must first be honest with ourselves, and then we can be honest with others.

"I would advise those who prepare for themselves a short dress for working purposes to manifest taste and neatness in getting it up. Have it arranged in order, to fit the form nicely. Even if it is a working dress, it should be made becoming, and should be cut after a pattern. Sisters when about their work should not put on clothing which would make them look like images to frighten the crows from the corn. It is more gratifying to their husbands and children to see them in a becoming, well-fitting attire than it can be to mere visitors or strangers. Some wives and mothers seem to think it is no matter how they look when about their work and when they are seen only by their husbands and children, but they are very particular to dress in taste for the eyes of those who have no special claims upon them. Is not the esteem and love of husband and children more to be prized than that of strangers or common friends? The happiness of husband and children should be more sacred to every wife and mother than that of all others. Christian sisters should not at any time dress extravagantly, but should at all times dress as neatly, modestly, and healthfully as their work will allow." *Testimonies for the Church* 1:464.2.

In this connection it should be emphasized that anyone who concentrates on only the mental aspect of their outward appearance, and forgets the health and spiritual aspects, will become vain. Such people become so involved with themselves and with the impression they wish to make on others, that they end up being dependent on the current fashion and recognition from others. Naturally, this makes them unsuitable for any kind of reasonable service.

Vanity is an evil that needs to overcome early in life. It is expressed in various ways, but self is always at the basis of it. Do I like myself? Will I be appreciated? Will I be respected? Have my wishes and goals been considered? Do I have enough financial and social freedom? Do I enjoy all

“Let your garments always be white, and let your head lack no oil.”

Ecclesiastes 9:8.

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my rights? Am I understood? Am I loved? Vanity is a form of selfishness. Obviously, it has no place in heaven, and therefore no place in God's work on earth. When we really look to Jesus then our vanity will disappear.

"A minister who is negligent in his apparel often wounds those of good taste and refined sensibilities. Those who are faulty in this respect should correct their errors and be more circumspect. The loss of some souls at last will be traced to the untidiness of the minister.

The first appearance affected the people unfavorably because they could not in any way link his appearance with the truths he presented.

His dress was against him; and the impression given was that the people whom he represented were a careless set who cared nothing about their dress, and his hearers did not want anything to do with such a class of people.

"Here, according to the light that has been given me, there has been a manifest neglect among our people. Ministers sometimes stand in the desk with their hair in disorder, looking as if it had been untouched by comb and brush for a week. God is dishonored when those who engage in His sacred service are so neglectful of their appearance."

Testimonies for the Church 2:613.1, 2.



Hair

It is a fact that our attitude and personality are expressed in our outward appearance as well as in our behavior. Our external characteristics also have an influence on our inner self. Peter says to believing women: "Do not let your adornment be merely outward - arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel - rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God." *1 Peter 3:3, 4.* And Paul wrote to Timothy: "In like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly

clothing, but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works." *1 Timothy 2:9, 10.*

"Good works" and "a gentle and quiet spirit" are expressed in an appropriate appearance, which contrasts with indifference on the one hand, and braided hair, gold, pearls, and expensive clothing on the other. The latter is an expression of the pride and extravagance into which a woman can be misled. What does "braided hair" refer to today? We should ask ourselves this question so that we will not be led into one extreme or the other.

Naturally, we all have different hair structure and color. And the various countries have different customs and styles, which influence our feelings. Among the Hebrew women of Paul's day it was usual to braid the hair if they wanted to make a good impression. What do women do today in order to attract attention or to stand out from the crowd? They alter the structure of their hair and the color. They have special haircuts, or style their hair in an unnatural, often impractical, way, or else they do not brush their hair at all, simply letting it hang down. These examples are illustrations only and may not apply to every country, or all the various types of hairstyle.

In general, people realize that their hairstyle is a direct expression of personality. Young people, in the process of becoming adults who can be responsible for themselves, usually place great value on their hairstyles. In their choice of hairstyle they are strongly guided by their feelings. Hair and clothing can easily be changed, whereas the shape of the nose or the ears cannot. Young people can arrange their hair to create a certain personal style, in whatever direction they desire. "I will not let anyone touch my hair - because I do not want to be touched." "I let my hair hang in my face - because I do not want to be seen." "I have an aggressive hairstyle - because I do not want anybody to interfere with my life." Hairstyles can include strong or soft lines, hair may be loose or gathered together, and it may be arranged in natural or unnatural styles. There are so many possible variations of hairstyle that each of us must ask ourselves what we really want to express.

We can further express our personality through our face and fingernails, and even our toenails. Apart from the necessary care of these, people often think that they have to "improve" on their natural beauty with the use of color and shaping, nail varnish, rings, jewels and so on. They do not realize that God has already made everything so practical

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and beautiful! We just have to recognize this beauty. Eyes are beautiful when they radiate love and friendship. Lips and cheeks are beautiful when they are ennobled by a smile. The mouth is beautiful when it speaks God's praise. Hands are beautiful when they are quick to serve, courageous as well as gentle in ministry. The beauty of character



can be seen in the facial expression, in the gesticulation of hands and movement of feet. As surely as harvest follows sowing, so is our inner mind expressed in our outward appearance.

While it is understandable that young people are searching for their own identity, one would imagine that adults have already found their role and personality. But this is often not the case, especially in our contemporary, unthankful, and restless society. People are discontented with their circumstances - today they want a partner, the next day they want to be rid of him or her. Today they want to possess something, and tomorrow they are tired of it. Today they want to have children, and tomorrow the work is too much for them.



People desire comfort, recognition or reputation, and sometimes riches, a higher position, or less responsibility in life. Some fight against being an adult and are always looking for someone else to carry their burdens. There are several ways of expressing discontent, but one thing is common to them all - lack of submission to circumstances, duties, responsibilities, and to others. Such people strive for freedom to live according to own feelings. But they will eventually find to their surprise that this freedom is their greatest prison!



"The world needs today what it needed nineteen hundred years ago - a revelation of Christ. A great work of reform is demanded, and it is only through the grace of Christ that the work of restoration, physical, mental, and spiritual, can be accomplished." *The Ministry of Healing*, 143.2. As believers, we should be aware that we are to be the salt of

the earth (*Matthew 5:13*). If we lose our flavor, what will become of all the needy people?

Each of us must search our own hearts if we really want to follow Christ. Everything that we do is an expression of what we are, and this in turn exercises an influence on us. As believing men and women, we should understand more than the people of this world, and give them a witness of our security that they so desperately need on the restless sea of their feelings. Even our hairstyles, silently and in the background, preach a message. Is this the message of the gospel which delivers us from self and enables us to serve, or is it the message of our own concepts, impressions, and fears?

To be continued

Uta Dura

For further study:

Hair is mentioned in the Bible in several contexts:

- The Israelites were forbidden to have the same hairstyle as the peoples around them. "You shall not shave around the sides of your head, nor shall you disfigure the edges of your beard." *Leviticus 19:27*. (Compare with *Jeremiah 9:25; 25:23*)
- Anyone who made a vow to God was not to be distracted from keeping it. This was expressed by the man letting his hair grow. "All the days of the vow of his separation no razor shall come upon his head; until the days are fulfilled for which he separated himself to the LORD, he shall be holy. Then he shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow." "Then the Nazirite shall shave his consecrated head at the door of the tabernacle of meeting, and shall take the hair from his consecrated head and put it on the fire which is under the sacrifice of the peace offering." *Numbers 6:5, 18*.
- When people's hair became gray they were not to be ashamed but instead willing to share their life experience with others. "You shall rise before the gray headed and honor the presence of an old man, and fear your God: I am the LORD." *Leviticus 19:32*. God Himself is pictured as having white hair (see *Daniel 7:9; Revelation 1:14*). "The glory of

young men is their strength, and the splendor of old men is their gray head." *Proverbs 20:29*.

- People showed their deep repentance by shaving their heads. "And in that day the Lord GOD of hosts called for weeping and for mourning, for baldness and for girding with sackcloth." *Isaiah 22:12*.
- In the New Testament Mary dried the feet of Jesus with her hair (see *John 12:3*).
- Paul wrote to the Corinthians that long hair and the covering of a woman's head was an expression of their submission to their husbands, which was an honor to them and which pleased God (see *1 Corinthians 11:6-15*).

Thus we can see that hair expressed a message of separation from sin, undivided consecration to God, life's experience, deep repentance, and submission. Is God referring to these things when He promises, "And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But not a hair of your head shall be lost. By your patience possess your souls."? *Luke 21:17-19*.



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