



Looks Matter

Botox, microdermabrasion, collagen elastin facial tonics, sea salt citrus scrubs, herbal body wraps, hot stone manicures, Japanese perms, revitalizing highlight glosser, Cambridge diet, amphetamines, Xenical, bench presses, protein shakes, wonder-bras, Raybans, Manolo Blahniks, Zara, French Connection UK, Menaji, SK-II, Osim Uzap, total body firming massages, lymphatic drainage, etc.

From clothes to spa packages, there are many products and services for sale – all to enhance, preserve, improve, or accentuate the looks of a person. While many of these products and services (especially those above) have more than one purpose, such as therapeutic and recreational, they nevertheless have an aesthetic purpose in common. While some of these products and services may be questioned for their association and extravagance, none of them are outright dubious, with the exception of the breast enhancer.

Do aesthetics matter? Do looks really matter? When one boils it down to a clear biblical perspective, looks really *do* matter. The Bible speaks about modesty in dressing and appearance – this is already a clear indication that looks do matter. The Bible also speaks of the finer things in life that the Christian can enjoy. Must the Christian always choose Bata over Rockport, grey hair over fake brown, preventable acne scars over relative smoothness, twitching eyes over a steady gaze? No! Naturally, the Christian has liberty to enjoy certain things and fix certain correctable physical defects – but it is his preoccupation with them that is illegal.

Preoccupation over ones looks and how to achieve them is a problem today. It is in the end, idolatry. It is a spiritual disease. The demand for designer clothes and designer bodies can never be fully met – the earthly craving can be satisfied only momentarily but ones sight of eternity and the weightier matters may be irrevocably damaged.

When we are preoccupied with our looks, it is worship. Romans 1:25 speaks of the state of sinful man – *“Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator.”* The creature here is oneself and ones look. Worship of oneself and ones looks is immodesty.

1 Timothy 2:9-10 tells us, *“In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with braided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works.”* Here we are told that the Christian has an obligation to look like a Christian – to be more concerned about the inner man than the outer man. When the women of Judah were more preoccupied with the outer man, the prophet Isaiah described them as proud – *“Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet...”* (Isaiah 3:16).

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INSIDE.....

- Young Teens Promotion Sunday TODAY.....Read all about the whole department's desire to live for the Lord....

NEXT WEEK.....

- Mothers' Day is next Lord's Day. What have YOU done for your mum? What have YOU done as a mum? Watch out for next week's issue as we contemplate the will of God for mothers.

PROMOTIONAL SUNDAY

We take a look at our Young Teens Department in the Sunday School.... where the Students' Aim is "To Delight the Lord in my Life" and the Teachers' Aim is "To win Student to Christ".



Mixed class of Sec 3 teens is working on "Understanding Biblical Doctrines" with Preacher Mark Chen in the former Pre JWS Room



Sec 2 boys in Guest Room 13 opposite the Beulah House kitchen ploughing through the book of Philippians with teachers Kwong Ann & Michael



Our Teachers

The Young Teens Sunday School (YTSS) gives biblical instruction to those in Secondary 1-4. Ministering to young teens is not an easy task - it takes much dedication and ingenuity to reach out to them and make the Bible understandable and applicable to them. Knowing that many of the teens who attend have grown up in church, the instruction must not only reinforce what has been learned in their childhood through reminders and re-instruction, but it must be applied with fresh insights with contemporary examples. This helps the Bible student to realize that the Bible is a living book that is most relevant to them in their everyday life - that it is the Word of God in practice and not just in study.

YTSS is not meant to be a replacement of Christian education conducted in the home, but often becomes the only source of systematic Bible study that the Christian teen has. And because there are visitors and non-Christians in the midst of them, the Gospel message and "the first principles of the oracles of God" are emphasized. It is also a time of fellowship, where prayer requests are shared and the Christian teen experiences true fellowship through intentional Christian conversation.



Sec 2 girls toiling through the book of Philippians in YAF Room with teachers Sharon and Mui Lee



← **Sec 1 boys (A) learning about “Growing in Christ” at Beulah House Second Floor with teacher Dn Heok Seng**



Sec 1 girls (A) learning about “Growing in Christ” at Beulah House Ground Floor (Round Room) with teacher Susan

This year, the theme is "To Delight the Lord in my Life." Practical subjects like Christian giving and punctuality are addressed. We pray that the Lord would do a deeper work in the lives of these teens - that they love the Lord and obey Him. We also pray that the Lord would give the teachers opportunity to minister to the parents of the teens as well, and to encourage them in their family life - that Christ should be spoken of often in these formative years, lest their children be given to the devil even though they were dedicated to Christ.

All our classes are held in Beulah House and if you are between 13 to 16 yrs old or a parent, whose teenage child is not attending any Sunday School Class, just drop by and we will be there to welcome you!

Heng Shao Sheng
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Sec 1 girls (B) learning about “Growing in Christ” at Beulah House Ground Floor (Round Room) with teacher Evelyn



Sec 4 boys studying through the book of Romans at the Guest Room 1 on Second Floor Beulah House with teachers Eld Yew Chong and Kok Chuan



Sec 4 girls working through the book of Romans at the LF room with teachers Eris and Chwee Eng

Looks Matter

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1 Peter 3:3-4 teaches that “*the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit is a great price in the sight of God.*” It exhorts the women against unnecessary and elaborate adorning of oneself in the plaiting of hair, wearing of gold or putting on of elaborate apparel.

While the Bible teaches modesty, it does stress the importance of looking physically decent. Women like Rebekah, Rachel, Esther, and Abigail, were praised for their physical comeliness. The cultivation of beauty and appearance was celebrated and this is much evidenced by the cosmetics used, such as perfumes and henna for make up. The Bible is not against the human body. Proverbs 5:19 says, “*Let her be as the loving hind and pleasant roe; let her breasts satisfy thee at all times; and be thou ravished always with her love.*” God made woman physically as she is in His good will. Husbands and wives are to be satisfied with God's creation.

And that is the crux of the matter – satisfaction and dissatisfaction. 1 Timothy 6:6 teaches that “*godliness with contentment is great gain.*” Philippians 4:11 speaks of Paul’s ability to be contented in whatever state he was in – “Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.” Contentment does not prevent one from enjoying lawful pursuits of apparel, physical beauty, and comfort. These must be pursued in maturity.

So far, it has been said that attending to looks is not wrong. However, not attending to looks is also wrong. The early Fundamentalists were often derided for their lack of dress sense, excessive neglect of their looks, and despising anything that remotely resembled the world’s fashion. Although their desire to please God is commendable, they were often a bit extreme.

Historically, the spread of early Fundamentalism and the path it took was called the “sawdust trail.” This was because Billy Sunday used to go around preaching to the tree loggers. And so Fundamentalism was a grassroots movement

characterized by concern for the truth but a lesser concern for culture. Billy Sunday’s good friend, Bob Jones Sr. however emphasized that the truth of the gospel must affect culture and aimed to develop a distinctive, dignified, and cultured Christianity. He delved into promoting the arts – so much so that it is said that Bob Jones put the “red carpet on the sawdust trail.”

We Christians are not to be uncultured – we are to be most cultured and understand how to enjoy the results of God’s common grace. Hence, it is appropriate for Christians to be concerned about their looks and to do their best to be presentable and cultured – but not to be obsessed. Here is a good quote by Dr. Bob Jones Sr. whenever he was asked about wearing makeup – “Well, if the barn needs a coat of paint, give it one.” Someone also said, “Some women wear too much makeup. And it is probably sinful. There are other women, they don’t wear enough and that is probably sinful too.” What this person meant in this context is that we need to promote propriety – that is the meaning of Philippians 4:5 – “*Let your moderation be known unto all men.*”

So, can a Christian get Botox, microdermabrasion, collagen elastin facial tonics, sea salt citrus scrubs, herbal body wraps, hot stone manicures, Japanese perms, revitalizing highlight glosser, Cambridge diet, amphetamines, Xenical, bench presses, protein shakes, wonder-bras, Raybans, Manolo Blahniks, Zara, French Connection UK, Menaji, SK-II, Osim Uzap, total body firming massages, lymphatic drainage, etc? It is not inconceivable that many of these things can be enjoyed and used moderately either for amoral aesthetic, recreational, and therapeutic reasons, and hence permissible. But they must be used, bought, and regarded with spiritual maturity and moderation. But please, unless there is some therapeutic consideration; leave the wonder-bra on the shelf.

Mark Chen



The Editorial team welcomes contribution from the congregation. Please send contributions to kohjulia@starhub.net.sg. The editorial team reserves the right to edit any articles to be published.

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