

# Are You Ready For School?

**Introduction.** Going back to school can be a wonderful time. There is excitement and optimism for the coming school year, but there are also responsibilities of which those who wish to be godly need to be aware.

Human beings are influenced by other human beings. Alfred Tennyson said, "I am a part of all that I have met." Each Christian must work to make the best "imprint" upon the world that he or she possibly can. Therefore, it is not a matter of whether we have influence or not, but our concern should be with what kind of influence we have on others, and what kind of influence others have on us (cf. John 17:14-15; Ephesians 5:8). Let's notice a few items that can get you ready to go back to school.

## I. ***Are You Ready For Pure Language?***

- A. Cursing means "to make light of something serious, to bring a serious matter into contempt, to show no respect; evil, wicked, or obscene talk" (Romans 3:14; Ephesians 4:29; 5:4; Colossians 3:8). The Israelites were not to profane ("to wound, defile or pollute") the name of the Lord (Exodus 20:7; Leviticus 19:12; cf. 1 Timothy 1:9). Also, dirty jokes and coarse jesting are the products of a dirty mind.
- B. Virtually every Christian realizes that vulgar speech, curse words, using the Lord's name in vain, etc., are condemned in the Bible; yet how many saints have been guilty of using "softened" or euphemistic words?
  1. The definition of euphemism is, "The act or an example of substituting a mild, indirect, or vague term for one considered harsh, blunt, or offensive."
  2. Maybe you use words like "golly," "gosh," "gee," "thank goodness," "darn," heck," "good heavens," etc. People who use these words either think nothing about it whatsoever, or they think they are avoiding foul language.
- C. Along with profanity and euphemisms, one must also be careful of other sins of the tongue.
  1. Slander (Psalm 101:5; Proverbs 10:18).
  2. Talebearing or gossip (Leviticus 19:16; Proverbs 11:13; 20:19; 1 Timothy 5:13).
  3. Whispering and backbiting (Proverbs 16:28; Romans 1:29-30; 2 Corinthians 12:20).
- D. There is no excuse for anyone using foul language. We ought to give deep thought to our speech (Matthew 12:36). We must bridle the tongue (James 1:26), but it is difficult (James 3:3-6). In Judges 12:6, the Ephraimites proved their ethnicity by mispronouncing "Shibboleth," which led to their death. Will your speech show you are a child of God?

## II. ***Are You Ready For True Friends?***

- A. Good friends are worth their weight in gold (Proverbs 27:9). However, friends are human and they can influence us for evil.
- B. There are examples of good friends.
  - 1. Andrew brought Peter to Jesus (John 1:40-41) and Philip brought Nathaniel to Jesus (John 1:45).
  - 2. Ruth refused to leave Naomi and was determined to return to her mother-in-law's homeland (Ruth 1:16-17).
  - 3. Naaman's servants got him to see his irrational behavior; after their questions he went and dipped in the Jordan River (2 Kings 5:13).
- C. There are examples of bad friends.
  - 1. In 2 Samuel 13:3, Amnon had a friend Jonadab who helped him hatch a plan whereby he was able to rape Tamar.
  - 2. Job's friends accused him wrongfully and were no help to him in his terrible plight (Job 6:14-21).
  - 3. Though he was sorry, Herod "sent and beheaded John" due to the influence of Herodias and her dancing daughter (Matthew 14:6-10).
- D. Don't let your friends influence you into drinking, cursing, smoking, cheating, lying, fornication, etc. (Proverbs 13:20).

## III. ***Are You Ready For Modest Clothes?***

- A. Three words in 1 Timothy 2:9-10 dictate how a woman is to be dressed. Although Paul is giving instruction as to how women should dress in the public assemblies, the principles will apply in other situations. If modest apparel is appropriate in worship, it is appropriate everywhere. If what is prohibited in dress is wrong in worship services, it would be difficult to show that it is right elsewhere.
  - 1. Proper or modest clothing.
    - a) The word denotes orderliness, or something neatly arranged. It does not mean "modest" in the sense of being opposed to that which is immodest, or which tends to excite improper desires, but what is appropriate or suitable.
    - b) This means that the appearance of a woman will not be offensive to anybody (cf. 1 Timothy 3:2, "good behavior").
  - 2. Modestly or shamefacedness.
    - a) The word means a demeanor of respect and reverence toward others. It is best reflected in a discussion of godly character.
      - (1) The reason these questions are so serious today is that we have forgotten how to blush (Jeremiah 8:10-12). We feel no sense of shame!
      - (2) This attitude refrains from going over the limits of modesty, as well as from the dishonor which immodesty would cause.

- b) Our defenses are lowered because of the abundance of “acceptable” exposure in our world. Christians even get bogged down in discussions of what is and what is not proper. If you have to ask, it probably is not.
- 3. Discreetly or sobriety.
  - a) The word stands basically for perfect self-mastery in the physical appetites. It definitely had a sexual nuance when applied to women.
  - b) Inappropriate attire exposes the body to the view of others. A godly woman will think this exposure is disgraceful and disrespectful. When you think of a godly woman, how is she dressed?
- B. According to Peter, when we get the heart right, everything else will fall into place (1 Peter 3:3-4). The Christian should dress as to reflect their minds are occupied with nobler thoughts. If the inner person is as God desires, the outward person in dress will reflect it.
- C. Now I know it is hot, and I know that people generally want to be fashionable, but you cannot let this cause you to commit sin and wear something you should not.

#### IV. ***Are You Ready For Faithful Service?***

- A. After becoming a Christian, God wants you to be faithful (Matthew 25:21, 23; 1 Corinthians 4:1-2, 17; Revelation 17:14). Faithful means “trustworthy, dependable, or reliable.”
- B. There are several people who were faithful in service to the Lord mentioned in the New Testament.
  - 1. Timothy (1 Corinthians 4:17).
  - 2. Tychicus (Ephesians 6:21).
  - 3. Epaphras (Colossians 1:7).
  - 4. Onesimus (Colossians 4:9).
  - 5. Silvanus (1 Peter 5:12).
  - 6. Antipas (Revelation 2:13).
- C. It will be easy and tempting to let matters like work or extracurricular activities (sports, FFA, 4-H, band, chorus, homework, etc.) become a stumblingblock.
  - 1. Remember that when you violate your conscience by failing to do what you know is right, such as miss services, you sin (James 4:17).
  - 2. Balak cast a stumblingblock before the Israelites and caused them to sin (Revelation 2:14). Activities, which are not wrong in and of themselves, can do the same!

**Conclusion.** Socrates said, “Let him that would move the world, first move himself.” Frank Loesch was not a very imposing man, but in Chicago

he was a living legend, for he was the man who had stood up to Al Capone. In the prohibition years, Capone's rule was absolute. No one opposed him. But singlehandedly, Frank Loesch, without any government support, organized the Chicago Crime Commission, a group of citizens who were determined to take Mr. Capone to court and put him away. During the months that the Crime Commission met, Frank Loesch's life was in constant danger. There were threats on the lives of his family and friends. But he never wavered. Ultimately he won the case against Capone and was the instrument for removing this blight from the city of Chicago.

What about your influence? What about those closest to you, who know the most about you and stand to be influenced as much or more by you than any other person? Have they become more spiritually minded, less spiritually minded, or no apparent change either way? Are you ready to face your challenges at school and glorify your Lord (1 Peter 2:12)?