

LADIES FRIENDSHIP CONNECTION

LESSON SEVEN: TEMPLE CARETAKERS HOW TO'S

by Sandy Harber

"What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." I Corinthians 6:19-20

We have been discussing some principles to help us make good decisions regarding the care of our bodies as temples of the Holy Spirit.

5. Is it a weight? Hebrews 12:1

"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us."

The "cloud of witnesses" are those Old Testament heroes of the faith recorded in chapter eleven. They are examples to us of others who have successfully run the race, that is, completed the course God had set out for them. Each of us has his/her own race to run. In Paul's day, a runner would divest himself of anything that could slow him down, including clothing!

Our race is that daily walk with Christ that ends with death or the Rapture. Our goal is to hear Him say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant." To achieve this, we need to rid ourselves of every "weight." A "weight" is an impediment or encumbrance, something that slows us down. It is not sin - that's covered with "and the sin which does so easily beset us" part. A weight is anything that does not move me toward my spiritual goals. In fact, it slows me down. It is all those activities that have no spiritual value. They aren't sinful or evil, just worthless in view of eternity. I need to cast those aside so that I can successfully complete my race that God has set before me. Proper care of my temple means eliminating those activities that have no spiritual value.

6. Is it winning to the unsaved? II Corinthians 5:20

"Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead; be ye reconciled to God."

Someone once said, "You may be the only Bible some people ever read." You represent Christ here on earth. You stand in His place issuing an invitation to salvation to unbelievers. Understanding that the cross of Christ has eliminated the cause of hostility (sin) between God and man you beg, plead, make a strong appeal to the lost soul to come into fellowship (be reconciled) on the basis of Jesus' sacrifice. But, who will be persuaded if your hair isn't combed, your clothes are soiled, and there's dirt under your fingernails? Your appearance reflects back on the One you represent. It is unlikely that any Christian would attempt to witness looking like a homeless person. However, what about your actions and speech? Your behavior also reflects back on the God you serve. Will your behavior draw unbelievers toward what you represent (Christ) or drive them away?

People are watching. Believer and unbeliever alike have a picture in their mind of how a "Christian" should behave. Whether the standard is reasonable or ridiculous, their perception of Christianity is how you will be judged. When I was in college the students were expected to abstain from dancing, attending movies, and playing cards. These were not considered Christian activities by the faculty. As to appearance, the men wore suits and kept their hair cut short. When their hair touched their collar it was time for a trip to the barber. Females wore dresses, skirt length no higher than mid-knee. Of course, that was 50 years ago. The point is that where you go, what you do, what you say, who you hang out with is being observed. And judged. Christianity is judged by what they see in us. Ask yourself if what you want to do is going to win the unsaved to Christ? The Bible says, "Abstain from all appearance of evil" (I Thessalonians 5:22). Don't do it if there's a chance it can be misinterpreted. Rather, choose actions and speech that cast a positive light on God and Christianity.

7. Does it glorify God? I Corinthians 10:31

"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

Paul concluded the discussion on eating meat that was sacrificed to idols by stating that whatever you do should be done for God's glory. Paul himself would not eat the meat because it might cause a fellow believer distress. He was willing to set aside his own desires and do whatever it took to win the unsaved to Christ (vv. 32-33). The principle of love must be applied in the exercise of Christian liberty. And, God, Who is love, will be glorified.

Our goal as temple caretakers is to glorify God (I Corinthians 6:20). There are two aspects to this. One is where we ourselves praise and magnify God. This we do through prayer and worship and singing, exalting His virtues and thanking Him for all things. The other aspect is where we encourage others to see God as we do and illicit recognition of Who God is and what He has done. We want everyone to honor the God of creation. What we say and do, how we represent Him on earth should be such that people respond by giving glory to our God. Therefore, I must endeavor to ensure that my speech and behavior will motivate people to honor, respect, and praise God.