FASHION AND SELF-IMAGE
Who’s in the Mirror?

November 9, 2019

1 PREPARING

A. THE SOURCE

1 Samuel 16:7 (NIV) • “But the Lord said to Samuel, ‘Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.’ ”

Proverbs 31:30 (NIV) • “Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.”

Isaiah 53:2 (NIV) • “He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.”

1 Peter 3:3, 4 (NIV) • “Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as elaborate hairstyles and the wearing of gold jewelry or fine clothes. Rather, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God’s sight.”

(See additional passages in student material.)

B. WHAT’S TO BE SAID ABOUT “FASHION AND SELF-IMAGE”

Life for today’s teens is driven by advertising and consumerism to a far greater degree even than a generation ago. While there’s nothing wrong with wearing things that happen to be in fashion, a Christian young person should never make fashion first priority. Too often, following fashion demands we ignore other values, such as modesty, good use of money, simplicity, and even health and well-being. The ability to make choices based on values rather than on fashion trends has to be rooted in a strong sense of self-respect. Remind your students that what is most important is the character they are building. And a good self-image has its roots in knowing that we are created and valued by a loving God.

C. WHERE WE’RE GOING WITH “FASHION AND SELF-IMAGE”

As a result of this lesson, students will be able to:
1. Recognize that fashion trends are driven by the need to make money and will always be changing.
2. Realize that they are valuable because God created them and loves them, not because of what they buy or wear.
3. Identify their own values and standards for clothing and appearance.

D. MATERIALS NEEDED

Beginning • (Activity A) magazines or catalogs, paper, pencils; (Activity B) “Fashion Sense” handout (p. 65), pencils.
Choose about 10-12 full-length photos of young people (both male and female) wearing advertised clothing.

Get set • Post the photos on the wall or bulletin board of your classroom.

Go • Give each class member a piece of paper and a pencil. Ask them to look at the posted pictures but not to discuss them with others. Then have them write on a slip of paper their top three favorite styles from those pictured, and their one least favorite. Tally the votes and discuss the results. Was there strong agreement on the favorites, or was there a wide variety of opinions? Did some items make both the “best” and “worst” lists?

Debriefing • Ask: What does this activity tell us about fashion? (Agreement is not universal; different people have different opinions; society’s opinions about fashion can be very influential; etc. Responses will differ, depending on how unanimous your group’s responses were, but most likely there is variety in the responses that can lead to discussion of how our individual tastes differ.) How important is it to you to be “in style”? Do you think the results of this survey would have been different if you’d been allowed to discuss your opinion of the outfits with your friends before voting? Do other people influence the styles and fashions you choose?

B. BEGINNING ACTIVITY

Get ready • Give everyone a copy of the “Fashion Sense” handout on page 65.

Get set • Allow five minutes or so for everyone to complete the handout.

Go • Discuss the responses.

Debriefing • Ask: What did you find out about your own fashion sense by answering these questions? Is it important to you to be in style and buy what’s fashionable? Why or
why not? What’s uppermost in your mind when you choose something to wear?

C. BEGINNING ILLUSTRATION

Find two young adult helpers (or photos). Have one person—dressed with the latest fashions—stand in the front, but not face the class (or have them cover their face). Have the other person—dressed nicely but not in the latest trends—also stand in front, but not face the class (or cover their face).

Take a poll and have the students vote on which outfit they would like to wear.

Before class, ask the person dressed with the latest fashion put on a mean, scowling face when they turn to face the students. Ask this person to keep this look and greet the students with growls and grunts while walking around the classroom.

Ask the person wearing the nice but out-of-trend clothes to make sure their face is pleasant and smiling. This person can walk around the class greeting the students with kindness and love.

Ask: What is the difference between these two people? At first, did you think the person wearing the clothes after the latest fashion would be the person you’d want to be like? Do you think what you wear displays who you are on the inside? Which person do you think shows how God wants us to be? Did the clothes display Jesus to you? What did?

Debriefing • Discuss with class members the importance of being Christlike with even the clothes we wear. Say: What we wear is of less importance than following God and being a witness for Him. It is by becoming more like Christ that makes a difference in where we spend eternity. What we wear will not help us get to heaven, but being loving and caring will contribute to our character transformation.

A. CONNECTING TO THE KINGDOM

Present the following ideas in your own words:

We are agents of God’s kingdom, but God doesn’t issue us a uniform when we join up. Instead, just like everyone else, Christians have to make choices about how they’re going to dress. Often, fashion and trends have an important part to play in those decisions.

Should fashion even be an issue for Christians? While there’s nothing wrong with wearing clothes that happen to be in style, we have to think about the reasons for the choices we make. Sometimes buying trendy clothes might not be the best use of our money. Sometimes what’s in style doesn’t fit with Christian standards of modesty. And sometimes we may be trying to use fashion as a way to be liked and accepted. Instead, we need to build our self-esteem on the fact that we are God’s children; that He created us and saved us and we have a special part to play in His kingdom.

B. CONNECTING TO THE LESSON ILLUSTRATION

Ask someone beforehand to read or tell the story from Sabbath’s section of the lesson.

After reading the story, ask the group to brainstorm as many fashion trends as they can remember just from the past few years—things that were considered really stylish or fashionable for a short time. Ask: Why are some of these trends so short-lived? Why is it important to some people to “jump on the bandwagon” while things are popular?

Ask the class to discuss the statement “Christians shouldn’t be concerned about wearing what’s in style.” Do they agree or disagree with this statement? Invite them to explain why. If there’s not a consensus of agreement on the statement, ask class members to suggest how the statement could be rewritten to reflect the attitude that Christian teens should have toward

LESSON 6 • November 9, 2019 • Fashion and Self-Image • 63
fashion and clothing choices.

Divide the class into groups of three or four people and ask each group to find and share a Bible verse that they feel sums up the right attitude toward fashion, from a Christian perspective. The texts in the student lesson can be used as a starting point, but encourage students to suggest others as well. Make sure each group writes down their text; they’ll be using it again during the Connecting to Life activity.

C. CONNECTING TO LIFE

In the same small groups, have students design (using poster paper and markers) a T-shirt featuring the Bible text (or a section of it) that they chose in the last activity. The text, the design of the T-shirt, and any other graphic or design elements should work together to illustrate a Christian approach to fashion choices. Encourage students to be creative. Have each group cut out the shape of the T-shirt they’ve drawn on the poster board, and pin the “shirts” up on the walls of your classroom.

APPLYING

A. APPLICATION ACTIVITY

Get into small groups again and give each group paper and pencils. Say: Imagine one person in your group has been given $500 to spend on clothing. Get the input of all group members to write out a budget plan for what you’re going to buy with that money.

After giving the groups 5-10 minutes to plan their budget, ask each group to share what they’re getting for $500, and compare. What kinds of choices are people making with their budget? A few quality items or lots of cheap stuff? How important was fashion in making your budget decisions?

Debriefing • Ask: What were the main factors you used in making your decision? Did you mainly think of practical things, such as what you would need and how long it would last, or did you think about appearance and how other people would view you? How do these values line up with our Christian values?

B. APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. On what should we focus—clothes and fashion or becoming more like Christ?
2. What are the characteristics we should be growing in our lives?
3. Are displaying the fruits of the Spirit more important than what you wear?
4. Do you really care more about what your friends wear than what type of friend they are?
5. What would be Jesus’ main concern if He were a teenager today?

CLOSING

SUMMARY

In your own words conclude with the following ideas:

Our opinions and views on fashion are probably just as diverse as are the people in this room. Some of you may be very concerned about fitting in with the crowd, while others pride yourselves on being individuals. But, what is important is knowing that God loves you. He accepts you no matter what label you are wearing. Real value comes from knowing that you are a child of God. Basing your self-esteem on fashions that change with the seasons is a losing battle. Real value comes from within. God created you—a wonderful, special human being. Even though we’re all fallen, Jesus died for each one of us, and He wants to re-create His image within us. You are of infinite value to God. You are His child. What you wear will not change this fact. You are special to Him because you are His child and He loves you.
### Fashion Sense

**Directions:** List the last 10 items of clothing you can remember buying. (You can include the five you listed in Friday’s section of your lesson.) Next to each one, check the box that best describes why you bought it—why you made that particular choice.

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STUDENT LESSON

FASHION AND SELF-IMAGE

Who's in the Mirror?

November 9, 2019

Sabbath

FOR STUDY

» Memory Text: “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, NKJV).

» Our Beliefs, no. 22, Christian Behavior: “While recognizing cultural differences, our dress is to be simple, modest, and neat, befitting those whose true beauty does not consist of outward adornment but in the imperishable ornament of a gentle and quiet spirit.”

» Ellen G. White, Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, pp. 95-98

WHO’S IN THE MIRROR?

Sara and her mom were cleaning out the basement, getting ready to pack their stuff before moving. “Hey, look at all the old clothes in here!” Sara said, throwing open the lid of a dusty trunk.

Her mom looked over her shoulder, laughing. “Hey, that’s my stuff from high school!” she said. “Haven’t seen that in a while.”

Sara pulled out two tie-dyed T-shirts. “These are pretty cool.” Underneath was a pair of jeans. “What did you do to your jeans?” she asked, seeing the bright triangles of color that ran up both legs.

Sara’s mom took the jeans from her. “This was very stylish in 1977, I’ll have you know!” she said. “We used to buy jeans with the widest possible legs—bell-bottoms, they were called. Then we’d cut up the seams and sew in extra pieces of fabric to make them even wider.”

“It certainly is—eye-catching,” Sara admitted.

“I thought wide-legged jeans were back in style now,” her mom teased. “You could wear these to school.”

“Uh, thanks but no thanks,” Sara said, continuing to look through her mother’s old clothes. “Isn’t that funny, though? Old styles come back, but they never come back exactly the same way, so you can’t actually wear old stuff over again. I wonder why that is?”

“Because the fashion industry is only concerned about making money,” Sara’s mom said. “They have to keep things constantly changing so we’ll always be discontented and want something different. Advertisers don’t want you to stay feeling good about your clothes or your look or yourself—they want to keep you a little off balance, wanting to buy something new and different.”

Sara glanced at herself in the mirror, holding the bell-bottom jeans against herself as if trying them on. “You make it sound as if they’re out to get us!”

“Well, out to get your money, anyway. What matters are the things that don’t change—the qualities inside a person.” She came and stood...
next to Sara in the mirror, putting her arm around her daughter. “Who do you see in the mirror? I hope you see a child of God, someone precious and loved and valuable—no matter what style she’s wearing.”

Sunday
RESPONDING

» Read 1 Samuel 16:7.

» You don’t get as much clothes-shopping money as your friends do because your family isn’t as well off. So you buy generic-brand jeans and shirts instead of the more expensive name brands. You don’t think anyone will notice or care, and most people don’t. But one of your friends starts making some comments about your “bargain store” look. Up till this point, you really haven’t cared, but her comments hurt your feelings. What do you say?

Monday
BIBLE ANSWERS ON
CHRISTIAN BEHAVIOR

» Read Romans 12:1, 2; Ephesians 5:1; 1 John 2:6.

» What we wear is of less importance than who we are. What is important to God is the character we are building. God will provide for our daily needs. Our focus needs to be on letting God help us become more like Him and putting on the robe of His righteousness, which covers our sins and allows us to attend God’s wedding feast.

» How does your life reflect the character you are building?

» In what ways can you grow to become more like Christ?

LESSON 6 • November 9, 2019 • Fashion and Self-Image • 67
important to Him today. And what is important to God is you! He doesn’t care about the clothes you wear or what style is the coolest. He cares about you becoming His child, growing to be loving, caring, honest, and a reflection of Him.

» You may be a trendsetter or a trend follower, or you may march to a different drummer and wear only what you like, but what really matters is if you are wearing the robe of Christ’s righteousness.

» People follow trends because they like to fit in and look as if they belong to the group. But a Christian’s focus should be more on Christ than what’s hot on the fashion runways?

» As followers of Jesus, we know we belong to Him. We’re part of God’s family, agents of His kingdom. Our sense of belonging shouldn’t come from a designer label, but from the label of our Designer, pinned to our hearts. We are God’s. God made us, Jesus saved us, the Holy Spirit lives inside us. When you’re tempted to feel that you’re nobody unless you’re wearing the latest styles, remember that you’re always somebody in God’s eyes.

Wednesday
BIBLE INSIGHTS

» You will find a list of texts and a group of words below. Match each text with the group of words that best reflects its meaning.

A. Ephesians 6:13-17  
1. Everlasting, love, loving-kindness
B. 1 Samuel 16:7  
2. Armor, God, salvation, firm, stand
C. Hebrews 13:8  
3. Lord, man, outward, heart
D. Jeremiah 31:3  
4. Jesus, forever, yesterday, same

Thursday
CONNECTING

» Read Ephesians 6:13-17.

» Review the memory text.

» Check your closet. What’s your attitude toward fashion? What do the clothes you wear say about you? Why do you choose the clothes you do? Looking nice and put together is great, but are you choosing your clothes so you feel good about yourself? If so, maybe you need to find a more solid basis for your self-esteem.

» Today’s fashions will change—probably by next spring! But some things never change. God never changes. His love for you, and the value He places on you, won’t change. And the special work He has for you to do within His kingdom doesn’t change. He challenges you to suit up in the “armor of God.”

» Of course, you still have to make choices about style and fashion. But those choices shouldn’t come from a need to be accepted or liked because of the clothes you wear. Instead, your choices should spring from a rock-solid foundation that says, “God loves me. He fashioned and designed me! I’m special just the way I am!”

Friday
APPLYING

» Read Matthew 6:25.

» Make a list of your top five favorite pieces of clothing. Next to each one, write why you like it. Look back over your answers. Do you like the things you like because of comfort, your own tastes, or what others think? Does this list tell you anything about your values?

Now think about why you value yourself as a person. Remember, you’re not just this season’s fad—you’re here for eternity!
### TOP FIVE CLOTHING ITEMS

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### WHAT MAKES ME SPECIAL IN GOD’S EYES?

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