

❁ Introduction ❁

A mature sunflower spends the whole day with its face toward the sun: the face of the flower begins the day facing east, and traces the path of the sun throughout the day, ending the day with its face toward the west.

Interesting, then, that Jesus compares people to flowers in Matthew 6:28-30. We should take our cue from sunflowers and spend our days with our faces turned, not toward the sun, but toward the Son. This is especially important for young women – girls becoming adults. As you go through the intense change that marks this time of your life, it becomes even *more* important for you to find your anchor – to keep your face turned firmly toward His.

Keeping our faces turned toward Jesus will give us 4 things that the sun gives flowers. The sun keeps the flowers healthy, and keeping our faces toward Jesus will keep us spiritually healthy and maintained. The sun makes flowers grow, and keeping our faces toward Jesus will make sure that we grow into the women He would have us be. The sun fills the space around a flower with other healthy flowers, and keeping our faces on Jesus will fill the space around us with other flowers of the Son. Finally, the sun gives flowers rest and peace, and keeping our faces and our eyes on Jesus will give us rest and peace, both now and later.

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**1: WISHIN' ... AND HOPIN' ...
AND THINKIN ... AND PRAYIN'**

*** The Principle ***

Read the following Scriptures. Beside and beneath each one, write your thoughts on how this Scripture relates to meaningful prayer.

1. Philippians 4:6-7

2. 1 Samuel 2:1-10

*** Dear God ... ***

We all know we're supposed to pray. From the time we're little bitty kids, our parents pray with us at bedtime. We pray at meals. We pray in Bible classes. We watch men pray during worship.

But *why* do we pray? *How* do we pray? *For what* do we pray? We can very easily fall into a habit of mechanically saying the same thing each time before we begin a meal, when in our heads we're saying "Man, this food smells great, I can't wait to eat!"

A big part of turning our faces toward Jesus is learning to talk to God through Him, and learning to make that conversation *meaningful*, not just same old, same old.

3. Psalm 51 (yes, all of it)

❁ The Point ❁

Consider these questions, in light of the Scriptures you just read.

1. What is the point of giving God our “Christmas list” (“... make your requests known ...”)?
2. Who is the subject of Hannah’s prayer? Consider the context – does this seem unusual?
3. Judging from Psalm 51, what was David’s relationship with God?
4. How does David expect God to fulfill his requests?

**The Lord has heard
my supplication,
The Lord receives
my prayer.**

~ ~ Psalm 6:9

❁ The Purpose ❁

1. Name 3 important categories of subject matter for your prayers.
2. Come up with 5 people (individuals or types of people) for whom we should regularly pray.
3. What does your prayer life say about your relationship with God? What *can* it say?

❁ The Practical ❁

At some point during the next week, focus on making one of your prayers different. Pray about something different, for someone different, or work on a particular aspect of your relationship with God.



2: READING BETWEEN THE LINES

✿ RE: Your Message ✿

In the last lesson, we established that creating an ongoing, meaningful conversation with God through prayer is essential to keeping our faces turned toward Jesus.

However, the conversation needs to be more than just one way. Even though God doesn't whisper in our ear the way He used to speak to the people in the Bible, He still speaks to us, and what He has to say is still JUST as important.

It's way too easy for us to treat the Bible like a prop, or a reference book, or a message only for unbelievers, or any number of other things that it *isn't*. Let's learn to view the Bible as exactly what it is – God's relevant, important message for us, here, now, and God's end of our conversation with Him.

✿ The Principle ✿

Read the following Scriptures. Beside and beneath each one, write your thoughts on how this Scripture relates to Bible study and reading.

1. Ezra 7:10

2. Romans 10:1-4

3. Galatians 1:6-10

4. 2 Timothy 2:14-19

✿ The Point ✿

Consider these questions, in light of the Scriptures you just read.

1. How dedicated was Ezra to studying God's law? How do you think that showed up in his life?
2. What was the problem that Israel ran into in their zeal for God?
3. How do you think we can avoid "so quickly deserting" the gospel of Christ?
4. What does Paul say is in opposition to properly handling the word of truth?

2%

The percentage of respondents who said that they felt the strongest connection to God while reading a "sacred text."

Source: *Newsweek*, Aug. 29, 2005

✿ The Purpose ✿

1. Name 3 *tangible* ways in which we can be more devoted to God's word.
2. What are some of the ways in which we desert the gospel for another gospel, which really is not another?
3. Come up with 4 temptations to mishandle God's word. How can we sidestep these?

✿ The Practical ✿

At some point during the next week, find some way to increase your devotion to God's word. Make it something measurable. If you study a couple of nights a week, make a point to add a night or two. If you study every day, increase your amount or your focus of study.



3: OFT WE COME TOGETHER

✿ The Principle ✿

Read the following Scriptures. Beside and beneath each one, write your thoughts on how this Scripture relates to church attendance.

1. Hebrews 10:23-25

2. Psalm 122:1

✿ Going to Church ✿

We're spending our time in this section looking at things that we already know we're supposed to do, but making sure that we're actually *doing* them, and that we're doing them right. So far, we've discussed Bible study and prayer.

Another "duh" task associated with being a young woman in Christ is going to church. Many of us have been going to church for years. The vast majority of you come with your parents, and aren't really given much of a choice about going to church or not.

However, there's more to going to church than just getting dressed up and putting makeup on and sitting in a pew for an hour or two. There's a *reason* that God wants us to go to church! In order to really get that reason, though, we have to be going for the right reasons, putting the right things into it, and looking to get the right things out of it.

3. Malachi 1:7-13

❁ The Point ❁

Consider these questions, in light of the Scriptures you just read.

1. What is the opposite of forsaking the assembly?
2. Why should we be glad when it's time to go to church?
3. What was the problem with the people's worship in Malachi's time?

❁ The Purpose ❁

1. Name 3 reasons we should assemble with other Christians.
2. Name 3 ways to get into a glad mindset when it's time for worship.
3. Name 3 ways to avoid duplicating Israel's mistakes as catalogued in Malachi.

**The Lord has heard
my supplication,
The Lord receives
my prayer.**

~ ~ Psalm 6:9

❁ The Practical ❁

At some point during the next week, focus on going to church for the right reasons. Whether it's Wednesday night when you're tired and just really don't want to go, or Sunday afternoon when you don't want to wake up from your nap, force yourself into the right mindset.



4: THE LADY AND THE TRAMP

☼ How to Be a Girl ☼

We've spent the last couple of weeks studying maintenance issues. These are things we already know we need to do, but we can always work on doing a better job of. We looked at the importance of maintaining a meaningful prayer conversation with God, and the necessity of letting God talk to us through useful study of His word.

Being Sunflowers also produces new traits and characteristics in us, though. One of those traits is having what Peter calls a "gentle and quiet spirit." There are a number of things that God calls women to that are different from what God calls men to. Women, for instance, are not especially called to be leaders. Men, on the other hand, are not called to be submissive to their wives.

Let's spend some time examining what exactly the Holy Spirit, through Peter, calls us to, and work on turning our faces to Him by having a gentle and quiet spirit.

☼ The Principle ☼

Read the following Scriptures. Beside and beneath each one, write your thoughts on how this Scripture relates to having a gentle and quiet spirit.

1. 1 Peter 3:1-6

2. Genesis 18:10-15

3. 1 Timothy 2:9-12

❁ The Point ❁

Consider these questions, in light of the Scriptures you just read.

1. What does *gentle* mean? Use a dictionary and a Bible dictionary to come up with some alternate meanings.
2. What does *quiet* mean? Use a dictionary and a Bible dictionary to come up with some alternate meanings.
3. What meanings do you think Peter was talking about? Consider the context of the passage, as well as similar material in 1 Timothy 2.
4. In what way did Sarah have a gentle and quiet spirit?

❁ The Purpose ❁

1. Come up with three ways in which a gentle and quiet spirit is demonstrated. How can you tell when someone has one?

On Being a Lady

*What outward form and feature are
He guesseth but in part;
But what within is good and fair
He seeth with the heart.*

– Samuel Coleridge Taylor,
"To A Lady, Offended by a Sportive
Observation"

2. What are three ways in which we're tempted to abandon our gentle and quiet spirit?
3. Think of three habits that will help us develop a gentle and quiet spirit.

❁ The Practical ❁

At some point during the next week, consciously force yourself into a gentle and quiet spirit. When you're tempted to fly off the handle, make yourself stop. When you really want to be cutting and nasty, don't. When you're freaking out about something, quit. Come up with your own ways to find a gentle and quiet spirit.



**5: THERE'S GOTTA BE MORE TO
LIFE ...**

✿ I wanna talk about me ✿

So far, we've looked at establishing a conversation with God – both through meaningful prayer with Him, as well as reading His responses to us when we usefully read His word. We've also examined His desire for us to have a gentle and quiet spirit.

Another "new trick" that we need to learn is to get out of ourselves. We expect self-centeredness in very small children. We would be surprised, to say the least, if an infant politely tapped its mother on the shoulder and said, "Excuse me, mom, whenever you've got a moment free, I'd appreciate being fed – but no big rush on that." Infants are expected to be selfish, because they don't know any better.

We, however, do know better. Let's examine, then, getting the focus off ourselves and where it belongs.

✿ The Principle ✿

Read the following Scriptures. Beside and beneath each one, write your thoughts on how this Scripture relates to focusing on others.

1. Ephesians 1:5-14

2. Psalm 8:3-4

3. Matthew 22:35-40

4. Philippians 2:2-7

✿ The Point ✿

Consider these questions, in light of the Scriptures you just read.

1. According to Ephesians 1, what is the purpose of the spiritual blessings we've received?
2. Compared to everything else, how important are we, really?
3. How is it that the entire law depended on the commandments to love God and others?
4. What common purpose should we have that will give us unity in the church?

When heaven's stagehands direct the spotlight toward the star of the show, I need no sunglasses. No light falls on me.

~~Max Lucado, *It's Not About Me*

✿ The Purpose ✿

1. Come up with 3 reasons why the world does not revolve around ME.
2. What are some situations in which we convince ourselves that, really, *WE* are what it's all about?
3. Think of three ways in which we can serve others, rather than ourselves.

✿ The Practical ✿

At some point during the next week, find some way to devote yourself to someone else. Help your mom out without being asked. Take your little sister's shoes upstairs rather than yelling at her to do it herself. Turn the internet off 10 minutes early and write a note to one of the shut-ins from church. AND, when you do this, record your observations – how do you feel after doing this?



**6: WALK LIKE A MAN ... TALK
LIKE A MAN**

❁ Ladies Don't ❁

OK, so we're supposed to have a gentle and quiet spirit, and we're supposed to get out of ourselves and focus on others. But is that *all* that God requires of His young ladies?

The fact that we are young ladies and not young men means that there is yet more that God requires of us. There are different requirements that God places on men than on women. Men are called on to lead their families and the church. Women are called on to be the rulers of their households, in submission to their husbands.

My mother-in-law has long used the justification "Ladies Don't" for many of her rules for her daughter. While all of her rules don't necessarily apply to us, let's see where God's word says, "Ladies Don't."

❁ The Principle ❁

Read the following Scriptures. Beside and beneath each one, write your thoughts on how this Scripture relates to being a lady.

1. Proverbs 21:9; 25:24; 21:19; 14:1; 19:13; 27:15

2. Titus 2:4-5

3. 1 Timothy 2:9-15

4. Isaiah 3:16-26

✿ The Point ✿

Consider these questions, in light of the Scriptures you just read.

1. What does *contentious* mean? What are some ways in which we can be contentious?
2. What does *sensible* mean? What root word do you see there?
3. What does it mean for a woman to be one who is "making a claim to godliness?"
4. What kind of girls do the women of Judah in Isaiah 3 sound like?

**Many daughters
have done nobly,
But you excel them
all!**

~~Prov. 31:29

✿ The Purpose ✿

1. Name 3 attributes of the speech of a Godly young woman.
2. Name 3 ways in which inattention in terms of modesty can get us into trouble.
3. Name 3 reasons why dressing or acting "sexy" is a BAD idea for an unmarried woman.

✿ The Practical ✿

At some point during the next week (or, really, at ALL points), focus on making sure that your behavior is that of a woman making a claim to Godliness. Pick one area we've talked about to really make an effort there, and be prepared to share your efforts next week.



7: THIS LITTLE LIGHT OF MINE

✿ **I'm not weird; I'm different** ✿

In addition to keeping His flowers healthy, and making sure His flowers grow, the Son also fills the space around His flowers with other flowers. However, like the other characteristics we've looked at, this occurs when we work with the Son.

That means that we need to be concerned with how we can go about seeing the space around us fill up with other Flowers of the Son. Among other things, we need to be sure that the light that we shine is one that reflects the Son.

When we were kids, we sang the song "This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine ..." As we get older, though, the song tends to turn into "This little light ... what light? I don't have a light!" Let's spend some time studying what God's word tells us about being a light to those around us, and thereby bringing them to know the Son.

✿ **The Principle** ✿

Read the following Scriptures. Beside and beneath each one, write your thoughts on how this Scripture relates to shining your light.

1. Matthew 5:14-16

2. Romans 12:1-2

3. 1 Peter 1:14-16

4. 1 Timothy 4:12

❁ The Point ❁

Consider these questions, in light of the Scriptures you just read.

1. What is the purpose of letting our light shine?
2. To what should we be conformed? What does that mean?
3. How much influence can a young person have?

❁ The Purpose ❁

1. Name 3 ways in which our light can bring glory to God.
2. Think of 3 places that we should focus on being conformed to God.

*Even the smallest
person can change the
course of the future.*

Galadriel, Fellowship of the Ring

3. Name 3 people on whom we, as young people, can have an influence. How?.

❁ The Practical ❁

At some point during the next week, focus on remembering that you are shining a light – someone's light. Notice the way your influence affects someone around you, and notice how they change their behavior in response to yours. Be prepared to discuss next week.

✿ The Point ✿

Consider these questions, in light of the Scriptures you just read.

1. How do we show the world that we are disciples of Christ? What does that *mean*?
2. What does it mean to bear one another's burdens?
3. What problem did Paul say the young widows would run into if they were supported by the church? How does that relate to us?

✿ The Purpose ✿

1. Name 3 *specific* things we can do to show that we are Christ's disciples.
2. Think of 3 *specific* burdens that you can bear. Share those that are appropriate to share.
3. Come up with 3 ways we can avoid idleness in our lives.

**Only a life lived
for others is
worthwhile.**

**--Albert
Einstein**

✿ The Practical ✿

At some point this week, go out of your way to serve someone else. Do more than just include them in your worldview - do SOMETHING to make their life better. If possible, think of something that you can do that will not be traced back to you - something you will not receive credit for. Be prepared to discuss next week.

✿ The Point ✿

Consider these questions, in light of the Scriptures you just read.

1. What was John's purpose in identifying Jesus?
2. As Jesus is leaving the earth, what does He tell those who are watching? Is this significant?
3. How concerned were Peter and John with the consequences of teaching the gospel?
4. If God hasn't given us a spirit of fear, where does that spirit come from?

**Therefore, those who
had been scattered
went about preaching
the word.**

-- Acts 8:4

✿ The Purpose ✿

1. Name three hurdles that we face in talking to our friends about Jesus.
2. Name three reasons we should talk to our friend anyway.
3. Name three people you want to talk to about Jesus.

✿ The Practical ✿

Do it! At some point this week, talk to SOMEONE about Jesus. Try to think of at least three people you can invite to a church service, and then. . . do it!!!

✿ The Point ✿

Consider these questions, in light of the Scriptures you just read.

1. What should keep us from striving, or from not being still?
2. Does worrying do us any good?
3. What should we do instead of worrying?
4. Is there *anything* that we should worry about?

**The Lord knows the days
of the blameless,
And their inheritance will
be forever.**

--Psalm 37:18

✿ The Purpose ✿

1. Name three things that you, individually, worry about.
2. As a group, think of a Bible verse/Bible reason to chill out about the things you worry about.

✿ The Practical ✿

At some point over this next week, focus on chilling out. Find some issue that your mind is really worrying over, and consciously decide to give it to God and quit worrying about it. Then, enjoy His peace!!



11: I AM BEAUTIFUL

✿ No Matter What They Say ✿

We've spent some time over the last weeks talking about having peace in our status as Sonflowers. We can have peace that God is in control and will work things out for us. However, that is only one way in which He gives us peace. We can also have peace in terms of having self-esteem.

The term self-esteem actually just means to respect yourself. It's a term for the balance we should have in how we view ourselves. We shouldn't be arrogant—thinking we're all that and a bag of chips. Neither should we hate ourselves—thinking we're not even the bag of chips, much less all that.

Self-esteem is a term that gets thrown around a lot in our culture, and for that reason, it's easy to dismiss the concept altogether. However, the Bible has some important things to say about the way we view ourselves. Let's look at what God has to say about what He thinks of us.

✿ The Principle ✿

Read the following Scriptures. Beside and beneath each one, write your thoughts on how this Scripture relates to our self-esteem.

1. Genesis 1:26-27

2. Psalm 139:14

3. Matthew 6:28-30

4. 1 Peter 3:3-4

✿ The Point ✿

Consider these questions, in light of the Scriptures you just read.

1. What does it mean that we're made in God's image?
2. How are we wonderfully made?
3. How does God clothe us?
4. How should we be concerned about clothing ourselves?

**I say to everyone among
you not to think more highly
of himself than he ought to
think, but think so as to
have sound judgment.**

--Romans 12:3

✿ The Purpose ✿

1. How do we doubt God's design?
2. How should we react instead?
3. Does this mean we're not supposed to improve ourselves?

✿ The Practical ✿

Pick a day over the next week to focus entirely on clothing yourself with godliness. Spend the day focusing as much attention on your soul as you usually do on your hair. See how you feel about yourself at the end of the day.



12: HOW FAR IS HEAVEN?

✿ Knockin' on Heaven's Door ✿

We've spent some time over the last weeks talking about having peace in our status as Sonflowers. We can have peace that God is in control and will work things out for us. We can also have peace by making sure our self-esteem is what it should be.

That leaves out the most important aspect of our peace in Christ. Because of Christ, we can be confident of our eternal destiny. Or, at least, we should be able to. All too often, though, it's easy to doubt that we're really going to Heaven, and sometimes it's even easy to doubt that heaven exists.

Most of us have a pretty nebulous idea of what Heaven will be like. A bible class teacher once asked his students to illustrate what they thought heaven would be like. He got everything from a castle and throne to ice cream cones and pretty flowers. God doesn't really tell us many specifics of what Heaven will entail.

He tells us enough, though, to be sure we want to go there. The question is, can we really BE sure? Let's see what the Bible has to say about that.

✿ The Principle ✿

Read the following Scriptures. Beside and beneath each one, write your thoughts on how this Scripture relates to our assurance of heaven.

1. 1 Peter 1:3-5
2. 1 John 3:18-24
3. 1 Timothy 1:15-16
4. 2 Timothy 4:7-8

✿ The Point ✿

Consider these questions, in light of the Scriptures you just read.

1. Can we be sure heaven exists?
2. Do our consciences "know better" than God?
3. Was Paul a "good guy" before becoming a Christian?
4. How sure was Paul that he was going to heaven?

*Our citizenship is in
heaven ...*

~Phil. 3:20

✿ The Purpose ✿

1. List 3 reasons you doubt Heaven, or doubt that you're going there.
2. Take your Bible and find God's answers to your doubts.
3. List 3 things that God's grace has overcome for you.

✿ The Practical ✿

At some point over the next week, make a conscious effort to reassure yourself of the goal and of your ability to reach it, with God's help. Then, let Him help you!!



13: REVIEW

☼ Health ☼

1. What kind of relationship should our prayers reflect? How?

2. Why does God want us to read the Bible?

3. What should we gain from assembling with the saints?

☼ Growth ☼

1. What does a gentle and quiet spirit look like?

2. Why is it important to focus on others rather than on self?

3. What advantages are there to being ladylike?

✿ Sharing ✿

1. What kind of actions let our lights shine?
2. What kind of reward should we expect for bearing another's burden?
3. Who is it that truly benefits if we don't talk to others about Christ?

✿ Peace ✿

1. Why should we avoid worrying?
2. How does being a Sonflower affect our self-esteem?
3. How sure can we be that we're going to Heaven? How sure are you?