

Selections from the Classic

*Beautiful
Girlhood*

Mabel Hale

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1. Opening Flowers

“Rejoice... in your youth, and let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth.” Eccl. 11:9

Have you ever watched the development of a rose from the tiny bud to the open flower? The bud held little more promise of beauty than the leaves around it, but day by day, it grew until it was full and round. One day you saw a thread of color, a promise of the rose to be, peeping through the covering of green. Each morning you saw the thread of color widening until the bud burst asunder, and the flower was revealed. You looked at the blossoming bud with admiration and delight, although you did not yet see the rose in its full size and beauty. You had to wait until it was full-grown and fully open, till it had reached its maturity, before you could behold the complete flower. But in the opening blossom, you had the beauty of the mature rose blended with the grace and charm of the bud.

Girlhood is the opening flower of womanhood. It has charms of its own. The wonderful change from the child to the woman, the marvelous blossoming of a young girl, will always be God's great miracle in life's garden. The half-open rose is like a girl on her way to becoming a woman. In this half bloom, we can see both the beauty of the bud and the wonderful coloring of the rose. We see the familiar traits of childhood that have always charmed us and held our affections, blended with the graces and powers of womanhood.

So often girls are in a hurry to grow up, but please don't miss this time. Appreciate the golden days in which you are living. Of course, you have your perplexities and problems, but enjoy the carefree days of youth. These are often the happiest days of life. You are standing "where the brook and river meet," where the toys of childhood are put aside for the greater things of womanhood.

Enjoy the present. This is your time. Dream bright and happy dreams, and aspire to aim high.

Girlhood should be a happy time. The blush of youth is on the cheeks, and the rich, red blood of youth is in the veins, while the cares of life have not yet pressed upon your heart. Life, to the average girl, is full of song and laughter. She looks forward with a magic view that hides all the sorrows and terrors of the future and reveals, in bright hues, all the joys and blessings of life. Her heart beats with eagerness to begin the conquests which she is prepared to tackle on the path ahead. From her point of view, there are no defeats, no failures, and no disappointments. Every thorn is hidden, and every rose is revealed. Her joy and optimism are so contagious that her presence can cheer the dullest household and set its pulse beating with hope and laughter. Even the elderly who have suffered through the many painful trials of life cannot help but come under the spell of her charms and smile with her. With songs of hope on her lips and enthusiasm in her steps, she goes forward to meet life joyously and unafraid.

Enjoy the present. This is your time. Dream bright and happy dreams and aspire to aim high. I would be a pessimist if I saw evil in the radiant dreams and fair hopes that now brighten your skies and make your path light.

Still, girlhood is not without danger. The rose can at times be damaged and never come to full bloom, even if the bud has begun to open with the greatest promise, and the girl with the brightest prospects and hopes of womanhood may fail to reach her goal if she is tainted with the scars of sin. Her God-given inheritance is a pure and beautiful maturity full of usefulness, but there are things that can rob her of her happiness. Just as we must guard the bud-laden rose vines so they are not trampled, we must guard our precious souls, so we are not robbed of that purity that leads to our peace and happiness.

Girlhood is the time of preparation. Maturity and independence can come later. For still a little while longer, the maturing young woman must remain under the guidance of godly parents and instructors to help lead her in the right paths, but don't worry. In a few short years, the parents and teachers will no longer be needed, and you will step into life's harness and feel the care and pain that have been the lot of women since the beginning. So take joy in your youth, dream your dreams, sip the honey and nectar from every passing hour, but guard your feet so they do not slip into one of the devil's traps along the way. Be pure, be true, be sincere, be earnest, and life will bring you peace and happiness.

2. From the Child to the Woman

“Who can find a virtuous wife? For her worth is far above rubies.” Proverbs 31:10

Childhood holds untold potential. It is true that many never reach their high aspirations or build beautiful characters. Many young people grow up to become nearly useless members of society, but it is never because they had no possibility or potential for better things. While circumstances, environment, and heredity all play a part in our development, we do not have to be ruled by these things. God is more interested in a good character, and this depends upon maintaining a godly disposition, and effort. God expects every child to grow into a good and noble person, and He has given everyone the potential to obtain a pure and noble character. Those who fail to become great have, somewhere along the line, wasted the talents that God has given them.

Childhood holds such promise, but womanhood holds its fulfillment. Youth, those golden days of girlhood, is the transition between the two. This change is almost too great for us to comprehend. We look on in amazement when we see the tiny green bud develop into a mature rose of brilliant hue; how much more wonderful is the change from the immaturities of childhood to the beauty and grace of young womanhood! We see this miracle performed before us continually, and yet we never cease to wonder at the sweetness, charm, and beauty of every newly budded woman.

Wonderful changes take place in the body of a girl in this transition. She takes on a new form and new symmetry. Organs that have been dormant during childhood suddenly wake into life and activity. She becomes not merely a person, but a woman. And with this change in her physical body also comes wonderful changes in her nature. She has new emotions, new thoughts, and new dreams. She has a new view of life and takes a new course of action. She changes so completely that it is as if she has entered into an entirely new world.

The awakening comes quickly. While she will not know the day or the week the change comes, or be conscious of the miracle in her nature, the things of childhood will fast slip away. The little girl loses interest in her play world. The same little girl who not so long ago played with her dolls all day long now leaves them in their little beds for weeks at a time, until she finally appeals to her mother, "These dolls are taking up too much space in my room. Can we get rid of them?" Mother and Father look on with dismay as they see these changes, knowing that their little girl is growing up and realizing that they must make room in their heart and life for the young woman developing before their eyes. They would put it off a little longer if they could because they will miss their little daughter—their baby girl. But even the love of the parent cannot stop the hands of time.

Youth cannot stand still. The changes in those early years happen so fast. Her heart is so filled with a desire for change and variety that even a few days without change grow boring to her. The more

excitement and change in life, the happier she is. Life to her is a succession of pleasant surprises.

Finally, the child becomes a woman. She slipped into girlhood naturally, and just as naturally, she will lay aside her girlish ways and settle into womanhood. Life will take on a more sober look, and she will see things more distinctly. Many of the warnings and much of the advice that she received in her girlhood, which seemed hard and unnecessary at the time, now appear in their true light, and now she can look back and thank her parents and teachers who gave these words of advice. She may even blush with embarrassment, thinking of some of her girlish escapades, and become more embarrassed when she thinks of some of the things she wanted to do, but Mother would not allow. She begins to talk quieter and laugh less impulsively as new feelings of responsibility press upon her. Life begins to look more serious than it used to, and she wonders how she ever could have been so careless of consequences. Our child is now a woman, and her nature craves something more real and satisfying than the fleeting pleasures of youth.

You are now in these busy, changing years. I have no better wish and prayer for you than that you may arrive, in due time, into the glorious state of womanhood, with hearts pure and hands clean. Good women are needed everywhere, and the call for them will never grow faint. There will always be responsible places in life to be filled by women who are true and noble. Their price is above rubies; that is, their worth is more than all the riches of this world.

3. Making Herself Beautiful

“Charm is deceitful and beauty is passing, but a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised.”
Proverbs 31:30

Sometimes, much to my amusement, I read in the magazines those comical letters that girls write to the beauty specialists. If these letters could all be put together into one long letter, it would read something like this: “How can I make myself pretty so that boys will like me for my good looks? I want to get rid of all my blemishes, my freckles, my pug nose, my stringy hair, and my pimples. I want my body to be the perfect shape, not too stout or too thin. Tell me, Miss Specialist, how to make myself beautiful.” Long ago, a wise man answered this question in words that are still appropriate today. He said, “Charm is deceitful and beauty is passing, but a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised” (Prov. 31:30).

Girls are typically lovers of beauty. Beautiful homes, beautiful furnishings, beautiful flowers, beautiful fruits, beautiful faces—anything where beauty is found, there will be girls to admire it. From the time her little hands can reach up and her baby lips can lisp the words, she is admiring “pretty things.” And when she obtains a little of that beauty, she is overjoyed. Most girls long to be beautiful. There is a nature in woman as deep as humanity itself that compels her to strive for good looks, and there is nothing more tragic for a young girl than to be convinced she is ugly and undesirable. So many tears

have been shed over freckles or rough pimply skin. So much energy has been expended in painting and powdering and waving and curling herself into beauty!

A desire to be beautiful is not unwomanly, but we must remember that true beauty is not in the face. It is in the soul. There is a beauty so deep and lasting that it will shine out of the homeliest face and make it pretty. This is the beauty that we should strive to obtain first. It is a quality of the mind and heart that is manifested in proper words and actions. A happy heart, a smiling face, loving words and deeds, and a desire to be of service will make any girl beautiful.

A desire to be pretty to look at should not be entirely condemned. Beauty of face and form are not given to everyone, but when they are present, they can be a blessing if used rightly. Nevertheless, a girl should not feel damaged if she lacks physical beauty. Even without meeting the world's standard of physical beauty, the woman who is tastefully and tidily dressed, with a clean life, is attractive and pleasing to those around her. Her personal care increases the charm of her personality, making her more attractive, and every girl should take pleasure in keeping herself presentable and attractive, not only when she goes out or has guests but while around the house as well. But when a girl paints and powders till she looks like an advertisement for cosmetics, she shows a foolish heart, which is not beautiful.

True beauty is first found in a pure and humble character. This is the beauty for which every girl should strive—the beauty that comes from

unselfishness and usefulness. Beauty of face and form is secondary in importance. Though not to be despised, if physical beauty leads a girl to think too highly of herself, it becomes a curse to her.

In the classroom of a certain school, some girls were talking about who had the most beautiful hands. The teacher listened as they compared hands and told secrets of keeping them pretty. After a while, the teacher spoke up and said, "I think Jennie Higgins has the most beautiful hands of any girl in school."

"Jennie!" the girls replied, "Her hands are rough and red and look like she doesn't take care of them at all. I never thought of them as beautiful."

"I have seen those hands carrying food to the sick and soothing the brow of the elderly. She is her widowed mother's main help. She milks cows and carries wood and water. And yes, she washes dishes morning and night to save her mother from the hard work. I have never known her to be too tired to speak a kind word to her little sister or help her in her play. I have seen those busy hands helping her brother with his kite. I tell you, I think they are the most beautiful hands I have ever seen because they are always busy helping someone."

Seek goodness and purity first, then strive to keep the body in harmony with the beauty of the heart. Take time to make yourself presentable, but do not use the time in front of your mirror that should be given to serving others. Let your main goal be to beautify your heart and spirit, not your face and form. Seek the true beauty of a godly character that lasts even until old age.

4. A Sunny Disposition

“A merry heart makes a cheerful countenance.” Proverbs 15:13.

Once I looked at the face of a dear little boy whose bright eyes and sunny smile cheered my heart. I asked him what his name was, and he answered, “Daddy calls me, ‘Sunshine John.’” Then I knew that his smile was merely the glow of his sunny heart. Any home is blessed if it has a sunshine maker.

Every girl owes it to herself and her associates to be sunny and cheerful. A happy girlhood is so beautiful that it cannot afford to be spoiled by frowns and pouts. There are enough clouds in life without making them out of a bad temper. A girl who is full of smiles and sunshine is a fountain of joy to all who know her. The world has enough of tears and sorrow, and her sweet, smiling face can help scatter the clouds of life. Could a girl ask for a better calling than to be a joy maker to those around her?

Every girl will have her share of troubles in life. If they do not come early in life, they will come eventually. She will have her share of shadows. She cannot escape them. But it is not the deep shadows that generally cloud a girl’s life and make her unhappy and pouty. It is the little things, insignificant in themselves, which could have been passed by with hardly a thought if resisted one by one, that irritate the temper and destroy the happiness. Every day there will be circumstances that will force her to choose between pouting with bitter complaints or

smiling and sharing a kind word. If she can pass these little bumps and stay sweet, then she has mastered the art of being sunny.

If a girl can leave home every morning for school or work with a song in her heart and a smile on her lips, and be ready with a “good morning” for her friends, and an encouraging smile for the old, or ill, or those otherwise in need of encouragement, then she has found a path of usefulness that will make her a blessing to many people.

There is a real art in smiling. Some people smile or grin so much that it becomes monotonous to those who look at them. These grinning people never seem to think who or what their smile is for. It is as if their mouths were formed that way. Other people have the kind of smile upon their faces that suggests sarcasm. But there are still others, and I have met girls who have mastered the art, whose smiles are tear-chasers. There is something so understanding in their glance and smile that they make you feel like they care for you and want you to be happy.

Sometimes, when I have been discouraged or depressed by trials of my own, a bright, hopeful smile from someone has cheered me profoundly. In fact, we are very much dependent upon each other for courage and happiness, so let us be dispensers of joy as we go through life, smiling and glad. If I am in trouble, having acted foolishly in some way, then I do not appreciate the grinning smile. I would rather see a face looking into mine that shows a little sympathy and understanding for my trouble. Such friends become a real comfort and joy.

Smiles and gladness are like sweet peas, in that the more you gather and give away, the more you have. Leave your sweet peas on the vines, and the flowers are soon gone, but gather them closely each day, and they will blossom and last all summer long. If you save your smiles for special occasions, they will dry up, but give them out at every opportunity, and they will grow and multiply.

Live in the sunshine. Look on the bright side of things, because there is always a bright side. No matter what the circumstances, find something to be thankful for. If a girl is poor, she is saved many of the temptations that come to the rich. If rich, she has many opportunities for doing good that a poor girl does not have. If she is strong and well, she can be used to good advantage in this busy world, but if she is weak and frail, her life can brighten the home. Often the sick one is the most cheerful of the family, in spite of her pain. Everyone can be a sunshine bearer. God smiles on all who are willing to carry His smiles on to others.

Remember, the faces of our friends are like mirrors. We can look into them and see the expression of our own face. If we come to them smiling, we see a smile in return, but if we meet them with a frown, they will frown back at us. Try catching the eye of someone who is sad, then smile at them and see if they answer back in their face. This is especially true with children. If you come to them angrily, they will be angry in return, so be cheery, sunny, and happy, both for your own good, and for the sake of others.

5. The Beauty of Truthfulness

“Buy the truth, and do not sell it.” Prov. 23:23.

It was once asked, “What is truth?” Truth is the foundation of all things, the rock upon which all things find stable and dependable rest. When truth is gone, there is nothing left to rely on. A life is useless if it lacks the elements of truth.

Truth beautifies the wearer. It sits like a royal crown on the head of all who obtain it. Nothing makes a face so beautiful as a noble heart and a clear conscience. One whose motives are all pure, and who has spoken the truth, can look the world in the face without flinching. The light of honor and sincerity brighten the eye. While the physical features may be ordinary and the complexion imperfect, these beautiful qualities of the soul will cover all outward defects and give to the homeliest face a beauty that is beyond compare. I would rather be known for the beauty of my character than the beauty of my face—wouldn't you?

A lie is cowardly. While there may be a million excuses for our lies, the only real reason behind it is cowardice. Whether the lie was told to cover a fault, acted out to pretend something that is untrue, or said in spite and hatefulness, cowardice is the real cause of its existence.

The most common lie, and perhaps the least culpable, is the one told to cover a mistake or fault. This is done because the offender is afraid to face the consequences of their actions. But a truly brave heart

will not give in to this weakness. It is better to look up and tell the truth, even if the confession will bring punishment and disgrace. It is better to be true in heart than to have merely the appearance of truth on the outside. To be truthful is courageous.

The worst kind of lie is one told deliberately to hurt another person. When the final judgment comes, such lies will be judged as murder, for the same evil motive lies behind each. In murder, the perpetrator had the courage to strike the death blow, but in the hurtful lie, he was too cowardly to kill outright, so he stabbed in the back from the dark. If such lies could be painted in their true colors, we may think twice before giving in to them.

The silliest lie is one acted out by a person's pretending to be richer, or cooler, or more popular than one is. I'm sure you have seen this. The people are always showing off, trying to be with the cool crowd, to dress and appear fashionable. Whether rich or poor, anyone who forms their own social clique, which only honors those within and leaves others out, is indulging in this lie. Those of real worth hate such two-facedness.

There is an old adage that says, "Always speak the truth." That does not mean all the truth should always be spoken. There are many things that are true that are better left unspoken. Unpleasant things will not help anyone by being spoken. It is better to remain silent than to speak and offend someone.

If I were looking for a girl to fill a responsible position at work, one of the first questions I would ask would be, "Is she truthful?" She may have the

knowledge and ability, she may be nicely groomed with good manners, but I would not consider her if I could not trust her word. A girl who does not always speak the truth puts herself in a position to be always mistrusted. Nothing destroys confidence as quickly as lies, and it is hard to get trust back once it is lost.

The best advice for any girl is to always speak the truth from the heart—to love the truth and keep it as her most important possession. As long as she knows in her own heart that she has been true, that she has not lied or spoken deceitfully, she can face the world courageously.

The great wall of truth is absolutely necessary to maintain our self-worth. A character that lacks the foundation of truth is weak, and in time it will break down, no matter how high the aspirations may be, and no matter how great the girl's ethics. Practical, everyday truthfulness in the little things of life is the only safe path for a girl to pursue. Hold truth fast. Do not let it go. Be honest and true. Let your words be spoken from a heart that is not filled with deception.

The really truthful person cannot carelessly break a promise. Her word is sacred, and when she has said that she will or will not do something, she can be depended upon. I have at times heard mothers say of their daughters, "She promised me before she left that she would not go there, and I know she will keep her promise." What a happy mother she must be who can speak with such confidence in her daughter. There is no circumstance in life where lies are better than truth. You cannot place too high a value on the truth, and it cannot be loved too greatly.

6. Character Building

“Let each one take heed how he builds on it.” 1 Corinthians 3:10

The most precious earthly treasure a girl can have is character. Her character is what she really is. If she will look beyond what she appears to be, and what people think of her, and look at her heart fairly and honestly, judging herself by the standards of right and wrong that are present in her own conscience, without ignoring and silencing her good conscience, then she can know whether she has a good character. Even when a girl is misunderstood and misjudged, if she knows she has done the right thing, there is peace, but if she has not done the right thing, no amount of outward praise will give her peace.

Character is not given to us. We build it ourselves. Others may give us the material, set before us right standards and ideals, give us reproof and correction, inspire our actions and mold our thoughts—but in the end, we all build our own character. It is we, in union with Christ, who choose from the influences around us, copy the right ideals, reach the pure standards, and make ourselves what we are.

Youth is the building time. From infancy through childhood, the material has been brought together that we may use in our building. There are home influences and teachings, moral and intellectual instructions received in school, religious precepts and counsels in church, the instruction of faithful friends, and countless other avenues that provide material that

we can use in our building. The girl who has been raised in a Christian home by careful parents has a better opportunity to build a good character than she, whose life has been less guarded against the evils of the world around her. Still, God's grace is sufficient for all, and those who will appeal to Christ for help may find power to build a pure and noble character.

This material is most prominently built into our characters in the days of youth. While we are young, our nature is more moldable, and habits are more easily formed and broken than when we grow old. Day by day, the girl, whether conscious of what she is doing or not, is gathering the building material from the things around her and using it to build her character. Truth or lies, love or hatred, obedience or rebellion—day by day she builds.

Through childhood, the parent is responsible for her conduct, but as she grows, their responsibility lessens, and hers increases. Some girls who have been obedient become independent and rebellious at this time, building things in their characters that they regret later in life—things that end up hurting them in years to come. On the other hand, some who have been disobedient now wake to their responsibility and start building those things that are good, honest, and noble. But more often, she who has learned to obey in her childhood builds the better character.

Character building goes on every day, but no building is put up if the builder does not first have a picture of what they want it to be like, and no good character is built if the builder does not have in her mind a picture of the woman she wants to be. The

carpenter will not try to make a mansion from the blueprint of a barn, and a girl cannot build a good character if she is constantly surrounded by careless friends who are indecent and rebellious.

A good character requires effort and sacrifice. That is why it is easier to build a bad character than a good character. One can always go downhill with less difficulty than up and glide with the current easier than rowing against it, and it is easier to drift with the crowd than to stand for the right. The bad character grows without effort. Those who get drunk and fall into sexual misconduct are weak. It requires no resistance to sin, but a good character requires one to be strong, so choose carefully. If you remain strong and firm to principle now, it will pay off in the end.

The character you are building now will either bring satisfaction all your life or years of pain. So many make a wreck of their lives by foolish choices they made in their youth, then they ask, "How did my life end up like this?" Make a line that you will not cross, and remain firm. Weigh your decisions in light of God's standards. Ask yourself, "Is this right?" "Does it meet the approval of God, my parents, or my teachers?" Many pleasurable things that seem okay turn out to be evil and result in pain. Everything that is taboo and dangerous, which hints of rebellion or sinful pleasure, should be rejected without hesitation. To do right will often cost a struggle, but it is always worth the effort. Don't allow yourself to be guided by what others do. Rise above the crowd. Christ is our perfect Pattern, and those who form their lives after Him will build the best character.

7. A New Awakening

“Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth.” Ecclesiastes 12:1

Every girl who has had ordinary religious training knows that there is an all-powerful God, also known as our heavenly Father, who rules over the world. She also knows the story of Christ’s life and death, and why He came to earth to suffer and to die, and many with an impressionable nature have grown to profess Christ and serve Him while still young.

As the child enters her teen years, there comes a deeper awakening, which sometimes seems to bring the girl into the very presence of God. Somewhere along in these years, the child who felt responsible only to her parents for her actions now begins to realize that she must answer to God Himself. Before, this child thought of wrong only as something forbidden by her parents, but now she begins to answer to a higher power.

When the girl reaches the age where she feels accountable to God for her own actions, she starts to feel the need of higher help in order to do right. She looks with a new curiosity at the conduct of others, even of her parents, and sees in their lives a lack of true conduct or motive. She finds herself unable to do what she knows she should do and realizes that her help must come from above.

This change of attitude toward God does not come instantly. But as the trees bud and leaf in the spring, every day bringing a gradual change until

they stand in full leaf, so the girl, week by week, develops and gains knowledge and experience until she stands a full-grown woman before her God. At first, there were only glimpses of what her character would be like and what her purpose in life was, but now she fully understands her duty to God. And as she sees her duty clearer and clearer before God, she realizes her shortcomings more and more. Then comes the natural cry of her heart for God, the longing of her soul for help from above.

This is how the young woman first awakens to her need and, in her need, finds the simple story of the cross. The power of Christ to save is now easily understood and embraced. The mind of the Christian girl has not been filled with the doubts and questions that often hinder those who disbelieve, and the truths of religion are quickly grasped. This is when the young Christian begins to feel the first touch of divine forgiveness and begins to see their life as a life of service to their God.

This awakening of the conscience toward God is an amazing thing. It brings a slight uneasiness that causes the young heart to stop, ponder, consider, and turn the thoughts to holy things. If a girl will open her heart at this time, and begin to ask honest questions about God and religion, seeking to know the truth, she will find the answers in the preaching of God's Word and will feel a strong impulse to give her life to Him. Looking at her own selfish motives, passions, and inclinations, she will begin to feel shame and remorse for the wrongs that she has done and will feel sorry that she has not been a better girl.

Compared with the new life she beholds in Christ and His love, she sees herself as a sinner, lost and without the hope of Heaven. And when an opportunity is given, she will come to God with her dear young life.

This awakening of the heart to its sins, and the need for God's forgiveness, is called conviction. It is the Spirit of God that causes this conviction which whispers to the soul, pointing out its needs, and she who hardens her heart, and will not listen, is shutting her door to Christ. He will come again and again, knocking louder and louder as her needs are more clearly understood, but if she continues to reject the wooing of the Spirit, He will go away, leaving her heart harder than before.

When a girl yields to conviction, it brings her to repentance. And repentance will also make her willing to forgive others, just as she wants to be forgiven. When she has done all that she can do to turn from her sins, calling earnestly on God, she will be forgiven because God has promised to do so in His word. As she accepts God's forgiveness by faith, the burden of sin and guilt will go away, and in its place will come a feeling of peace and quietness.

In the Bible, this experience we have just been describing is called "conversion" and being "born again" (Acts 15:3; John 3:3). To be converted means to be changed. From this time on, it will be the young woman's joy and desire to strive to do things that are pleasing to God. She will find it easier to do right and will find a joy in the service of God that she never knew before. There is beauty untold in the Christian life and in service to God.

8. A Higher Calling

“And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.” Acts 11:26

A disciple of Christ is one who makes Christ her example and seeks to copy and honor Him in all things. God never meant for us to spend our years filled with the common and mundane rounds of life, with nothing higher or nobler to rise to. The heart cannot be fully satisfied with the material and mundane things that earth has to give. There was, planted in the heart from the beginning, a desire to know and understand higher things, and to commune with our Maker. One may become very intelligent, filling their mind with many things, but a person cannot be fully satisfied until they find God.

Christian womanhood is the only perfect womanhood. If this is true, then a girl will never reach all the beauty and perfection of girlhood until she reaches for Christian girlhood. The life of a Christian is not too hard for a girl to live if she looks to Jesus and strives to know Him and be like Him.

To be a Christian, one must be born again. Christian living is not something that people put on whenever they get ready, but it is the result of the change that comes into the lives of those who have given their hearts to God. A Christian has made Christ her guide and example, and she is not ashamed to tell her friends that she is a Christian. Though she may at times feel timid, she counts it an honor to be a servant of the Lord.

The Christian girl also studies her Bible and tries to reflect its teachings in her life. It is her guidebook, and she directs her path by its words. If she finds that anything is forbidden or spoken against in the Bible, she will give it up, being ready to do all that it tells her to do, out of a love for Christ.

When a girl is a Christian, she has learned where to go for strength and courage to do right. She knows the secret power of prayer and is often found in secret communion with God. The more she has learned to look to God in prayer and trust, the more beautiful her life will be.

Still, a Christian's life is not all sunshine and joy. Even Jesus did not pass through life without trials, and these trials come to every Christian life. One of the Gospel writers has said that it is expected that we will have "to suffer for His sake" (Philippians 1:29). Sufferings must come, but who would not be willing to bear a little pain for someone we love?

There is something about a clean, positive, Christian life that will make the Christian girl different from other girls. The Christian girl will not perfectly fit in with girls who only love the things of this world. They will want to go places and do things that she feels in her heart would not please God, so of course, she must refuse. They will talk about things and allow their minds and thoughts to dwell on things that, in her mind, the Christian girl knows are not right. They will feel uncomfortable in her presence. That is just the way it must be if we follow Christ.

In response, some people will criticize her, speak evil of her, and seek to make her life hard

because of her beliefs. She will be persecuted for her faith in many little ways. But for all that she may have to suffer from misunderstandings of this kind, God will supply grace and glory so that her life will be peaceful and happy anyway.

Those who think attaining Christian goals and standards make life boring or less noble are mistaken. The Christian religion crowns all goals and dreams with nobility, and it is only a rebuke and barrier to those things that are impure and evil. Only those who will fearlessly say, "I am a Christian," will obtain the highest standard of girlhood.

You may meet girls who seem to live good lives, but who do not profess to be Christians. They may even boast that they are as good as Christians without Jesus' help, but every act of true goodness is actually from Christ, whether we know it or not. Just as the moon reflects light from the sun, any goodness that we reflect comes from Christ. If these same people who boast of good works were raised in a place where Christian standards were not taught, they would be in as much heathen darkness as cannibals. It is foolish to brag about our own goodness.

Still, while some unbelievers live moral lives, there are other girls who claim to be Christians who do not live according to the Bible. This will always be. Everything that is good has a counterfeit—money, gold, jewels—everything of worth has its counterfeits, and Christianity does too. For this reason, the most important thing any girl can do is make sure she strives to have, not the reflection or the counterfeit, but the genuine religion of Christ.

9. A Pure Heart

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” Matthew 5:8

What a joy it is to look out the window on a clear morning after a snowstorm at the covering of pure whiteness, covering all that is unclean and ugly, hiding every defect and blemish, transforming every stick and dirt pile into things of beauty, leaving only a blue sky above and pure whiteness below! How beautiful to stand at the edge of a clear, calm pool, looking deep into the water without seeing anything unclean, and then put your lips up to a cup of the crystal liquid to take a drink, fresh from the spring that feeds the pool! Or to feel the sense of God’s presence that one feels out under the clear night sky, looking up at the stars that are shining down!

Similarly, to look into the clear, fearless eye of the man or woman whose heart is free from the condemnation of sin, or to see the quietness and confidence of old age that has come with cleanness of hands and purity of heart, gives strength to those who are struggling down the road of life. The look of innocent pleasure in the eyes of a modest girl brings joy to all who see.

Everywhere purity and transparency are admired and appreciated. Pure air, pure water, pure food, pure associations, pure ideals, pure aspirations—all are needed for perfect living.

The purity that counts for most in your life and mine is purity of heart. Is it possible for us to live

such a life? Is it possible to be cleansed from our lives of sin and have our hearts made pure from the temptations which continue to sink us into the pit of despair? Certainly! The heart is a temple into which we may ask the Lord to come and live forever.

One thing every Christian girl soon becomes aware of is the natural sinfulness of her own heart. When she is trying to do what is right, evil thoughts and feelings rise up. She is tempted to be proud and selfish, and under pressure, she feels anger rising up in her heart, though by looking to God for help, she may keep her lips from speaking out her feelings. Sometimes she is startled by feelings of jealousy and envy, two things that must not be allowed in the life of a Christian. She will find it hard at times to follow the Lord fully, to entirely do His will. If she will seek out the real desire of her heart, she will find that she wants a closer walk with God, but when she tries to walk closer, she begins to see these sinful impulses more clearly. She begins to see that her only hope in overcoming these sins is to get a new heart.

If a girl will come to God with her problems, tell Him about the struggles she is having with “foes within,” fully consecrate her life to Him, saying from the depth of her heart, “Lord, I give my life to You. You may have every part of it. Clean my heart and make it Your home,” and then trust God to do what she has asked Him to do, she can have a pure heart simply for the asking.

God will start to clean those sinful principles from her nature and make her a conqueror. Not that she will no more be tempted, but instead of those

inward struggles that are so hard to master, she will find inward grace and strength to overcome.

There is a heavenly Visitor who will come in and fill the heart that is fully given to God, so that instead of those sinful impulses ruling there, the sweet Spirit of God will reign.

Those who cherish impure thoughts and feelings, with no desire to change, will never be given a pure heart. The pure heart cannot be gained by those who cherish envy, jealousy, pride, arrogance, or evil thoughts, with no desire to change. Those who cling to these sinful passions will never become pure. Only those who willingly give their sinful desires to Christ, asking forgiveness and power to change, may obtain purity.

Deliberately giving ourselves to Christ, to live for God alone, is an amazing thing. While we look at the sacrifice of the nun who leaves the world to take the veil as perhaps a bit extreme, many girls go to the opposite extreme and make no sacrifice for Christ at all. We seem to have forgotten that there are consecration and sacrifice in true Christian service. Not the kind of sacrifice which, in a sense, buries us alive, but the consecration of service that refuses to act, think, or live contrary to the will of God.

There is a peace inside, a quiet confidence, a joyfulness, and a perfection of love in the heart of those who have given their lives to God that cannot be described by words, and this experience is not only for a special group of people. All who seek God with their whole heart, who will draw close to Him, may have this experience of a pure heart today.

10. The Full-Blown Rose

“Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good.” Genesis 1:31

A rose in full bloom is a thing of beauty. It’s a pleasure to hold a perfect rose and admire its soft, velvety petals, to smell its rich fragrance, and to feast upon its beautiful colors! Looking at the rose, we might be tempted to say, “This is the best of nature.” But nature, and the God of nature, gave us many beautiful and glorious things.

After the uncertainties of girlhood, when the crudeness and lack of symmetry in body and mind have been put away, and the woman of promise is before us in all her beauty and grace, we are privileged to see in her who was once the girl, one of the most blessed of God’s creation; a good, true woman. This fulfillment is the hope and expectancy that every mother wants in her daughter.

The grown woman who stands just at the door of life’s responsibilities, ready to enter into her life work, is full of endless possibilities. Her influence in the world will last until the end of time. It is impossible for her to live entirely for and to herself.

First, her influence is spread to all womankind. None of us is so weak and insignificant that we will never be copied. Every one of us is being watched by the world as examples to draw courage from. When we are true to principle, our loyalty to what is right and true can lead our weaker sisters down the path of purity. In the home, in the neighborhood, in the

classroom, in the church, and everywhere, a good woman is a great power for good, but a woman who is not good is just as powerful for evil. Each woman has, by her example, the wonderful power to lift up or the terrible power to pull down and destroy.

Woman has a far-reaching influence in the world, often beyond what she realizes. A good woman can be like a star of hope, a beacon of light, a safe retreat to the man who is struggling against the obstacles of the world. In her, he can see the ideal of purity and truth, and the manhood in him will strive to be worthy of her. But if she steps down from the path of true, virtuous womanhood and becomes impure or sinful, she may be his downfall. In a very real sense, she is her brother's keeper.

Beyond this, the woman has a powerful influence on the young people around her. While she may feel like the boys and girls around her are caught up in the foolish games of youth and do not see her pure and godly example, she may be surprised as the years pass to see that her life did bear fruit among those young people. Girls often look up to other women as their ideal, seeking to copy and model their lives after them. We never know what young eyes may be watching our example. Do not fool yourself into thinking that the things you do, don't have an effect on those around you.

If a woman can influence her sisters and brothers, imagine how much more she influences youth, who are more impressionable. A good woman can be a great influence, but a woman with a sweet, smiling face, and a heart that is unclean, is as great a

curse, which can harm or ruin the lives of the young boys and girls that she comes into contact with.

Oh girls, life is so great, so wonderful, and so full of possibilities that none of us can afford to be anything but what is good and pure and true! Let us make the perfect rose an emblem of our womanhood and strive to make its fragrance a blessing to all who come in contact with it.

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