

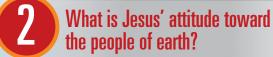
in love changes everything! When a young lady was reading a large book for her university's English literature course, she found it very boring and could barely stay focused while reading it. But then she met a handsome young professor on campus, and they quickly fell in love. Soon after, she realized her beloved was the author of the book she had struggled with. That night she stayed up and devoured the entire book, exclaiming, "This is the best book I have ever read!" What changed her perspective? Love did. Likewise,

many today find Scripture boring, unappealing, and even oppressive. But that all changes when you fall in love with its author. See how in this heart-warming Study Guide!

Who is the author of Scripture?

"The prophets have inquired and searched carefully
... searching what, or what manner of time, the
Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified
beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would
follow" (1 Peter 1:10, 11).

Answer: Virtually every book of the Bible refers to Jesus Christ—even the Old Testament books. Jesus created the world (John 1:1–3, 14; Colossians 1:13–17), wrote the Ten Commandments (Nehemiah 9:6, 13), was the God of the Israelites (1 Corinthians 10:1–4), and guided the writings of the prophets (1 Peter 1:10, 11). So, Jesus Christ is the author of Scripture.



"God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

Answer: Jesus loves us all with an unfailing love that passes understanding.



"While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). "We love Him because He first loved us" (1 John 4:19).

Answer: We love Him because He loved us enough to die for us—while we were yet His enemies

In what respects are a successful marriage and the Christian life similar?

"Whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight" (1 John 3:22).

Answer: In a good marriage certain things are imperative, such as faithfulness to one's spouse. Other things may not seem major, but if they please a spouse they are necessary. If they displease, they should be discontinued. So it is with the Christian life. The commands of Jesus are imperative. But in Scripture Jesus has also outlined for us principles of conduct that please Him. As in a good marriage, Christians will find it a joy to do the things that make Jesus, the One we love, happy. We will also avoid things that displease Him.

What does Jesus say are the results of doing the things that please Him?

"If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love. ... These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full" (John 15:10, 11).

Answer: The devil claims that to follow Christian principles is drab, dull, demeaning, and legalistic. But Jesus says it brings fullness of joy—and a more abundant life (John 10:10). Believing the devil's lies brings heartache and deprives people of life that is "really living."



Why does Jesus give us specific principles for Christian living?

Answer: Because they:

- A. Are "for our good always" (Deuteronomy 6:24). As good parents teach good principles to their children, so Jesus teaches good principles to His children.
- B. Set for us a safeguard from sin (Psalm 119:11). Jesus' principles protect us from entering the danger zones of Satan and sin.
- C. Show us how to follow in Christ's footsteps (1 Peter 2:21).
- D. Bring us true joy (John 13:17).
- E. Give us an opportunity to express our love for Him (John 15:10).
- F. Help us be a good example to others (1 Corinthians 10:31–33; Matthew 5:16).



According to Jesus, how should Christians relate to the evil of the world and to worldliness?

Answer: His commands and counsels are clear and specific:

- A. Don't love the world or the things of the world.

 This includes (1) the lust of the flesh, (2) the lust of the eyes, and (3) the pride of life (1 John 2:16).

 All sin falls into one or more of these three categories. Satan uses these avenues to lure us into the love of the world. When we begin to love the world, we become an enemy of God (1 John 2:15, 16; James 4:4).
- B. We must keep ourselves unspotted from the world (James 1:27).







Answer: Jesus warns, "Do not be conformed to this world" (Romans 12:2). The devil is not neutral. He presses every Christian constantly. Through Jesus (Philippians 4:13), we must firmly resist the devil's suggestions, and he will flee from us (James 4:7). The minute we permit the "squeezing" of any other factor to influence our conduct, we, perhaps imperceptibly, begin slipping into apostasy. Christian behavior is not to be decided by feelings and the conduct of the majority, but by Jesus' words.



Why do we need to guard our thoughts?

"As he thinks in his heart, so is he" (Proverbs 23:7).

Answer: We must guard our thoughts because thoughts dictate our behavior.

God wants to help us bring "every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:5). But Satan desperately wants to bring "the world" into our thoughts. He can do this only through our five senses—especially sight and hearing. He presses his sights and sounds upon us and, unless we consistently refuse what he offers, he will direct us into the broad way that leads to destruction. The Bible is clear: We become like the things we repeatedly see and hear (2 Corinthians 3:18).



What are some principles for Christian living?

"Whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things" (Philippians 4:8).

Answer: Christians must separate themselves from all things that are not true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report. They will avoid:

- A. Dishonesty of every kind—cheating, lying, stealing, being unfair, intent to deceive, slander, and betrayal
- B. Impurity of every kind—fornication, adultery, incest, homosexuality, pornography, profanity, filthy conversation, off-color jokes, degenerate songs, music, dance, and most of what is shown on television and in movie theaters
- **C.** Places where we would never invite Jesus to accompany us, such as nightclubs, taverns, casinos, racetracks, etc.

Let's take a few minutes to understand the dangers of popular music and dancing, television, and the theater.

Music and Song

Many types of secular music (rap, country, pop, rock, heavy metal, and dance music) have been largely captured by Satan. The lyrics often glorify vice and destroy a

desire for spiritual things. Researchers have discovered some interesting facts regarding the power of music—(1) It enters the brain through the emotions, thus bypassing reasoning powers; (2) It affects every function of the body; (3) It alters pulse, breath rates, and reflexes without the listeners realizing it; (4) Syncopated rhythms alter moods and create a type of hypnosis in the listener. Even without lyrics, music has power to debase a person's feelings, desires, and thoughts. The most popular rock stars openly admit this. Rolling Stones leader Mick Jagger said: "You can feel the adrenaline going through your body. It's sort of sexual." John Oates of Hall and Oates fame stated that "Rock 'n' Roll is 99% sex." Would such music please Jesus? Converted pagans from overseas tell us that our modern secular music is the same kind they used in witchcraft and devil worship! Ask yourself: "If Jesus came to visit me, what music would I be comfortable asking Him to listen to with me?" Any music you aren't sure about should be abandoned. (For an in-depth analysis of secular music, purchase *Drums, Rock, and Worship* by Karl Tsatalbasidis from Amazing Facts.) When we fall in love with Jesus, He changes our musical desires. "He has put a new song in my mouth—praise to our God; many will see it and fear, and will trust in the LORD" (Psalm 40:3). God has provided for His people plenty of good music that inspires, refreshes, elevates, and strengthens the Christian experience. Those who accept the devil's degrading music as a substitute are missing one of life's greatest blessings.

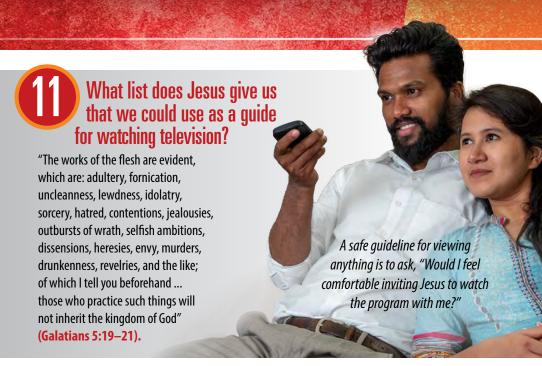


Worldly Dancing

Worldly, sexually suggestive dancing inevitably leads us away from Jesus and true spirituality. When the Israelites danced around the golden calf, it was idol worship because they had forgotten God (Exodus 32:17–24). When the daughter of Herodias danced before a drunken King Herod, John the Baptist was beheaded (Matthew 14:6–10).

TV, Movies, and the Internet

Do the things you watch on TV, in theaters, and on the Internet appeal to your lower or higher nature? Do they lead you to a greater love for Jesus—or for the world? Do they glorify Jesus—or satanic vices? Even non-Christians speak out against many TV and film productions. Satan has captured the eyes and ears of billions and, as a result, is rapidly turning the world into a cesspool of immorality, crime, and hopelessness. One study said that without TV "there would be 10,000 fewer murders per year in the United States, 70,000 fewer rapes, and 700,000 fewer assaults." Jesus, who loves you, asks you to take your eyes off Satan's thought-controllers and put them on Him. "Look to Me, and be saved, all you ends of the earth!" (Isaiah 45:22).



Answer: Scripture is too clear to misunderstand. If a family should ban all TV programs that exhibit or condone any of the above sins, there would be very little to watch. If Jesus came to visit you, what TV shows would you feel comfortable asking Him to view with you? All other shows are probably unfit for Christian viewing.

Many today feel capable of making spiritual decisions without input from anyone, including Jesus. What does Jesus say about such people?



Answer: Listen to Jesus' unequivocal statements: "You shall not at all do as we are doing here today—every man doing whatever is right in his own eyes" (Deuteronomy 12:8). "There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death" (Proverbs 16:25). "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but he who heeds counsel is wise" (Proverbs 12:15). "He who trusts in his own heart [mind] is a fool" (Proverbs 28:26).



What solemn warnings does Jesus give about the example and influence of our lives?

"Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea" (Matthew 18:6). Let no man "put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother's way" (Romans 14:13). "None of us lives to himself" (Romans 14:7).

Answer: We all expect leaders, people of influence, and celebrities to set a good example and use their influence wisely. But in today's world, we are often disillusioned by the repugnant, irresponsible actions of these prominent individuals. Likewise, Jesus solemnly warns that Christians who disregard their own influence and example are in danger of leading people away from His kingdom!



Answer:

- A. **Dress modestly.** See 1 Timothy 2:9, 10. Remember that the world's vices are brought into our lives through the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life (1 John 2:16). Immodest dress involves all three and is off-limits for a Christian.
- **Cast aside ornaments and jewelry.** "Pride of life" is the issue here. Jesus' followers should look different. Their appearance sends light to others (Matthew 5:16). Jewelry draws attention to and exalts self. In the Bible, it is often a symbol of backsliding and apostasy. For instance, when Jacob's family rededicated their lives to God, they buried their jewelry (Genesis 35:1, 2, 4). Before the Israelites entered the Promised Land, the Lord commanded them to remove their ornaments (Exodus 33:5, 6). God says, in Isaiah chapter 3 that in wearing jewelry (bracelets, rings, earrings, etc., as listed in verses 19–23), His people were sinning (verse 9). In **Hosea 2:13**, the Lord says that when Israel forsook Him, they began to wear jewelry. In 1 Timothy 2:9, 10 and 1 Peter 3:3, the apostles Paul and Peter both share that God's people will not adorn themselves with gold, pearls, and costly array. Please notice that Peter and Paul did speak of the ornaments God wants His people to wear: "A gentle and quiet spirit" (1 Peter 3:4) and "good works" (1 Timothy 2:10). Jesus sums it up by symbolizing His true church in **Revelation 12:1** as a pure woman clothed with the sun (Jesus' brightness and righteousness) and the apostate church as a harlot bedecked with gold, precious stones, and pearls (**Revelation 17:3, 4).** God asks His people to separate from Babylon (Revelation 18:2–4) and all it stands for—including jewels that draw attention to self—and instead clothe themselves with the righteousness of Jesus. When we love Jesus, it is a sheer joy and pleasure to live His lifestyle.



15

How do conduct and obedience relate to salvation?

Answer: Christian obedience and conduct are the evidences that we have been saved by Jesus Christ (James 2:20–26). The fact is that unless one's lifestyle changes, the conversion most likely was not genuine. Converted people will find their greatest joy in discovering Jesus' will in everything and in joyously following where He leads.

Beware of Idolatry

The first epistle of John talks about Christian conduct. At its close (1 John 5:21), Jesus warns us through His servant John to keep ourselves from idols. The Master here is referring to anything that interferes with or lessens our love for Him—such as fashion, possessions, adornment, evil forms of entertainment, etc. The natural fruit, or result, of a true conversion is to follow Jesus happily and adopt His lifestyle.



Should we expect everyone to look with approval upon the Christian lifestyle?

Answer: No. Jesus said that the things of God are foolishness to the world because people lack spiritual discernment (1 Corinthians 2:14). When Jesus refers to conduct, He is laying down principles for those who are seeking to be led by His Spirit. His people will be grateful and will joyously follow His counsel. Others may not understand or approve.





How would a person who rejects Jesus' standards for conduct view heaven?

Answer: Such people would be miserable in heaven. They would complain that there were no nightclubs, liquor, pornographic material, prostitutes, sensual music, profanity, nor gambling. Heaven would be "hell" for those who have not formed a true love relationship with Jesus. Christian standards simply make no sense to them (2 Corinthians 6:14–17).

How can I follow these Bible guidelines without appearing judgmental or legalistic?

Answer: All that we do should be with one motivation: to express love for Jesus (1 John 3:22). When Jesus is exalted and revealed to people through our lives (John 12:32), many will be drawn to Him. Our one question should always be, "Will this [music, drink, TV show, movie, book, etc.] honor Jesus?" We must sense Jesus' presence in every facet and activity of our lives. When



we spend time with Him, we become like Him (2 Corinthians 3:18)—and the people we're around will respond to us as they did to the disciples of old: "They marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus" (Acts 4:13). Christians who live like that will never become pharisaical, judgmental, or legalistic. In Old Testament days, God's people were in almost constant apostasy because they chose to live as their heathen neighbors rather than follow the distinctive lifestyle God outlined for them (Deuteronomy 31:16; Judges 2:17; 1 Chronicles 5:25; Ezekiel 23:30). It is true today as well. No one can serve two masters (Matthew 6:24). Those who cling to the world and its lifestyle will be slowly molded by Satan to adopt his desires and thus be programmed to reject heaven and be lost. In contrast, those who follow Jesus' principles for conduct will be changed into His image and prepared for heaven. There is no middle ground.

10	Do you want to love Christ so much that to follow His principles for Christian living will be a joy and delight?
UU	principles for Christian living will be a joy and delight?

Your <i>l</i>	Answer:
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Your Questions Answered

1. I know what God would have me do concerning my lifestyle, but I don't feel I'm ready to begin doing it. What do you suggest?

Answer: Begin doing it today! Never depend on feelings. God guides through the words of Scripture (Isaiah 8:20). Feelings often lead us astray. The Jewish leaders felt they should crucify Jesus, but they were wrong. Many will feel saved before Jesus' second coming, but they will instead be lost (Matthew 7:21–23). The devil influences feelings. If we depend on our feelings, he will lead us to destruction.

2. I want very much to do a certain thing. I realize, however, that because of its appearance, some might feel I am doing evil. What should I do?

Answer: The Bible says, "Abstain from every form of evil" (1 Thessalonians 5:22). And the apostle Paul said that if his eating of foods offered to idols offended somebody, he'd never touch those foods again (1 Corinthians 8:13). He also said that if he ignored the offended person's feelings and continued eating flesh foods, he would be sinning.

3. It seems to me that churches list too many things I must do and too many things I must not do. It drives me up the wall. Isn't following Jesus what really matters?

Answer: Yes—following Jesus is what matters. However, following Jesus means one thing to one person and something quite different to another. The only safe way to know what following Jesus means is to discover what Jesus says in the Bible on any question. Those who lovingly follow Jesus' commands will one day soon enter His kingdom (Revelation 22:14). Those who follow man-made rules could be led away from His kingdom (Matthew 15:3–9).

4. A few of God's requirements seem unreasonable and unnecessary. Why they are so important?

Answer: Children often feel that some of their parents' requirements (e.g., "Don't play in the street") are unreasonable. But in later years, the child will thank the parents for the requirement! We are "children" in dealing with God, because His thoughts are as high above ours as the heavens are above the earth (Isaiah 55:8, 9). We need to trust our loving heavenly Father in the few areas we might not understand and stop "playing in the street" if He so requires. He will never withhold anything good from us (Psalm 84:11). When we truly love Jesus, we will give Him the benefit of the doubt and do His will even if we do not always understand why. The new birth is the key. The Bible says when we are born again, overcoming the world will not be a problem because a converted person will have the trust to happily follow Jesus in everything (1 John 5:4). Refusing to follow Him because we are not clear on His reasons displays a lack of trust in our Savior.

5. Will I benefit from Jesus' loving principles, laws, and commands?

Answer: Absolutely! Every principle, rule, law, or command of Jesus provides unbelievable blessings. The biggest lottery win in history pales into insignificance when compared to God's rich blessings to His obedient children. Here are just a few benefits that come from following Jesus' rules:

- 1. Jesus as a personal friend
- 5. Freedom from fear
- 8. Assurance of a home in heaven

- 2. Jesus as a partner in business
- 6. Indescribable joy 9.
- 9. Better health

- 3. Freedom from guilt
- 7. Longer life
- 10. No hangovers

4. Peace of mind

Talk about riches! The true Christian receives benefits from his heavenly Father that even the richest people on earth can never purchase.

6. In regard to standards and lifestyle, do I have a responsibility to convict other people about them?

Answer: The best rule for us to follow is to be concerned about our own lifestyle. "Examine yourselves," the Bible says in **2 Corinthians 13:5.** When our lifestyle is as it should be, our example serves as a silent witness and we don't need to lecture anyone. Of course, parents do have a special responsibility to help their children understand how to follow Jesus.

7. What are some of the greatest dangers for Christians today?

Answer: Among the greatest dangers are divided loyalties. Many Christians have two loves that divide the heart: a love for Jesus and a love for the world and its sinful practices. Many wish to see how closely they can follow the world and still be considered Christians. It won't work. Jesus warned that no one "can serve two masters" (Matthew 6:24).

8. But isn't it legalism to follow these rules of conduct?

Answer: Not unless a person is doing it in order to be saved. Salvation comes only as a miraculous, free gift from Jesus. Salvation by works (or conduct) is no salvation at all. However, following Jesus' standards of conduct because we have been saved and love Him is never legalism.

9. Are Christian standards involved with Jesus' command to let our lights shine?

Answer: Definitely! Jesus said that a true Christian is a light (Matthew 5:14). He said, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:16). You don't hear a light; you see it! People will see a Christian shine by his or her conduct—dress, diet, conversation, attitude, sympathy, purity, kindness, and honesty—and will often inquire about such a lifestyle and may even be led to Christ.

10. Aren't Christian standards cultural? Shouldn't they change with the times?

Answer: Customs may change, but Bible standards endure. "The word of our God stands forever" (Isaiah 40:8). Christ's church must lead, not follow. It must not be programmed by culture, humanism, or the trends of the day. We are not to bring the church down to erring human standards, but rather, up to Jesus' pure standards. When a church lives, speaks, looks, and behaves like the world, who would ever go to it for help? Jesus sends a clarion call to His people and church, saying, "Come out from among them and be separate. ... Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you" (2 Corinthians 6:17). Jesus' church is not to imitate the world, but rather to overcome it. The "world" has ravaged billions of people. The church must not join in its mayhem. The church must stand tall and, with a gracious voice, call people to listen to Jesus and come up to His standards. When a hearer falls in love with Jesus and asks Him to control his life, the Savior will work the miracles needed to change him and safely escort him to God's eternal kingdom. There is no other way to heaven.

11. Surely not all dancing is evil. Didn't David dance before the Lord?

Answer: True—not all dancing is evil. David leaped and danced before the Lord as an expression of praise for His blessings (2 Samuel 6:14, 15). He was also dancing by himself. David's dance was similar to that of the crippled man who leaped for joy after being healed by Peter in Jesus' name (Acts 3:8—10). Such dancing, or leaping, is encouraged by Jesus to those who are being persecuted (Luke 6:22, 23). Dancing with those of the opposite sex (which can lead to immorality and broken homes) and lewd dancing (such as strippers) are the kinds of dancing condemned by the Bible.

12. What does the Bible say about people condemning and judging each other?

Answer: "Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged" (Matthew 7:1, 2). "Therefore you are inexcusable, 0 man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things" (Romans 2:1). How could this be clearer? There is no excuse or justification for Christians to judge anyone. Jesus is the Judge (John 5:22). When we pass judgment on others, we usurp Christ's role as judge and become a miniature antichrist (1 John 2:18)—a solemn thought, indeed!



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Summary Sheet 26

Please read this lesson before completing this Summary Sheet. All answers can be found in the Study Guide. Place a check by the correct answer. Numbers in parentheses (1) indicate the number of correct answers.

	Jesus' loving principles for conduct become a pleasure to follow when I fall in love with Him. (1) Yes.	8.	For which facets of Christian conduct listed below does Jesus provide some specific counsel and guidelines? (5)
2	Following Jesus' standards of conduct because		How we dress
2.	I have been saved and love Him is legalism. (1)		Healthful living
	Yes. No.		Ornamenting the body Buying a house
2	The real author of the Bible is Jesus. (1)		Olympic skiing
	Yes. No.	9.	How do conduct and obedience relate
1	"Do not love the world" means that we		to salvation? (1)
7.	shouldn't love (1)		We are saved by our conduct and obedience.
	Our country.	ч	A saved person can ignore conduct and obedience and still be ready for heaven.
	The world as our planet.		Conduct and obedience are the evidence that one
	The sinful, wicked, and ungodly ways		has been converted, or born again.
	and things of this world.	10.	If I refuse to forsake something Jesus asks me
5.	Why does Jesus give us specific commands, laws, and rules? (5)		to forsake—such as jewelry, rock music, or watching immoral TV shows—God considers
П	For our good always		that unforsaken thing an idol. (1)
	So we will know how to set a good example		Yes.
	for others	11.	A Christian life is like a good marriage in that
	To take away our freedom	-	success comes when our aim is to please the
	So we can follow in Christ's footsteps		one we love. (1)
	To safeguard us from sin		Yes. No.
	To keep us under His thumb	12.	Satan leads people into sin by which three
	To bring us true joy		of the avenues listed below? (3)
6.	Two good rules for deciding what is proper		Hiding their Bibles from them
	Christian conduct are as follows: (2)		Pride of life
	Discover what the Bible says.		Writing messages in the sky
	Watch to see what church members do.		Lust of the flesh
	Consult an Ouija board.		Lust of the eyes
	Go by your feelings.	13.	Guarding our thoughts is crucial because
	Ask yourself what Jesus would do.		thoughts can become actions. (1)
7.	Satan has access to us only through our five senses. (1)		Yes. No.
	Yes.		Continued on back ▶▶

Summary Sheet continued

14. Some promised benefits of faithfully following Jesus are as follows: (7) You will know how to prophesy. You will live a longer life. You will enjoy indescribable joy. You will have better health. Your hair will not turn gray. You will be a millionaire. You will be assured of a home in heaven. You will have freedom from fear. You will have Jesus as a personal Friend. You will enjoy peace of mind. 15. If my conduct offends another Christian, what should I do? (1) Ignore it. No one can please everybody. Fight it out, one to one. Try to get the person disfellowshipped. Tell everybody so church members can choose sides. Stop doing the offending thing.	 16. What does Jesus call a person who is determined to have his own way rather than listen to Bible counsel? (1) An independent thinker A wise person A fool 17. A person who rejects Jesus' standards for Christian living would (1) Suddenly begin to love spiritual things when he gets to heaven. Be repentant for his hardness of heart after a few days in the holy city. Be miserable in heaven. 18. I want to love Christ so much that to follow His principles for Christian living will be a joy and delight. Yes. No. Be sure to answer all the questions above and on the reverse side!
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