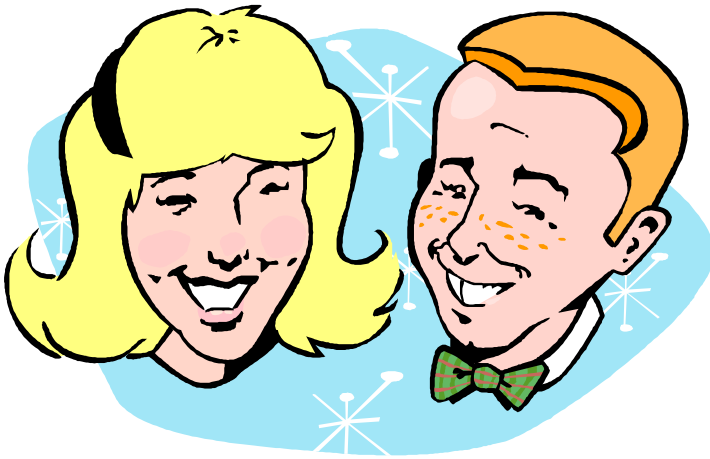


Booklet 11

Helps for Young People



Does Joan Have It Right

I Hate My Acne

20 Ways To Make Someone's Day

Nice Shoes...But

Too Many Changes

Compiled by Hervey Bay Gospel Chapel for its young people

Do we assess the TV shows we watch. Here is an assessment on one TV show. How does it teach us to judge what we watch? - Noel

Does Joan Have It Right?

Mark Matlock answers your questions.

***Joan of Arcadia* is a pretty realistic show with great stories. But is there anything wrong with how it handles God?**

Joan of Arcadia's depiction of God is a mixed bag. While it has some positive lessons, it also has some messages that contradict the Bible and some ideas that can be confusing.

First, the good. The character of God in *Joan of Arcadia* loves humans, is involved in their lives and is helpful. He appears to Joan in many human forms, such as homeless people and cafeteria ladies. Joan is always a bit sceptical about what God wants her to do for him. But she does it, and her good deeds teach people lessons or make them happy. The process changes Joan too. The more she obeys, the more she sees God work. The more she sees him work, the stronger her faith grows.

This is a good illustration of a biblical idea: God knows better than we do what is right. When he tells us to do things—obey your parents; don't lie; don't have sex before you're married—he isn't punishing us, but telling us what is best for us. The show also demonstrates the truth of Romans 8:28: "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose" (NIV).

Now, the bad news. The show's God isn't the God of the Bible. He is presented as a "god" who is present in all religions. Further, Jesus isn't part of the show's depiction of God. And we know from Scriptures (John 14:6) that Jesus is the only way to God.

There are also some messages in *Joan* that fall in a confusing gray area. It's hard to tell what they mean. For example, the God character seems to just want humans to be better people—not to love him. Yes, God wants us to be happy, but he knows true joy

comes through a life in Christ. And contrary to what the show seems to say, we can't earn God's acceptance or get on his good side by being better people or doing good deeds. The God of the Bible gives us salvation as a gift (Ephesians 2:8-9).

How do we keep from being confused? We can keep our noses in the Bible so we know what's true. We can also talk to mature Christians about the show. Or even watch it as a youth group and discuss it. The key is to watch *Joan of Arcadia* with our minds in gear to best evaluate the messages we're getting.

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I Hate My Acne

Jim Burns answers your questions

I have acne that has gotten worse in the last couple of years. I only know a few people in my grade who have acne as bad as I do, but they don't get ridiculed like I do. I want to do something about it but I know it's normal for teens. Also, my mom says, "God has put it there to humble you and without it you would be too pretty and think too much of yourself." That might be true, but I still hate it. I don't know what I can do.

I feel for you. Acne is really a terrible problem. True, it affects many people at this age, but you're still hurting. And it's OK to feel this way. It is perfectly normal to want to cure it or lessen it. There are numerous treatments and medications that could quite possibly solve your problem. If your parents will help, that's great. But if they won't or can't help, then I suggest you get their blessing to save your own money to see a dermatologist. God can work through physicians just like he does through other helping professionals.

As for your mom's thoughts about why you might have the acne, I can't help but think her statement came across a little harsher than she meant it. I don't think (and I doubt if your mom does, either) that God has some big plot to mess up your complexion just to make you humble. I don't believe God is vindictive like that. So talk to your mom about this and let her honestly know how you feel. Yes, beauty does come from the soul and inner beauty is what we are called to work on in our lives. But our outer appearance—and the reaction of other people to it—can really affect our minds and feelings. So I encourage you to do what you can to work on your acne.

Jim is a well-respected youth pastor, speaker and radio host. Due to the volume of mail, Jim cannot answer every letter.

20 Ways to Make Somebody's Day

by Chris Lutes

- 1.** Spend an afternoon having water fights and playing outdoor games with some little kids in your neighbourhood. They'll love it, and their parents will appreciate the free babysitting!
- 2.** Send "thinking of you" cards to some guys and girls in your youth group who seem lonely.
- 3.** Surprise Mom by offering to do this week's grocery shopping or laundry.
- 4.** Bake some cookies for an elderly person in your neighbourhood. When you drop off your treats, plan to stay awhile and talk.
- 5.** Call your pastor or youth pastor and volunteer to help out around the church for a day.

- 6.** Pick a bouquet of wild flowers for your neighbour.
- 7.** Make it Christmas in July for a missionary family! Get your youth group friends together and buy some gifts for a missionary family from your church. (Contact your pastor or youth pastor for ideas on what to send.)
- 8.** Shoot a roll of film of your family and send the pictures to your grandparents or other extended family members who may live far away.
- 9.** Volunteer for a day at your local soup kitchen or the Salvation Army shelter.
- 10.** Spend a day at the zoo or a park with your little brother or sister.
- 11.** Smile and say "Hi!" to someone you don't know.
- 12.** Send "thank you" cards to a few of your favourite teachers—including teachers from your elementary and junior high years. Tell them what you enjoyed most about your time in their classroom.
- 13.** Have dinner ready when your parents come home from work.
- 14.** Walk your neighbour's dog.
- 15.** Treat a friend to a sundae at the local ice-cream shop.
- 16.** Buy your mom a single rose.
- 17.** Get together with some church friends and deliver homemade snacks to recent middle school "grads." Tell them you look forward to getting to know them at the high school youth group.
- 18.** Give someone a big bear hug.
- 19.** Spend an afternoon visiting residents at a local nursing home.
- 20.** Don't stop now! Look for little ways to make somebody's day every single day!

If you ask a question you don't want an answer to, expect an answer you don't want to hear.

Nice Shoes, But ...

Do you ever think about what really matters to you? I've been thinking about that a lot lately, and I've started to see that it's really easy for me to focus on things that don't matter.

For instance, I have a tendency to spend money like it's water. I don't think about where it's going or where it's coming from. Well, not too long ago, I bought this expensive pair of shoes. They were beautiful, and I was so excited!

But then I started thinking, *Wait a second, this isn't making me a better person. It's just a pair of shoes!* Yeah, they look really cool brand new, but they'll probably go out of style next week. They certainly don't matter much in the whole scope of life.

It's pretty tempting for me to get caught up in material possessions, to think that the things I have are what make me cool or important or worthy of love. Other people I know get their value from their accomplishments or their brains or whatever.

I have this friend who's a great athlete, and he really struggles not to let his game define who he is. He can get so hung up on improving his athletic abilities that it becomes the most important thing to him. But I try to remind him (and myself!) not to get caught up with success.

It's so important to remember what God values most, and what he wants our lives to look like. Life isn't about cool shoes or being a great athlete. It's about who we are in Christ and what we've done to bring people to him.

The truth is, in the end, I don't want to be remembered for the records I've made, and I sure don't want to be remembered for what I wore on my feet! I want people to remember how faithful I was, how I showed Christ in my life. Most of all, that's what God cares about.

When I stand in front of God and he judges me, I don't want him to say, "Hey, you accomplished a lot and you had a great pair of shoes. But I never knew you." I want him to say, "You kept your eyes on me, on the things that mattered. Well done!"

Actual announcements taken from church bulletins:

Don't let worry kill you, let the church help.

Remember in prayer the many who are sick of our church and community.

This being Easter Sunday, we will ask Mrs. Lewis to come forward and lay an egg on the altar.

For those of you who have children and don't know it, we have a nursery downstairs.

Next Sunday a special collection will be taken to defray the costs of redecorating the sanctuary. Anyone wanting to do something on the new carpet will come forward and do so.

The ladies of the church have cast off clothing of every kind, and they may be seen in the church basement Friday.

A bean supper will be held on Tuesday evening in the church hall. Music will follow.

The outreach committee has enlisted 25 visitors to make calls on people who are not afflicted with any church.

The Pastor would appreciate it if the ladies of the congregation would lend him their electric girdles for the pancake breakfast next Sunday morning.

Irving Benson and Jessie Carter were married on October 24 in the church. So ends a friendship that began in their school days.

Low Self-Esteem Support Group will meet Thursday at 7 to 8:30 pm. Please use the back door.

Too Many Changes!

While dropping something off at the school counsellor's office the other day, I passed my brother's locker. I saw him there, grabbing a few books and then hurrying to his next class. As I watched him disappear down the crowded hallway, I suddenly felt kind of down. Since my seventh-grade year, when he was a freshman, I'd gotten used to seeing my brother almost every day around school. But he's graduating in June. Then he'll head off to college, and I won't be able to see him at school anymore.

It makes me sad to know he's going away. I mean, we've had our share of disagreements and fights over the years, but he's really been a great brother. When I'd get stuck on homework assignments, he'd be there to help me out. When we were having tests or quizzes, we'd help each other study. And when I needed to just chill out for a while, he'd spend time shooting hoops with me.

I know we'll be able to keep in touch with e-mail and phone calls. And he'll be home for breaks and vacations. But it just won't be the same.

Of course, my brother leaving isn't the only thing I'm worried about. I worry about all the changes that will soon be taking place in my own life. Before long I'll be weeding through college brochures and making plans for my own future. Everything is just changing so fast around me. I'm not sure I can handle it all. And when it comes to the future, I sometimes feel like life is out of control. I can't help but look up and ask, "Lord, what in the world are you doing?"

Of course, even as I ask this question (and I ask it a lot), I know God has an answer for me. The answer is this:

"'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future'" (Jeremiah 29:11).

It's reassuring to know that when my brother leaves for school next fall, God will be in control. And when I graduate in a couple more years, God will still be in control. I don't have to be scared of the future, because what God has planned for me is more wonderful than I could ever imagine.