

Letters to Young People - 'Fashion'

by [Gary Young](#) on Friday, August 13, 2010 at 11:18am

Have you ever noticed how quickly fashions change? The latest 'in' clothes, especially those worn by teenagers, seem to change not just from season to season but even during the season. The latest jeans, the 'must have' running shoes, the newest dress, all seem to come into and out of fashion in a matter of weeks. That item that 'everybody' needed only a few months ago is now so out of date that most people wouldn't be seen dead in it.

Most people, if they think of it at all, assume that this is because people's tastes and desires change, and then the clothing companies produce the garments to suit. However, it's rather more complicated, and a good deal more contrived, than that. The fashion industry is a huge industry, and clothing companies make millions and millions of dollars out of the changing fashions. They want you to 'need' new clothes, they want you to change the style of jeans or skirt or whatever you wear as often as possible – because each time you do, they make more money. Each year, fashion shows take place with all the latest looks from all the famous designers, and these set the scene for what is going to be produced by the clothing industry every year – from the most expensive fashion houses to the generic brands in department stores, it's all the same. You've got money, and they want it. Convince you that you need all the latest fashions, and they've got it.

Much of the marketing is directed at teenagers, for a couple of reasons. First, teenagers nowadays have access to considerable amounts of cash, either their own or that of their parents. Second, the advertisers regard teens as a 'soft touch' – they are regarded as easier to talk out of their money than many adults are. Even among the fashion industry then, teenage fashions account for a huge proportion of the turnover every year.

Do you like being manipulated like that? Didn't think so. Before you drop one hundred dollars or more on the coolest runners, \$150 on the newest style of jeans, who knows what on the latest fashion in skirts or dresses, take a moment to think – do I actually need it? Am I just getting it because I want my friends to think I'm cool, or because I don't want to be seen as being 'out of fashion'?

The fact is, you don't need the 'latest look' to be who you are. Fashion is superficial, it's outward and changes overnight. Are those the sort of things you want people to think about you? We need to make sure that the person we project is the result of our character and personality, not a shallow appearance. Also, do we judge others by what they're wearing? Do we determine if a person is 'cool' based on whether they are wearing the latest look churned out of the clothing factories? Maybe they can't afford the latest fashions. Maybe their taste in clothing is different to yours. Maybe, just maybe, they have enough character and individuality not to CARE what the latest fashion is!

The Bible talks about the contrast between outward appearance and the true nature of a person:

Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel;

But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price (1 Peter 3: 3-4).

There's nothing wrong with looking good (in the right way), and that's not what this verse is saying. God doesn't require you to wear a burqa, or anything like that! Just remember, there is a lot more to you than whether or not you're wearing the latest fashion. A LOT more.