

AMERICA'S NEXT *top* model

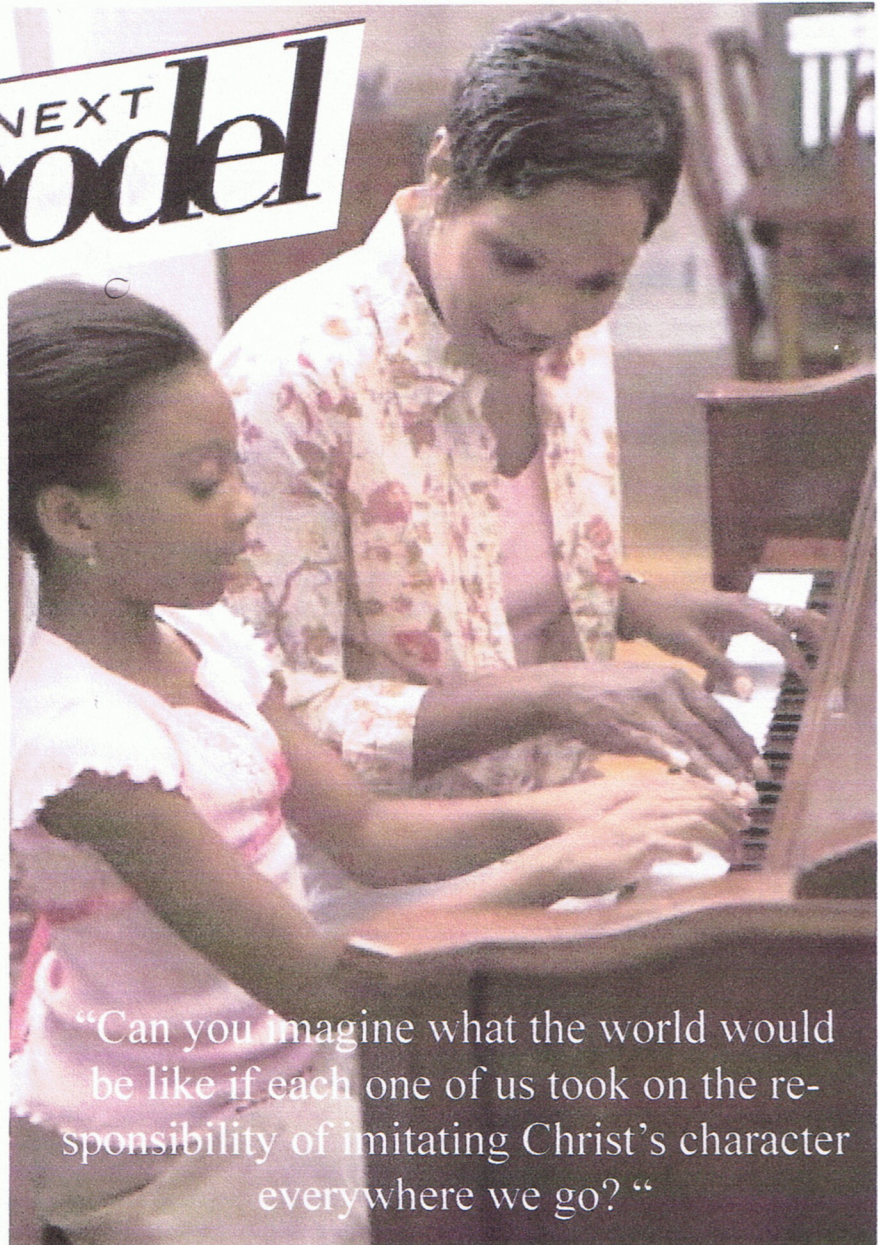
BY EDWINA FINDLEY

Romans 9:17 "For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, 'I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display my power in you and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.'"

We live in a society wherein celebrity, wealth, status, and possessions inevitably determine the "worth" of an individual. The more "important" a person, the more others want to have to do with them. This pervasive paradigm is echoed even in our churches, where "prosperity" is often personified by worldly possessions, and pride has prohibited many from humbly submitting to God's divine purpose. It seems that someplace between the projects and the palace, many have concluded that success is really all about me, myself, and I.

Yet Romans 9:17 indicates that God's intention for exalting us actually has very little to do with our own comfort and aggrandizement. His purpose is two-fold- to display HIS power in us and for others to proclaim HIS name. We are designed to be vessels and conduits of God's glory, reflecting His beauty, radiance, humility, and righteousness throughout the earth. He set it up so that through our success, popularity, and prosperity, He's really the One who gets the credit and acclaim. In essence, He wants to use us as His "Next Top Models."

The dictionary defines a 'model' as "one serving as an example to be imitated or compared". Can you imagine what the world would be like if each one of us took on the responsibility of imitating Christ's character everywhere we go? Our schools, neighborhoods, jobs, and relationships and would be so full of light, that darkness and despair would have no



choice but to flee! Joy, kindness, gentleness and generosity would flow without ceasing, and self-centeredness would be replaced by an insatiable desire to serve others as our Savior did. Talk about a Utopian society!

So how do you break into this modeling business anyway? I'm glad you asked! It's actually pretty simple. Lift Him up! Jesus said, "But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself." (John 12:32) When you spend time praising Him, praying to Him, and getting to know Him by studying His Word, your relationship will grow so strong that you can't help but share His love and Spirit with others! You'll make your Heavenly Father proud when you exalt His name and allow Him to display His power through

you. After all, God selected you as His personal "Top Model", and I doubt that there's anything Tyra Banks can say or do about that!! •



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