



MODESTY

“Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ”

(Romans 13:14)

As children of God we live in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom we are to shine as lights (Phil. 2:15). The society that surrounds us is alienated from the God of **Light** and **Right**. The children of disobedience are in the **realm** and under the **rule** of darkness, loving darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil (John 3:19-20). Their moral bankruptcy is produced by their unbelief, resulting in immorality, sexual confusion, perversion, and **lust** instead of **love**. Such shameful acts and actions are accepted, applauded and encouraged by a society which promotes indecency, immodesty, nudity, etc.

Society is upset and concerned about problems such as rape, sexual perversion, child abuse, child pornography, incest, AIDS, marriage unfaithfulness and divorce. Yet society encourages and promotes the very things which have contributed to many of these problems (skimpy and immodest clothing, the media's emphasis upon sex and nudity, the entertainment industry's emphasis upon premarital and extramarital affairs, homosexuality, etc.).

In light of these concerns, we as believers must understand what the Bible teaches on the subject of modesty.

The Christian's outward appearance was addressed by the Apostle Paul, particularly in the case of Christian

women, for whom he lays down some guidelines: “In like manner also that women adorn [arrange] themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety” (1 Tim. 2:9). The adjective “modest” means “orderly, well-arranged.” Women should dress orderly, neatly and in good taste, seeking to be attractive.

The term “shamefacedness” (in 1 Timothy 2:9) suggests the idea of modesty and humility. The woman who adorns herself with shamefacedness shrinks away from anything that would even suggest immodesty or indecency. She is not even willing to look at anything shameful or disgraceful, much less to be involved with it herself. She abhors (shrinks back from) “that which is evil” (Rom. 12:9), abstaining “from all appearance of evil” (1 Thess. 5:22), not even speaking of such things: “But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, **let it not be once named among you**, as becometh saints” (Ephesians 5:3). She desires to display the Lord Jesus by her life and good works: “And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (Eph. 4:24).

“Sobriety” (in 1 Timothy 2:9) may be rendered “sound judgment,” and indicates that the Christian woman should give careful thought to what she should wear, how she should dress, and the appearance that she will present to others. She is to dress sensibly. Modesty in dress, especially today, requires careful discrimination. The Christian woman is not to be conformed to the world's sensuous standards, and must set aside many of the fashions of today. At the same time, she ought to display good taste in the clothing she wears, not drawing attention to herself with extremism in either direction: “**Be not the first by whom the new is tried, nor yet the last to lay the old aside.**”

In these days of worldly trends and fads, it is our responsibility (whether male or female) as obedient children of God to reject all that would hinder our ultimate purpose of glorifying our wonderful Savior. Here is a principle which

we might apply personally to ourselves:

Whenever a new style or a new way of dressing or a new way of saying something is seen or heard by me, I will look to see if it pictures truth or error. I will see if it agrees or disagrees with God's Word and God's ways. I will see if it makes clear or confuses God's Person and God's Word. I will see if it mixes truth with error. May nothing detract from the message I want to present: "I belong to the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me."

Peter also addresses the matter of modest dress:

"While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear. 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. For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands" (1 Pet. 3:2-5).

Modesty goes far beyond mere dress and physical appearance. It is an attitude of the mind. It is the adorning of the hidden man of the heart. It is a meek and quiet spirit which in the sight of God is of great price. Modesty is displayed by the person who does not want to draw attention to self, but rather desires that the Savior would receive all the attention. By her dress (or lack of dress) the immodest person is saying, "Look at me! Look at my body!" Compare Proverbs 31:30: "Favor is deceitful (deceptive) and beauty is vain (illusory), but a woman who feareth the LORD, she shall be praised." The message that comes from the life and witness of a modest person is this: "**Look at CHRIST living in me. He is MY LIFE and MY LOVE!**"

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; **yet not**

I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20).

"I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called [*to walk worthy of our high, heavenly and holy calling*]" (Ephesians 4:1).

"But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof" (Romans 13:14).

"And let the beauty of the LORD our God be upon us" (Psalm 90:17).

"According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, **so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body**, whether it be by life, or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Philippians 1:20-21).

Whether male or female, we each need to realize the problems that are created as we fail to abide in Christ, allowing ourselves to be controlled by the flesh instead. Walking in the flesh cultivates sinful and self-centered passions which reap a harvest of wrong relationships, wrongful sex, and countless problems. As believers we are free and privileged to display God's Person by means of the Lord Jesus Christ, to show the excellencies of our Saviour and not to promote SIN and SELF. By God's grace may we cover the nakedness of our flesh with the clothing described for us in Colossians 3:12-14 and Ephesians 4:24.

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