

Immodesty – Adjusting Our Thinking

Introduction

1 Timothy 2:9-10 in like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works.

- 1. Too often the Christian allows his thinking about clothing to be determined by the pressures of fashion and the tenets of sexual libertinism** (“Libertinism”: without moral principles or sense of responsibilities in sexual matters)
- 2. The so-called sexual revolution has done more than we like to admit to set our standards for us.**
- 3. As a corrective, in this lesson we will try to make an honest attempt to align our thinking with the Biblical principles we have studied.**
- 4. If we have understood these principles accurately, it is important that we apply them obediently.**

Basic Ideas About Clothing

1. Proper uses of clothing.

A. To cover nakedness

Genesis 3:7-11, 21

B. To protect from the elements of nature and from injury

2 Timothy 4:13, 21 Bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas when you come — and the books, especially the parchments. **21** Do your utmost to come before winter. Eubulus greets you, as well as Pudens, Linus, Claudia, and all the brethren.

C. To adorn

1 Timothy 2:9 in like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing,

- 1) **We adorn ourselves not only for our own sakes, but for that of others.**
- 2) **We use clothing socially in a variety of ways: to gain peer approval, to gain respect and credibility, to attract the opposite sex, etc.**
- 3) **Within godly limits, adornment for these reasons is normal and acceptable.**

2. Kinds of immodest apparel.

A. **Perverse** – clothing that is transvestite.

Deuteronomy 22:5 "A woman shall not wear anything that pertains to a man, nor shall a man put on a woman's garment, for all who do so are an abomination to the Lord your God. (*see also 1 Corinthians 6:9*)

B. **Revealing** – clothing that does not modestly cover the body's nakedness.

Isaiah 47:1-3

C. **Suggestive** – clothing that is sexually provocative, titillating, lascivious.

Romans 13:14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and **make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.**

Galatians 5:19 Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, **lewdness,**

- 1) **Clothing that suggests or teases is as tantalizing, if not more so, than that which reveals – such as tight, form-fitting garments; clothing worn without proper undergarments; garments which accentuate the private, erotic parts of the body.**
- 2) **Consider that the modern swimsuit is immodest for several reasons:**
 - **It reveals too much of the body.**
 - **It is often tantalizingly tight.**
 - **It allows for no undergarments.**
 - **By limiting its "coverage" to the private parts of the body it draws attention to those very parts.**

D. Defiant – clothing worn to “make a statement” and assert one’s independence.

1) It is a bold person indeed who uses clothing deliberately to flout the sensibilities of others.

Romans 12:10 Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor **giving preference to one another**;

Romans 15:2 **Let each of us please his neighbor for his good**, leading to edification.

Philippians 2:3-4 Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind **let each esteem others better than himself**. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, **but also for the interests of others**.

E. Unbecoming – clothing that does not befit godliness (1 Timothy 2:10)

Specific Problem Areas

1. **We may have a tendency to rationalize our conduct.**
 - A. **While we give at least lip service to the Biblical principles of modesty, we can most of the time find some way to make an exception for the activities we want to engage in, however much they may be in conflict with those principles.**
 - B. **If we are not outright hypocritical, we are blameably inconsistent – and in a nearly impossible position to help a weaker Christian!**
2. **Commitment to the Lord's will that has exceptions attached to it is really no commitment at all. Only unqualified obedience pleases the Lord.**

James 2:10-11 For **whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.** For He who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder." Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, **you have become a transgressor of the law.**

3. Here are some areas where we may be dangerously inconsistent in the application of our convictions.

A. Double standards

1) Singles and married

- **Dress that is thought to be unacceptable for married people is sometimes tolerated in the case of the unmarried. Why is this so?**
- **And why will not some men allow their wives to wear in public what they “enjoyed” them wearing before marriage?**
- **Is it less important to dress modestly prior to marriage than it is afterwards?**

2) Youth and adults

- **Parents who themselves dress modestly will often allow their teenagers to make all sorts of compromises in this area.**
- **But is there any Biblical justification for immodesty in one’s adolescent years?**
- **Are peer pressures to dress in style so great as to make immodest fashions acceptable?**
- **Do the demands of modesty not apply to school activities such as sports, cheerleading, majorettes, etc.**
- **What kind of thinking is capable of justifying young ladies participating in beauty contests involving the swimsuit competition?**

3) Male and female

- **Men who expect women to be clothed decently will often be unconcerned about applying the same principles to themselves, and women who try to dress themselves to prevent the lustful look of men will often be guilty of relishing the sight of immodestly clad men.**
- **What are the reasons for the Biblical emphasis on feminine modesty?**
- **Do these imply that men are free to bare their chests, go shirtless, wear tight pants, or swimsuits?**

B. **Warped sense of modesty**

1) Undergarments versus revealing garments.

- **Why will women who would be embarrassed at home even to answer the door in a slip not be ashamed to appear outdoors in a swimsuit, when the latter is much more revealing?**

2) Dressing versus watching.

- **Why will those with scruples against dressing immodestly themselves enjoy watching others dressed immodestly on TV, in the movies, and in the Sports Illustrated swimsuit issue, etc.?**

C. Special situations

1) Family

- **Obviously the inner family circle involves a special set of circumstances, but is it not possible to go beyond the bounds of modesty and propriety even in the home among family members?**
- **What attitudes are taught by carelessness here?**

2) Strangers

- **Why will otherwise modest people feel free to dress immodestly when they are among strangers while on vacation, cruises, etc.?**

3) Close friends and fellow Christians

- **Why will otherwise modest people feel free to dress immodestly among close friends and or fellow Christians? Have not tragic consequences come from such situations?**

D. Relaxation and recreation**1) Special social events**

- **What causes modes Christian ladies temporarily to suspend their principles and wear immodest evening gowns to formal functions, weddings, etc.?**

2) Comfort

- **Is hot weather really adequate justification for immodest dress?**
- **Are we to dress modestly when “dressed up,” but not when casually attired?**

3) Swimming, water skiing, water sports

- **Is our enjoyment of these activities sufficient rationale for appearing immodestly before others?**

4) Sports

- **Are we relieved of the need to dress modestly merely because the activity is athletic?**
- **Even if the requirements of modesty prevented the Christian from participating in sports totally, would not his priorities be clear to others and especially to the God he serves?**
- **In ancient Greece, athletes commonly trained and competed nude. Did the fact that the activity was athletic justify the accepted sports “attire” of that day?**

Conclusion

- 1. In our attempts to justify what we wish to do, let us be careful we do not put ourselves in the position of those “who call evil good, and good evil.”**

Isaiah 5:20 Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!

- 2. Along with everything else about us, God is concerned about the way we dress ourselves.**

- 3. May we always be disposed to heed Paul’s admonition:**

Colossians 3:17 And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

- 4. Specifically, may we reverently dress ourselves consistently as those “professing godliness.” (1 Timothy 2:10)**

