

Modesty - Let's Take A Good Look

April 3, 2007

...women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire, but with what is proper for women who profess godliness—with good works. 1Timothy 2: 9-10

Do not let your adorning be external; the braiding of hair, the wearing of gold, or the putting on of clothing. But let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious. I Peter 3:4

I. Foundational Principles

- A. Our decisions in life are based on our life values
 - 1. Ownership
 - 2. Lordship
 - 3. Citizenship

"...the starting place for all of us has to be answering this question: "Why do I live"? What is my purpose in life? You know the answer: to glorify God. "So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." That's a foundational principle in life and we should come to the place where we can say, "My purpose in life is to please God rather than to please others." We have to come to the place where we recognize that our ultimate purpose, our supreme primary purpose for living is to make God happy. [And] that affects everything about our lives, including this matter of clothing. It affects our motives. Why am I wearing this? Why do I like this outfit? Why do I like this look? Is it because I want to fit in? Is it because I want to be accepted; I want to be cool; I want to be popular? You see, if I determine to live my life for the glory of God—that will affect why I wear what I wear. It will make me think about what I wear, not just go to the store and pick up whatever is the current style." - Nancy Leigh DeMoss

- B. World's philosophy vs. God's idea
 - 1. What is beauty?
 - 2. What is the motivation behind your dress?
 - 3. What are you drawing attention to?
 - 4. What satisfies?

"Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." I Corinthians 10:31

II. A Look at our Heart

"...Women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire, but with what is proper for women who profess godliness - with good works." I Timothy 2:9

A. Adorned with Respectable Apparel

B. Adorned with Modesty and Self-control

Definitions of Modesty:

"That lowly temper which accompanies a moderate estimate of one's own worth and importance...synonymous with chastity, or purity of manners...modesty results from purity of mind, or from the fear of disgrace.... Unaffected modesty is the sweetest charm of female excellence, the richest gem in the diadem of their honor." *Webster Dictionary*

"Christian modesty is the inner self-government, rooted in a proper understanding of one's self before God, which outwardly displays itself in humility and purity from a genuine love for Jesus Christ, rather than in self glorification or self advertisement" *Jeff Pollard*

"Modesty is humility expressed in dress." *C. J. Mahaney*

" How does a woman discern the sometimes fine line between proper dress and dressing to be the center of attention? The answer starts in the intent of the heart. A woman should examine her motives and goals for the way she dresses. Is her intent to show the grace and beauty of womanhood? Is it to reveal a humble heart devoted to worshipping God? Or is it to call attention to herself and flaunt her beauty? Or worse, to attempt to lure men sexually? A woman who focuses on worshipping God will consider carefully how she is dressed, because her heart will dictate her wardrobe and appearance." *John MacArthur*

"You show me a woman with a beautiful character;
you show me a woman with a meek and quiet spirit;
you show me a woman with an incorruptible heart;
you show me a woman who comes to worship God -
And I will show you a woman whose wardrobe you do not have to worry about."
-*John MacArthur*

C. Adorned with Good Works

Questions about your heart: (some of these are taken from the Modesty Check)

1. What statement do my clothes make about my heart?
2. When I shop for clothes, am I governed by self-control and modesty?
3. Who am I trying to identify with through my dress?
4. Whose attention do I desire and whose approval do I crave?
5. What words do you *hope* others will use when describing your wardrobe?
6. Are you more known for your outward appearance or for your good works?
7. Are you more known for your clothes and body or for your countenance and humility?

III. A Look at the Facts

A. Understand the treasure of a female's beauty

"Modesty is the source of this delicate yet formidable power, making it a power in and of itself. It's delicate because it can be so innocently given away without your even knowing it. It's formidable - or difficult to deal with or control - because once you've mastered it, no man will be given access to the full secrets behind your allure until you so desire." *Dannah Gresh*

"Imagine how fulfilling it will be if you save it all...every moment of passion, every bared curve, every suggestive glance! Imagine the powerful "intoxication" you'll create for the man of your dreams if you keep the deepest secrets of your beauty just for him." *Dannah Gresh*

B. Understand the differences between men and women

1. Men are visually stimulated; women respond to touch

"What a man's touch is to a woman, the sight of woman is to a man." - *Unknown*

2. Beware of blaming men for their lack of self-control - we are both responsible

"Guys are responsible to govern their eyes and women are responsible to govern their modesty - to govern what they show to men's eyes." *Nancy Leigh DeMoss*

3. Walk as a "candle among gunpowder"

"You must not lay a stumbling block in their way, nor blow up the fire of their lust....You must walk among sinful persons, as you would do with a candle among straw or gunpowder, or else you may see the flame which you did not foresee, when it is too late to quench." *Richard Baxter*

Questions about the Facts:

1. Am I keeping the treasure of my beautiful body a well-kept secret?
2. Am I a walking hazard, just waiting to ignite a fire?
3. Am I helping or hindering guys who desire to be morally pure?
4. Do I dress in a way that will not stimulate men to sin in their hearts?
5. In times of corporate worship, does my attire distract men from worshipping God?

IV. A Look at our Clothes - How can I dress in a way that reflects a modest heart?

A. Immodesty Defined

"An expression of arrogance" - C. J. Mahaney

1. What is exposed or emphasized?
2. Are you inviting others to finish the picture?
3. Where do the eyes naturally go?

Kim Alexis was a model in the 80's but had a change of heart regarding the area of dress: "Many women are playing with fire in the way they dress. Dressing like a floozy tells the world, 'Look at me, want me, lust after me. I'm easy and you can have me.' Displaying intimate parts of the body is a form of advertising for sex."

"The fashion industry does not believe that the principle purpose of clothing is to cover the body; it believes that the principle purpose of clothing is *sexual attraction*." *Jeff Pollard* in *Christian Modesty and the Public Undressing of America*

B. Evaluating your wardrobe

1. Too tight and form fitting
2. Too loose
3. Too short
4. Too little
5. Too low
6. Formal wear and swim wear

"So many mothers make the critical error of trying to be their daughter's friend instead of being her parent. Often, the first thing the teenager picks off the rack is something that is just over the edge. Then mom starts rationalizing. Her daughter is a good kid. She doesn't smoke or drink. She is going to buy it with her own money. All of her friends are wearing this style. Plus, if you say "no", it is going to ruin the whole mood of the outing. So she gives in and approves." *Mary Mohler*

C. Sacrifices of Modesty

1. Time

2. Money

3. Pleasure

4. Diligence

Taken from The Rebelution (<http://www.therebelution.com>)

As a Christian guy with a deep appreciation for feminine modesty, I hereby affirm and commend the following biblical truths to my sisters in Christ:

- Please, approach the survey as a resource, not a list of rules.
- Always honor your parents above the results of the survey. ([Ephesians 6:1-3](#))
- Seek personal feedback on your attire from the godly men and women in your life.
- Remember, modesty is first and foremost a matter of the heart, not the wardrobe.
- Faithfully pursue the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit. ([1 Peter 3:4](#))
- Let your good works outshine your outward appearance. ([1 Timothy 2:10](#))
- Dress for the glory of God. ([1 Corinthians 10:31](#))

Questions about your clothes:

1. Do I need to go through my drawers and closets with a closer look?
2. Am I seeking counsel and input regarding what I wear?
3. Daughters, will you ask your father and mother for their approval?
4. Have I settled for less than God's standard in the area of dress?
5. Am I willing to make the necessary sacrifices to dress modestly?

V. A Look at the Rewards - For the sake of the Gospel

1. Praise from God for your obedience and your godly character
Proverbs 31:30 "Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting, but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised."
2. Freedom from enslavement to fads and fashions and from what people think.
3. Pleasure in marriage, knowing that you reserved your body just for your husband.
4. Protection from the wrong kind of attention from the wrong kind of men.
5. Purity that results from the right kind of attention from the right kind of men.

Recommended reading:

Girl Talk by Carolyn Mahaney and Nicole Whitacre

Christian Modesty and the Public Undressing of America by Jeff Pollard

The Look by Nancy Leigh DeMoss