

Modesty

TEXT: 1 Timothy 2:9-10; 1 Peter 3:1-5.

THESIS: To make a biblical investigation of the subject of modesty and make appropriate application to Christians to day.

INTRODUCTION:

1. These are vibrant passages of Scripture.
 - a. Passages that stirs both men and women to sit up and listen.
 - b. It even arouses emotions and reactions from some, in particular within societies where women's rights have become a heated issue.
2. The subject is the New Testament teachings about “modesty.”
 - a. We live in an immodest world today.
 - b. Immodesty dominates much of what is watched on TV in our country today.
 - c. And, we have seen a lot of revealing clothing and wardrobes malfunctions worn by famous people.
 - i. But what isn't said is that these people have been acting immodest long before these lewd moments are revealed to us.
 - ii. You know, one cannot even watch a decent program without fear that a Victoria's Secret commercial will suddenly appear and that a woman will walk around in her bikini strutin’ her stuff.
 - d. Moreover, our nation has an entire industry (the porn industry) that monetarily thrives because of the sin of immodesty.
 - i. In fact, many of our nations evils and crimes would utterly vanish if only our people would pursue modest dress and behavior.
3. Now, the New Testament is authoritative, which authority has not diminished with the passing of the centuries.
 - a. And therefore, what the New Testament says regarding “modesty” is binding upon Christians today.
 - b. And, what the New Testament teaches about “modesty” is truth, which if violated constitutes sin.
4. Therefore, let’s discuss modesty.

DISCUSSION:

I. DEFINITION OF MODESTY

- A. The English word “modesty” appears only once in the KJV, 1 Tim. 2:9.
 1. “Modesty” is from the Greek “kosmios.”
 2. It means: orderly, well-arranged, decent, modest, adornment.
 3. “Kosmios” appears in the Septuagint in Eccl. 12:9, and is translated “set in order” and is applied to Solomon’s proverbs.
 4. “Kosmios” is derived from “kosmos” which means: harmonious arrangement, order, decoration (1 Pet. 3:3).
 5. It is also a word used in Matt. 13:35, “That it might be fulfilled which was

spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world (Kosmos).”

6. Also Mk. 16:15, “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world (Kosmos), and preach the gospel to every creature.”
- B. Now, “Modesty” can apply to one’s manner of dress.
1. The context of 1 Tim. 2:9-10 for example, affects gaudy, tasteless, loud, cheap dress.
 2. Also, the word for “apparel” is from the Greek “katastole” which means: letting down, and is used in the Septuagint in Isa. 61:3 as “garment” for the Hebrew meaning “covering” or “wrapping.”
- C. “Modesty” is also biblically applied to one’s demeanor or behavior.
1. “Kosmos” appears in the qualifications of elders as “good behavior,” (1 Tim. 3:2).
 2. The apostle Peter also taught “modesty” and addressed both what one may wear and an internal modesty.
 - a. Look at 1 Pet. 3:1-5, “Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; 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.”
 3. Now, the Greek for “adorning” (vs. 3) is “kosmos.”
- D. So, the summary definition of “modesty” involves both one’s manner of dress and inward qualities.
1. The well ordering is not of dress and behavior only, but also of one’s inner life, which exhibits itself outwardly, too.
 2. This shows us that Biblical “modesty” is something that starts on the inside and works its way to the outside of a person.

II. MODESTY IN CONTEXT

- A. Let’s notice a brief exposition of 1 Timothy 2:9-10, “In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works.”
1. The context of 1 Tim. 2:8-11 relates first to the public worship.
 - a. Especially in the public worship, women are cautioned here to be careful lest their outward adornment pose a distraction both to

themselves and to others.

- b. The fact was Paul was addressing the specific issues of the different parts of the Grecian and Roman dress in the worship setting.
 2. The word “Shamefacedness” that is used here, is the natural, internal moral quality of blushing when sin is viewed as repulsive.
 3. The word, “Sobriety” is soundness or soberness of mind, resulting in self-restraint.
 4. “Not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array” refers to the gaudy show in which women braided their hair with strands of gold and silver which glistened in the sunlight and layered themselves with jewels.
 - a. Now, it is here that we see similar descriptions in Isa. 3:16-23, “Moreover the LORD saith, Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet: Therefore the Lord will smite with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, and the LORD will discover their secret parts. In that day the Lord will take away the bravery of their tinkling ornaments about their feet, and their cauls, and their round tires like the moon, The chains, and the bracelets, and the mufflers, The bonnets, and the ornaments of the legs, and the headbands, and the tablets, and the earrings, The rings, and nose jewels, The changeable suits of apparel, and the mantles, and the wimples, and the crisping pins, The glasses, and the fine linen, and the hoods, and the vails.”
 - (1) These women were proud saying, “Look at me”
 - (2) They were making lots of noise, wanting all the attention,
 - (3) And, their identity was dependent upon their elegant necks, fluttering eyes and dainty walk, and they thing that they attached to their bodies.
 - (4) But, God struck them with a scab on the head, meaning, God made them bald which is a worldwide sign of female disgrace.
 5. Continuing on in 1 Tim. 2:9-10, “But which becometh women professing godliness with good works.”
 - a. This statement is contrasted with a mere outward display; the inner display is more precious before God and more representative of Christian womanhood.
 - b. And so, the prohibition is on the extreme and otherwise addresses the priority of adornment, declaring praise on inward over outward adornment.
- B. Now, when we look at 1 Pet. 3:1-5, let’s notice a brief exposition there.
1. From the first verse of this context, one’s behavior rather than anything

- else, such as physical adornment, is commended.
2. Verses one and two champion chaste or holy behavior as the means for a Christian wife to influence a husband whose wife's words are ineffective toward him.
 3. The Christian woman does not rely on lavish outward adornment to secure and keep the attentions of a man; the references to adorning here are the same as those of 1 Tim. 2:9.
 4. Comparatively speaking, the inward spiritual adornment is more precious to God and more effective for Christians than the outward physical adorning.
 5. The apostle Peter teaches a disposition that was also practiced by godly women, such as Sarah, verses 5-6, "Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement."
 6. Now, Peter did not prohibit wearing jewelry, cosmetics or clothes; he did prohibit extreme adornment or decorations which overshadowed (displaced) a holy and reverent behavior.
 7. Both Paul and Peter urge holiness that is to be exhibited, not hindered, outwardly.

III. IS MODESTY A VARIABLE?

- A. There is a sense in which "modesty" is not variable.
 1. God's Word does not change.
 2. There are no special circumstances either then or now that can mitigate or set aside this teaching.
 3. It will never be right for one's dress or degree of undress to overshadow and displace a Christian's holy behavior.
 4. God is concerned about Christian "modesty" (of men and women) in and out of the worship assembly.
 5. Men and women should be modestly attired (inwardly and outwardly) always, especially in public.
- B. But, there is a sense in which "modesty" is variable.
 1. "Modesty" in public worship is equivalent to what constitutes "modesty" in any public setting.
 2. However, what is biblically "modest" in public differs from what is biblically "modest" in the private setting of a married couple's bedroom, etc.
 3. The modern day problem over "modesty" is not primarily the putting on of apparel, but the taking off apparel or clothes.
 4. People, and unfortunately Christians too, have taken modesty confined to private settings and moved it to public display.
 5. This is sinful, for it discounts biblical modesty, numbs the senses of morality (shamefacedness, etc.), dismisses holy behavior and influence, as

well as promotes lust.

IV. THE TOPIC OF MODESTY IS ALSO AFFECTED BY THE TOPIC OF LUST

- A. The attire of a harlot has always aroused the lower nature of men.
 - 1. The “attire of a harlot” is clearly noticeable and has a calculated result.
 - a. Solomon said, “behold, there met him a woman with the attire of an harlot, and subtil of heart.” (Prov. 7:10)
 - 2. Is it reasonable to suppose the dress or lack thereof, which if worn by a harlot that encourages men to lust, if worn by a Christian woman it will also lead one to lust.
- B. In connection to this is watching a woman bathe which has been known to arouse unlawful lusts in a man.
 - 1. Consider 2 Sam. 11:2-5, “And it came to pass in an eveningtide, that David arose from off his bed, and walked upon the roof of the king's house: and from the roof he saw a woman washing herself; and the woman was very beautiful to look upon. And David sent and enquired after the woman. And one said, Is not this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite? And David sent messengers, and took her; and she came in unto him, and he lay with her; for she was purified from her uncleanness: and she returned unto her house. And the woman conceived, and sent and told David, and said, I am with child.”
 - a. King David saw Bathsheba washing, lusted after her, committed adultery with her, fathered a child, murdered her husband and brought much misery upon himself and the nation.
 - 2. So, is it advisable for women, especially those professing godliness, to bathe in the presence of men, whether it be by sunbathing or swimming?
- C. “Lust” is a sin, which especially men are cautioned in Scripture to avoid.
 - 1. Yet, is it any more praiseworthy for women to dress provocatively and excite lust?
 - 2. “Lust” is viewed by our Lord as “adultery” only not yet acted out. (Matt. 5:28).
 - 3. “Lust” is a sin for which souls will be lost.
 - a. “Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;” (Titus 2:12)
 - b. For, “. . . when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.” (Jam. 1:14-15)
 - c. Therefore, “. . . abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;” (1 Pet. 2:11).

V. A CLEAR DEFINITION AND CRISP APPLICATION OF BIBLICAL MODESTY

- A. It is improper and sinful for Christians to dress immodestly in the worship assembly.

1. The greater context of 1 Tim. 2:9-10 addresses the public worship.
 2. Mini-skirts, backless dresses, high-slit skirts and low-cut dresses have absolutely no place in public worship.
 3. In addition, women should be careful to wear appropriate undergarments that contribute to modesty because of see through clothing.
- B. It is improper and sinful for Christians to dress immodestly in any public setting.
1. Public immodesty terminates positive Christian influence and promotes lust, and is, therefore, sinful.
 2. Added to the former list, short-shorts, halter or tube tops, sheer blouses, contemporary swimsuits, tank tops and other revealing or provocative clothing should not be worn publicly by Christians.
 3. The beach or a swimming pool does not lessen the need for Christians to dress modestly.
- C. At home, the modesty of one's dress varies.
1. What may be biblically modest in the inner chambers of one's home is biblically immodest in the public areas of the house while entertaining guests or out in the yard.
 2. Furthermore, what may be modest between husband and wife can be immodest in front of the children.
 3. What may be modest family dress at night is immodest when exhibited to others (e.g., night-clothes).
- D. Persistence in immodesty has serious ramifications.
1. Immodesty in the face of biblical instruction demonstrates willful lack of subjection to God and one's father or husband.
 2. Immodesty is not a usual and orderly arrangement of clothing.
 3. Immodesty overshadows and displaces "shamefacedness and sobriety," "professing godliness" and "good works."
 4. Immodesty makes influencing another with the Gospel, impossible (1 Pet. 3:1-5).
 5. Immodesty is sinful, leads to additional sins and corrupts others.

CONCLUSION:

1. The topic of "modesty" is taught in the New Testament and is binding today.
 - a. Modesty is an orderly arrangement of clothes that does not hide the inner or spiritual side of man.
 - b. Immodesty leads to lust and other sins.
2. Faithful and knowledgeable Christians do not wear revealing clothing in public.
 - a. Christian women and men must be focused upon Christ and upon helping those who are in the communities and cities of the world.
 - b. Christian women and men must be focused upon godliness—fearing and reverencing God—and upon good works—the good works that are so desperately needed by the lost.
 - c. Yet, persistent immodesty is evidence of rebellion toward God, toward His Word,

- toward the church, toward fathers and toward husbands.
 - d. Immodesty ruins the Christian influence and impairs the effectiveness of the Gospel.
- 3. Invitation:
 - a. God calls on mankind to conform to His Word rather than conform to the world (Rom. 12:1-2).
 - b. Initial conformity to God's Word results in Gospel obedience and forgiveness of sins.
 - i. "Repent, and be baptized" (Acts 2:38)
 - ii. Jesus is the "author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Heb. 5:8-9).
 - c. Faithful children of God need to continue to obey the Gospel.
 - i. Are you, "stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding" (1 Cor. 15:58)?
 - ii. Are you "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith" (2 Cor. 13:5)
- 4. If you need to come to God, do so now as we stand and sing.