

MODESTY MATTERS

“The Requirements of God”

Introduction

What we have discussed thus far:

- Clothed of God – 2 Cor 5:4-5
2 Corinthians 5:4-5
4 For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.
5 Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. KJV¹

We were wrought of God for the purpose of being clothed upon.

- Face of God – 2 Cor 3:18; 4:6
We are to fellowship with God “face to face.” Our countenance is to shine the light of Christ.

2 Corinthians 3:18

But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

2 Corinthians 4:6

For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

We should thus ensure that our attire draws the eyes of others to our countenance. It is more than just modesty. It is a matter of being affective witnesses for the Lord Jesus Christ.

I. Clothing Matters to God

1. Adam and Eve – Gen 3:21
Genesis 3:21
Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.
2. The Clothing of the Priests – Ex 28:1-42; 29:1-30; 39:1-31
The Lord devoted at least 103 verses to the clothing of the priests in Exodus alone!
3. The Garments of Jesus Christ
 - A. His Parted Garments – John 19:23-24
John 19:23-24
23 Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout.

¹ All references are from the King James Version of the Bible unless otherwise noted.

24 They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did.

The Holy Spirit thought it important enough to record what happened to the Lord's earthly clothing.

B. His Shinning Raiment

i. Transfiguration – Matt 17:1-2

Matthew 17:1-2

1 And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart,

2 And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.

ii. Clothed with Light – Ps 104:1-2

Psalms 104:1-2

1 Bless the LORD, O my soul. O LORD my God, thou art very great; thou art clothed with honour and majesty.

2 Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment: who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain:

C. His Spiritual Clothing

i. Redemption – Is 59:16-20

Isaiah 59:16-20

16 And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him.

17 For he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloke.

18 According to their deeds, accordingly he will repay, fury to his adversaries, recompence to his enemies; to the islands he will repay recompence.

19 So shall they fear the name of the LORD from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him.

20 And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD.

ii. Majesty – Job 40:9-10; Ps 93:1

Job 40:9-10

9 Hast thou an arm like God? or canst thou thunder with a voice like him?

10 Deck thyself now with majesty and excellency; and array thyself with glory and beauty.

Psalms 93:1

The LORD reigneth, he is clothed with majesty; the LORD is clothed with strength, wherewith he hath girded himself: the world also is stablished, that it cannot be moved.

iii. Authority – Is 22:21-22; Rev 3:7

Isaiah 22:21-22

21 And I will clothe him with thy robe, and strengthen him with thy girdle, and I will commit thy government into his hand: and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah.

22 And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.

Revelation 3:7

And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth;

II. Jesus on Clothing

1. It Is not to Be a Distracting Care – Matt 6:25

Matthew 6:25

Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

A. “Give no Thought” – *merimnao*

“To be full of anxiety which divides up and distracts the mind.” Bullinger

Does our clothing distract the mind of others even it doesn't distract us?

B. It Is a Basic Need of Life that God Will Supply – Matt 6:28-32

Matthew 6:28-32

28 And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:

29 And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

30 Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?

31 Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

1 Timothy 6:7-8

7 For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.
8 And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.

C. We Are to Seek the Kingdom First – Matt 6:33-34

Matthew 6:33-34

33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

34 Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

2. It Is Indicative of Lifestyle – Luke 7:24-25

Luke 7:24-25

24 And when the messengers of John were departed, he began to speak unto the people concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness for to see? A reed shaken with the wind?

25 But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they which are gorgeously apparelled, and live delicately, are in kings' courts.

A. John's Clothing – Matt 3:1-4

Matthew 3:1-4

1 In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea,

2 And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

3 For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

4 And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey.

“Camel's hair” was a cheap, coarse cloth made from the rough, shaggy fur of the camel. It was the traditional garb of prophets (see 2 Kings 1:7-8; Zech 13:4).

B. Those “Gorgeously Appareled”

i. “Soft” raiment

Soft = *malakos*, effeminate

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

9 Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor **effeminate**, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,

10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

11 And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

Deuteronomy 22:5

The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the LORD thy God.

ii. Live “delicately”

Delicately = *truphe*, delicate living, luxury as though breaking down the mind and making it effeminate. (Bullinger)

When our clothing and living choices tend toward the pampering of the flesh, our minds are made weak. This kills women (1 Tim 5:6) and feminizes men.

iii. Rioting in the daytime

2 Peter 2:9-14

9 The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished:

10 But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities.

11 Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord.

12 But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption;

13 And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to **riot** [*truphe*] in the day time. Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you;

14 Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children:

The feast of verse 13 is the love feast.

Jude 12

These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots;

When those who “live delicately” do so in the presence of the church, they corrupt many. Thus, they need to be confronted in the spirit of meekness that many not be defiled.

3. It Can Be Used Deceptively

A. Religious Dress – Matt 23:1-5, 12

Matthew 23:1-5

1 Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples,

2 Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat:

3 All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.

- 4 For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.
- 5 But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments,

These borders are the tzitzit, the tassels that were to remind them of the Covenant. The Pharisees made them large so that all could see their religious piety.

Matthew 23:12

And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.

Even conservative dress can become a point of pride. We need to be humble and allow the Lord to exalt us in due measure.

On a side note, we saw earlier that it was this "border of the garment" on Jesus that people grabbed to be healed. Ezekiel reveals an interesting counterpart to the anointing being carried in clothing.

Ezek 13:17-21

- 17 "Now, son of man, set your face against the daughters of your people who prophesy out of their own imagination. Prophesy against them
- 18 and say, "This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Woe to the women who sew magic charms on all their wrists and make veils of various lengths for their heads in order to ensnare people. Will you ensnare the lives of my people but preserve your own?
- 19 You have profaned me among my people for a few handfuls of barley and scraps of bread. By lying to my people, who listen to lies, you have killed those who should not have died and have spared those who should not live.
- 20 "Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I am against your magic charms with which you ensnare people like birds and I will tear them from your arms; I will set free the people that you ensnare like birds.
- 21 I will tear off your veils and save my people from your hands, and they will no longer fall prey to your power. Then you will know that I am the LORD. NIV

These false prophetesses were using jewelry and veils to ensnare the souls of people (thus the KJV).

B. Sheep Skins – Matt 7:15-20

Matthew 7:15-20

- 15 Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.
- 16 Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?
- 17 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

19 Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

20 Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

We need to judge by fruit, not by degrees (get it, “sheep skins”) or religious pedigree.

C. Full Exposure

Regardless of how people dress in the natural, or to what purpose, the Lord will judge us all according to our hearts. We need to be prepared for the wedding to come.

i. Wedding garments – Matt 22:8-14

Matthew 22:8-14

8 Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy.

9 Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage.

10 So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests.

11 And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment:

12 And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless.

13 Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

14 For many are called, but few are chosen.

We need to be properly clothed to stay in the wedding.

ii. Be clothed – Rev 16:15

Revelation 16:15

Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.

We need to keep our garments. On this point, it is interesting to compare the church in Sardis with the church in Laodicea.

Sardis-

Revelation 3:4-6

4 Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy.

5 He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.

6 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

Laodicea-

Revelation 3:17-19

17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:

18 I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.

19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

iii. Keep clean – Rev 7:14; 19:7-9

Revelation 7:14

And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

Revelation 19:7-9

7 Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.

8 And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.

9 And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.

III. Lifting Up the Countenance²

1. Have a Cheerful Countenance

A. He Is the Health of Our Countenance – Ps 42:11

Psalms 42:11

Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.

B. It's a Heart Issue – Prov 15:13

Proverbs 15:13

A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance: but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken.

C. Wear a Smile! (Neh 2:1-2)

Nehemiah 2:1-2

² These insights are from *Wisdom Booklet 15*, p. 49-52 published by the Advanced Training Institute International.

1 And it came to pass in the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the king, that wine was before him: and I took up the wine, and gave it unto the king. Now I had not been beforetime sad in his presence.

2 Wherefore the king said unto me, Why is thy countenance sad, seeing thou art not sick? this is nothing else but sorrow of heart. Then I was very sore afraid,

Barnes' Commentary "A Persian subject was expected to be perfectly content so long as he had the happiness of being with his king."

What about us?

2. Proper Attire

A. Proper Fit

i. Not too snug

If clothing is too snug, it has a tendency to reveal the "nakedness" underneath. Even when the article in question isn't designed to do so (though often they are), a too tight fit will cause many "self-conscious" adjustments to our clothing drawing attention away from our countenance.

ii. Not too loose

If it is too loose, our clothing may give a slovenly or sloppy appearance. Also, it may billow or fall and reveal underclothing or nakedness.

B. Proper Occasion

We need to be mindful of what occasion we are dressing for. We don't want to be like the man who came to the wedding feast without a wedding garment.

Whether we are dressing for work, play, church, etc., modesty must always be born in mind.

C. Cultural Sensitivity

We need to be sensitive to the culture we are ministering in. Does the church you have been invited to ask its women to wear head coverings? Then wear a head covering if you are a woman.

Some cultures have reservations about certain colors of clothing. Be aware of where you are going and what their taboos are.

3. Avoiding "Eye Traps"

A. Eyes Are Attracted to Skin – Hab 2:15

Habakkuk 2:15

Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that putteth thy bottle to him, and maketh him drunken also, that thou mayest look on their nakedness!

Proverbs 27:20

Hell and destruction are never full; so the eyes of man are never satisfied.

Exposed skin naturally draws our eyes (especially men).

- B. Eyes are Attracted to Written Messages – (Lev 19:28)
Not only to what is written, but also to where it is written.

While we are on written messages, we should take note of Leviticus 19:28

Leviticus 19:28

Ye shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor print any marks upon you: I am the LORD.

- C. Eyes Follow the Lines of Design and Accessories
Examples: Seams that outline body parts, plunging neck lines, low knotted jewelry.

Conclusion

Num 6:23-27

23 Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them,

24 The LORD bless thee, and keep thee:

25 The LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee:

26 The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.

27 And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel; and I will bless them.