



Modesty

*Jesus'
Invitation
to His
Bride*

As always, if we can help you in any way, please contact the church here at
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Modesty: Jesus' Invitation

To His Bride— To Us!

Though this may focus on the issue we call “modesty,” it is first and foremost an expression of our need for God and our need for His cleansing and Life and Mercy on our lives. Why? Because apart from His touch on our lives and His imparted vision to us, we will not be able to understand much of anything about His Heart for this temporary material realm. This is not about the “do’s and don’ts” of a Christian’s proper moral dress code. It is the Journey of finding God’s Heart. Legalism is death, just as ignoring God’s Heart is fatal. This is *not* about legalism *or* license. It’s about HIM. This is about being drawn deeper into the heart of God and having our hearts and minds renewed from the inside. It is about loving Him more deeply, and again, seeing why He has very specific thoughts and opinions about how we clothe our physical bodies.

Part I

Changing Our Eye-Glasses

It is always worth reminding ourselves what our part is, as followers of Jesus. Obvious, we say? Sometimes we lose sight of the fact that GOD is

God. That means that He calls the shots. He sets the course. He makes the decisions. He is the Potter and we are the clay. He is the Creator; we are His created beings. That is very important to fix clearly in our hearts and minds at every turn. That we will submit to, obey and ultimately love His commands, decrees and thoughts. No “Yeah, God, but...I don’t like that.” Or “I don’t think that’s so important...” There is no way a child of God can hold that kind of selfish, prideful attitude and expect to prosper in Christ and grow spiritually. God makes certain, every so often, that we have practical “life tests” to see how surrendered we are to Jesus. Our hope is that you find in this, another opportunity to lay everything at His feet, with a mind and will to obey Him, no matter what the cost. This may be, for you, a topic that provides that opportunity. Please, take it seriously. If you have left everything to follow Jesus, just like people in His day—if that is your intent and heart, then don’t stop now! Don’t let your personal experiences or preferences or pride or vanity be your god or your guide. He deserves far better than that. “Do you not know that...you are not your own: you were bought at a price? Therefore honor God with your body.” (1 Cor. 6:19-20)

It will be very helpful, as we approach God and His Word about modesty, if we first understand what it is that we’ve most likely been taught and exposed to all our lives. If we’ve been raised in mainstream America, or most any other culture or civilization or nation, we have been force-fed a steady diet of sensualism, immodesty, immorality and flesh. Our minds and opinions have usually been saturated with the world’s point of view, not God’s point of view. As children of the King, our whole foundation and frame of reference must change from that of the world! Please understand that we all have a worldly point of view prior to God changing our hearts and creating a new person with a new mind. Paul speaks of the need to be renewed in the attitudes of our minds and to throw off the worldly perspectives.

“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.”
Romans 12:1-2

“So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking.... You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.” Ephesians 4:17, 22-24

Our minds must be renewed by God, and part of that process involves recognizing and repenting of patterns of this world. We have had our minds so saturated with what the world deems “valuable” in regard to our bodies: a slim waistline, shapes, muscles and features; appealing clothing to draw the eyes of men and women. The enemy is forever lying to us that appearance means everything and defines who we are. The world constantly screams that appearance is of utmost importance and whispers invitations to drink in the parade of sensuality from billboards, magazines, advertisements, clothing stores, movies and television. The world says that it’s only natural and *normal* to be drawn to the fleshly appeal of immodest dress. It’s okay! Enjoy! Indulge! Our eyes and ears have been so bombarded with a godless, sensual standard, that we have been almost completely dulled to the Standard and the thoughts of God Himself. It is a fact of spiritual life in God and obeying His Son that when we are fed worldly thinking and breathe its air and absorb its lies and its standards for living, it is impossible to see clearly and understand and hear God’s Heart on other matters, either.

Please, take responsibility. Go in your room and shut the door and face God on this matter. Honestly ask Him to open your eyes and expose the whole thing to you personally, to help you see it for what it is. It will do you absolutely no good whatsoever to go on reading this if you won’t question your own opinions about how you dress, and if you don’t ask God specifically to cleanse and renew your mind on these matters. And the other response of just “doing it,”—changing your dress because it’s the moral and religious thing to do—that’s no good either. Our choice to submit our thinking and our hearts to God and change our ways must be because we see Jesus and we respond to Him as a Person. We don’t have to understand all the details in order to surrender to His Lordship. Our peace will be found in becoming soft hearted and ready to respond to our Living God who has thoughts right now about all this. Find Him! Call out to Him! Search for Him on this matter with your whole heart. He wants to richly bless you and draw you to His side and fill you with the Glory and goodness of His Holy Word. Here is a promise that He has made with us according to His Word:

“For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: ‘I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people.’

“Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you.’ ‘I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.’

“Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.”

2 Corinthians 6:16-7:1

Notice the condition He has placed on being “a people belonging to God.” We must come out from them, the world, and purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit. He has, and is, drawing us “out from” this world and the ideals and opinions and pressures and values of this world. No longer are we “yoked” with it. If we are truly His, then we are “aliens and foreigners” in this world, not belonging in its mainstream, nor to be polluted by it. God says to come out from them and urges us to embrace what He has said about our lives.

Who are we to argue with God about anything? “Be transformed by the renewing of your mind;” no longer “conform to the patterns” and thinking and marketing schemes of this world. We have been “rescued from the dominion of darkness and brought into the kingdom of the Son He loves.” No longer are we slaves to sin and bound to “the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts.” (Eph. 2:2-3)

For most of us, those cravings have included jealousies about others’ appearances, comparisons of our flesh to others’ flesh; competing with our looks, and being eaten up inside with our lust to look good—vanity of every sort. This would also include the terrible sin of drawing people to our own bodies instead of pointing them towards God with our behavior. And whether knowingly or unknowingly, most of us have been, at times, responsible for causing others to stumble into lusts and other sin, because we were so selfish and vain to adorn ourselves outwardly in an effort to impress or entice people. That is the product of a diet of worldly thinking in regard to clothing and appearance. This alone should cause us to run from anything originating in the heart of the world and the devil. He is our enemy and will work through any means to spoil and twist and poison and pollute our minds against Godliness and a Life hidden in Christ with God. It is no surprise that he has steeped people in a cauldron of stinking flesh and immorality and immodesty through the avenues of our eyes and ears and emotions. Please, recognize this for what it is! Agreeing with God is not optional for a follower of Jesus.

By the way, it may be helpful to mention here that you are no better off in your walk with God if your clothes are modest but your heart is still worldly.

Your “acts of righteousness” can easily be filthy rags before God if you’re not responding because of God’s Heart. Some people, because they dress modestly, can become self-righteous in their thinking. But it means nothing if it is not in response to Jesus, your Head. So please don’t simply become a modest dresser who has made no effort to find Jesus’ heart on your clothing. Changing how you dress may be a good place to start, but it would be shallow and robbery to stop there!

Here’s an example of how the futility of keeping an external “law” in the name of “modesty” can tragically cause someone to miss God’s Love and Heart. Recently, a sister saw a Muslim woman walking with her young daughter. As the sister watched, the little girl ran ahead and headed for the street where a car was coming along. In her hurry to go after the child, the mother’s head covering began to fall off. At this, the mother was torn between the two apparently equal concerns. She had to replace her head covering! But what about her daughter? The sight was mournful, to say the least. Is this the result of a “religiously” held belief? A scrap of cloth becoming as valuable as a child’s life? It has never been Jesus’ thought that we robotically conform to an external list of “rules for holy living,” missing the value of Life itself. Remember His words about how the religious people of His day would “keep the Sabbath” and hold on to their traditions, while ignoring or forgetting the Love of God for others? Suffice it to say that in our desire to please our Father with our apparel, we must respond to Him in love, as a Person—not to a legal mandate that would quench our Life in Christ and our lives with others.

Be spiritually deepened as you find and embrace God’s Heart on this matter. Please, do not just embrace a “right way to dress.” Embrace GOD! Then, in turn, you can help your brothers and sisters to see and be changed inwardly, by God’s Spirit and by His Grace. So together, let us thank God that “because of His great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with Him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages He might show the incomparable riches of His grace, expressed in His kindness to us in Christ Jesus.” (Eph 2: 4-7)

Let’s press on together to find God!

Part 2

It Began in the Garden...

“The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.” Genesis 2:22-25

There was a time in the garden, when the man and woman were holy people, pure and without blemish, blame or guilt. That is the way God created them—without sin or guilt. Therefore, they felt no shame about their nakedness. They were one with God and with each other and their lives and their flesh were right and pure and holy. The truth of that was reflected in the fact that they were both naked, and they felt no shame.

However...

“When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

“Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. The Lord God called to the man, ‘Where are you?’

“He answered, ‘I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid BECAUSE I WAS NAKED; so I hid.’”
Genesis 3:6-7

Look at the very first thing Adam noticed about himself: He was naked. Of all things...naked. There they were, husband and wife, all alone in the garden. Surely it shouldn't have been that big of a deal. They were married, and totally alone with one another! Of all the things Adam could have noticed or said after he sinned, he was most conscious of his nakedness. He had just disobeyed Almighty God, his Creator. He had just broken sweet friendship and kinship with God himself. He had pained God's heart. Yet his own uncovered body is at the forefront of his mind and fears. A man or woman in the habit of walking with God, but living in a fallen world, will care about modesty, just as Adam did.

This set the stage for all human history. Fallen man is meant to cover his nakedness and live in a holy and reverent fear of a righteous and just God. When they violated God's command, their whole being was affected by sin, inside and out. Their nakedness had become something to be covered. And

even after they covered themselves with the fig leaves, Adam was still hiding from God because he was afraid...because he was naked. Though it seems he had already covered himself to some degree, in his mind he still considered himself naked and wanted to hide because of his fear. Maybe Adam sensed that the fig leaves couldn't adequately cover his nakedness or remove his shame. The bloodshed of animals was required to adequately cover their shameful nakedness as "the Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them." (Genesis 3:21) Clothing them was important enough to God that He Himself made their clothes, through bloodshed. (A foreshadowing of the need for the Blood of His Son to remove the sin and guilt for anyone who would call on the name of the Lord) The obvious initial point? God Himself *clothed* them! *God wanted them clothed!*

Don't we, like Adam, have a sensitivity to our nakedness? Aren't there "lines" that your conscience makes you aware of? Isn't it true that we have a sense of shame about varying degrees of nakedness? For example, one blouse or shirt button too many unbuttoned? Don't you feel the difference in your spirit? Think about it. What do you feel in your spirit as you unbutton the next shirt or blouse button and leave to go out in public? If you acknowledge that we do have "lines" that we should not cross, then surely we need to make sure they are God's "lines"! It's not for each of us to decide "what's right in his own eyes" by setting our own personal standard. We must align our hearts with God's and find out what He thinks about being clothed properly, and what we should allow our eyes to fall upon or accept. If it was important to God to clothe Adam and Eve, then certainly He cares how we dress today, too. We need to love what He loves and hate what He hates in this area of our lives.

Remember that before we knew Christ and His Resurrection power and life, we were fallen beings in need of cleansing and forgiveness. In our sinful natures we were "dead even while we lived." Once we are raised with Him and made new creations, "we have an obligation—but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live...." (Rom. 8:12-13) And don't you know that "the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law." (Gal. 5:17-18)

We must find God and be wise and know that the fallen state of our flesh is at war with the desires of God's Spirit within us. Our sinful nature may want

to flaunt itself in an unholy way, while our spirit yearns for purity of body, soul and mind. Therefore, by the spirit we are meant to subdue the flesh and bring it under the submission of Christ. While there once was a time when Adam “had no shame,” now we cover our nakedness.

Perhaps all of this is somehow related to the fact that clothing is even worn in Heavenly Realms, as Scripture indicates innumerable times. And if clothing is worn in the Heavenly Realms, where believers are seated with Christ Jesus, how much more, in this fallen world, where the visible is a shadow of the reality in heaven. Obviously, it would be a very serious flaw in reasoning and morality to advance the theory, with no Scriptural support, that nakedness should be okay once we are Christians and the “curse” is removed. Our physical clothing appears to reflect the current arrangement in heavenly realms. And when the Wedding Day of the Lamb comes, and the curse is fully crushed, “fine linen” is still a beautiful thing!

“...Let us rejoice and be glad and give Him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and His Bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear.”
Revelation 19:7-8

Part 3

Examples of Shameful Nakedness

“I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness...” Revelation 3:18

“Jerusalem has sinned greatly, so she has been tossed away like a filthy rag. All who once honored her now despise her, for they have seen her stripped naked and humiliated. All she can do is groan and hide her face.” Lamentations 1:8 (NLT)

“Noah, a man of the soil, proceeded to plant a vineyard. When he drank some of its wine, he became drunk and lay uncovered inside his tent. Ham, the father of Canaan, saw his father’s nakedness and told his two brothers outside. But Shem and Japheth took a garment and laid it across their shoulders; then they walked in backward and covered their father’s nakedness. Their faces were turned the other way so that they would not see their father’s nakedness. When Noah awoke from his wine and found out what his youngest son had done to him, he said, ‘Cursed be Canaan! The lowest of slaves will he be to his brothers.’”

He also said,

“Blessed be the LORD, the God of Shem! May Canaan be the slave of Shem.”
Genesis 9:20-26

It seems Noah's lack of knowledge about what fermented grape juice can do, led to an unfortunate incident. Noah didn't quite get changed into his pajamas before he fell asleep. However, notice the holy reverence Shem and Japheth had when they covered the nakedness of their father without looking on him. A righteous respect of the seriousness of the naked flesh. Ham was cursed for seeing his father naked; the others were blessed. God makes it very clear that nakedness is a private thing. These were even blood relatives! Think about that! It is still, obviously, not appropriate with God to be less than extremely cautious about modesty, even with physical family! It is no wonder that satan is trying to see to it that nakedness is not only uncovered, but actually exalted! The world loves bare flesh and nakedness, in one form or another. Have we had shame or guilt or remorse about our society's standard? Like Shem and Japheth, we ought to have a holy fear about nakedness and line our ways up with God's ways.

God says to come out and be set apart, holy and consecrated to God. Can you see how satan has duped the world via the media and carnal standards around us? If society "accepts" a trend of tightness, or flesh exposed, or exotic garment material or sensual styles, do we blindly follow it into a pit? Come out and be separate, says the Lord! Can you see it? The standard of the world and necklines are creeping, creeping, creeping ever lower, as the shorts and skirts are often, depending on the era and culture, creeping, creeping, creeping ever higher. For the saints of God and for the Lamb we must see it! Consider this Old Testament passage about God's holy servants:

"Make linen undergarments as a covering for the body, reaching from the waist to the thigh. Aaron and his sons must wear them whenever they enter the Tent of Meeting or approach the altar to minister in the Holy Place, so that they will not incur guilt and die."
Exodus 28:42

God was specific about their undergarments! And they were in danger of death if they didn't cover themselves in this way, "from the waist to the thigh." Death! It was that important to Him. And consider this thought: while God calls those "undergarments," (from the waist to the thigh), we have called them "shorts!" Does that mean shorts may be inappropriate in God's sight? We honestly don't know the answer to that question. Maybe or maybe not. God often enlightens our hearts if we're connected to Him (rather than being controlled by legalism, fear and pride, or by careless, God-less living). But let's get our heads straight—have a mind to love what God loves and hate what He hates. Our inner man convictions must be built according to God's mind and not our influenced-by-the-world minds.

Here's another, similar, Old Testament passage:

“And do not go up to my altar on steps, lest your nakedness be exposed on it.”
Exodus 20:26

God did not even allow stairs for His altar, lest nakedness be seen as His servants ascended! Think about this. These men, as far as we can tell, had on a long, robe-type garment in addition to the undergarments covering from the “waist to the thigh.” What were the chances that their nakedness would be seen? God doesn't appear to have cared for even the possibility of exposure.

Are we getting the gravity and the seriousness of all this? This really does matter. He has opinions and thoughts about how we cover and even how we carry ourselves. Be talking with Him about this as you read because as we adopt God's attitudes with sobriety, it allows us to “feel” what he feels as we consider our own dress.

Here is another passage which shows that God cares about the attitude of heart and how people carry themselves.

“Next the Lord will judge the women of Jerusalem, who walk around with their noses in the air, with tinkling ornaments on their ankles. Their eyes rove among the crowds, flirting with the men. The Lord will send a plague of scabs to ornament their heads. Yes, the Lord will make them bald for all to see!

“The Lord will strip away their artful beauty—their ornaments, headbands, and crescent necklaces; their earrings, bracelets, and veils of shimmering gauze. Gone will be their scarves, ankle chains, sashes, perfumes, and charms; their rings, jewels, party clothes, gowns, capes and purses; their mirrors, linen garmets, head ornaments, and shawls. Instead of smelling of sweet perfume, they will stink. They will wear ropes for sashes, and their well-set hair will fall out. They will wear rough sackcloth instead of rich robes. Their beauty will be gone. Only shame will be left to them.

“The men of the city will die in battle. The gates of Jerusalem will weep and mourn. The city will be like a ravaged woman, huddled on the ground.”
Isaiah 3:16-26 (NLT)

The women of Israel were consumed with their “beauty” and it was a stench to God. We have been surrounded by a society that saturates women with thoughts of drawing the eyes of men and seducing them by luring their eyes, attention and affections. This sin can be subtle in its manifestation, and seem playfully innocent by the world's standards. But we must know in

our heart of hearts that it is a stench and an abomination to God! Let it NOT be so for those who are purchased by the Blood of the Lamb to be pure and without blemish.

Saints of God, remember that we are His Bride. So let us divorce ourselves from the world and clothe ourselves with the robes of righteousness of God! (See Isaiah 61:10) Let us separate ourselves from the things that the world has taught us and the things our own flesh and insecurities have taught us to value. Reject worldly axioms such as “if you think you look good, then you feel good.” So much garbage straight from dark realms. Lord, help us break our self-awareness and allow the way we dress and think to truly be for the GOOD of OTHERS. “...worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.” (I Chronicles 16:29)

Another illustration of God’s mind toward nakedness is found in Ezekiel 16. Here, Jerusalem is likened to a woman:

“On the day you [Jerusalem] were born your cord was not cut, nor were you washed with water to make you clean, nor were you rubbed with salt or wrapped in cloths. No one looked on you with pity or had compassion enough to do any of these things for you. Rather, you were thrown out into the open field, for on the day you were born you were despised. Then I passed by and saw you kicking about in your blood, and as you lay there in your blood I said to you, ‘Live!’ I made you grow like a plant of the field. You grew up and developed and became the most beautiful of jewels. Your breasts were formed and your hair grew, you who were naked and bare.

“Later I passed by, and when I looked at you and saw that you were old enough for love, I spread the corner of my garment over you and covered your nakedness. I gave you my solemn oath and entered into a covenant with you, declares the Sovereign Lord, and you became mine.”
Ezekiel 16:4-8

This is a beautiful and tender picture of the way God sees us in our filth and how He has mercy on our pitiful souls. He finds us, apart from Him, as people who are bloody-filthy and naked in a shameful state. Out of His kindness and love for us, He cleans us and covers our nakedness.

God gave His Son Jesus, out of His deep love for us, to be a sin offering on our behalf. The sacrifice of Christ and His bloodshed on our behalf is God’s mercy and cleansing on our lives, and the way in which He has covered our nakedness and wiped away our guilt and shame. The picture in Ezekiel is a significant one. Notice that God describes our needful state as being a naked and neglected one, apart from Him and His Love. Praise be to Our

God for taking such tender care to wash us and clothe us by the blood of His Son that He sent!

By the way, on the rare occasions, over the past 6000 years, when God violated His own order of Holiness as it related to modesty (such as with Isaiah and Hosea), it was to demonstrate His Judgment! In each of these cases, He specifically asked one representative man, in that generation, to endure the curse (as Jesus did, “cursed is he that dies on a tree”), to demonstrate His judgment on sinful man. Isaiah’s nakedness was not an experiment in the removal of the curse of the Fall, but rather an extreme example of His Holy anger.

Part 4

And Today?

With all that we see in the Scriptures concerning the issue of nakedness, how does it touch our lives, in a practical way? Let’s consider some practicals where the truths about nakedness hit closer to home for us today.

Swimming Scenarios

It is not only acceptable, but it is highly encouraged by the world system to dress in the equivalent of your underwear, and walk, swim, sit, and to “lay out” in front of anyone who cares to look on. We purposely strip our bodies, literally, and expose our flesh to public view, to friends and strangers alike. And we have faithfully passed that heritage on to our children and taught them that it is okay to be immodestly dressed—as long as it’s by a pool or in a lake or at the beach. And, of course, all of it has been in the name of “relaxation” and “healthy exercise.”

Think about it. Fifty years ago, it was degrading to expose your body in such a way. Only the lowest of society would think of such a thing. In fact, at the beginning of this century, women’s “bathing suits” looked like neck-to-ankle, fluffy Victorian dresses. But slowly, through media and marketing (satan pulling the strings, of course), our consciences have been anesthetized to a godly standard. Put on a pink bow or two and go ahead and strip down to your underwear. Walk, run, splash and tan in full view of anyone who cares to look on. It’s all so appealing to the eye. How could it be wrong? “It’s okay,” the enemy says. “God doesn’t mind. It’s simply good, wholesome fun.” Please, think again. We have bought a lie from God’s enemy that we can be immodest, as long as it’s a swimming setting. And the fruit of embracing and tolerating that undoubtedly results in lust of the eyes, jealousies, vanity, and fleshly competition and degradation, just for starters.

Here's a good test to let you "feel" the wrongness of it. How would you feel if you and your family saw someone in a bra and panties at the table next to you, down at the local family restaurant? Or if all the cashiers at your local grocery store were in their bras and panties? Probably you'd feel a bit embarrassed and think it a pretty inappropriate way to dress or place to shop. But put the same person poolside, add some color to that underwear, and suddenly it's completely "acceptable" and appropriate. Why?! What a double standard! It's okay in this physical location, but not in that? It's okay for people to see you at the beach in your underwear, but it's not okay in the grocery store or restaurant. Or what about in the "church building?" Or would you and your children sit in your living room, along with total strangers, all of you in your most immodest underwear? Suddenly, that's NOT okay. What has changed? Only our *perception* about what is acceptable.

The enemy has lied to and told us that it is perfectly fine in certain situations to show your flesh before the eyes and lusts of any man or woman who cares to look. Can this be right? Be honest! The fact is, no child of God has the right to dress in what is essentially *underwear* and go out into public view. Please don't let your children grow up thinking that it's okay to be immodest, as long as there is water, sand and sunshine around. It isn't true and it makes Jesus very sad. (Luke 17:1-2)

Advertising

Another arena of nakedness is found in the advertising and marketing industries. Full page ads of women in their underwear (literally), billboards with skimpy, nude dress and places like the "intimate apparel" sections at the department store. In full view for children and men and all to see. Fleishy lace to entice the lusts of men and fill the eyes of children with things they should not see. Here again, is another example of what the world has deemed acceptable, through sophisticated marketing. Put bright colors, nice artwork and printing on paper and suddenly it's no longer pornography; now it's okay to look at a newspaper advertisement or a pornographic "advertising" poster in the intimate apparel section. Does the fact that it's *free* pornography somehow make it okay? I think we know it doesn't. Now the scoffer may say, "Oh, come on, it's only advertising!" Is it? What kind of seeds does it plant in our minds and in our children's minds? Fuel for the fire that wages war against the minds and hearts of the saints of God. It just shouldn't be!

Special Occassions

Why do "special occassions" suddenly make it acceptable to wear exposed cleavage and open backs on "formal wear?" At a prom or wedding or formal

dinner, it's expected. But a young woman with a ripped up tee-shirt that exposes cleavage and a bare back—at your “church service?” How would you feel about the identical amount of revealed skin in that setting, instead of the “formal” setting? Do we justify immodesty (“disobedience”—1 Tim. 2) because of our culture's established expectations? Isn't that sin?

Medical Situations

Consider the medical profession. Stripping down to our undergarments, or less, has not typically caused much of a problem for us as long as “qualified” doctors and nurses are examining us. Hmmm. Just because they have a plaque on the wall, does that justify breaking God's heart and “exposing our nakedness” in such a setting—usually to near strangers? Have we ever thought twice about that for ourselves or for our children? Why would we shudder to disrobe before others, but in front of a man or woman with the title, “Dr.,” it becomes totally acceptable? Do you see the lie we've bought into?

This doesn't mean avoid doctors. But wouldn't it be wise to at least consider seeing a doctor of the same gender as you? And wouldn't it be okay to remain with clothes on if possible? Isn't it your choice? The medical profession consists of servants that we hire for their opinions. They are *never* to be our bosses, that we cower in front of, regardless of how they speak or carry themselves. They are simply information-for-hire, no more. God is God. They are not. Some things, of course, can't be avoided, such as operating room settings where everything must be sterile so no street clothes are allowed. But can't we at least be aware that we don't have to “buy” into a lie that says nakedness is fine, if it involves the medical world? Shouldn't we reject the lie that we dare not question nudity in a doctor's office because, afterall, everything “appears” so professional and sterile and safe? Let's have discernment and sensitivity about such things. Pagans are pagans, whether they wear white or plaid or paisley. And God's Word remains true.

Do you know what medical students are exposed to as they are learning about medicine? In one college course, students were required to “examine” other stripped down students! This is abominable. Is it worth it to go through that kind of education and ignore God's Word? Looking on nakedness is a shameful and intolerable thing. And most employment for doctors and nurses requires looking on other people's nakedness (bathing patients, giving shots, operating, examining, etc.) What will we do as people who have been bought at the very high price of the blood of God? What will be most important to us? Our careers...or our integrity as priests of God?

Art

Here is another example of everyday immodesty: the world of art. In the name of “art,” whether it be paintings, sculpture or sketchings, we’ve easily accepted immodesty and nudity as perfectly legitimate and appropriate. “It’s artwork,” the world says. It’s something to be admired and applauded. For centuries, famous artists have lifted up nudity as “beautiful” and the world has admired it and raved over it. May it never be for the people of God! We have been taken out of the kingdom of darkness and the reign of Satan and his wicked lies. Let us “be transformed by the renewing of our minds.” Naked sculpture and artwork is readily accepted for display, even in religious buildings. It is absurd that it would be reasonable and accepted in ANY setting, especially by God’s People. Did not God say that nakedness was shameful?

Part 5

Beauty According to God

Of Jerusalem, God often describes her as a queen, a woman, a bride made ready for her groom. She is God’s precious gem, the Bride being made ready for Christ. We are that Bride, the people who God is preparing. It is valuable to consider her majesty and glory to get a picture of who we are and why we would want to be pure for Him.

Esther is a type of the Bride, the Church.

“This girl, who was also known as Esther, was lovely in form and features...”

“And Esther won the favor of everyone who saw her...”

“Now the king was attracted to Esther more than to any of the other women, and she won his favor and approval more than any of the other virgins. So he set a royal crown on her head and made her queen....” *Esther 2:7,15,17*

A prophecy concerning Christ and His Bride:

“...at your right hand is the royal bride in gold of Ophir.

“Listen, O daughter, consider and give ear; Forget your people and your father’s house. The king is enthralled by your beauty; honor him, for he is your lord. The Daughter of Tyre will come with a gift, men of wealth will seek your favor.

“All glorious is the princess within her chamber; her gown is interwoven with gold. In embroidered garments she is led to the king; her virgin companions follow her and are brought to you. They are led in with joy and gladness; they enter the palace of the King.” *Psalms 45:9-15*

A prophecy concerning God's Bride, His people:

"For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, for Jerusalem's sake I will not remain quiet, till her righteousness shines out like the dawn, her salvation like a blazing torch.

"The nations will see your righteousness, and all kings your glory; You will be called by a new name that the mouth of the Lord will bestow. You will be a crown of splendor in the Lord's hand, a royal diadem in the hand of your God. No longer will they call you Deserted, or name your land Desolate. But you will be called Hephzibah [my delight is in her], and your land Beulah [married]. For the Lord will take delight in you, and your land will be married. As a young man marries a maiden, so will your sons marry you; as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so will your God rejoice over you." Isaiah 62:1-5

Paul's passion:

"I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you a pure virgin to him." 2 Cor. 11:2

John's revelation:

"Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting: Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give Him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and His bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear."* Revelation 19:6-8

**(Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.)*

"I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.

"And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.'" Revelation 21:2-3

Ezekiel's prophecy about God's holy city:

"I bathed you with water and washed the blood from you and put ointments on you. I clothed you with an embroidered dress and put leather sandals on you. I dressed you in fine linen and covered you with costly garments. I adorned you with jewelry; I put bracelets on your arms and a necklace around your neck, and I put a ring on your nose, earrings on your ears and a beautiful crown on your head. So you were adorned with gold and silver; your clothes were of fine linen and costly fabric and embroidered cloth. Your food was fine flour, honey and olive oil. You became very beautiful and rose to be a queen. And your fame spread among the nations on account of your beauty, because the splendor I had given you made your beauty perfect, declares the Sovereign Lord." Ezekiel 16:9-14

God gives the beauty to His people, and we are to be that people, dressed and made ready for the return of the Bridegroom. When God speaks of adorning His beloved with costly gifts and precious clothing, He is referring to the grace He gives His people to walk in righteousness.

As we surrender to His Spirit in us, we have the honor of displaying the beauty of His character and life. We could never have such beauty on our own, but our great God and Savior has given us this inheritance that we should “shine like stars in the universe as we hold out the word of life.” (Phil. 2:14-16) He’s given us beauty for ashes. (Isa. 61:3) The inner beauty of a life that is characterized by the fruit of the Spirit: “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.” (Gal. 5:22-23) These are just some of His gifts to His Bride. And as His betrothed, we have pledged ourselves to be pure, unspotted by the world and its darkness.

Paul writes:

“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.”
Ephesians 5:25-27

What an appreciation we should have of our inheritance and our days here on earth being prepared as that spotless, radiant Bride! It is a great blessing and privilege to be participating in the work of the Father for the sake of His Son.

So what does all this have to do with modesty? Well, hopefully, we are gaining an appreciation for how holy, blameless and upright our lives should be, for God’s sake. We are holding precious treasures in these earthen vessels of clay called our bodies. We are indwelt by the Spirit of God if we’ve been born of Him. We house the Creator of heaven and earth, here in our mortal frames! What a thought! Shouldn’t that arouse our hearts to a sense of responsibility and propriety and holiness? Since our bodies are not our own, but bought with a price, shouldn’t we have a mind to treat ourselves with the utmost sensitivity and modesty? Not only in what we wear, but how we wear it?

Just as the Bride is being made beautiful and spotless for her one and only husband, Jesus, a woman’s beauty in form and feature is for her husband and her husband only. She was made for him (1 Cor. 11:9), not for the world or her own vanity. Since we are commanded that “marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure” (Hebrews 13:4), doesn’t it make sense

that our bodies and figures were given for but the one person on earth to see, that is, our spouses? Are not our lives and our bodies meant to be a gift offered in the inner chambers?

When different modesty issues come up, some may say, “Isn’t it all right for a woman to have a nice figure? It is something God has given.” Yes, God has given it, but it is for her husband—only him—a gift for him alone. After all, “the wife’s body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband.” (1 Cor. 7:4) It’s not for the world, your neighbors or even for yourself that you would find some idolatry in it or vanity.

The following is an example of a holy and precious response of a beautiful woman, to her betrothed. If you can immerse yourself into the heart of what God shows you in this picture, your own heart will sing and smile and maybe even cry at the beauty of it!

“Then Rebekah and her maids got ready and mounted their camels and went back with the man. So the servant took Rebekah and left.

“Now Isaac had come from Beer Lahai Roi, for he was living in the Negev. He went out to the field one evening to meditate, and as he looked up, he saw camels approaching. Rebekah also looked up and saw Isaac. She got down from her camel and asked the servant, ‘Who is that man in the field coming to meet us?’

‘He is my master,’ the servant answered. So she took her veil and covered herself.

“Then the servant told Isaac all he had done. Isaac brought her into the tent of his mother Sarah, and he married Rebekah. So she became his wife, and he loved her...”

Gen. 24:61-66

In Genesis 24, Abraham sends his servant back to the land of his people to find a wife for his son, Isaac. The servant went to the land of Nahor and found Rebekah, “very beautiful, a virgin” (v. 16). The servant speaks with her father and brother, Bethuel and Laban, about taking Rebekah to be Isaac’s wife. They said, “Here is Rebekah, take her and go, and let her become the wife of your master’s son, as the Lord has directed.” Rebekah agreed to go and set out with the servant and his men.

Please notice what Rebekah did as soon as she heard that her groom, her man, was there in the field. As soon as she heard it, she got down from the camel and *she covered herself*. She was a very beautiful woman, and when she heard it was Isaac, her future husband, whom she had never seen before, what did she do? She covered her glory, her beauty, waiting for the time and place for which

that was to be revealed. Her response was not to fix her hair and flash a smile. Rather, she covered herself in humility and propriety and dignity.

Now look at the contrasting response of a woman who didn't guard and cherish with propriety, the beauty and the glory given to her. In Ezekiel, he writes of the woman, Jerusalem,

"You became very beautiful and rose to be a queen. And your fame spread among the nations on account of your beauty, because the splendor I had given you made your beauty perfect, declares the Sovereign Lord." Ezekiel 16:13-14

Her beauty was because the Sovereign Lord had made her so, and it was a perfect beauty because of the splendor GOD had given her. God gave it to her. Her beauty was good and right because He authored it and blessed it. But her response to the world around her was to squander the beauty God had given her and she prostituted herself to other lovers, violating the purity between her and her one and only Groom. Her beauty was given by God for her Husband, not for others. Read what happened when she became conceited about her beauty and "had a nice figure" for others to enjoy:

"But you trusted in your beauty and used your fame to become a prostitute. You lavished your favors on anyone who passed by and your beauty became his. You took some of your garments to make gaudy high places, where you carried on your prostitution. Such things should not happen, nor should they ever occur." Ezekiel 16:15-16

She took the God-given beauty and garments and flaunted them on other lovers. For "anyone who passed by" her "beauty became his," it says. It was originally poured out by God, for Him. And she perverted her beauty and used it for other men, anyone who cared to have it. "Such things should not happen, nor should they ever occur."

Our beauty and our bodies were made for our husbands. Women have lines and curves and attractive features, and we know how to accentuate those and "show them" if we want to. But it is sin to purposely show your lines and curves to others because they are meant to be a pure and undefiled gift for your husband. It doesn't mean you can't be neat and trim and well-groomed. But if you care and pay attention, your conscience and the Spirit will let you know when you are grieving Him by the way you dress. If you have a twinge about "showing" a line, don't do it. And if you cover flesh that should be covered, with a flimsy, clingy turtleneck, you're probably crossing that line. It is completely possible to cover your nakedness and not cover your glory.

Who decided that in order to be “well-groomed” we must wear those tailored clothes tucked in with the belt squeezed tight? Isn’t it the world telling us to accent the parts of our bodies that are “flattering?” Once we begin to treasure what we’ve been given and treasure the one-and-only that it’s been given for, we will find much freedom. As we search our hearts and our wardrobes, God will lead us by his Spirit about what is and is not acceptable and modest, by His definition. There aren’t ironclad dress code laws that God wants us to live by, but He does want us to be sensitive to others and highly aware of who our bodies belong to (Christ and our spouses).

As we search our hearts, we must ask ourselves why we wear what we do. Do we take subtle pride in our thin waistline and so tuck our shirts in to accentuate that? Do we like to have the shape of our bust noticeable? As a man do we take pride in having a muscular physique? Do we like the look of our legs, so we wear the shorts higher than they should be? Do we have petite, little feet, so we like to go barefoot in a vain way? Sound petty? Think about it.

If there is anything that we feel good about in and of ourselves; a thing that we take pleasure in solely because we like it about ourselves, we have hurt God and cast Jesus aside. He is the only One we are to find our worth and our value and our “good feelings” in.

May all of this stir our hearts to a deeper awareness of our need for Him.
