**Concerning Modesty – Ostentatious and Sexually Attractive Dress**

*1 Timothy 2:9-10*

**Introduction**

1. The standard of modest dress has been established with the authority of scripture.
2. Why is it so important to dress modestly?
3. There are two opposite ends of the spectrum – Ostentatious (too much) and Sexually Attractive (not enough) dress. It is sinful to dress in either way.
4. What is ostentatious and sexually attractive dress, and why are they sinful?
5. A Review of the Text
6. Terminology
   1. Adorn – *kosmeō –* “to arrange, to put in order” (Vine) (implies concerted effort)
   2. Modest – *kosmios –* orderly, i.e. decorous: — of good behavior, modest. (Strong) (**3:2** – “good behavior”)
      1. “The well ordering is not of dress and demeanor only, but of the inner life; uttering indeed and expressing itself in the outward conversation.” (R.C. Trench, *Synonyms of the New Testament*)
   3. Apparel – *katastolē –* “a garment let down, dress, attire” (Thayer)
   4. Propriety – *aidōs –* “a sense of shame, modesty,” (Vine)
      1. Honorable shame.
      2. Shame linked with nakedness – “inner decency which recognizes the lack of clothing to be shameful” (Harry Osborne, *“Modest: What does the Bible teach?”*, Guardian of Truth XXXVIII: 13, p. 10-11, July 7, 1994)
   5. Moderation – *sōphrosynē –* soundness of mind, i.e. (literally) sanity or (figuratively) self-control (Strong)
      1. “it is that habitual inner self-government, with its constant rein on all the passions and desires, which would hinder the temptation to these from arising, or at all events from arising in such strength as would overbear the checks and barriers which *aidos* (shamefastness) opposed to it” (Trench Syn. Sec.xx, end).
7. The Goal
   1. ***“modest apparel…which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works”***
   2. I.e. by our apparel we are trying to avoid professing anything other than a mind focused on God and His will.
   3. Those who observe us should not be drawn – by our own fault – to what we are wearing, or not wearing, but to our faithfulness to God in obedience – thus to Him.
   4. We want to draw attention to God by letting our light shine through service to Him – **Matthew 5:16**
8. Emphasis on Moderation
   1. Moderation (NKJV) – “sobriety” (ASV); “self-control” (ESV); “discreetly” (NASB – carefully, circumspectly, prudently)
   2. “sound judgment” practically expresses the meaning (Vine)
   3. “practice of prudence, good judgment, moderation, self-control as exercise of care and intelligence appropriate to circumstances” (BDAG)
      1. The circumstance? – clothing proper for a godly person, a Christian.
      2. Good judgment? – is this clothing taking away from my profession as a Christian BY PROFESSING SOMETHING ELSE?
   4. God wants us to use good judgment, to think, and control ourselves BASED ON THE GOVERNANCE OF HIS WILL in practical consideration.
   5. He wants us to use our brains when we are choosing what to wear – this requires HONESTY IN CONJUCTION WITH THE STANDARD OF HIS WILL.
   6. Must ask the question – “What is my attire, or lack of attire, saying about myself?”
      1. Professing godliness, with good works?
9. Ostentatious Dress
10. Excessive Dress
    1. Not with **(1 Timothy 2:9**):
       1. “Braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing”
       2. Not a condemnation of wearing jewelry inherently, but an emphasis on godly character.
       3. “not…but” (**vv. 9-10**) – what is proper for godliness, NAMELY GOOD WORKS – OBEDIENCE TO GOD’S WILL.
       4. **1 Peter 3:3-4** – Not wanting your image to be about what you have and are wearing, but what you are on the inside in relation to God.
       5. “They no longer needed the former splendor of outward adornment, because [they were] clothed with the beauty and simplicity of Christ-like character. They exchanged the temples, theaters, and festivals of paganism for the home, labored with their hands, cared for their husbands and children, graciously dispensed Christian hospitality, nourished their spiritual life in the worship, service…of the church…Their modesty and simplicity were a rebuke to and reaction from the shameless extravagances and immoralities of heathenism. That they were among the most conspicuous examples of the transforming power of Christianity is manifest from the admiration and astonishment of the pagan Libanius who exclaimed, ‘What women these Christians have!’” (ISBE, 1915 Edition, ed. James Orr (Seattle, WA: BibleSoft, 1996.), s.v. “Woman.”)
    2. Condemnation of ostentation and excess among the women of Judah – **Isaiah 3:16-26**
       1. Condemnation of pride, selfishness, and excess.
       2. “The women were haughty and proud and concerned with luxurious adornment of themselves in order to bring attention to themselves. This is immodesty!...Proper adornment and true beauty in women should never call attention to themselves but should direct the beholder’s attention to God and His Son.” (Bible Study Textbook, College Press, Paul T. Butler, Isaiah 1&2, pg. 106)
    3. Goal? – **Galatians 2:20** – People cannot see Christ living in us if we are seeking their focus to be upon our outer dress.
11. What is ostentatious dress?
    1. That which places self before God.
       1. A phrase often heard in the discussion of our attire, or what we do to our body (tattoos, excessive piercings, etc.) – “It’s my body, and I can do with it what I want.”
       2. Contrary to – **1 Corinthians 6:13, 19-20** – the body is for the Lord, and belongs to Him.
          1. For His glory – NOT YOURS.
          2. For His service – NOT TO SERVE SELF.
          3. **Romans 6:13** – present our members to God’s service.
          4. **NOTE**: “temple” – OT illustration.
             1. Would God accept any desecration of the temple?
             2. Would God accept graffiti on the temple?
             3. Would God accept a senseless renovation of the temple?
             4. NO – He instructed how He wanted it built, and it was to remain that way.
             5. Didn’t God create us how He wanted to? – **Psalm 139:14**
             6. DO WE HAVE THE AUDACITY TO TAKE GOD’S CREATION, AND GIFT TO US FOR SERVICE TO HIM, AND MAR IT?

Adornment is different than defacement.

Adornment is different than distraction.

* + 1. May not be inherently sinful, but does it define you? Does it take away from your body’s purpose? – **1 Corinthians 6:12** (lawful, but not helpful)
    2. Are we seeking attention for ourselves, or God? – **Galatians 6:14** (The ostentatious person does not glory in the cross, but in self.)
  1. That which boasts of material things.
     1. Our focus is to be on the lasting treasure – **Matthew 6:19-21**
     2. Does our dress manifest a materialistic character? – **1 Timothy 6:17-19** – don’t trust in riches, but God, and store up heavenly treasure.
  2. That which is contrary to a gentle and quiet spirit.
     1. **1 Peter 3:3-4** – Christians are not loud, boisterous people who draw attention to themselves.
        1. “’Meek and quiet’ go together, the doubling intensifies the virtue. This meekness is always quiet; loudness, intemperate, irate speech and action are foreign to it. A steady, balanced strength keeps it on an even keel.” (Lenski)
           1. Such strength comes from the self-control of “moderation” – **1 Timothy 2:9**
        2. Not even in their good deeds – **Matthew 6:1, 3-4**
        3. THE CHRISTIAN IS NOT AN ATTENTION SEEKER, BUT A SEEKER OF GOD.
     2. Contrary to culture?
        1. There is a cultural component to modest attire, especially as it pertains to the end of the spectrum where ostentation lies.
        2. **Romans 12:2** – not conformed to the world as it pertains to worldliness, i.e. sin.
        3. **1 Corinthians 9:20-23** – Paul became all things to all men.
           1. Never in such a way that was contrary to the law of Christ.
           2. **2 Corinthians 8:21** – provide for honorable things in the sight of God and men.
           3. TO DRESS IN A WAY CONTRARY TO THE CULTURE YOU ARE A PART OF WOULD BE TO DRAW ATTENTION TO SELF.
           4. WE ARE NOT TO BE DIFFERENT FOR THE SAKE OF BEING DIFFERENT.t

1. Are we dressing with moderation (*sōphrosynē*)?
   1. Are these taking attention away from God and placing it upon self? Do these reflect a gentle and quiet spirit, or are they loud and flashy?
      1. Tattoos, bright unnaturally colored hair, excessive piercings, excessive jewelry, flashy clothes, etc.
   2. One might say, “But that is a part of our culture.” – BUT IS THE CULTURE CONTRARY TO THE CHARACTER GOD HAS COMMANDED US TO POSSESS?
      1. Rebellious, attention seeking, prideful, materialistic, etc.
2. Sexually Attractive Dress
3. Insufficient Dress
   1. Propriety – *aidōs –* “Shamefastness” (ASV) – holding fast to honorable shame, i.e. the shame of nakedness as it pertains to insufficient clothing.
   2. Summary of modest dress:
      1. Modest dress is that which covers nakedness.
      2. Nakedness includes:
         1. The waist to the thighs (knees).
            1. **Exodus 28:42-43** (Priests trousers)
         2. The uncovered thigh.
            1. **Isaiah 47:2-3** (Babylon’s shame)
         3. The uncovered buttocks.
            1. **Isaiah 20:3-4** (sign against Egypt and Assyria)
         4. The uncovered breasts.
            1. **Ezekiel 16:7-8** (God’s love for Jerusalem, covering her nakedness.)
         5. Everything from the shoulders down to the knees.
            1. **Genesis 3:7, 10, 21** (God clothing Adam and Eve with tunics of skin)
      3. Modest dress covers these areas at all times.
   3. What does this have to do with “sexually attractive dress?”
4. What is sexually attractive dress?
   1. Dress which would tend to attract others sexually whether knowingly or otherwise. (Not necessarily designed with this in mind, although that is common.)
   2. Sex is only pure and honorable in marriage – **Hebrews 13:4** (bed – euphemism for sexual act)
      1. Body performs the sexual act – **1 Corinthians 6:13, 18** (hence the admonition of Paul); **Genesis 2:24** (one flesh – not simply sexual union, but includes it)
      2. Sexual fulfillment in marriage – **Proverbs 5:15-20** (confined to marriage – father’s instruction to son); **1 Corinthians 7:2-5** (sexual affection – **v. 4,** authority over each other’s bodies for such release)
      3. Adam and Eve ashamed of nakedness? – **Genesis 2:25; 3:7-10** (Not before each other – spouses – but before God)
      4. Conclusion – dress which reveals nakedness (according to God’s standard) is sexually attractive dress.
         1. Nakedness is only without shame in view of another if it is in the marriage relationship.
         2. Nakedness according to God’s standard outside of marriage is sexually attractive dress, and is therefore wrong because sexuality is to be expressed only in marriage.
         3. THIS TAKES THE SUBJECTIVITY OUT OF THE CONVERSATION.
            1. One might say, “But that doesn’t seem ‘sexually attractive’ to me.”
            2. But is it according to God’s definition of sexuality, and nakedness?
   3. Is there dress that is specifically meant for sexual attraction?
      1. A man may sin by looking at a woman with lust – **Matthew 5:27-28** – visual stimulation (Men are visual creatures – obviously different from women)
         1. If such is the case, then insufficient clothing that does not cover nakedness can be sexually attractive.
      2. Attire of a harlot – **Proverbs 7:10, 21-23** – that lust may be influenced by the dress of a woman.
         1. This is in part what the women of Judah were guilty of – **Isaiah 3:16** (wanton eyes)
         2. Seeking to attract the attention of men. (Licentiousness, lewdness)
5. Are we dressing with propriety (*aidōs*) and moderation (*sōphrosynē*)?
   1. Is my dress sexually attractive? (not simply by worldly standard, but according to God’s standard)
      1. Does it expose the thigh, breast, buttocks, back, midriff?
      2. Does it expose any of these areas that God considers nakedness WHEN YOU MOVE IN DIFFERENT WAYS? – sit down, cross legs, bend over, squat down, reach up, etc.
      3. Does it accentuate nakedness instead of covering it?
         1. Clothing that covers the area with cloth but is made to highlight nakedness.
         2. Tight, clingy, thin, see through, etc.
   2. We must have an honorable shame concerning nakedness (propriety; *aidōs*) and dress with moderation (sound judgement; *sōphrosynē*) to cover it up – USE YOUR MIND TRANSFORMED BY GOD’S WILL, AND BE HONEST – WHAT IS THIS ATTIRE REALLY SAYING?
      1. A common sight is the wearing of yoga pants, tights, and spandex.
      2. Consider the thoughts of a woman from the world – “It’s a new year and I’ve got a new gym membership. I went the other morning. It was 8 degrees outside. And every woman in there was wearing skintight, Saran-wrap-thin yoga pants… Don’t get me wrong. I have yoga pants — three pairs. But for some reason none of them cover my ankles, and as I said, it was 8 degrees outside. So I wore sweatpants…I got on the elliptical. A few women gave me funny looks. Maybe they felt sorry for me, or maybe they were concerned that my loose pants were going to get tangled in the machine’s gears. Men didn’t look at me at all…We aren’t wearing these workout clothes because they’re cooler or more comfortable. (You think the selling point of Lululemon’s Reveal Tight Precision pants is really the way their moth-eaten design provides a ‘much-needed dose of airflow’?) We’re wearing them because they’re sexy.” (*“Why Yoga Pants Are Bad for Women,”* Honor Jones, The New York Times, Feb. 17, 2018)
      3. The greater focus of the clothing/fashion industry (especially as it pertains to women) is sex appeal. THIS REQUIRES GREAT CAUTION ON THE PART OF THE CHRISTIAN WHEN CHOOSING CLOTHES.
         1. Short shorts, tight clothes, low cut tops, sleeveless tops with thin or crossing straps that don’t sufficiently cover the back, jeans with holes that reveal the thigh, bathing suits (one piece doesn’t make it modest), etc.
         2. NOTE: Location, activity, and weather do not change the standard! (Sports uniforms are often immodest – CC shorts, track unis, wrestling, Cheerleading, etc.) (Exercise does not require you to be immodest, nor does it excuse it.)
   3. Christians have no place in adorning themselves in sexually attractive dress – **1 Thessalonians 4:3-5, 7-8** – because we are to be sanctified, and possess our vessels (bodies) in holiness and honor.

**Conclusion**

1. God created clothing in Genesis 3. It was created to cover nakedness and protect the body.
2. It is wrong to use clothing for the simple purpose of attracting attention to yourself, thus contradicting the character God has called us to, and taking attention away from Him.
3. It is wrong to use clothing as a tool for sexual attraction outside of the marriage relationship. Clothing should cover nakedness.
4. We must dress modestly with propriety and moderation to be well pleasing to God.