**Concerning Modesty**

*1 Timothy 2:9-10*

**Introduction**

1. The Bible makes it clear that God wants our dress to be in line with the character we seek to profess as Christians.
2. While most Christians will agree with this, not all agree on a standard of modesty.
   1. Why do we have to be unified in every other place?
   2. Is the standard of modesty an exception?
3. Is there a standard? Has God “drawn a line”? (Something which seems to be labeled as presumptuous, and extreme.)
4. If the Bible requires modesty wouldn’t it also define the parameters for us to follow?
5. What is modest attire? Why is it vital?
6. The Text – 1 Timothy 2:9-10
7. The Context
   1. Conduct in the worship assembly:
      1. **(v. 8)** – men – *anēr* – male. (Contrast – **v. 1** – *anthrōpos* – mankind)
      2. Males lead in authority roles of worship in contrast to women – **(vv. 11-12)** – they are silent.
      3. How men approach worship – specifically prayer:
         1. Holy hands – holy life/conduct.
         2. Without wrath and doubting – as it pertains to their relationship with men. (those they’re praying for)
      4. How women approach worship – concerning their conduct, and how their dress reflects such – **(vv. 9-10):**
         1. ***“in like manner also”*** – i.e. as it pertains to conduct in the assembly.
            1. NOT in regard to prayer, BUT in regard to character/conduct – like ***“holy hands…without wrath and doubting”***
         2. Adorned in modest apparel – AS IS PROPER FOR ONE WHO PROFESSES GODLINESS WITH GOOD WORKS.
            1. Godliness – *theosebeia*, denotes “the fear or reverence of God,” from *theos*, “god,” and *sebomai*, “to be devout.” (**v. 2** – *eusebeia* – to be well devout)
            2. Good works – those prepared by God – **Ephesians 2:10; 2 Timothy 3:17** – God ordained works, Law of Christ.
   2. Not limited to the worship assembly, but general principles to be applied everywhere:
      1. **(v. 8)** – men COME TO the assembly in holiness, thus are able to pray as such.
         1. Can they be unholy outside of church?
         2. Can they be wrathful and disputatious outside of church?
      2. **(vv. 9-10)** – women adorn themselves AT HOME in order to come to worship appropriately.
         1. Can they adorn themselves – get dressed – at church?
         2. Is what is proper for godly women different outside of church?
   3. Not limited to women in general application – understandably an issue more specific to women, but not limited to them.
8. The Goal
   1. **(v. 10)** – to profess godliness and submission to God in “good works.”
   2. Clothing which projects the inner man:
      1. It is a heart issue, but the clothes we wear can manifest our heart.
         1. It is ignorant to say the clothes we wear say nothing of our inner man.
         2. Lacking proper wedding garment – **Matthew 22:11-13** – didn’t meet requirements for attendance. (Disrespectful to the king)
         3. Attire of a harlot – **Proverbs 7:10**
         4. **Proverbs 4:23** – out of the heart proceeds the issues of life. (I.e. THE HEART IS THE SEAT OF ALL THAT WE ARE AND DO.)
      2. Apparel – *katastolē* – a lowering, letting down. (Thayer)
         1. As it pertains to letting down a garment.
         2. “a garment let down, dress, attire” (ibid.)
      3. ***“adorn themselves in…apparel…which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works.”***
   3. Godliness – denotes that piety which, characterized by a Godward attitude, does that which is well-pleasing to Him. (Vine)
   4. Seeking for outer dress to be congruous with the inner rule of God in the heart.
9. The Instruction
   1. Adorn self in modest apparel:
      1. Adorn – *kosmeō*
         1. to put in proper order, i.e. decorate (literally or figuratively) (Strong)
         2. primarily “to arrange, to put in order” (Vine)
         3. Denotes order and arrangement – implies concerted effort.
      2. Modest – *kosmios*
         1. orderly, i.e. decorous: — of good behavior, modest. (Strong)
         2. Qualification of Elders – **3:2** – “good behavior” (obviously not SIMPLY pertaining to outward dress)
         3. “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*)
         4. I.e. in regard to that which is ***“proper for women professing godliness with good works.”***
      3. Apparel – *katastolē*
         1. “a garment let down, dress, attire” (Thayer)
   2. How? With propriety and moderation:
      1. Propriety – *aidōs*
         1. “shamefacedness” (KJV); “Shamefastness” (ASV)
         2. Bashfulness (Strong)
         3. “a sense of shame, modesty,” (Vine)
         4. “innate moral repugnance to the doing of [a] dishonorable act” (R.C. Trench, Synonyms of the New Testament).
         5. “it is that ‘shamefastness,’ or pudency, which shrinks from overpassing the limits of womanly reserve and modesty, as well as from the dishonor which would justly attach thereto” (ibid)
            1. Trench on “shamefastness” – by ‘shamefast’ that which was established and made fast by (an honorable) shame. (ibid.)
            2. Ability to blush – **Jeremiah 6:15**
         6. Propriety of apparel – “In other words, it is that 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)
         7. Shame of nakedness – **Isaiah 20:3-4; 47:3**
      2. Moderation – *sōphrosynē*
         1. “Sobriety” (ASV)
         2. soundness of mind, i.e. (literally) sanity or (figuratively) self-control (Strong)
         3. “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).
         4. Shame of nakedness translates into a self-control that regulates one’s apparel.
      3. Not with (ostentation):
         1. Braided hair, Gold, Pearls, Costly clothing
         2. “not…but” – not merely, but especially – **cf. 1 Peter 3:3-4**
            1. It is not inherently wrong to wear jewelry, makeup, etc.
            2. It is wrong for such to define you.
            3. It is wrong for such to replace the character of Christ in your life. (Materialism)
         3. Costly clothing:
            1. Concerning the introduction of silk clothing into 1st century Rome – “Silk in its natural state clung to the female form in a way that was infinitely more pleasing to the eye than Parthian banners. But Roman ladies did not stop at that. For one thing, there was not enough pure silk to go around at first. And, anyway, it was not sexy enough for those freewheeling days. So, they unraveled the close-woven Chinese fabric and rewove it into a flimsy gauze which left little to the imagination. So unlike Chinese silk was this Roman adaptation that the Chinese, when they eventually saw it, named it "ling," assuming that Rome was growing a special product of its own. For the average Roman girl-watcher those were golden years, but the moralists raised a fearful outcry. "I see clothes of silk, if clothes they can be called," wrote the philosopher Seneca (4 B.C. - A.D. 64), "affording protection neither to the body nor to the modesty of the wearer, and which are purchased for enormous sums, from unknown people." Pliny told of garments that "render women naked." Other writers waggishly referred to clothes "made of glass." [Robert Collen 's book, East to Cathay: The Silk Road (pp. 44-46)]
            2. Not MERELY a condemnation of ostentation/excess, but of clothing which lacks proper coverage as it pertains to “propriety and moderation.”
   3. Summary:
      1. Dress which reflects the inner character of a Christian.
      2. Dress which is orderly, and of good behavior.
      3. Dress which is bashful in the sense of covering what is shameful – nakedness.
      4. Dress which does not overwhelm the spiritual qualities of the inner man with ostentation, or indecency.
      5. Dress which is chosen with sound judgment based on these principles.
   4. Are these instructions followed and fulfilled by subjectivity?
10. Can we draw distinct lines?
11. Common Thoughts
    1. “Someone may wonder, ‘but none of this answers the question of what specifically we can or cannot wear, or where that line is between modest and immodest.’… Agree or disagree, but if we have to debate the exact line in inches on someone's legs or torso, then I have to wonder if we are asking the right questions. Regulate yourself with a heart for God. When you get dressed, think of your motivation. Know that your body belongs to God first (I Corinthians 6:19-20), then to your spouse (cf. I Corinthians 7:3-4). Ask, ‘Does this reflect an inner attitude that God finds precious? Is this proper for professing godliness?’ Be honest. You'll likely know the answer and what to do next.” (*“The Real Issue in Modesty”*, Doy Moyer)
    2. “If the lines between what is appropriate and what is extreme are not always easily defined, they exist…”, “There may be a ‘gray area’ between how far one can lean over the side of a high cliff and yet be safe… but most of us seem to know how to remain on the safe side of that line without claiming that we have found its exact location…While there may be some disagreement as to the exact point at which the line is crossed…”
    3. It is maintained by many that we must dress modestly, but God has not given us an exact standard – you may say He has not drawn an exact line – but we will know it when we see it.
12. The Problem
    1. There can be no order without a standard:
       1. Adorn – *kosmeō;* Modest – *kosmios (BOTH HAVE TO DO WITH ORDERLINESS)*
       2. Cosmos – (from same root) – the universe seen as a well-ordered whole.
          1. Why? Observed order.
          2. In what way? Natural law. (Discovered, and continued discovery.)
       3. WHERE THERE IS ORDER THERE IS LAW – always!
    2. Is it a sin to dress immodestly?
       1. Not one would say no – direct violation of God’s instruction in our text.
       2. What is sin? – **1 John 3:4** – lawlessness.
       3. There must be law laid out specifically in order for it to be violated – such is true regarding modest dress – LAW OF MODESTY.
    3. Modest dress is proper for women professing GODLINESS:
       1. Godward piety; that attitude which seeks to do what is pleasing to God.
       2. Must have a standard to be godly – **1 Timothy 3:16** – mystery of godliness.
          1. Dress which professes godliness is godly dress.
          2. Which is dress according to a standard.
       3. God reveals that we might do – **Deuteronomy 29:29** – if there is such thing as orderly dress it will be specified.
13. Distinct Lines are Necessary!
    1. For God to command modest dress without specific guidelines is to enforce a something which is impossible to meet.
    2. MODESTY THEN LOSES OBJECTIVITY AND BECOMES AN AMALGAMATION OF CONFLICTING SUBJECTIVE THEORIES.
    3. What other command of God is like this? NONE.
14. The Standard of Modest Dress
15. Nakedness
    1. As noted, modest dress is that which maintains a sense of shame, and regulation regarding that shame.
       1. The shame regards that of nakedness.
       2. Modest dress covers nakedness.
    2. What is nakedness?
       1. Can be total (nudity) – **Genesis 2:25; Job 1:21**
       2. Can be partial nudity (insufficient clothing) – **Genesis 3:7, 10**
       3. If one can be clothed but still naked, we must find what is sufficient clothing to cover what is naked – GOD HAS SHOWN US THIS.
16. How God Covered Nakedness
    1. Adam and Eve
       1. **Genesis 3:7** – naked, and made coverings.
          1. **(v. 10)** – still naked.
          2. Coverings – *chagowrah* – a belt (for the waist). (Strong)
             1. “A sash or belt is bound around the waist for attaching weapons. A piece of cloth is brought from the front to the rear to make a loincloth.” (Ancient Hebrew Lexicon of the Bible)
          3. Similar to modern bathing suits – bikini.
       2. **Genesis 3:21** – God provided sufficient clothing to cover nakedness.
          1. Tunic – *kuttoneth* – tunic, under-garment; a long shirt-like garment usually of linen. (Brown-Driver-Briggs)
             1. “generally with sleeves, coming down to the knees, rarely to the ankles” (Gesenius’ Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon)
             2. “In biblical times, this important garment was typically a large square of cloth with armholes. It fell to or below the knee.” (The Revell Bible Dictionary (Grand Rapids, MI: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1990), s.v. “Cloak.”)
             3. Shoulders to knee.
          2. Covered nakedness by:
             1. Covering from shoulder to knees.
             2. Solid, opaque – as opposed to the fig leaves. (of skin)
    2. Priests
       1. **Exodus 28:42-43** – trousers to cover nakedness.
          1. Reach – waist to thighs.
          2. Why? To cover nakedness.
          3. Conclusion – area from waist to thighs is nakedness.
       2. NOTE:
          1. “From…to” – expression defining a range from one extreme to another covering everything in between.
          2. **Numbers 6:4** – Concerning the Nazarite vow.
          3. **2 Samuel 14:25** – Concerning Absalom’s looks.
    3. Figuratively in the prophets
       1. NOTE: The figurative use makes no sense if the literal is not true.
       2. Concerning the humiliation of Babylon – **Isaiah 47:2-3** – uncovered thigh is nakedness.
       3. Concerning the woe of Nineveh – **Nahum 3:5** – lifted skirt revealed nakedness.
       4. Concerning the sign against Egypt and Assyria – **Isaiah 20:3-4** – buttocks – the backside needs covering as well – midsection.
       5. Concerning God’s love for Jerusalem – **Ezekiel 16:7-8** – uncovered breasts – both male and female (see Adam and Eve) – nakedness.
    4. Conclusion
       1. Modest dress is that which covers nakedness.
       2. Nakedness includes:
          1. The waist to the thighs (knees).
          2. The uncovered thigh.
          3. The uncovered buttocks.
          4. The uncovered breasts.
          5. Everything from the shoulders down to the knees.
       3. Modest dress covers these areas at all times.
    5. NOTE: Covering these areas is more than simply having cloth over them.
       1. If the clothing accentuates (highlights) the body is it really covering it?
       2. The idea is to conceal nakedness, not revealing it in any way.
17. Can we use the Old Testament in this way?
18. What have we done?
    1. We have not bound the OT.
    2. We have defined nakedness.
       1. Nakedness pertains to the creation of God that is the human body.
       2. This has not changed – God has not changed His view on what portion of the body is naked.
19. Used the OT for our learning – **Romans 15:4; 1 Corinthians 10:6**
    1. What is faith – Hebrews 11
    2. What is apostasy – Hebrews 3-4
    3. What is God’s intention for marriage – Matthew 19
    4. Nakedness has not changed – Adam and Eve were naked before the OT was instituted – the OT defines nakedness – we can utilize the OT to define nakedness – we can use the OT to define modest dress.

**Conclusion**

1. God demands that we meet these standards of dress to be modest.
2. A child of God, one who is godly and obedient, will not hesitate to make the necessary changes to conform to God’s standard of modesty.
3. We must do more than nod our head in affirmation that scripture backs the claim. WE MUST MAKE THE APPLICATION – are you?