What is Modest Apparel?

by

Ellis P. Forsman

What is Modest Apparel?

by

Ellis P. Forsman

October 17, 2011

What is Modest Apparel?

1 Tim. 2:9-10

Every culture reveals its own view of modesty regarding clothing:

Some cultures — from our Western view — think nothing regarding the matter.

Other cultures — like our Western view — have a standard, but differs from one generation to the next; region to region; person to person.

Still other cultures — different from "ours" — never seem to change but seem so drastic.

As noted through the above "views" based upon culture, such is confusing:

Does culture dictate what is modest or immodest regarding our clothing?

If culture dictates: could the same be said for culture dictating what constitutes marriage, or what constitutes stealing, or what constitutes baptism?

God's truths, on the other hand, are not always easy to accept, but it is clear: including the subject matter of what constitutes modesty regarding our clothing.

God's word is "*a lamp unto* (our) *feet*" (Ps. 119:105) when we receive it with all readiness.

Acts 17:11, "*These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.*"

Good and noble hearts will study to show themselves approved before God, rightly dividing His word of truth.

- Luke 8:15, "*But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.*"
- 2 Tim. 2:15, "*Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*"

In this lesson we shall see:

- Man's varying standards regarding what constitutes modest apparel.
- God's revealed word regarding a standard of modesty.
- Taking that standard and applying it to our clothing.

Truth: Man's standard regarding modesty varies and is confusing

For the worldly:

Prov. 14:12, "*There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.*"

One may think it *immodest* to answer the door in their undergarments, but think it *modest* to wear "similar" clothing in public.

Another may think it immodest to wear "see through" clothing but okay to wear tight fitting, skin-colored clothing.

This kind of reasoning does not lean on the Lord's revealed word, but on self/society to dictate their standard of authority.

Worldly reasoning and standards have crept into the Lord's church.

A number of Christians have adopted the standards of the world.

Others study the matter but refuse to allow clear passages to direct their understanding.

The result: Neither apply the principles that reveal biblical truths on the matter.

2 Pet. 3:17-18, "*Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.*"

Truth: God's standard of modesty is clear

NOTE: There are some who are destitute, and nakedness is a by-product of their poverty.

- Deut. 28:47-48, "*Because thou servedst not the LORD thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things; Therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies which the LORD shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things: and he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck, until he have destroyed thee.*"
- Ezek. 18:5-9, "*But if a man be just, and do that which is lawful and right, And hath not eaten upon the mountains, neither hath lifted up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, neither hath defiled his neighbour's wife, neither hath come near to a menstruous woman, And hath not oppressed any, but hath restored to the debtor his pledge, hath spoiled none by violence, hath given his bread to the hungry, and hath covered the naked with a garment; He that hath not given forth upon usury, neither hath taken any increase, that hath withdrawn his hand from iniquity, hath executed true judgment between man and man, Hath walked in my statutes, and hath kept my judgments, to deal truly; he is just, he shall surely live, saith the Lord GOD.*"

Such is NOT sin

The following is not dealing with matters of poverty, but matters of ability and choice through the riches our God has given to us.

Nor is this subject limited to nakedness, but everyone that contrasts with the term "modest."

Nakedness defined by the principles revealed in God's word.

Before sin entered the world: Adam and Eve were naked... and NOT ashamed.

Gen. 2:25, "*And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.*"

After sin entered the world, both knew they were naked and made "aprons" in an attempt to cover themselves.

Gen. 3:7, "*And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.*"

Scantly clothed, both (afraid) hid because they were naked.

Gen. 3:8-10, "*And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden. And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.*"

God clothed them with coats of skin (tunic: which means "cover").

Gen. 3:21, "*Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.*"

Priests were to wear an undergarment to cover their nakedness, covering from the waste to the thighs.

- Exo. 20:26, "*Neither shalt thou go up by steps unto mine altar, that thy nakedness be not discovered thereon.*"
- Exo. 28:40-42, "*And for Aaron's sons thou shalt make coats, and thou shalt make for them girdles, and bonnets shalt thou make for them, for glory and for beauty. And thou shalt put them upon Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him; and shalt anoint them, and consecrate them, and sanctify them, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office. And thou shalt make them linen breeches to cover their nakedness; from the loins even unto the thighs they shall reach.*"

Physical descriptions of "nakedness" help to understand the allegory *of nakedness* used to show their sin.

Isaiah 20:4, "*So shall the king of Assyria lead away the Egyptians prisoners, and the Ethiopians captives, young and old, <u>naked</u> and barefoot, <u>even with their buttocks uncovered, to the shame of Egypt</u>.*"

Modesty defined by the principles revealed in God's word.

- 1 Tim. 2:9-10, "*In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works.*"
- 1 Pet. 3:1-4, "*Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear. Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of*

gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price."

With shamefacedness and sobriety (not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing).

The passage stresses an appearance based upon godly qualities that would manifest itself in contrasting fashion to that of the world.

The stress is godliness, not worldliness.

Summary:

Characteristics of modesty — chaste, meek, quiet, modest, shamefacedness, sobriety.

It is the chaste, shamefacedness type of character that would manifest itself with like clothing.

Your fruit reveals your standard of modesty

A man is known by his fruits.

Matt. 7:15-20, "*Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.*"

A person who wears immodest apparel bears the fruit of the world.

A person who wears modest apparel (with the accompanied virtues aforementioned) bears the fruit of the Spirit.

Your fruits also reflect the standard you live by:

Is it based upon the standards of man?

Gal. 5:19, "*Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,*"

Or, it is it based upon the standard of God?

Gal. 5:22-23, "*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.*"

In the end, you will reap (destruction) what you have sown (flesh).

Gal. 6:7-8, "*Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the*

flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

Conclusion

While man's standard on immodesty (or any subject matter) is unstable and confusing, God's standard is sound and clear: immodesty is shameful and sinful.

Test yourselves to see whether you are "in the faith" regarding this matter.