

LESSON 13



BIBLE TEACHING CONCERNING CHRISTIAN DRESS

Scripture Texts: Genesis 3:21; Deuteronomy 22:5; 1 Timothy 2:8-10; 1 Peter 3:3-5

Some may think this subject is very unimportant. But God has much to say in His Word as to what His people should and should not wear. Obeying both will help us in spiritual growth toward a **perfect man**. In Paul's writings to the Galatian church, he wrote that it was Christ who called him to be a preacher. Paul received his message by revelation from Jesus Christ (Galatians 1:10-12). He said, **I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not** (1 Timothy 2:7). How can Christians disregard what he had to say? We all know times have changed, but the Word of God has not changed. Let us see what the Word of God says about this subject.

MEMORY VERSE: *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.* *Revelation 19:7*

God Designed First Clothes

Genesis 3:21 **Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them.** When Adam and Eve sinned they realized a need for clothing to cover their nakedness. In verse 7 they used their own understanding and made aprons from fig leaves. When people get away from God today they often go back to "fig-leaf" clothing. God was displeased with their design, and He has not changed. He designed coats, garments which would cover their bodies sufficiently. The wearing of clothing came with God's approval. He provided the first clothing for the first people.

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.** Wearing the garb of the opposite sex is condemned by the Mosaic law. The reason for this prohibition still exists, and it is still observed. On the doors of airport rest rooms are pictured men in pants and women in dresses. The reason for this is obvious; even though one cannot read the language he can understand the universal picture.

There are people who feel justified in nudity by saying originally man was unclothed. True, but this condition did not continue long. There is no proof that it prevailed in the early race. It should be remembered that as yet there was but one man and his wife. Conditions since are different.

Clothing Needed for Modesty

1 Timothy 2:8-10 **In like manner also, that women adorn themselves**—what manner? Like the men in verse 8. Men are to **pray . . . lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting**. Women are to be similar in leading prayerful, holy, sincere, God-fearing lives. They are to **adorn themselves**, or dress, in a manner consistent with such living. **In modest apparel**—clothing that covers the body and does not attract undue attention. The modest person

is not seeking notice. This requires a conformity to the general type of dress. To dress too far from custom may convey a false humility and defeat the purpose of modesty by attracting unnecessary attention, as sects who dress alike or in uniforms. **With shamefacedness**—able to feel shame should we overstep the bounds of modesty. Shame is a monitor given by God to keep us in the right way. Where is shame today? Modest dress seeks to conceal the physical charms rather than reveal them. Clothing that reveals, or suggests too strongly, the contour of the body defeats one purpose of dress and is decidedly immodest. This may be done with too little, too thin, or too tight clothing, or with lines and decorations. Much of the modern garb of women is dangerously near immodesty at this point. **And sobriety**—with serious, thoughtful, consciousness of God's eye upon us, and of our mission in the world. This is positive. Now we come to some negative teaching. **Not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array**—the world's ways of adornment. Pride, selfishness, and self-exaltation are in these. Saints are instead to be adorned **with good works**—consistent with a profession of **godliness**. A modestly-dressed Christian woman going quietly about doing good deeds is beautiful to see. Such are not only adorned, but they **adorn the doctrine of God** (Titus 2:10).

Adornment Is Corruptible

1 Peter 3:3-5 Outward adorning of plaiting the hair—the same as broided hair. Peter said the same thing as Paul did. He does not speak against braiding the hair, but the special ornamentation that went with it. One was the braiding of gold threads into the strands of hair. **Wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel**—for adornment or show. This does not forbid the wearing of gold for practical use. To those who follow styles, the most outlandish or flashy dress requires nothing to commend it except the fact that it is the latest style. This is forbidden. Outward things cannot bring happiness or glorify God. They do not last (2 Corinthians 4:18). Instead we are to adorn ourselves inside, in **the hidden man of the heart**. Adornment there is **not corruptible**—cannot get old or decay or be destroyed. We shall put there **a meek and quiet spirit**. This is very precious to God, **of great price**. It is a heart that is purified and Spirit controlled. **Holy women also . . . adorned themselves**—here attention is called to the examples of holy women. Here is the lack of vanity and the presence of meekness in their dress.

Worthy of Due Consideration

Modest means reserved, decent, moderate, not excessive or extreme, not bold, chaste. Women are mentioned more prominently here, because women are more prone to vanity in dress and to be led away with worldly deception. Eve was deceived and then led Adam to sin. But the principles apply equally to all. Dress has large influence on conduct. We have no right to send children and young people out dressed so as to invite danger from wicked people. We have no right to dress ourselves in a manner to lay temptation to sinful thought or action in the way of any person. Children need the guidance of adults to form modest habits. If children learn to feel comfortable exposing their bodies they will be inclined to do so when older. This writer has spent many years living a Christian life and has never seen a woman dressed in the height of fashion, adorned with gold, pearls, and costly array who was effective in prayer at the bedside of the sick or who could stir the congregation with a Spirit-filled testimony for Christ.

In these days of extreme immodesty of both men and women we need to use special care not to be led from the Bible standard by the examples of the world. Shorts, halters, bathing suits, sleeveless dresses and shirts, short and low-necked dresses, etc., are not modest. Dressing properly—leaving off the forbidden jewels



and costly array—is but half of the matter. We must put on the modesty, good works, meekness, quietness, and righteousness God commands. Pride is condemned in the Bible. Many Scriptures cry out against pride. Dress is one of the greatest means of revealing pride. The benefits of Christian dress are great. We must maintain the Bible standard (Jude 3).

JUST A THOUGHT

**The way people dress is somewhat like the hands on a clock;
it indicates what is going on inside.**