

Bare Season

Believe it or not, it is bare season again. This is the time of the year when you will see, bare legs, bare mid-drifts, bare backs, etc. You do not even have to go hunting for bare skins, immodest apparel is beside every tree, laying on every beach, walking down the aisle of every grocery store and even mowing your neighbor's front yard.

A study on this topic can be very personal. After all, we are talking about the way people dress. However, this pamphlet is in search of God's Will on the matter of how Christians should dress. It is not an attempt to promote one man's opinion on modern day fashion.

Instead of asking, what's wrong with showing a little skin in short shorts or bathing suits, we should ask "Is it pleasing to God?" Instead of asking "what is wrong with what I am wearing"? ask "what is right with what I am wearing"? We are to prove all things and hold on to what is right (1 Thess. 5:21). Instead people just wear what they like and hope it is right.

One preacher asked another, "Why do Indian women wear saris that leave most of their stomachs bare?" The other preacher replied, "The reason is because the top of the sari only comes down to the top of the rib cage and the bottom only comes up to the waist. So there is a gap in between that is left bare." Well, that is one reason. The real reason is due to the fact that they have a different standard of modest apparel.

Before we take a look at the Biblical standard of modesty, let us look at some false standards used to determine what is modest or immodest. How one feels in their own heart is not a good standard. We "*walk by faith not by sight*" (2 Cor. 5:7). Therefore, faith (not feeling or one's conscience) is the guide. That faith

comes from God's Word (Romans 10:17). Others feel that what is considered modest or immodest is based on what is accepted by society. In this case, society may be either too loose or too strict in its concepts of modest apparel. Whether clothing is fashionable or in style is not the appropriate standard. Society thinks it is fashionable and stylish to smoke, dance, curse, even go in the nude, etc. What is fashionable and thus "modest" changes from year to year and culture to culture. At one time it was the height of fashion for french women to "bare" one of their breast while covering the other. Just compare the 1890's, 1920's, 40's, and 60's, 80's, 90's to see how fashions change back and forth. In 1922, many were arrested for going topless at Atlantic City Beach. You might think it strange that even back then people were going topless at a public beach, but what is really unusual is that all those arrested for violate the city ordinance against topless bathing were men. Would you want to use civil law as the standard for modesty? After all, in middle eastern countries it is immodest for women to show their face in public. Another standard for modest dress is related to the amount of material used in the clothing or just covering the essential portions of the body. However, yards of material may go into an evening dress, yet many are immodest. The weather is not a reliable standard. It was not any hotter or colder a century ago and they didn't even have electric fans, air conditioners and central heat and air, but they wore modest clothing. The standard is the same weather you live in Florida or Alaska; Maine or California. You may say, "Oh, it is so hot!", so you take off your clothes. Well, Hell is so hot you had better leave them on. Some argue that they are just trying to catch some rays. What some are really out to catch is Ray Smith or Ray Jones, etc. Finally, the standard is not based on whether anyone notices or lusts. Whether anyone pays attention or not certainly does not prove it right. God notices it, so that proves it wrong.

God designed the human body and the desires of the flesh. God created the body. He has the right to tell us how to dress it. He should be the one who designs the dress code for modesty. His standard is found in His Word. It contains absolute truth. It is not relative or fluctuating with fleeting fashions. It is never out of date. Just consider the nude Greek athletes and nude patrons in the Romans baths, and Roman women bathing with slaves in the first century. Nudity was an issue in the first century.

God has been concerned with modesty all the way back in the beginning. Before sin, Adam and Eve as husband and wife were naked and not ashamed (Gen. 2:25). After sin, even Adam and Eve (the only adults on earth) had to wear clothing. They made fig leaves for themselves. The first couple were the first fashion designers. Fig leaves were the universal style for all mankind. God was not pleased with Adam and Eve's apron of fig leaves. Even Adam realized that they were still naked in wearing them. God made them a garment animal skins that was modest. Developing the first dress code, God made them modest clothing.

Today as in New Testament times modesty is commanded. "*in like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works*" (1 Tim. 2:9,10).

The word "adorn" means "to put in order, to arrange properly." A Christian is not adorn themselves with immodest clothing which is not proper, but with modest apparel. "Apparel" is the Greek word "katastole". A stole was a loose outer garment. The prefix "Kata" means "down". Women professing godliness to wear garments that hang down, but their apparel had to be modest. Among the ancient women some were known to slit the sides of their dress to expose a part of the thigh (phaino-marides, i.e., showers of

the thigh as they were called). The Greek word “kosmos” is translated “modest” means: “Respectable, honorable” (Arndt and Gingrich, 446); “Well-arranged, seemly, modest...” (Thayer, 356) and “Orderly, well-arranged, decent, modest (akin to ‘kosmos, in its primary sense as harmonious arrangement, adornment...), is used in 1 Tim. 2:9 of the apparel with which Christian women are to adorn themselves; in 3:2 ..., one of the qualifications essential for a bishop or overseer” (Vine, 79). Thus, men are to be modest was well (1 Tim. 3:2). The next term describing their attire is “shamefastness” or “propriety” from the Greek word “aidos” meaning: “1. Modesty of women” (Arndt and Gingrich, 21); “A sense of shame, modesty...reverence...would always restrain a good man from an unworthy act,” (Thayer); “a sense of shame, modesty which is...rooted in the character” (Vine). Davies Bible English tells us that “shamefastness is that modesty which is ‘fast’ or rooted in the character”. The “bed fast” person is firmly fixed in his bed. The “shamefast” person is firmly fixed in a sense of shame or modesty. He is fast to blush. Some are embarrassed over nothing. The ability to blush is a vanishing virtue with many (Jer. 6:15; Ezra 9:6). When just one curse word was used in the movie, “Gone With the Wind” people gasped. - the nation blushed. Today, the nation doesn’t even blush over the nudity that abounds in movies. Finally, to help us understand the type of clothing a godly woman would wear the Bible uses “sobriety” from the Greek “sophrosune”. This word means: “Soundness of mind, self-control, sobriety” (Thayer, 613); “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..” (Trench, Synonyms of the N.T., 72); and “good judgment, moderation, self-control...esp. As a feminine virtue, decency chastity” (Arndt and Gingrich, 810). In other words, a Christian will dress in a way as not to stimulate the passions of the body

in one’s self or in those that behold him or her. A Christian with sound judgment will not dress immodestly. A person with a sense of shame or modesty will not have to stand there doubting whether a one piece bathing suit or swimming trunks are modest on the crowded public beach. The Christian will use sound discretion in picking out their clothes.

The following questions represent the three views on modesty:

- 1) Where do I draw the line?
- 2) Which dress code should I follow?
- 3) Would this be clothing a Christian professing to be godly should wear?

The last question is the one which fits the standard found in 1 Timothy 2. If you dress according to these guidelines you will not have to worry whether you clothing matches what you profess to be: a Christian. However, if you dress in such a way that causes the world to wonder or even be shocked that you are a Christian, than perhaps it is time for a new wardrobe. There is a famous commercial of the ‘70’s that was revived in the 90’s which asked: “Who wears short shorts?” Not the woman of 1 Timothy 2 who professes godliness.

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Service Times

Sunday

Bible Study.....9:30 am
Worship Service.....10:30 am
Worship Service.....5:00 pm

Wednesday

Bible Study.....7:30 pm

Does God Care

What You Wear?

