

The Christian's Attitude Toward Clothing



Discovering God's Word
Bible Study Series

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Learn about God's standard for your clothing

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My plea: It is my hope and prayer that you are searching for the truth that is contained in God's word, the Bible. My desire is to help you understand and obey these truths God has revealed in the pages of His word. It is to that end that I write this material. Please observe all of the Scripture references and evaluate whether the conclusions I have drawn are in harmony with God's word. If they are, I ask that you make honest application of those truths to your life and obey God's instructions.

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The Christian's Attitude Toward Clothing

What is your attitude toward the clothing that you wear? That is, what is your mindset toward your clothing? Do you give great consideration to God's instructions that are applicable to the subject of clothing? Or, do you focus on worldly standards for clothing or on your own comfort and style?

"Does God care about my clothing?" That's a question you should be asking yourself. "Is my clothing too short, too revealing, too tight, too extravagant, too low-cut, too see-through, too suggestive, etc.?" "Does my clothing profess godliness or worldliness?" I would simply suggest that if you desire to give God control over *every* aspect of your life, you need to ask these sorts of questions.

It is certainly true that the subject of clothing is often viewed as a sensitive and personal subject. Therefore, many people conclude that clothing is simply a matter of personal style and conscience. However, the Bible has some very definitive teachings about how we choose to clothe ourselves that you must heed in order to please God! Furthermore, the Bible's general instructions also have great implications for the clothing you choose to wear!

As we begin this lesson, let me say that I do not view the subject of clothing as being just a "woman's" subject (that is, a subject that is only applicable to women and their clothing)! While it is certainly true that the specific passages about clothing in the New Testament are given directly to

women, I whole-heartedly believe that the conclusions we will reach on this subject will be equally applicable to men and women! For instance (as we will observe momentarily), God clothed Adam and Eve equally when they were in the Garden of Eden!

The purpose of this lesson is to evaluate the Bible's teachings on the subject of clothing (both generally and specifically) and discover what God wants from His people regarding their clothing. Then, we want to apply these teachings in a way to help you develop the proper mindset about this subject.

God's Standard For Clothing

2 Timothy 3:16-17 says, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." Everything you need to know to live life in a way that is pleasing to God is found within the pages of God's inspired word (the Bible). Then, as you diligently search the Bible for the answers to all of life's questions, you should observe the fact that God teaches some things about the subject of clothing, specifically, that you need to pay attention to and make application of. Let's observe.

No standard?

Many folks (even many Christians) believe that God has provided no standard for how His people ought to clothe themselves. They tend to often think of being "modest" or "immodest" as a "grey area" that has not been defined by God and one that is open to many different interpretations. They view it as a matter of personal choice and individual judgment.

However, I want you to consider why the just and righteous God would give His people the command to be modest – and then give His people no idea about what it means to be "modest"? Yes, there are judgments that must be made by individual Christians relative to the subject of clothing.

However, God also gives us enough information on the subject to guide our understanding about what He considers to be “modest” and “immodest.”

But, before we consider some of those passages, I want you to think about some of the common attempts that are made by folks to justify their choices of clothing.

(1) “Some will lust regardless of what I wear.” There can be no doubt that there are many people in this world who are consumed by lust. They will lust after individuals regardless of what they are wearing. However, it should also be understood that there is a connection between what an individual wears and lust. Even worldly men and women understand this connection. This is the reason so many advertisers use men and women who are dressed immodestly. They know that it gets attention. Clothing manufacturers also understand this principle – and they gear their advertisements to manifest this. So, if those who are not Christians understand that some types of clothing increase lust, shouldn’t those who are Christians have enough common sense and wisdom to know the same?

(2) “If someone lusts after me, that is his/her problem – not mine. He/she needs to learn to control his/her own mind.” Yes, everybody is individually responsible for his/her own thoughts (i.e. Matthew 5:27-30). And, each individual must learn to control his/her thoughts – regardless of how others are dressing around him/her (2 Corinthians 10:3-6). However, the Bible also teaches that Satan uses other people to tempt (see Matthew 16:21-23). It is naïve and foolish to think that you cannot clothe yourself in a way that will make it more difficult or easier for individuals to control their minds! The Bible clearly teaches that Christians should not desire to put any kind of stumbling block in the path of another – to cause him/her to fall into sin (read Romans 14). Certainly, the Christian, then, should not desire to intentionally clothe himself/herself in such a way that makes it difficult for those who want to live for the Lord to control their thoughts!

(3) “It’s hot and I dress for comfort in the summer. If that means shorter shorts, lower cut dresses and blouses, shorter skirts, and swim suits, so be it – I’ve got to keep cool!” It is interesting to me

how that so many in relatively cool climates use the summer weather as an excuse to dress immodestly when there are those who live in near desert climates (i.e. Jewish and Muslim women in the Middle East) who go to great lengths to be fully covered (due to their religious convictions). Somehow they are able to “survive the heat” and clothe themselves. Even further, when has God’s standards been dependent on external factors – like the weather? Where is the passage that loosens the responsibility to be clothed in modest apparel as the temperature increases? It’s simply not there. There are many times Christians will have to make decisions between their own personal desires and doing God’s will (Luke 9:23).

(4) “I can wear what other people wear whenever I’m at the beach, the swimming pool, etc.” God’s people have often sought to be like the people who are around them. For instance, the Israelites (in the Old Testament) often desired to worship and serve idols because of the idolatrous practices around them. However, God told them, “You shall not follow a crowd to do evil” (Exodus 23:2). God has *never* permitted His standards to be changed based on what other people think or do! Instead, God calls upon His people to be different from the sinful ways of the world (2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1; Matthew 5:13-16). The world’s standards for clothing (whether at the beach, the swimming pool, or any other place) is never sufficient as God’s standards. In fact, God has said that the majority of people are living their lives in a way that leads to eternal destruction rather than everlasting life in Heaven (Matthew 7:13-14)!

(5) “I just can’t seem to find anything modest to wear.” Certainly, the deck is often “stacked” against the Christian. That is, the devil has desired to make it difficult to live a Christian life. This is true in the area of modesty – as in other areas also. The devil has often succeeded to negatively influence many on the subject of modesty. He has even influenced many of the companies that make clothing. As a result, the Christian will often experience difficulty finding modest clothing. However, God does not permit His standards to be changed based on the difficulty of finding modest clothing. In fact, God says that the way that leads to eternal life will be difficult (Matthew 7:13-14). The

Christian must find ways to rise above these difficulties and live for the Lord!

Certainly, there are other attempted justifications made regarding clothing choices – and all of these could be answered specifically. However, my general response to each and every objection is this: God has given *you* some instructions concerning your clothing that *you* have the personal responsibility to abide by. You must simply choose to listen to God!

When God designs clothes

We have already considered the fact that many people tend to believe that God has no standard for clothing – at least nothing we can objectively consider and reach any kind of concrete conclusions. However, we have been given examples in Scripture of times when God designed clothing. We should pay attention to His design (even though these passages are found in the Old Testament) because they give us insight into what He chooses to cover (and what He choose to leave uncovered)!

(1) Genesis 3:6-7, 21. Genesis 2:25 reveals that when God had joined Adam and Eve together as husband and wife, they were “both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.” This was prior to sin’s entrance to the world. Then, in Genesis 3:1-5, Satan tempted Eve to violate the law God had given her and Adam to abide by. Genesis 3:6-7 records the following: “So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings.”

After their sin, this nakedness was shameful and they attempted to clothe themselves. Notice the first man-made attempt at clothing is described in this passage. Adam and Eve sewed fig leaves together and made “coverings” for themselves. The word translated “coverings” by the *New King James Version* is also translated “loincloths” in the *English Standard Version*. *Brown-Driver-Briggs’ Hebrew Definitions* includes the ideas of a girdle, loin-

covering, and a loin-cloth to define this Hebrew word (Strong’s number H2290). This sounds a lot like a modern-day swim suit, miniskirt, and short shorts, doesn’t it?

Then, in Genesis 3:21, God responded to their attempt to clothe themselves by giving them proper clothing: “Also for Adam and his wife the Lord God made tunics of skin, and clothed them.” This is just one example in the Bible that demonstrates how individuals can have *some* clothing on and still not be clothed properly! God chose to make Adam and Eve tunics of skin. *Brown-Driver-Briggs’ Hebrew Definitions* says that this was a *long* shirt-like garment (Strong’s number H3801). Then, according to the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, the “tunic” was a garment that would *always* reach from the shoulders to below the knee – sometimes even to the ground [“Dress.” Orr, J. (1939). *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*. Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans Pub.]. I also appreciate the fact that this tunic was made out of skin – and would not have been something that would have clung tightly to the body or would have been see-through. This is the way God clothed Adam and Eve!

(2) Exodus 28:39-43. Just as God designed clothes for Adam and Eve to wear, God also gave instructions concerning the clothing that was to be worn by the priests in the Old Testament. While there are certainly specifics that only apply to Old Testament priests, we *do* need to take note of what God instructed to be covered – as we see that it is consistent with the teaching in Genesis 3.

First, consider the reading itself: “You shall skillfully weave the tunic of fine linen thread, you shall make the turban of fine linen, and you shall make the sash of woven work. For Aaron’s sons you shall make tunics, and you shall make sashes for them. And you shall make hats for them, for glory and beauty. So you shall put them on Aaron your brother and on his sons with him. You shall anoint them, consecrate them, and sanctify them, that they may minister to Me as priests. And you shall make for them linen trousers to cover their nakedness; they shall reach from the waist to the thighs. They shall be on Aaron and on his sons when they come into the tabernacle of meeting, or when they come near the

altar to minister in the holy place, that they do not incur iniquity and die. It shall be a statute forever to him and his descendants after him.”

Now, please observe the following. Notice that they were clothed with tunics – just as we saw in Genesis 3:21. So, again, this was a garment that would *always* reach from the shoulders to below the knee – sometimes to the ground. Then, also notice that they were given “linen trousers to cover their nakedness” (verse 42). Now, whatever these trousers covered, remember that they were used to cover their “nakedness.” Specifically notice that the text tells us what these were given to cover: “they shall reach from the waist to the thighs.” Specifically, this was a type of undergarment for the priests to wear under the tunic. These trousers were given to the priests as an extra means of protection, lest their nakedness be exposed! The *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* says that “breeches” (the translation of the *King James Version*) were “a garment, extending from the waist to or just below the knee or to the ankle, and covering each leg separately” (“Breeches”).

Thus, as God designed the clothing for those who would serve Him as priests, He made absolutely certain their “nakedness” was covered. For, if they would not be properly clothed when they came into the tabernacle or when they came to the altar to minister, they would “incur iniquity and die” (verse 43). Their clothing was a serious thing to God! Furthermore, please appreciate that God calls “nakedness” more than just having no clothing on at all. He calls it “nakedness” when a part of the body is revealed that He believes should be covered!

(3) Conclusions. Now that we have seen two specific examples of situations in which God designed clothing, let’s take a moment to observe some basic conclusions. First, we saw that in both passages, God chose to cover the upper body (up to and including the shoulders) and He covered the lower body by (at least) covering the knees. Second, we saw that God did not choose material that would cling closely to the body or that was transparent enough to reveal what was underneath. Third, we saw that “nakedness” (according to God’s standard) is more than just being completely unclothed. Fourth, we saw that having “nakedness” exposed was a

serious thing to God – and that He even (in the case of the priests) provided additional precaution so that their nakedness would not be revealed (in making the linen trousers to go under the tunic).

As you think on these points, you should recognize that every time God designed clothing for His people (both male and female), He chose to cover from the neck to the knee. However, please understand this is the *minimum* of what God covered. As was mentioned, the tunic *minimally* covered from the neck to the knee – and it *often* even extended to the ground. I don’t know whether the tunics God designed just covered the knee or whether it went to the ground.

Certainly, these basic facts ought to help us understand that when God designed clothing, He covered more than much of the modern-day styles of clothing covers. This includes low-cut blouses on women, men without shirts, miniskirts/shorts that reveal the thigh, shirts that do not cover the belly, shirts that rise to reveal the back, strapless dresses, shirts with thin straps, tight fitting clothing, bathing suits (whether one piece or two pieces), etc. Certainly, the way in which God designed clothing is far different than any of these!

Now, the question becomes: Should we apply these standards to our clothing today? First, let me state that I fully recognize that the two passages we’ve just considered are located in the Old Testament – and I know that we do not live under the Old Testament today (Colossians 2:14). Still, the Old Testament has been preserved for the purpose of teaching us (Romans 15:4; 1 Corinthians 10:1-11). Therefore, I contend that these examples are very useful to help us understand God’s ideas of what clothing is modest and immodest (as well as what He considers “nakedness”). Has His standards for clothing changed because these passages are not found in the New Testament? Absolutely not! God has never provided us with any different definition than what we have observed. Instead, these teachings and conclusions are consistent with the teachings in the New Testament. Therefore, these passages help us to understand the mind of God with regard to the New Testament instructions about modest dress.

Specific New Testament instructions

Now that we have established a foundation concerning how God designed clothing, let's look to the pages of the New Testament and see what God requires of us today with regard to how we clothe ourselves.

(1) 1 Timothy 2:9-10: “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.”

Notice the three words used in this passage to describe how God expects His people to clothe themselves. Particularly, this passage addresses the way women are to clothe themselves. However, I have already demonstrated that God chooses to cover the same amount of the body in both men and women.

The first word used is “modest.” Thayer [Thayer, Joseph Henry. *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*. Published in 1886. Using: E-Sword. Version 10.2.1. Rick Myers. Copyright 2000-2013.] defines the Greek word as “well arranged, seemly, modest” (Strong's number G2887). Certainly, there are many people today who do not arrange their clothing in such a way that would please God. Instead, they arrange their clothing in ways that please themselves, physically attracts others, or that fits in with the societal standards.

The second word used is “propriety.” Thayer defines the Greek word as “a sense of shame or honour, modestly, bashfulness, reverence, regard for others, respect” (Strong's number G127). The *King James Version* translates the word as “shamefacedness.” Certainly, there are many people who dress in clothing that demonstrates they have forgotten how to blush (see Jeremiah 6:15; Jeremiah 8:12). Many people today are not ashamed to expose the nakedness of their bodies to others. So, rather than taking great care to clothe themselves in ways that cover their nakedness (even taking extra precautions when needed), they are willing for others to see their nakedness!

The third word used is “moderation.” Thayer defines this as “soundness of mind...self-control, sobriety” (Strong's number G4997). Certainly, many people today have cast aside self-restraint in order to dress in the ways they desire to dress (according to their own physical desires). Thus, in addition to being guilty of dressing immodestly, they are also guilty of the sin of lewdness (condemned in Galatians 5:19-21 and other passages). Lewdness is unrestrained lust/desire – and it will keep people out of Heaven!

Now that we have gained a basic understanding of these three words, consider the contrast presented in the remainder of the passage. The Christian's clothing is *not* to be focused on the outward (i.e. braided hair, gold, pearls, and costly clothing). Instead, the Christian's dress is to be focused on “professing godliness with good works.” Therefore, as you make decisions relative to how you will clothe yourself, please realize that God wants you to clothe yourself in a way that is “proper” for someone who professes godliness! Since this is true, understand that the necessary implication is that it is possible to clothe yourself in a way that is *not proper* for someone who professes godliness. Certainly, much of the world's standard for clothing does not profess godliness.

(2) 1 Peter 3:1-4: “Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear. Do not let your adornment be merely outward — arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel — rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.”

In this text, Peter is addressing the responsibility of wives toward their husbands. He says that some Christian women can even win their unbelieving husbands to Christ without saying a word (through their godly conduct). This conduct includes their submissive spirits, their gentleness, their fear, their quietness – and their dress.

Consider that their general conduct will have an impact on their choices of clothing. First, their conduct is described as being “chaste.” Thayer says that to be “chaste” is to be “pure...pure from carnality, chaste, modest...pure from every fault, immaculate...clean” (Strong’s number G53). Certainly, it will not be possible to conduct yourself in this way and still wear clothing that reveals your nakedness or that is sexually suggestive!

Second, their conduct is to be accompanied by fear. Godly wives/women will live in the fear of the Lord. This is part of the entire duty of mankind (as identified in Ecclesiastes 12:13-14). This kind of godly fear involves both a reverential awe of God and a terror of God. Therefore, Christian women (as well as men) will be working out their salvations “with fear and trembling” (Philippians 2:12). These individuals, then, will be considering what types of clothing to wear with great seriousness – and recognizing that he/she will be held accountable to God for how he/she dresses.

Then, notice that this passage has some specific instructions that will impact how a Christian woman (particularly) clothes herself. Again, this passage says that the focus must not be on the external. Instead, the focus must be placed on the internal (the “hidden person of the heart”). This is the “incorruptible beauty” that is “very precious in the sight of God.”

(3) Conclusions. After looking at these two New Testament passages that specifically address the subject of clothing, let’s make some observations and applications.

First, both Paul and Peter command that women be reserved with regard to their outward appearances. Rather than putting their focus on outward appearances, they are instructed to put their focus on developing the character God approves and find the incorruptible beauty that is so precious in God’s sight (the beauty that is eternal rather than temporary)! Their clothing is not to be focused on attracting others to the physical body (either by dressing in revealing or extravagant ways). Instead, they are to dress themselves in ways that focus on attracting people to Jesus Christ (professing godliness with good works)!

Second, there are certain conclusions that would also be implied with regard to how “little” is “too little” regarding what we wear! Revealing clothing (clothing that is too short, too low-cut, too see-through, too tight, etc.) does not fit with a woman who professes godliness or one who is trying to be inwardly beautiful! Such revealing clothing stems from the heart (Proverbs 4:23) – a heart that seeks to incite lust, a heart that is proud of one’s physical qualities and seeks to flaunt such, a heart that desires to lure others so as to engage in sexual activity (Proverbs 7:10), etc.!

General Instructions Applicable To Clothing

Once again, recognize that the Bible gives us everything we need to know in order to live in a way that is approved of God (2 Timothy 3:16-17). Now, it does not *just* do so through giving instructions specific to certain subjects (i.e. like clothing). But, it also does this through giving general instructions that are applicable to many different subjects (including clothing). Let’s briefly consider a few general instructions that are applicable to the way in which we clothe ourselves.

Matthew 5:13-16

“You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”

Generally-speaking, this passage teaches that the Christian is to be an example to the world, showing Christ to the world. The Christian, therefore, does not live according to the same sinful ways as the rest of the world is living. Instead, he/she is daring to live for the Lord in the midst of a sin-

filled world, pointing others to Jesus Christ. Therefore, the Christian will be concerned about what his/her clothing shows to the world. Does his/her clothing show Christ to the world and lead others to Him? Does his/her clothing manifest that there is a difference between himself/herself and the world? Can the world even notice that he/she dresses differently (according to a higher standard)? In addition, the Christian needs to consider what kind of example he/she is setting for his/her children – that they will see Christ living in their parents (and this being reflected even in the way they choose to dress)!

Romans 12:1-2

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”

Generally, this passage teaches that the Christian must have sacrificed his/her entire life to God, determining to live according to God’s standards rather than by the world’s standards. The life that he/she is living, then, is no longer about his/her own physical desires and comforts. Rather, it is entirely about serving God (compare with Galatians 2:20). Therefore, the Christian will be willing to live entirely by God’s standards regarding his/her clothing – even when they are different from the standards of the world. He/she is willing to serve God in every capacity – not withholding the way he/she dresses!

1 Peter 1:13-16

“Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, ‘Be holy, for I am holy.’”

Generally, this passage demonstrates that Christians are God’s children. They have been

rescued from their former lusts by the grace of God – and have dedicated themselves to live according to God’s standard of holiness. In fact, the passage demonstrates that the standard of holiness is God’s own holiness (who is perfectly holy/separated from evil). Therefore, the Christian will seek to be holy in all of his/her conduct – including in the way he/she dresses. The Christian will not be content to have even “a little” impurity in how he/she dresses. Instead, the Christian (in the language of 2 Corinthians 6:11-7:1) has determined to come out and be separate from the sinful ways of the world in order to please God!

1 Thessalonians 5:21-22

“Test all things; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil.”

Generally, this passage teaches that the Christian must test (evaluate) everything he/she does, hears, thinks, etc. in order to see if it is right in God’s sight. Everything is evaluated on the basis of God’s word. If something is in agreement with the teachings of God’s word, he/she will “hold fast” (cling) to it. However, if something is not in agreement with the teachings of God’s word, he/she will “abstain” (get away) from it. Therefore, the Christian must evaluate everything he/she wears by God’s standards, holding to what is good and abstaining from everything that is evil. With this kind of thinking, the Christian will not be “pushing the limits” with regard to how he/she dresses (trying to get as close to immodesty as he/she can). Instead, he/she will want to be as far away from sin as possible and comfortably live within the boundaries God has drawn!

2 Corinthians 5:10-11

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are well known to God, and I also trust are well known in your consciences.”

Generally, this passage teaches that everyone will stand before Jesus Christ on the Day of

Judgment and be judged concerning how he/she has lived during his/her earthly life. Nothing will be excluded from this Judgment (see Ecclesiastes 12:13-14). In addition, we know that the standard we will all be judged by is God's word (John 12:48; Revelation 20:11-15). Furthermore, recognize the "terror of the Lord" involved in the Judgment Day scene – if you lived in a way that was unprepared for Judgment. Therefore, the Christian must be evaluating everything he/she chooses to wear while living on this earth by the standard of God's word – recognizing that he/she will be held accountable and answer for it! Just consider: Are you prepared to answer for what you are wearing? If you are not sure that it is approved of God (that it meets His standards), you had better not wear it!

The Problem Of Spiritual Immodesty

Up to this point in our study, we have been focused on physical clothing. We have seen that God's word teaches us a great deal that is applicable to your clothing. However, before we close this study, I want you to also realize that God's word teaches some things about how you clothe yourself spiritually – and how this impacts your physical clothing. It is my contention that most (if not all) of the problems concerning immodest dress (physically) results from not being properly clothed spiritually!

Clothing says something about you

The way you clothe yourself says something about you (i.e. about your mindset, about your character, about your purpose, etc.). This can be demonstrated as true in the pages of Scripture. For instance Genesis 38:12-16 tells a story about a woman (Tamar) who clothed herself in a way that solicited sexual relations from her father-in-law (Judah). Similarly, Proverbs 7:10 identifies a woman who was clothed with "the attire of a harlot" that manifested her "crafty heart" and her desire to commit adultery.

These passages demonstrate that clothing says something about a person. Your clothing could reveal your interest in committing fornication, your desire for your own comfort, your lack of concern about God's standards, your lack of concern about causing others to lust, your desire to be accepted by the world, etc. Or, your clothing could profess your desire for godliness and good works – along with your reverence for God (1 Timothy 2:9-10). Regardless of what your clothing says about you, it does say something! Therefore, you must consider what message you are sending to others by the way you are dressing. ***Is your clothing professing godliness or worldliness?***

Please realize that the way you choose to clothe yourself stems from your heart. Proverbs 4:23 says, "Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life." That is why it is so important to establish a proper mindset toward clothing! Most likely, the problem of physical immodesty stems from a deeper problem in someone's relationship with and devotion to God. If we can take care of those problems, the positive effects will be seen in how an individual dresses physically. In order to do this, you need to be properly clothed *spiritually*.

Romans 13:11-14

"And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts."

You must cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. There are simply some things that must not be involved in the life of a Christian (as identified in verse 13). The Christian also must be devoted to Jesus Christ – and, in doing so, he/she will not be making provisions to fulfill his/her carnal desires!

If you clothe yourself in this spiritual way (with Jesus Christ), your physical clothing will not be so great of a challenge to you! You will determine that you will not cater to the lusts/desires of the flesh. Instead, you will determine not to make any provisions at all for those desires – because you will simply be trying to live your life wholly for Jesus Christ!

Colossians 3:1-17

Colossians 3:1-4 says, “If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.”

Then, in verses 5-9, Paul writes concerning things which must be “put to death” and “put off” in your life: Fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, covetousness, anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language, and lying. All of these things are part of the “old man” of sin. Rather than living for those sinful things, the Christian must “put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him” (Colossians 3:10). This “new man” involves putting on: Tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering, bearing with one another, forgiving one another, love, and thanksgiving (Colossians 3:10-17).

If you will make this transformation in your life (putting off the old man and putting on the new man), it will have wide-reaching positive effects on how you dress physically. You will no longer be concerned with your physical desires/lusts. You will not be dressing to please yourself. Instead, you will be dressing for the Lord and focused on developing a character that is pleasing to Him. For instance, take some time just to consider the positive effects humility and meekness will have on your clothing! Quite simply, being properly clothed spiritually (by taking off the old ways of sin and putting on Jesus Christ) will largely take care of the questions regarding physical immodesty!

Conclusion

Has this lesson described your attitude toward clothing? Are you willing to submit to God’s teaching and standard in this area? Certainly, we have not exhausted all of the Bible’s teachings and principles that could be discussed regarding this subject. However, we have seen enough to provide a general understanding of God’s standard and to consider the high calling of discipleship. Remember, you will be judged for how you conduct your life in every area – including in the way that you dress. Are you prepared to answer to God for how you have been dressing? If not, please make the necessary changes and make your life right with God today!

Study Questions

Does God care about your clothing?

Is a discussion about modest clothing only applicable to men? Explain.

1. Recognizes And Applies God’s Standard For Clothing

Do you believe that God has a standard for clothing? Explain.

What principles do you learn from the following passages that describe how God designs clothing?

1. Genesis 3:6-7, 21 –

2. Exodus 28:39-43 –

3. Conclusions –

What do you learn from the following New Testament passages on the subject?

1. 1 Timothy 2:9-10 –

2. 1 Peter 3:1-6 –

3. Conclusions –

2. Recognizes And Applies General Commandments

Briefly discuss the general teaching in each passage and how the passage specifically is applicable to the subject of clothing.

1. Matthew 5:13-16 –

2. Romans 12:1-2 –

3. 1 Peter 1:15-16 –

4. 1 Thessalonians 5:21-22 –

5. 2 Corinthians 5:10 –

3. Properly Clothes Self Spiritually

How is the answer to physical modesty found in being spiritually modest? Explain how your clothing says something about you.

Explain the impact that clothing yourself in the way described in each of the following verses will have on your physical clothing.

1. Romans 13:11-14 –

2. Colossians 3:1-17 –

***Has this described your attitude toward clothing?**