

Modesty

By David Phillips

Introduction

1. “Modesty” is a term that is rarely heard by many people today.
2. Nevertheless, it is essential to the life of a Christian.
3. For this reason, we will consider what God says concerning the subject of modesty.

Discussion

I. Modesty—A Bible Subject

- A. Some people claim that the standard for proper attire changes with each passing society.
 1. This is true of man’s standard:
 2. Before the 20th century in America, it was shameful for a woman to show even her ankle in mixed company.
 3. Today, some would accuse a person of being an old school marm if their clothing did not show enough skin.
 4. In some countries in the east, even today it is forbidden for a woman to show anything but her eyes in public (and some even forbid that).
 5. In America, however, some apply the philosophy, “Less is more,” to their clothing.
 6. Indeed, man’s standard is every changing.
- B. But it is not so with God’s standard!
 1. In Genesis 3:7-11 Adam and Eve saw that they were naked in the garden and were ashamed, so they sewed fig leaves for their garments.
 - a. God made them garments out of skin to cover them (Gen. 3:21).
 - b. It was shameful for their nakedness to be seen.
 2. Two-thousand years later, God’s standard had not changed, as we see in His description of the priestly garments (Ex. 20:26; 28:42-43).
 - a. God’s standard did not change.
 - b. In this passage nakedness is defined.
 3. Centuries after the law of Moses was instituted, God still shows us that it was shameful for one’s nakedness to be exposed (Isa. 47:3)
 4. Even in the New Testament, God’s standard had not changed though it had been nearly four-thousand years after Adam and Eve (Rev. 3:18; 1 Timothy 2:9-10).
 - a. We must see, dear brethren, that even though men dive deeper and deeper into darkness, as God’s people we must hold ourselves up by the light of His word.
 - b. We must conform to His standard rather than that of the world.
 - c. “*Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and Your law is truth*” (Psalm 119:142).
 5. Have you considered your dress in light of God’s righteous standard? Those whose hearts are right with God will do this!

II. Modesty—A Matter Of The Heart

- A. Everything we do is determined by the condition of our heart.
 1. Proverbs 4:23: “*Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life.*”
 2. Mark 7:20-23: “*What comes out of a man, that defiles a man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile a man.*”

- B. The Christian must understand that how we dress is just as important as what we say and what we do, for how we dress is also a matter of the heart.
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."
 - a. "In like manner": Women are to adorn themselves in a holy manner.
 - b. "Modest apparel" means orderly, well arranged, and decent. It can be applied to not wearing too much as well as not wearing too little.
 - c. "Propriety" means proper. There is such a thing as improper clothing; clothing which is not appropriate for a person professing godliness. God expects us to put on clothing that is proper for godliness.
 - d. "Moderation" is self-control which holds our passions in check. This means to have a sense of shame, and avoid incurring that shame with improper clothing. Sadly, many today do not have this sense of shame, but God's people must learn it.
 - e. Clothing professing godliness suggests that just as we will speak in a godly manner and act in a godly manner, we will also dress in a godly manner. Our clothing reflects the nature and condition of our heart.
 - f. What does your clothing say about your heart?
 2. Titus 2:1, 4-5: As a matter of sound doctrine, younger women are commanded to learn how to be...
 - a. Discrete: this means to be safe, of sound mind, self-controlled, moderate. This describes a person who does not desire to draw attention to herself with her clothing or otherwise.
 - b. Chaste: This means to be clean or pure. How we dress can prove us to be unclean according to the condition of our heart. If we have a pure heart then we will have pure motives in choosing our clothing and we will change if our standard does not meet up with God's.
 - c. "That the word of God may not be blasphemed": Our dress, among other things, can cause the word of God to be blasphemed if it does not conform to God's righteous standard. What does your clothing say?
 3. 1 Peter 3:1-4: Addressing wives, Peter commands that they...
 - a. Not let their adornment be merely outward: The world desires to be seen by their outward beauty. But in the kingdom of God outward beauty is worthless if the hearts is not right. Notice:
 - b. "...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" (vs. 4).
 - c. What does your clothing say about your spirit? It is a gentle spirit, or a haughty spirit that seeks the attentions of the people around you?
 - d. Are you trying to be godly in your clothing or cute or alluring?
- C. When people around you see the clothes you are wearing, what does it tell them about the condition of your heart?

III. Modesty—A Subject Needed Today!

- A. The need to examine ourselves.
1. There are some Christians who condemn the world for its immodesty, but they themselves are not conforming to God's righteous standard.
 - a. One preacher rightly noted, "Then, there are those who attend with dresses too short on both ends" (Connie Adams).
 - b. Paul severely condemned this type of character in Romans 2:21-24: "You, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself?..."
 2. We must apply this principle to the subject of modesty as well, saying, "You who preach modesty, are you being modest?"

- B. As modesty is a matter of the heart, we must examine ourselves very closely.
1. *“Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? -- unless indeed you are disqualified” (2 Cor 13:5).*
 2. For this reason we must read and understand God’s standard for our dress.
 3. If we have some difficulty knowing whether or not what we are wearing is appropriate, as someone.
 - a. In some households it is customary for the ladies to ask the men about their clothing and vice versa.
 - b. If you have no men, or no women, in your household, find someone in the church who you can trust. It’s that important!
- C. Summer Is Near And The World Is A Sea of Skin.
1. Also, we must not allow the philosophies of the world move us from God’s standard
 2. “It is too hot, God understand if I want to be cool”—but there is decent clothing that is still cool.
 3. “But it’s so cute”—if we are godly at heart then righteousness will take preeminence over cuteness. Remember, women should adorn themselves, but in a way that is proper for one pressing godliness (1 Tim. 2:10).
 4. “But the activity calls for it”—one would not wear their under garments in public, why wear the equivalent? The Bible shows that some activities do call for less clothing, but in each case, when a person was in mixed company or in public, they clothed themselves (John 21:7).
 5. It is shameful for our nakedness to be seen, no matter what the purpose—if we have the shamefacedness God expects, then we will acknowledge this! Let us put God’s standard first in our lives, so that they we continue to be as shining lights, even though it is summer time.