



TRUTH MATTERS

A Newsletter Discussing Matters Related To Truth Because Truth Matters

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Lighthouse Baptist Church
Sussex, WI

Wardrobe Malfunctions

Nudity – A Declaration of Independence

There has been a lot said, written, read and watched about the outlandish display of rebellion by Janet Jackson during last week's Super Bowl. Her brazen actions provide us an opportunity to observe the theology of nakedness. Yes, there is a theology of nakedness. The Bible goes to great lengths during the opening passages in Genesis to outline the place of nakedness in the life of a human under God (chapters 1-3).

For example, Adam and Eve lived in the garden perfectly content with their relationship of dependence upon God. God had provided for them everything they needed for a sustained existence, a secure future and a happy tomorrow. God provided food, animals, breath-taking beauty and a perfectly suited soul-mate for fellowship and camaraderie. Therefore, like totally dependent babies, they were naked and not ashamed (2:25).

The Serpent, however, entered the picture and wooed Adam and Eve away from their delight and contentment in God by creating in them a spirit of contempt. Satan caused them to call to question God's integrity and God's worth by implying that he was holding out on them the greatest goods and highest joys. The Serpent insinuated that God had not created the two of them in order to bless them with the overflow of his own happiness but instead, to [ab]use them for the filling up of his own need for happiness. Such accusations are blasphemous.

Satan's bottom-line lie to Adam and Eve was that if they broke their dependence on God they would be like God "in knowing good and evil" – an

idiomatic expression understood as "independent beings" (3:5). They bought the lie.

Upon eating the fruit, their eyes were opened (as the Serpent had promised cf. 3:5) and they knew they were naked (3:7). The result of their knowledge was that they were indeed like God in their pursuit of independent happiness. However, they also could clearly see with these newly opened eyes that they were completely unlike God in that they did not have the limitless resources that God had for pursuing his happiness. They were finite; they were limited; they were insufficient for such a path. Therefore, they knew they were naked and in need. This brought them shame and fear. They knew they needed to be covered and then they hid (3:7, 10).

Nakedness is the reality that every human enters the planet a dependent creature. Leave a baby alone and he will die within days. He needs – everything! The knowledge of nakedness is the reality of one's independence when they should be dependent. It is the knowledge that I am living a life I should not be living. I am pursuing a path I am not cut-out to travel.

Mankind is left with two options: cover-up or stay uncovered. There are huge implications here for modesty, dress and nudity.

First, the implications for nudity

Nudity is nothing more than a declaration of independence. It declares to the world, "I don't need anyone else telling me what to do – not a culture, not a Super Bowl, not a television network, not the FCC that governs the airwaves, and least of all, not God." Nudity is the outcry of a rebellious heart that still believes the lie of Satan

that a person can make it just fine with what they brought into this world – nothing! “What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?” (1 Cor 4:7). Janet Jackson even received her body – the sole tool she seeks to use for her independence – from God. Nudity is the ultimate expression of self-worship and it is a huge insult to the worth of a God who wants to meet Janet Jackson’s every need!

Secondly, the implications for modesty and dress

You may not be so brazen in your rebellion and desire for independence to display yourself in public nudity; but be careful how you dress. The heart of the matter is not always the amount of clothing but the intent of clothing. Any man or woman who desires to flaunt their body (whether with flesh or form-shape) is guilty of the same rebellion that drove Jackson to do what she did! And we must go a step further. Even Adam and Eve’s first attempt at covering (the fig leaves sewed together) was an attempt to cover up their inadequacies and to project a persona of independence. The fig leaf covering was their first attempt at self-assertive need-meeting. Therefore, I can flaunt my independence not just with nudity and immodesty but with elaborate, expensive and trending dress as well. “Notice me! I’m in vogue! I am making it in this world!”

At the root, any vain attempt on our part to meet a need for security, contentment or joy by pursuing a pathway other than God’s glory is a form of idolatry that leads to spiritual death.

- If you seek to gain the security that comes from the acceptance of an “in” crowd by dressing with the latest styles, you fall short of God’s glory.
- If you desire to gain satisfaction from the gaze of a man as he looks with approval upon your body, you injure the worth of God who offers you eternal approval.

And be careful to listen, here, you can *desire* those things without believing you have what it takes!

- The reason you don’t like the out-dated clothes and curse your inability to buy new ones is because you *desire* that fulfillment which new clothes bring.
- The reason you look with contempt upon yourself in the mirror every morning is because you *desire* a different body that will fetch a different response.

Thirdly, the implications for marriage

Nakedness still has a place of honor, namely, the marriage bed. Marriage is the matrix for Christ’s relationship with his church. Marriage brings a tangible experience to an intangible relationship. That is why with marriage, as with conversion, the starting point is commitment. A husband and wife commit to one another and in that commitment comes all the security of acceptance. I pledge to love, honor and cherish my wife all the days of my life or hers no matter what. On the basis of that contentment, acceptance and joy comes the freedom to be naked and unashamed. There is no need for feeling vulnerable, abused or taken advantage of. There is no need to “become” or to “perform.” There is only security, contentment and joy – just as there is with Christ! I know I am accepted; I know I am dependent; I know I have needs, therefore, I can be naked and unashamed.

Husbands, be careful how you talk to your wives and daughters about their bodies. You may be feeding their sin-infested desire for independence.

Parents, teach your children shame in nudity. Point them to their need for covering that only comes from God (cf. Gen. 3:21).

Being clothed and modest is necessary for demonstrating a heart that is dependent upon God and content with his prescribed pathway for a future filled with hope and happiness.