



Truth Matters

A Publication Discussing Matters Related To Truth Because Truth Matters

Scripture Reading
Week of
May 1st - 7th



Monday

- ❖ 1 Samuel 1, 2
- ❖ Psalm 86
- ❖ John 18

Tuesday

- ❖ 1 Samuel 3, 4
- ❖ Psalm 87
- ❖ John 19

Wednesday

- ❖ 1 Samuel 5, 6
- ❖ Psalm 88
- ❖ John 20

Thursday

- ❖ 1 Samuel 7, 8
- ❖ Psalm 89
- ❖ John 21

Friday

- ❖ 1 Samuel 9, 10
- ❖ Psalm 90
- ❖ John 22

Saturday

- ❖ 1 Samuel 11, 12

Sunday

- ❖ 1 Samuel 13, 14

Fashion and Following the Savior

By Carolyn Mahaney, Kristin Chesmore, Nicole Whitacre and Janelle Bradshaw¹

This article originally appeared in the November/December 2000 issue of Moody Magazine.

It's that time of year again. The fashion magazines are touting the newest and hottest clothing trends for spring and summer. And because fashion is so fickle, a woman is sure to find that what was popular last season, must not see the light of day this season. But more than just the latest style, spring and summer (in particular) usher in a vast array of immodest and indecent clothing. Thus the racks and shelves at the nearest mall are crammed full of body-revealing attire.

So, what's a Christian woman to do?

We must consult God's Word rather than the fashion magazines. We must take God with us when we go shopping. And what's interesting--and freeing, I might add--is that God's clothing style for women doesn't change from season to season. He presents his fashion standard to us in 1 Timothy 2:9-10: *Women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire, but with what is proper for women who profess godliness--with good works.*

Definitions - *Janelle Bradshaw*

We are going to hang out on three main points:

- The attitude of a modest woman

- The appearance of a modest woman
- The allegiance of a modest woman

Before my trip to the mall, something important must take place. I must first evaluate my heart. [C.J. Mahaney] says it this way, "Any biblical discussion of modesty begins by addressing the heart, not the hemline." So what is this heart we're supposed to have? 1 Timothy 2:9-10 makes it clear. It says that *"Women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control."* These two qualities are to inform the way that I dress. Let's check out these definitions.

Modesty--"Propriety: The avoidance of clothing and adornment that is extravagant, showy, and sexually enticing."

Self Control--"Restraint, moderation for the purpose of purity."

Maybe modesty is a word you don't really want to think about. Perhaps you've had a vague idea that it means "ugly" or "out of style." It may not have occurred to you that God has something to say about the clothes you wear.

As do all Scriptural commands, this

command to modesty and self-control has broader implications than merely externals, what we wear. It goes right to the heart of WHY we wear what we wear. Our clothes, whether we realize it or not, say something. They give us away. They reveal the heart behind the clothes we wear. A modest heart comes before modest dress.

What do your clothes say about your heart? What would we discover if we met your closet before we met you? Do your clothes reveal a heart of modesty and self-control?

The Attitude of a modest woman- *Nicole Whitacre*

Immodest dress is more than simply wearing skimpy clothing. Often, it's an expression of pride, the opposite of humility. Simply put, immodest clothes are pride on display. In his book *Humility: True Greatness*² [C.J. Mahaney] explains that "The proud person seeks to glorify himself and not God, thereby attempting in effect to deprive God of something only He is worthy to receive."

In other words, the immodest girl seeks to dress in a way that draws attention to herself and to her body, instead of serving others and bringing glory to the Savior.

... continued on page 2

¹This article is edited in content and was accessed from their web blog <http://girltalk.blogs.com/girltalk/> [accessed April 2006] Some content edited from a sermon "Soul of Modesty" by C.J. Mahaney Can be downloaded from <http://www.sovereigngracestore.com> (item #A1170-06-51)

²C.J. Mahaney, *Humility: True Greatness* (Oregon: Multnomah Publishers, Inc. 2005)

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....continued from page 1

How can we know if pride is our fashion style of choice? By considering our motives: why we wear what we wear. Here are three arrogant desires that can often motivate the way we dress.

1. A desire to be selfish.

I simply don't want to invest the time and effort required to find modest clothing. I mean, let's face it-it's not easy to be modest these days! I have to try on three times as many pairs of jeans as the girl who isn't concerned about modesty. I might as well go on an archeological dig--it's that hard to find a stylish, attractive shirt or dress that's modest. Not to mention that I have to leave hanging on the rack many things that I think would look really great on me! However, when I grumble and complain or make excuses for immodesty, I'm putting my selfish desires above serving others and glorifying Christ. That's pride.

2. A desire to show off.

I want people to think I'm trendy. I want them to include me because of how I dress. I worry they'll reject me if I don't dress a certain way. This is a common temptation. But really, it's just another campaign for my own glory. I want the attention from others that I should be directing to God instead.

3. A desire to seduce.

This is the most serious of the three. While many women who choose immodest clothing aren't literally trying to seduce a guy, in its infancy, there can be a desire for that lustful attention. We want to feel attractive and desirable. However, this is sinful, and a particularly virulent form of pride. It's says: I'm worthy of the kind of attention that's forbidden in God's Word. It tempts men to sin against God's holiness.

If these three proud desires-to be selfish, show off and seduce-are lurking in our hearts, we must first admit to the ugly truth. Then we must repent and receive the forgiveness that comes only through Christ. And we must purpose to put on humility-first in our hearts, and then in our dress. For if immodesty is an expression of pride, then modesty is humility expressed in dress.

So how about you? Are you wearing humility today?

"[Do not dress] from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his

own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus..." Philippians 2:3-5

The Appearance of a modest woman - Carolyn Mahaney

Now that we've established that modesty begins in the heart, it's time to consider what it means for our wardrobe. What's a modest girl to wear? Once again, let's turn to our 1 Timothy 2:9 passage. Here Paul instructs the women to clothe themselves in "respectable apparel."

Now let me set your mind at ease. Adorning ourselves in "respectable apparel" doesn't mean we must restrict ourselves exclusively to cheap, out of style, unattractive clothing. Paul is not saying that gold or pearls or braiding are forbidden. In fact, you will find other places in Scripture where godly women wore fine clothing and jewelry.

For example, the Proverbs 31 woman - who is put forth in the Bible as a model for biblical womanhood - wore colorful, high-quality clothing (Pr. 31:22). We read where the bride in Song of Solomon adorned her appearance with jewelry (S of S 1:10). We are told that Esther underwent 12 months of beauty treatments - 6 months with oil of myrrh and 6 with perfumes and cosmetics (Es. 2:12).

So we are not to take this verse to mean that godly women should try as hard as they can to be out of style and unattractive. No! Quite the opposite. God is the creator of beauty. God delights in beauty. All we need to verify this fact is to consider the beauty He created all around us: whether it is an elegant flower, or towering trees, or a meandering river, or billowy clouds or the majestic night sky. Every time we stop to take in one of these breathtaking scenes on display in God's creation, we can't help but be convinced that He delights in beauty!

And because we are created in the image of our Creator, each of us has this propensity to make things beautiful. That means, when we decorate our homes, or plant a lovely flower garden, or seek to add some form of beauty to our surroundings, even when we attempt to enhance our personal appearance - we are actually imitating and delighting in the works of our Great Creator.

Now granted, these activities can be sinfully implemented; but still, we must not overlook the fact that the essence of our desire to beautify

comes from God. John Angell James in his book, *Female Piety* (first published in 1860), offers this helpful thought:

This taste [for beauty], however in many cases it may be altogether corrupted in its object, wrong in its principle, or excessive in its degree, is in its own nature an imitation of the workmanship of God, who, "by his Spirit has garnished the heavens," and covered the earth with beauty.

Now hopefully we have convincing proof that our desire to enhance our appearance isn't wrong, that "respectable apparel" does not have to be dowdy or out of style. So what exactly does Paul mean by "respectable apparel"?

Respectable Apparel - Nicole Whitacre

In 1 Timothy 2:9, Paul insists that the women "adorn themselves with respectable apparel" and not with gold, pearls or braids. We learned that he was not forbidding stylish clothing or banning jewelry. So what was Paul getting at?

To the women of this first century church, Paul writes to warn them against imitating the dress and adornment of the ladies of the Roman court and the prostitutes. These women were known for their extremely expensive, showy clothes and ridiculously elaborate hairstyles. They dressed, not only to attract attention, but to seduce as well. Paul does not want the women of the church to dress in this manner and thus be a distraction during the church service, or at any other time.

What he is condemning is not attractive attire, but the association with worldly and ungodly values. Women who profess godliness, he says, should not dress in such a way that resembles those who are extravagant, or worse, intent on being seductive or sexy. Simply put, we are not to identify with our sinful, worldly culture through our dress.

So, the question for us is this: Who are we seeking to imitate or be like in our dress? Who inspires our wardrobe? Are we preoccupied with looking like the latest American Idol winner or the actresses and music stars on magazine covers, or the immodest woman next door?

That is why Paul's message is urgent-not just for the original recipients of his letter, but for us today. He doesn't want the women in the church looking exactly like the ungodly, seductive women in the world.

... continued on page 3

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continued from page 2

Women in the church are to be different from the world. We should be stand-outs-not because of our revealing clothing, but because of our distinctly modest heart and dress.

The Allegiance of a modest woman - Nicole Whitacre

This final point gets to the question of why do we make such a big deal about modesty? Is it because we're conservative or moral people? Is it because we have personal preferences about how women should dress?

No. The reason is the gospel. Modesty is important because of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

That is why Paul is concerned about modesty and that is why we should be concerned about modesty as well. For when we take a broader look at 1 Timothy 2, we discover that these instructions about women's dress are set in the context of the gospel.

1 Timothy 2:3-6 says,

"This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time."

The gospel message is our motivation for modest dress. As [C.J. Mahaney] explains: "The woman who loves the

Savior avoids immodesty because she doesn't want to distract from or reflect poorly upon the gospel." John Stott puts it like this: "Paul's over-riding concern was that the way Christians deported themselves would not detract from but enhance their gospel mission."

We have a gospel mission: not only to preach Christ, but to live in a way consistent with our profession of faith. For how can we preach the good news of the transforming work of our Savior if our dress does not reflect His power at work in us?

May there be no contradiction between our gospel message and the clothes we wear. And may our modest dress be a witness to the One who gave Himself as a ransom for all.

That is the big deal about modesty.

Other Recommended Resources:

The Look: Does God Really Care What I Wear? by Nancy Leigh DeMoss -- this little booklet is a wonderful tool to help you study God's Word on this topic. It's full of quotes, charts, and discussion questions. (Publisher: Revive our Hearts, c2003, ISBN # : 0-940110-43-1)

Girl Talk: Mother-Daughter Conversations on Biblical Womanhood, by Carolyn Mahaney and Nicole Mahaney Whitacre (Publisher: Crossway Books, c2005, ISBN #: 1-58134-510-0)

Corporate Arsenal Passages

God is Faithful to All His Promises

Promise 6: Promises to complete His work



Philippians 1:6

And I am sure of this, that He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

1 John 3:2

Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when He appears we will be like Him, because we shall see Him as he is.

Romans 8:29

For those whom He foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, in order that He might be the firstborn among many brothers.