

Dress to Impress – the Lord

By Greg Gravitt

As I get older, the winter's cold weather seems to become harder and harder on my bones. Every year, I look forward to the coming of June, July, and August, and the hotter weather, more and more. There are many things about warmer weather, and the coming of summer, we all enjoy. We must acknowledge that, unfortunately, summer may bring many temptations and challenges. One major challenge is our attire, and how we handle the dress of others. We will not be able to stop everyone from drawing emphasis on their bodies. But we can refuse to take part in immodesty, and choose to glorify God in our attire.

Consider the following biblical principles that must guide us this summer and throughout our lives. These principles involve far more than attire. But, how we apply them in our dress is a barometer of how we are *submitting to God* in these areas.

Important Principles:

- **God has called us to be a holy people.** As 1 Peter 1:13-17 states, in part, “As obedient children...be holy, for I am holy.”
- **We are to “flee sexual immorality”** (1 Corinthians 6:18). Our dress can be seductive and contribute to sexual desire. Even the world acknowledges this. Have you ever seen dress codes required to visit nearly any prison? Why do those standards exist?
- **We are not to engage in lewd, lustful, lascivious or licentious conduct.** In everything, including our dress, “Let us walk properly...not in lewdness and lust...” (Romans 13:13-14; 2 Corinthians 12:20-21).
- **We must avoid putting a stumbling block before others.** Jesus uses strong, graphic language when he discusses this topic. He states, “For whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depths of the sea” (Matthew 18:6-7). Paul reiterates the important obligation we have in 1 Corinthians 8:9 and 10:31-33. We cannot be “stubborn” in this regard. Since we know looking at another person with lustful desire is sin (Matthew 5:28), we must not allow our dress (or the lack of) to be an obstacle that causes another to stumble.
- **We are called to be different - an influence for good in a corrupt world filled with darkness.** We know we are to be change agents – salt and light – in a corroding and dark world. Let us strive to be “children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world” (Philippians 2:15-16; Matthew 5:13-16).

So, are we willing to maintain a holy dedication to God and a faith that *dares* to be odd (not like everyone else) in the way we dress? Will we refuse to dress in ways that satisfy the desires of those who have “eyes full of adultery” (2 Peter 2:14)? Will our

determination to avoid immorality, lust, and lewdness lead us to embrace modesty? Will we dress in such a way that can lead others to lust, or will we choose to be a light shining in the darkness? *Does our dress manifest our insecurity and need to be seen by others?*

Those are some questions we should ask ourselves and provide honest answers. In addition, while the following questions and considerations are not exhaustive, we should give honest answers to them as well.

- **Is what I am wearing too short?** If so, why is my heart *really* desiring to wear it? Can I sit down and still retain my modesty? There may be shorts or dresses that are acceptable when one is standing, but we will need to sit at some point. Let us be *intellectually honest* with ourselves, if we find ourselves continually tugging at the bottom of our shorts or skirts, we *know* it is immodest.
- **Is it cut too low?** If so, am I trying to bring glory to God, or use what God has given me to be glorified?
- **Is it too tight?** Again, let us be honest, form-fitting clothes are purposed to display the attractiveness of the human form. Do we not see the problem with that? Today, many Christians are trying to toe the line of their faith and the world in this area. Christians are wearing extra tight jeans and yoga pants without blushing. We are compromising; it is troubling.
- **Is it too sheer?** Some fabrics may “cover” the body, but still allow the skin or undergarments to be visible. This has become very popular in our culture.

It will be hot this summer. Many will dress indecently. Yet, as children of God, we must consciously make wise decisions in how we dress. Let us be honest in our faith and stop making excuses (for ourselves *or our family*). After all, there is a place that will be much hotter, and for much longer, than June, July, and August. Is that too far? Go back to Matthew 18:6-7.