

Biblical Modesty For Women

It is not often that believers publicly consider what the Bible teaches about feminine modesty. When I speak of modesty, I am not simply talking about dress because your dress is bottom line evidence of your heart attitude. Modesty, even by its definition, implies a heart attitude of humility. We know that God hates pride and the opposite of pride, of course, is humility and humility is possible only when the Holy Spirit does a transforming work in us. My goal here is not only to consider God's standards for dress, but we want to consider the condition of our heart when this subject is raised.

Many churches are rightly concerned about avoiding the legalism of laying down man-made rules as opposed to biblical injunctions. I once heard a pastor say "I wouldn't touch the subject of modesty with a ten-foot pole." But the response of my heart was, "If the word of God addresses it, if the word of God teaches it, we have a responsibility before God to understand it and to teach it." In the New Testament women are taught their behavior should be chaste and that impacts dress. 1 Peter 3:1-7.

WE DO NOT WANT TO MAKE A LIST OF RULES. To make decisions about dress for yourself, you need to understand certain principles from the Bible. Don't ask me, "How many inches from the floor should my hemline be?" We're just going to address what the word of God has to say and then I'm going to share with you what your Christian brothers would like you to know as to how your dress impacts them. What is it about feminine dress that constitutes major stumbling blocks for men?

I have found a lot of agreement among men on this subject. When a young man is 18 years old, certain things about women's dress are going to hit him one way. Then when he's 80, it might not resonate with him to the same degree. You can go from one Christian husband to another and say, "Is this okay? Is this a problem?" They might answer you a little differently, but you will find a lot of agreement.

MODESTY REFLECTS HUMILITY. Let us now look into the Word of God. We're going to begin with a bottom line statement. The bottom line is Micah 6:8. It tells us what

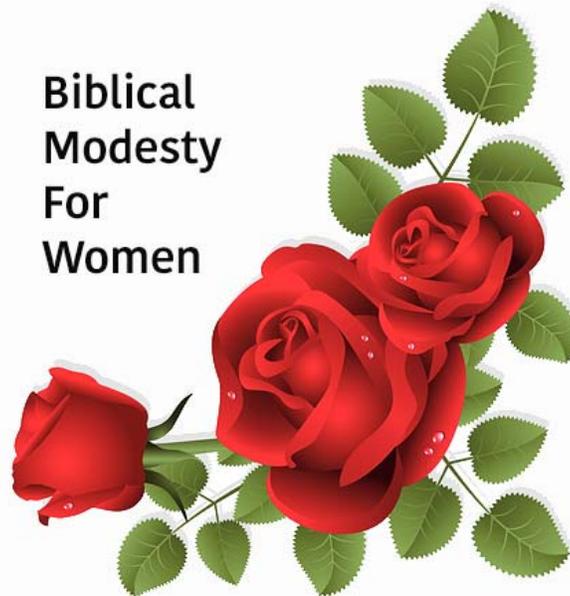
God requires of his children. It says, "He has told you, oh man, what is good; And what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" That verse implies a spirit of submission and

obedience to whatever God says is good for us.

I was struck when I read that verse again after my study on this subject. I was struck how modesty in a woman does justice, it shows kindness, and it demonstrates if you're walking humbly with your God. What do we mean that it does justice? Simply that it is not fair to behave or to dress in an immodest way in front of a man when he can't stop the arousal of his feelings that you are stirring in him. He can only determine

not to act on them.

When you are dressed immodestly, ladies, it's not fair to the fellows. You expect respect from them towards you. I am hoping, if I don't accomplish anything else, I hope you learn today that behaving and dressing modestly shows respect towards our Christian brothers. We need to respect that God made them male. God designed males to be sexually



aroused by the sight of the female form or body. To women males can be mysterious creatures. In many ways, they are different from us; but God is the one who made them the way they are. You want men to respect you as a woman. Then if you are going to show respect towards your Christian brothers, one way you will do that is with modesty in your behavior and in your dress.

1 Peter 3:2-5 says, “As they observe your chaste and respectful behavior, and let not your adornment be merely external.” (What that means is your dress is not to be emphasizing primarily the external). “braiding the hair,” (is a term that does not refer to just braids, but refers to extreme hairdos). “and wearing gold jewelry or putting on dresses; but let it be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit which is precious in the sight of God. For in this way in former times the holy women also, who hoped in God, used to adorn themselves, being submissive to their own husbands.”

Remember we said that modesty wasn't just the way you dress. Modest dress is the reflection of the modesty that comes from a humble heart. In 1 Peter 3, we have the definition of it. It says, “The hidden person of the heart with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit.” The apostle then states this attitude is precious in the sight of God. It is very, very important to God that we be women with a modest heart, with a holy heart. When we are, He values that. He desires your life to reflect that attitude. Your Savior's life reflected this attitude and this is what He longs to see in you.

Think on what Christ did for you. He went to the cross for you. He laid down His life for you. Now He is asking us to be the kind of women He wants us to be. That kind of woman is described in Titus 2:4-5. “Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips, nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good, that they many encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, that the Word of God may not be dishonored.” Ladies, we are living in the world, but we are not to be of the world. There is a big difference.

You can be very much involved in society without being of your society. You are to be different. By the way, that word ‘discreet,’ in the Greek means, “careful and circumspect in one's speech and actions.” Actions include our behavior. The verse calls for modest behavior. “Especially to avoid causing offense or to gain an advantage.” When we're not modest in our dress, we will cause offense. A chaste married woman is one who abstains from extramarital affairs and flirtations. Then what does it mean to be modest in our dress? One recent dictionary gives as a definition for modesty “dressing or behaving to avoid impropriety or indecency, especially to avoid attracting sexual attention. Modesty in clothing is not revealing or emphasizing the figure.”

Modesty is not revealing or emphasizing the figure. A lot of Christian women think, “If my skin is covered, I'm modest.” No, even the dictionary recognizes modesty prohibits revealing or emphasizing the figure. This dictionary gave as an example: “Modest dress means that hem lines must be below the knee.”

Let us look at the word impropriety. Impropriety is a failure to observe standards or to show modesty, to use improper language, behavior or character, to be unbecoming, unseemly, indecent, or to display improper conduct. The conclusion? Modesty involves much more than how you dress.

Modesty again reflects a humility of heart and spirit. How is that accomplished in our lives? The fruit of the Spirit growing in a woman's life will bring that about. In our sinful natures, we tend towards pride. When you grow up in the American culture, you grow up valuing attitudes of “I can do it myself, I don't need anybody else, I am strong.” There's that self-reliant attitude of freedom. I'm going to do what I want to do and that's that. In high school, they used to teach us, “Your freedom ends where my nose begins.” As long as I'm not hurting anybody else, I can behave the way I want to behave and you can like it or lump it. Ladies, you won't find that in Scripture. The Bible teaches believers are part of a body or family. Our behavior is always going to have an impact on others.

THREE FOUNDATIONAL TRUTHS. There are several axioms I believe we all need to accept. These are founda-

tional and you might say, “Why in the world are you articulating them?” They’re important for the conclusions that we reach. 1) It goes without saying that our behavior should stem from a desire to please our God. If we name the name of Christ, what should drive our behavior is a desire to please God. When we know that something doesn’t please Him, then it should check us and we should want to turn away from that kind of behavior. 2) It goes without saying again that the Bible is our source for truth. It’s inerrant - without error or incapable of being wrong. It’s the very living Word of God.

3) It goes without saying that we worship a God who is holy and consequently, everything He does is good. Does that include when He made Adam and Eve to be different from one another? Yes! When we have problems in life, sometimes it’s because we don’t understand why He’s done what He’s done. He made men and women differently for His plan and purposes. Sometimes we don’t trust Him to bring understanding to us in His timing. We can trust His judgment. He knows what is good for us.

We live in a culture that has rejected our God and has rejected the truth in His Word. One of the reasons we approach the subject of biblical modesty with mixed feelings is because we have been brainwashed by our culture. For many generations in our society there were modest standards for dress that were largely accepted by most people. Few questioned them. Only a woman who was a harlot dressed differently to sell herself and to advertise her availability.

For generations, there was no question that certain parts of our body that should be always clothed, covered, and concealed outside of the bedroom. Children were raised that way and be they Christian or non-Christian, they were expected to behave that way.

I can remember the news story when Jacqueline Kennedy was caught by a photographer wearing jeans. The picture made the papers. Today most women wear jeans. But the first time Jackie was caught in public wearing jeans, there were those who had a problem with it. The times change. When I was growing up and I went to school, every boy at school wore Levi blue jeans. In public school, girls wore dresses or skirts to school. Girls dressed as girls and the boys

were attired as boys.

I remember the women all chattering about Jacqueline Kennedy and her jeans. Why do I bring that up? I bring it up as an example that the times have changed rapidly when it comes to dress. Most women today wear jeans and think nothing of it.

There are a couple of things that have accelerated that change. It’s not just fashion that has changed. It is not just fabrics that have changed, but the whole issue of what is modest and what is not has undergone a tremendous revolution. Leading that change is a Godless women’s liberation movement - a movement of women that rejected the Word of God. There are things about the women’s liberation movement that probably every woman will appreciate. I believe in equal pay for equal work. I’ll sign up for that any day. You need to understand that the movement was strongly influenced by lesbians who wanted to communicate the message that we don’t need men, that we can’t stand men, and we can do anything that a man can do.

I remember when the Free Speech Movement hit the University of California at Berkeley. That was the start of the ‘60s movement towards the rejection of many standards and law, and what was right or wrong. One of the changes that came right at the beginning was, “I don’t have to wear a bra and if anyone does not like it, that’s tough.”

A lot of women then chose not to wear bras. They didn’t care what impact that would have on men. They were going to be in control of their bodies. Unless you had been alive and had come to maturity back then, you would have no understanding of the incredible change that we have experienced in this country when it comes to the roles of men and women and to what is right and wrong in our relationships. That’s why we want to look at the word of God and what it says on this subject.

Let us go back to the basic truths of the Word of God and draw our principles from the Bible. Then between you and God, pray about what you learn today and say, “Lord, am I okay with You, or is there anything in the way that I am living right now that You would want to change?” instead of having the attitude, “If I have it, I am going to flaunt it.”

MODESTY IN GENESIS. Now let us go back to the garden

of Eden and creation. On days one through five, God spoke and everything just instantaneously appeared. On day six His creative nature took over in a different way. He took dust from the ground and the Bible says, "He formed Adam." It's not too clear how much time passed, but Adam was there alone with all the animals and plants God looked down from His heaven and He concluded that He was not quite through because Adam was by himself. There was no other person like Adam. He did not have a friend or companion. He was all alone.

God then became the first surgeon. I imagine He may have said, "Okay, Adam, I want you to lie down." He put him to sleep. God didn't have to call in the anesthesiologist; He just did it Himself. He put him to sleep. Somehow, He took from Adam's side what is translated as a rib. I don't know if rib is the best translation from the Hebrew, but He took something from Adam's side and from that He formed Eve.

Then when God presented Eve to him, Adam looked at Eve and said in Genesis 2:23, "This is now bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh. She shall be called woman for she was taken from man." I have heard several times preachers quote that verse a little in jest as Adam looking at Eve and telling God, "Wow! God, you did a good thing here." Recognizing that is not a good translation, I don't discount that as Adam's basic reaction.

Knowing men to the little degree that I know men, I don't discount it at all. When she was standing there in her birthday suit, Adam looked at her and he was turned on majorly. Right there in the Bible it says God gave him a command. He said, "Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth." I think Adam may have thought, "Well, that's going to take a little bit of time, Lord. That command I can't complete this week. But we will go to work on it."

Ladies, that's the first evidence in scripture that men react physically to the visual. In fact, recently, a very Godly man said when he knew the subject I was going to address, "If we didn't react to the visual, Rachel, there would never be a baby. There just would not be any children." He said it's as plain as that.

Adam and Eve were in the Garden of Eden and there was

no sin. With me imagine being in that garden before the fall with the temperatures perfect. You never got up in the morning and said, "What am I going to wear today?" There was no one else except this wonderful man that God had given to you. I don't know what all they had to do because everything was so perfect. I don't think there was any weeding there because there were no weeds. In that environment, total and complete nudity was not only okay, it was God blessed, and God planned.

I think that some women when they think about sex feel that probably some dirty old man came up with the idea. Ladies, the Almighty, our Holy God planned the physical relationship. He did it and declared it to be good.

Remember, everything that God does is good. Before sin entered the picture, it was perfect and there were no problems. Then one day Eve encouraged her husband to join her in doing something that God had told them not to do. They sinned and they violated the command of God when they ate the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. That was the one time when Adam should not have gone along with what his wife had to suggest. Have you ever noticed the immediate reaction of Adam and Eve once they sinned? The first change it made in their lives was they realized that they needed to be covered.

I've always wondered, "How did they go about sewing those fig leaves together? Where did they get the thread and the needles?" I understand why they just made loin cloths. Because if you are going to try and make full garments out of fig leaves, it is not going to be easy. The Word of God doesn't give us all the details. Somehow, they took fig leaves and fastened them together and made loin cloths. They covered the part of their bodies that's commonly referred to as private parts.

Then the Good Lord showed up to walk and talk with them in the garden, and called out, "Adam where are you?" Genesis 3:9. They were hiding because even though they had loin cloths on, they didn't want to be seen because they were not covered. You can't hide from God. God had to teach them to cover their bodies. But first, their sin issue had to be addressed. There needed to be the death of an animal by sacrifice and the shedding of blood for that to happen. In

Hebrews 9:22 the Bible tells us that without the shedding of blood there is no remission for sin. God then provided a covering for their bodies and for the forgiveness of their sins.

Then God taught them to make clothes from the skins of animals. The Hebrew word in the biblical account tells us that it was a tunic like garment. What does the Hebrew mean? The tunic at least covered the knee. In very ancient times, there were two lengths of tunics. Both men and women went around wearing what we might call gowns or robes. There were two lengths. The first was one that just covered the knee and was worn for work.

When you read in scripture that a man girded up his loins, he would reach down between his legs and grab the loose fabric behind them and pull it up between his legs. Then he would tie it around his waist leaving his knees exposed. He was then free to do whatever work needed. It's said that Peter did that on the fishing boat. He was a fisherman. To do his work he had to gird up his loins. The Good Lord put Adam and Eve in garments that covered them and He taught them that they were to wear clothes.

RICHARD BAXTER AND THE PURITANS. Younger women today have been raised in times when there are no common-sense dress standards. I use the expression 'common-sense.' because of the way dress fashions impact men. Are you familiar with the way Pilgrims and Puritans dressed? We can all agree that Puritan women dressed modestly.

You would think that there would not have been a problem back then. Guess again! I want to read to you from the writing of Richard Baxter, a great Puritan preacher and writer. Listen to what Richard Baxter had to say, and remember he is saying this as a pastor. "If it, the matter of dress, tends to the ensnaring of the minds of the beholders in shameful lustful wants and passions, though you say you intended not, it is your sin. That you do that which probably will procure that reaction, yea, that you did not your best to avoid it, and you must not lay a stumbling-block in their way. You must not blow up the fire of their lust, you must not make your ornaments snares to entrap, but you must walk amongst sinful persons as you would do with a candle amongst straw or gun powder. Or else, you may see the flame which you did not foresee when it's too late to

quench it."

Now, that's a very formal, Puritanical way of saying, "Ladies, if you are not behaving and dressing in a modest way, you're going to ignite a flame of passion in a man, and it may be so strong that he can't quench it."

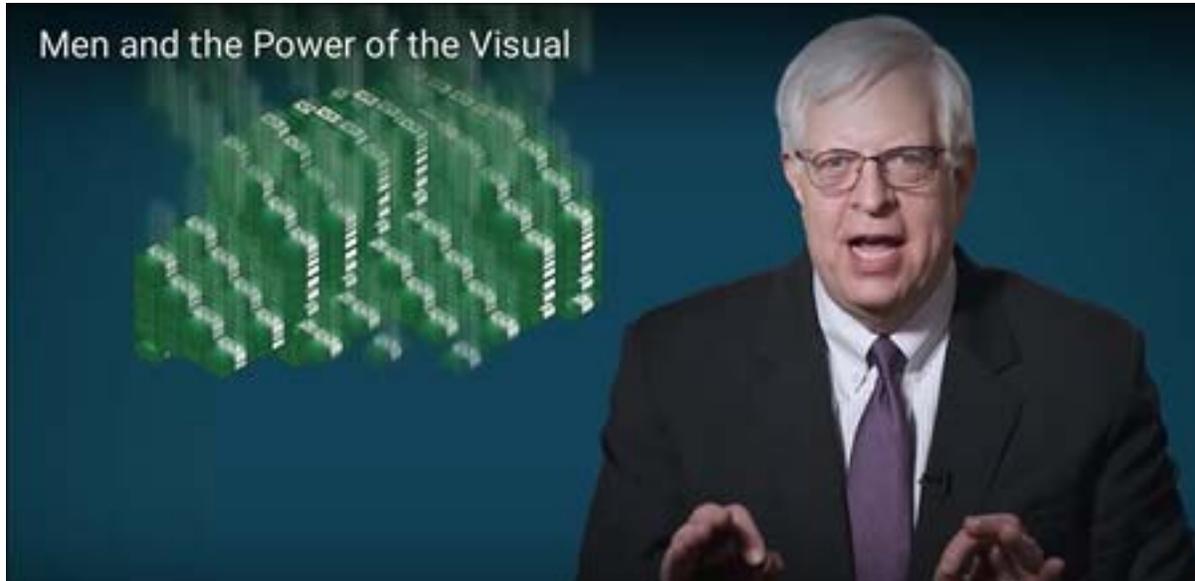
Someone recently said to me, "If women only understood that there are times when their dress stirs such strong passionate sexual desires in a man -- and let's face it, if he's on a job, he's out there in public somewhere and he has no way to deal with this, no way to relieve it, he may be fighting those feelings sometimes for hours on end." That came from a man who said, "If only women understood how important this is."

MEN AND THE VISUAL. I want you to hear from another man right now. His name is Dennis Prager. He is not a Christian. From the exposure that I have had to Dennis Prager, he has won my respect often for the stands he takes. He is a Jew and he feels that he needs to speak to the women of today.

This topic is so important to him that he's published a DVD at his Prager University on the subject. I want you to understand this is not just a problem in the church, but society has greatly suffered because of the way many women today conduct themselves and dress. We are quoting Mr. Prager with the permission of Prager University.

Dennis Prager: "Every year men spend billions of dollars to look at women with little clothing on, such as the annual Sports Illustrated swimsuit issue, or with no clothing on such as on internet sites and in so called men's magazines. Women on the other hand spend virtually nothing to see unclothed men. Why? Some say that the reason is that men are socialized into viewing women as sex objects, and that women are socialized into not viewing men as sex objects. But if that's true, how do these people explain gay men? They are always aroused by pictures of naked men as heterosexual men are aroused by pictures of naked women.

Obviously then, it's not socialization. It's that men are programmed by nature, not by society, to respond sexually to the visual. This is an area in which men are so different from women that it's probably impossible - no, not probably - just outright impossible for a woman to truly understand. Of course, women find some men attractive, and of



course a woman can have an intense reaction to seeing a very appealing man, but there is still no comparison. The visual alone arouses men. It takes far more to arouse a woman than seeing naked men. If that's all it took, most husbands would walk around the house naked whenever possible, or at least every time they wanted sex.

The average heterosexual man is excited countless times a day simply by seeing women in person, on billboards, in magazines, on television, and even in his imagination. This is not the case for women. Yes, there are some male strip shows for women. But few women ever go and the few who do attend them in groups, a girls' night out. For every one of those shows, there were probably 10,000 female strip shows for males, most of whom attend alone, not as a participant in a guys' night out. Let's be honest. There is no magazine featuring men's legs for women to look at and get aroused by. But there are websites and magazines of women's legs for men. Are women paying to view topless men? Men pay good money to look at topless women. Again, that doesn't mean women never get turned on by merely looking at some men. Of course, they do. But it's only by some men, on rare occasion a stranger, and more usually, a celebrity.

Men get turned on by any sight of female flesh on almost any female. The effect of the visual in men is so powerful that it even amazes men. A man came over to me after hearing me lecture on male sexuality and said, "I've got a story to tell you. I was in front of a department store, and in the

window was a seated mannequin. I couldn't believe it but I found myself looking up her skirt." Here was a perfectly normal, responsible man who found himself looking up a skirt on an inanimate object shaped like a woman. That's how instinctive it is for men to look at female flesh. It's perfectly understandable that women cannot fully relate to this. But if a woman wants to understand males' sexuality, the first thing she has to understand is the power of the visual.

That's why you see ads on billboards, on TV and in magazines, for every sort of product a man might buy accompanied by a scantily clad woman or sometimes, just part of her. I recall a famous liquor ad that showed a woman's legs and a bottle of tequila: no face, just beautiful legs. Would you ever see an ad showing men's legs? People would laugh. It would be considered absurd. An ad with women's legs is not absurd; it's alluring. None of these is in any way meant to excuse inappropriate male behavior. Men must always control themselves. But to deny the power of the visual on men is like denying that the Earth is round. I'm Dennis Prager."¹

GOD'S WORD ON MODESTY. Rachel Calaban: Now there, you have heard from a man. He said it much more quickly than I could have and far more succinctly. I hope that you can accept at this point that this is a bottom line truth. Men are strongly attracted by the visual. They don't

1. We are quoting Mr. Prager with the permission of Prager University.

have to know anything about you. Understand this, ladies. This truth is why women end up being used because a man attracted to her physical appearance says, "I love you, I love you and if you love me..." and then promises her the moon. You know what happens. A woman will believe whatever is said and often ends up being used.

From the beginning of time, women have often been fooled when a man says, "I love you." They forget that words alone do not prove love; a man's behavior and actions prove and demonstrate his love. You need to be very careful that a man is not simply saying "I want your body." Men are attracted and stirred strongly by the visual. When they see partial nudity, a red blooded American male is going to start thinking about sex and what sex with that woman would be like, et cetera. If you do not want to unduly arouse that passion in a man, you need to be very careful about how you dress.

I want at this point to say, "What God designed in the male female physical relationship was and is beautiful and perfect." Ladies, we can have good, beautiful relationships with our husbands, but God wants that physical relationship to be limited to marriage. Anything outside of marriage is going to wreak havoc in your life. In Proverbs 5:15-19, he commanded men, "Drink water from your own cistern, and fresh water from your own well. Should your springs be dispersed abroad, streams of water in the streets? Let them be yours alone and not for strangers with you. Let your fountain be blessed and rejoice in the wife of your youth as a loving hind and a graceful doe. Let her breasts satisfy you at all times and be exhilarated always with her love."

If you have never read the Song of Solomon, you need to read it; and you need to read and benefit from the advice of the Proverbs. God cared so much about the physical relationship between a man and his wife that He devoted an entire book of the Bible to it. When God planned the physical relationship, He planned something in which He rejoices and that He wants to take place between a man and his wife. In that scenario, it's a beautiful, beautiful experience.

If you are married, you have a responsibility to be sure that your husband is completely fulfilled and satisfied sexually in your relationship. That will go a long way towards helping

him when he is all day long having to avert his eyes from looking at certain things and at some women. I have known men who walk into church and need to almost immediately turn their eyes away to avoid sinning.

For them the sin is not in what they see. The sin is in what they do with their thoughts and how they deal with them. How about it, ladies? When we go to church, how do we present ourselves? It's something that we need to think about. God commands men to show respect to their wives and to be faithful to their relationship. The Song of Solomon goes into great detail about the physical relationship. When you read the Song of Solomon, you will see how powerful the visual is to that king. There is a very erotic description of her body. That's what hits him. Then when the Shulamite starts talking, have you noticed the way she talks? She talks about his character. She talks about his accomplishments. She talks about his reputation in the land.

She's attracted not just to the physical. She has a little to say about that, but she's very attracted to whom he is as a man, what he has accomplished, and what his character is. It's tremendous. It illustrates the difference between men and women. I have read several surveys of Christian men where fellows will say that, yes, the first thing they see in a woman is the visual, but if they spend any time at all with her and there isn't good character to back that up, they just lose interest.

In the Song of Solomon, there is the most intriguing warning given. The Shulamite is the spouse in this book. Three times - in Solomon 2:7, 3:5 and 8:4 - she says these words in speaking of her man. "I adjure you, oh daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles, or the does of the field, that you not stir up or awaken love until it pleases." ESV

I was just gripped by that. Three times, she gives a warning to women not to stir up or awaken passion -- it's translated love. In speaking of passion, she says to wait until it pleases, until the time is right. Ladies, you have in your physical body a very powerful tool, if I can be so blunt. Depending on how you conduct yourself, you can stir a man to desire you physically. The Shulamite is warning these women that within marriage the physical relationship is totally proper and it is what God planned. But outside of the bonds of mar-

riage, you're not to be physically involved.

We're living in a culture now where some women try to ensnare men. I'm not talking about harlotry alone. Women today feel the freedom to pursue men because that's what the Women's Liberation Movement has advocated. It has taught women that they have just as much right to pursue physical pleasure as the men do and that it is good to do so.

Instead of men being the ones who initiate relationships, we have women who feel that they need to do this. I'm one of six sisters and we used to say, "We girls do not have to chase a fella." I felt good about that. We didn't have to chase boys. The boys would be chasing us! When Dad and Mom said that they didn't want their daughters chasing boys, they explained that it was natural for males to pursue females. We learned from experience that we would be approached.

When you're a Christian woman, you can and should trust God to bring a man into your life. When He wants you to have a husband, He will do it. You can dress modestly and the right men in God's timing will take notice.

One of the first things Christian men will notice about a woman is if she dresses modestly. If so, it raises a man's feelings of respect for her. Many men have said they have no interest in a woman who looks like she's trying to entrap or ensnare guys with her body. It's not that they won't notice it. It's not that they won't have to fight a battle with their aroused passions over her appearance, but that's not the kind of woman they want to marry. They want a woman who's modest.

We've talked about Adam and Eve and how they responded to their nudity. I want to show you what the Scripture teaches about nudity. God clothed Adam and Eve in the garden and gave them tunics that covered them.

God also gave instructions for priests. I was intrigued with what the Bible says about covering the thighs. Whether we need to cover the thighs is a big topic for debate. I'm going to show you from the Word of God what God says about covering thighs. First time it shows up is in the priest's clothing. The priests already had tunics. God had given instruction for the tunics and one might think, "Isn't that enough?" God says if a priest is going to show up for work in the tabernacle or the temple, underneath the tunic he was

to wear breeches or short trousers that covered the knees. Exodus 28:42-43

Let me read to you what God said. "And you shall make for them linen breeches to cover their bare flesh; they shall reach from the loins down over the thighs and they shall be on Aaron and on his sons when they go into the tent of meeting or when they approach the altar to minister in the holy place lest they incur guilt and die." Underneath the long tunics, the priests had to wear trousers that covered their knees. In covering their thighs, God said they were covering their nakedness. The loin area that we sometimes refer to as the private parts and the thighs were considered nakedness that needed to be covered. That really gripped me. I had not seen that before.

Then in Isaiah 47:2-3, God is describing the humiliation of Babylon and He compares the city of Babylon to a woman. He said that the humiliation of the city was going to be like exposing one's nakedness. I'm now quoting scripture, "Take the millstones and grind mills. Remove your veil, strip off the skirt, uncover the leg, cross the rivers. Your nakedness will be uncovered. Your shame also will be exposed. I will take vengeance and will not spare a man." To take off the skirt, to reveal a woman's thighs, God said was nakedness. All throughout Scripture, nudity outside of marriage is considered as very shameful and something God hates.

In Isaiah 24 prisoners of war were shamed by exposing their buttocks and their thighs. In Micah 1:8-11 mourning for Judah in Israel was done in naked shame. In Ezekiel 23, nudity and harlotry went together and are described as lewdness. In Nahum 3:5, God levels judgment on Nineveh and states that He's going to lift your skirts over your face and show the nations your nakedness. In Jeremiah 13:22, the nation's sinful state is compared with the shame of nakedness. In Revelation 3:18, the sin of the church people in Laodicea is compared to the shame of nakedness. Again, in 16:15, the sinful state is compared to nakedness.

Do you think that God has strong feelings about the issue of nakedness? Our western culture has gradually been desensitized. It happens little bit by little bit, year after year, often influenced by Hollywood and celebrities. It's incredible how little by little, the stars and celebrities set new stan-

dards -- I should say they lower the standard little by little until the nation has become very desensitized to this whole issue. The fall or the entrance of sin has strongly impacted a beautiful relationship that God wanted between a man and his wife. Because of the fall, God has laid down standards for covering and concealing nakedness to avoid the sin that will otherwise take place.

Let's look at the New Testament. Matthew 5:27-29 says, "You have heard that it was said, "You shall not commit adultery. But I say to you, that whoever looks on a woman to lust for her, has committed adultery with her already in his heart. And if your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out, and throw it from you; for it is better for you that one of the parts of your body perish, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell." Across America men will walk into their church and be forced to avert their eyes from looking at an immodestly dressed woman to avoid temptation and possibly sin.

Wouldn't it be nice if men didn't have to do that in church? Job had a solution. Job 31:1 says, "I have made a covenant with my eyes. How then should I gaze at a virgin?" His covenant with his eyes was to look away and not to sit there and enjoy the view in a sinful way. Again, do you see in scripture the very principle that Dennis Prager was sharing? The principle of the impact of the visual on a man. Ladies, it was God Who made our brothers that way.

Bearing in mind how God chose to make men and women differently, let me ask you: Is our God good? Does He do everything well? When He made men to respond to the female form this way, He had something good in mind. It was the marital relationship between Adam and Eve. He made man to be stimulated in that way and to initiate physical relations with his wife. That was something very good. He made women to respond to their husbands. To what do we to respond? Often we respond to a man's touch. But men will respond to the visual with desire, and just the loving embrace from a husband can trigger desire in a wife.

GOD'S WORD REGARDING OUR RESPONSE. Now I want to share with you Scriptures that impact how we should be responding. 1 John 2:15-17 says, "Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the

love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. And the world is passing away, and also its lusts, but the one who does the will of God abides forever." Many women are controlled by the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh and the boastful pride of life. They end up taking too much pride in how they appear to others and are not always concerned if their appearance is modest.

Even within the church, there are women who will try to use female charms (or the visual) to control or influence men. The Bible says such behavior is not from the Father but is from the world. 1 Corinthians 6:18-20 says, "Flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit Who is in you, whom you have from God and that you are not your own. For you have been bought with a price: therefore, glorify God in your body."

When you walk to the closet in the morning, ladies, you make a choice as to what you're going to wear. If you are a daughter of the King of kings, you are clothing a temple of the Holy Spirit. May I remind you that your Savior suffered on the cross giving His life for you so that you could be His princess. His standards for dress have your best interest in heart. Because He is omniscient, He knows what is best for you. He wants to protect His princess. One of the ways we can avoid a lot of trouble in life is by dressing in a modest way. Romans 12:1-2, " I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect." Have you thought about this recently? If you are a believer, you do not own your body!

The is different from what the Women's Liberation Movement told us. What does the abortion industry tell us? They say that our bodies are our own, that we have control over our bodies, that we can do what we want to do with our bodies, that we have choice. When you are a daughter of the

King of Kings, your body is not your own. He paid with His life for you, and all He wants to do is in love show you the way to live so that you will have the greatest peace and joy possible.

By the way, when it comes to the subject of choice, I always say I believe in choice. A woman DOES have a right to choose. She chooses whether she will get into bed with a man or not. That's the time to make the choice. Do you follow what I'm saying? You should get into bed only with the right man under the right conditions: with a man who is your husband, who loves you, who is going to care for you, is going to provide for you and who is going to do everything he can to help you raise any offspring from your relationship. That's the time to choose. You do not have the right to choose whether another human being lives or dies. That is God's choice.

A young ruler came to Jesus and he said, "Teacher, what is the greatest commandment in the law?" And Jesus responded, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great, and foremost commandment." Then the second is like it. "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." When we think of a neighbor, I want us to think of our Christian brothers and any man that God has put into our lives. We are to care about them as much as we care about ourselves. Sister, if you name the name of Christ and you say you belong to Him, He asked you to care for others as much as you care for yourself. You should care about the spiritual walk of your brothers in the faith. If you know that there are things that you can do in regards to your appearance that will be of help to your Christian brothers, then that should become very, very important to you.

Each of us is going to give an account to God. Romans 14:13. "Therefore, let us not judge one another anymore, but rather determine this - not to put an obstacle or a stumbling block in a brother's way." Then in Galatians 5:13, it says, "For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love, serve one another." Understanding then that the sight of the female form, either partially clothed or unclothed, can arouse a man's sexual passions, we need to come to grips

with the concept that what we wear can potentially cause Christian men to stumble and can be a very poor testimony to the unsaved world. "Oh, she calls herself a Christian and that's the way she dresses? She calls herself a Christian and she dresses no differently from any other woman in the world?" There has been many a man who has responded to a professing Christian woman like that.

This is a heavy responsibility on us because we are forced to go against our culture in a bigger way than women have ever been forced to go. 1 Corinthians 10:31 tells us "Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."

Have you asked, "Lord, how can I glorify you in how I choose to dress?" Has that thought ever crossed your mind? It should.

This is the way we should want to respond: out of a heart of love for my Savior, I will dress to please Him, not to meet the letter of any law, not to get by with whatever I can, but to please Him regardless of the practices of my society."

WHAT IS OBJECTIONABLE TO GOD? Are there forms of dress that God finds objectionable? Does Scripture tell us to what He objects? In Deuteronomy 22:5, it says, "A woman shall not wear man's clothing, nor shall a man put on a woman's clothing; for whoever does these things is an abomination to the Lord our God." Women are to dress distinctly differently from men and vice versa. What do we see in our society today? Things have become so wicked that some in education are trying to brainwash school teachers into not recognizing the gender differences and not to acknowledge there are boys and girls. They claim we are just whatever gender we feel like.

Teachers are undergoing training on how to handle their class situations so they don't acknowledge the difference between boys and girls. That is how bad it is. What does our God find objectionable? It is gender-less dress and cross dressing. Anything like that is an abomination to God. I don't know a stronger word that you could use. I don't believe that this is a subject about which to joke. Anything the Scripture says is an abomination to God should never be the subject matter of joking.

In Isaiah 3:16-23 God says of the Jewish women, "Because

the daughters of Zion are proud and they walk with their heads held high and seductive eyes, and go along with mincing steps, and tinkle the bangles on their feet, Therefore the Lord will afflict the scalp of the daughters of Zion with scabs. And the Lord will make their foreheads bare.” In that day the Lord will take away the beauty of their anklets, headbands, crescent ornaments, dangling earrings, bracelets, veils, headdresses, ankle chains, sashes, perfume boxes, amulets, finger rings, nose rings, festal robes, outer tunics, cloaks, money purses, hand mirrors, undergarments, turbans and veils.” I wonder what the size of their closets were!

What is God objecting to there? When they walked with their heads held high is walking with a prideful spirit. Secondly, seductive eyes: a woman can wreak havoc with her eyes. These are wanton eyes, eyes casting voluptuous or amatory glances and acting at the same time, totally innocent. By the way, a second meaning is painted eyelids. The testimony of Scripture would indicate that women use some products to enhance beauty, but when it's overdone, God's hates it. The meaning of this is eyes that are just heavy with makeup, with paint.

Next are the mincing steps. The Talmud says some women took very short steps, just putting the heel of one foot against the toe of another. In addition to that, they wore foot rings above their ankles that were connected. There was a chain from one foot to the other connecting them, and they had bells on those chains. When they took tiny mincing steps, they were making noise. Everybody would know where they were. The bottom line is that they attracted attention to themselves.

James 4:6 says that, “God is opposed to the proud but gives grace to the humble.” A woman with a heart of humility will submit therefore to God. From this we see that in the eyes of God, it is wrong to purposefully dress in such a way to attract the interest and attention of the opposite sex, especially when you do it by accenting your sexuality or your physical attributes. God does not like that.

In 1st Timothy 2:9-10, God says, “I want women to adorn themselves with proper clothing, modestly and discretely, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly garments; but rather by means of good works as befits women making

a claim to godliness.” Is He saying that He doesn't want them to comb their hair or to wear any jewelry? No, it's the overdone to which He objects. Notice He said, “Costly garments, gold and pearls.” Our reputation is not to be how much jewelry we have or the value of our wardrobe.

In addressing the conduct of a church service, the apostle specifically lays down principles for how women should dress when they come to church. Do you know what that tells me? Even in the early church, there was a problem with how women dressed. They came to services oftentimes dressed in such a way that they were a distraction, either by causing their brothers to stumble or just by attracting attention to how much wealth they had. In those days, some women loaded down their hairstyles with jewels. It has been said that they wore their wealth or their bank account, so to speak, piled up in their hair dos!

The apostle said that they were to adorn. When it says 'adorn,' it means to arrange or put in order. We are supposed to pay attention to how we dress and how we appear. We should be orderly. I don't want anybody to get the idea that to be dressed modestly means that you run around in the same old outfit all the time. No, we don't have to dress down to be modest. In fact, our attire should fit the occasion so long as it's modest.

We are to come into church adorned, arranged, in order, and the word that's translated order is the opposite of chaos. One gets the impression very clearly that a godly woman does pay attention to her style, does take time to get ready, and she presents herself as orderly and appropriate. The word that's translated clothing actually means her whole demeanor. That is her behavior. It includes how she conducts herself. She's orderly and she's not in chaos. May God the Holy Spirit apply that truth to your life.

Then Paul uses a word here to describe clothing that means of a sound mind, curbing ones' desires and impulses, self-control and temperate. Again, contrast that with a woman who comes into church in very costly garments, with all her jewelry either in her hair or dangling from her. She's overdone. A godly woman doesn't do that. In other words, there's no room for personal display, whether it's a display of wealth or a display of your sexuality. There should be no immodesty

that draws attention to herself or to her body. Again, remember that however you present yourself at church will reflect your heart attitude towards worship.

The word translated as braided is talking about hairstyles in general. In other words, we are to avoid the gaudy and the ostentatious. The word in that passage that is translated modestly appears only one time in the Bible, right there. It's the only time. It includes, again, that sense of humility, coupled with an idea of shame. She is not ashamed of who she is or ashamed of her body, but has an appropriate shame. That's such a hard word to use in our culture today because we have the wrong idea. If I said to you, it's sad that often in our society, there doesn't seem to be any sense of shame. Everything goes or is okay, do you know what I'm saying? In the world, it doesn't matter what you do, it doesn't matter how you behave, there is no sense of shame.

The apostle is saying here that humility and modesty involves a certain sense of appropriate shame. In other words, there are things I wouldn't do, I wouldn't dare do. Why? Because I'm a daughter of the King of kings. I am his princess. Remember also that we are not saying that jewelry or good clothing are forbidden. Remember Proverbs 31 describing the ideal woman? Remember it said that her clothing was made with very fine fabric. We are not advocating for no jewelry. We are not saying no good or fine clothing or clothing that might have cost a little bit at some point in time. What is not to be present in our lives is pride and the necessity to flaunt what we have and who we are.

The Godly woman doesn't draw attention to herself by extremes. Instead, she does not lead the fashion parade, but she is not at the tail end of it. When she comes to worship, she comes with a sense of humility and orderliness. All of this is made possible in our lives by a work of the Spirit. That should be our focus. The fruit of the Spirit is temperance or self-control and that is what the entirety of Scripture is saying should mark our dress.

WHAT ARE PROBLEMS FOR MEN? I want to share now what the fellows say about modesty in dress. These are not the opinions of one man or even ten men. I have pulled these suggestions from several surveys of Christian men.

The way a woman dresses can stir a man's passions and at

the worst, it could force him to end up fighting that arousal for hours if there's no way to relieve it. Men would like us to understand that some of the current fashions cause problems for men who genuinely want to respect us. They then have a problem respecting us when our dress is less than modest.

One man's comment that has impressed me was that he never goes to a public swimming pool or to the beach because of what he knows he would see. What does the Bible say? "Flee lust," right? This man flees by practicing that principle.

When it comes to the bust line, the men say to avoid tight or form-fitting tops or see through shirts. There should be looseness in your top garment. They say to avoid tops without undergarments or a bra-less look. That look is deliberately designed so that bosoms will bounce. Ladies, I'm going to tell you that if you have a bouncy bosom or a bouncy rear end, it will catch a man's eye and encourage him to look and then to start thinking. There should be some looseness in your garment to avoid this problem.

Christian men agree that we should always avoid any cleavage. For many women, this means that you're going to have to stay away from spaghetti straps and strapless designs or wear a cardigan or shrug over the garment.

Women ask, "How low is low when it comes to a neckline?" Stand in front of a mirror and bend over. If you can see anything, realize that for most men that will be a problem. That is the best test that I know of to check your neckline. When it comes to the bust line, men point out that if you're wearing a sleeveless garment, you need to be very careful, because some sleeveless garments are deliberately designed loosely to reveal your bra. I have heard men say that on occasion if a woman just raises her arm, she is on full display.

Let's review. The fact that a man has a sexual reaction to a woman's attire, is that his fault? Does that mean he's some bad guy? No, he's a male, ladies, he's a male and God made him to react that way. God says He wants you to be a team member. He wants you to conduct yourself around men in a holy manner. Remember that a man reacts as he does, because God made him that way to motivate him to choose a godly woman to marry and to bring children into the world, build a home et cetera. Do you get the picture? In

so many words, God is saying to us that He wants us to get with His program as a team member. He wants us to live as He planned, knowing what would be the best for all of us.

We talked a little already as to how God feels about thigh exposure. Men will tell you that partial thigh exposure is a big turn on. Many a man will say just part of the thigh can be more stimulating than seeing the whole leg. That's not true of every man. It's the concept of the tease. A little bit of cleavage is a big tease. A little bit of thigh is a big tease.

Showing part of your thighs is a major tease for men. In everything that I could find, it seems that the safest hemline is one that would cover the thigh. In other words, a hemline that at least hits the knee. Whether we are at church or in any public place, when women walk in and sit down one of the first things you will see are women trying to pull their hemlines down to cover as much thigh as possible.

Why don't women just wear a longer dress or skirt? By the way, the straighter the skirt, the more problem it's going to be. The more fullness there is in a skirt, the less problem when you sit down. I'm sure you all realize that, but you may not have realized what's happening to the guy sitting next to you when you sit down. Suddenly your hemline climbs part-way up your thigh and he starts imagining, "Oh, I wonder what's up a little bit higher." You didn't know he was thinking that, did you?

Men have often said, "If women only knew what men are thinking and for a godly man, if they only knew what he goes through to wrest control of his thoughts." I hope today you can take it as truth that this is a real problem. Backless tops and dresses with the plunging backs were designed to look sexy. Ladies, they do and they attract attention to your body. If you're wearing a backless garment and there's no bra across the back, what do you think a guy is going to be thinking? Do I have to tell you? Your midriff and your stomach should always be covered, always.

We need to avoid tight or form fitting skirts. Carry this thought with you - modesty involves not just covering; it involves concealing. Cover and conceal. If you're wearing a form fitting top and a tight or form fitting skirt, or you're in form fitting pants or leggings, a guy sees that and thinks, "Wow, she leaves nothing to the imagination. I know exactly

what she looks like." Then their temptation can be to start imagining such a woman in the nude.

The Lord put tunics on Adam and Eve in the garden. Most tunics kind of fall straight from the shoulders, do they not? We need to avoid tight skirt, shorts, dresses and pants that reveal every shape and curve. The men caution us to avoid revealing the shape and curve of the buttocks. Jeans, pants, or slacks with words or decoration on the hip pockets or the hip area are designed to catch the eye. If it is a form fitting garment with décor on the hips drawing a man's eyes to your buttocks, the next thing he's having to fight are sexual thoughts.

I hope I'm getting the point across. The curves of the female form are a turn-on for men. You need to do some concealing when it comes to that. That is accomplished by looseness in a garment. When your clothes lack any looseness to them and your curves are on full display, you have created a problem for a man. When you are one of God's princesses, you want that man's respect. Do you not? You want his respect, but he has trouble respecting you when you're attired immodestly.

Ladies, it's personal for the guys too. We want men to respect us as women and all that means. The fellows are saying that they would like our respect. They want us to understand how God made them, and they would like you to respect them by protecting their eyes. When you walk into the room, they would rather not have to avert their eyes. They would rather see a modest, pleasant female person, their sister in Christ and to be able to engage you in conversation et cetera.

When we don't dress in a way that takes into consideration how God made them as males, then we show a lack of respect for our Christian brothers. This is the bottom line concept our brothers would like us to understand.

I think it goes without saying that we shouldn't expose our underwear. I almost didn't say that, but ladies be careful. They're making garments nowadays that are made to look like underwear is showing.

Watch the so-called modesty panels designed to wear with a lower necked garment. Watch it if they have lace trimming that looks like the lace trim on a slip. Because at times,

it's designed to look like a slip is showing. Sometimes we're going to have to think in ways we haven't thought before because so much of the fashion world is very wicked.

Something else to consider are leggings. It's a popular fashion now to wear leggings with either a mini skirt or a very short dress. 65% of Christian men say that's a major problem for them because the exact form of your legs is on display often with quite a bit of the thigh showing.

96% of guys will tell you that they notice whether we dress modestly. We're talking Christian men now. One of the fellows said, "I don't know how to say this strongly enough. I don't want to marry someone who looks like they have tried to sell themselves to every guy they have ever met. If she's using that kind of bait to hook me, why would she stop after catching her first fish?" Why would a man want his wife to advertise herself to other men? What the fellows are saying is, "We don't just want you to cover up, we want you to conceal." Remember the two Cs - cover and conceal. 97% of Christian men say girls and women can dress attractively without being immodest. 95% say a guy can't consider

a girl attractive without thinking of her in an impure way if she is immodest in her clothing. 94% say, a modestly dressed girl can still be a stumbling block because of her behavior and attitude. You can be clothed from your neck to your ankles and be inappropriately flirtatious.

When we dress modestly, we serve our brothers in Christ. If we're married and dress modestly, we honor our husbands because we are saving our bodies and the display of our bodies for him alone. That is what a Christian man will want from his wife. Sure, in the marital situation, they want you to be completely free, but when you are around anybody else, they want you covered up.

CONCLUSION. In conclusion, let me leave you with Jeremiah 7:23, "But this is what I commanded them, saying, 'Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and you will be My people; and you will walk in all the way which I command you, that it may be well with you.'" Then in Jeremiah 6:16, "Thus says the Lord, stand by the ways and see and ask for the ancient paths, Where the good way is, and walk in it; and you shall find rest for your souls."