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**On the Issue of Modesty:
So What About It?**

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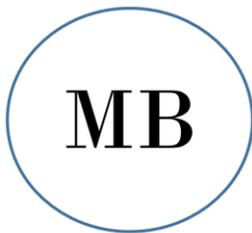
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On the Issue of Modesty: So What About It?

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Modesty

Modesty is a very important issue, for men and for women. Brothers, we must not dress in such a way as to show off muscles or to try to entice a woman. Isn't that the same as a woman dressing immodestly to attract a man's glance in God's eyes? While women are not as visual as men, we can cause a woman to stumble in this area. Sisters, you may not completely understand, but men are sexually aroused at the mere sight of skin. It doesn't usually matter what the woman's character is, God has designed him to be visual and physical, and that's a good thing for his allotted work and being the stronger of the two sexes. A leader needs to be very visual and be able to see things to protect; yet he also needs strength to fight the battle. Within the context of what you wear, please realize that just because your body "is covered" doesn't mean that it is modest. How tight is the clothing? In addition, the way a woman walks, talks, and her facial expressions can tempt a man and be immodesty, of the heart.

As we approach this issue, we must approach it from the perspective of:

*Rebuke not an elder, but intreat him as a father; and the younger men as brethren;
The elder women as mothers; the younger as sisters, with all purity.*

1 Timothy 5:1-2

Let me provide one example in my own life. I have to be very careful about what I watch. These days, commercials and action series and movies depict women in little to no clothing. Porn is everywhere today: Victoria Secret commercials, laundrie ads—that are sent to the house!—, exercise shows, beaches, Botox or weight loss advertisements, and even in the store—magazines will depict titles like "10 sex tricks to play on him," undergarments are placed on the end of aisles, posters of "models" feature food products, and more. Men, we have a battle on our hands. We must build defense walls and flee even giving occasion for temptation. *Maybe with this brief description, the women reading will understand one of the reasons why Christian men often do not like the mall.*

I have to watch myself, it is so easy to look lustfully at an advertisement in Walmart, the woman walking by (even in churches these days), and television when I want to just enjoy a show with the family and rest (i.e. my guard is down). I do believe that what women wear plays a factor in temptation. For example, I have watched the *Love Comes Softly* series with my mother (which isn't as bad as *Pride and Prejudice* is) and was not tempted at all by the women in the shows. Why? The women were modestly dressed. They did not wear tight clothing and behaved in a meek fashion. I was able to focus on the story, see their beautiful (yet fictional) character, and walk away enjoying a

good film. I'm not saying that women need to necessarily go back to wearing the dresses they did back then; although I will remind you that clothing styles remained very similar for hundreds of years throughout history (look at the clothing of pilgrim women vs. Oregon Trail women—pretty similar). Today, the public undressing of America has gone from “exposing” an ankle (which isn't necessarily immodest) to wearing undergarments in public (ie bikini's, short-short's, tank tops, etc...).

I am not trying to legislate rules, nor condemn Christian women who are trying to be modest. However, I must as a man, say that there is a big problem in the Church of Jesus Christ today. Many men are wearing pants that are about to fall off and walking about with a lustful eye; and many women are wearing either too tight and too short of clothing, exposing their chests, wearing hole-filled jeans that are designed to arouse a guy's desires, and flirting with their eyes and body language.

In addition, it is not funny (contrary to what the culture may say) when men and women dress up as the opposite sex—it is an abomination.

Scripture Verses On Modesty:

The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the LORD thy God.

Deuteronomy 22:5

In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works. I

Timothy 2:9-10

Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. 1 Peter 3:3-4

Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

1 Peter 5:5

And, behold, there met him a woman with the attire of an harlot, and subtil of heart.

Proverbs 7:10

I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

Revelation 3:18-20

Make-Up

In light of those what we have looked at on the topic of modesty, now let's address make-up, hair, and jewelry. Make-up can be ok if not overly used. In my experience as I guy, though, I have seen far too many you ladies wearing too much make-up as well as weird colors that remind me of heathen nations: blue and green eye shadow, black finger nails, dark red lipstick (makes me think of a harlot). In short, makeup can have some good uses, I guess, but I have heard far too many young ladies overly concerned about their vanity, thinking that they are ugly without makeup. Ladies on the frontier of this country and in the common folk of Biblical, Jewish culture, probably did not wear make-up. **A woman who has a quiet and gentle spirit, is far more attractive than a woman with crazy paint.**

Biblical references on makeup:

And when Jehu was come to Jezreel, Jezebel heard of it; and she painted her face, and tired her head, and looked out at a window. 2 Kings 9:30

Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. 1 Peter 3:3-4

Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

1 Peter 5:5

Hair

Bible teaches that men are to cut their hair shorter than a woman, unless he is a Nazarite. This does not mean that men must shave their head, but it does mean that they are to keep it shorter than women. Women, on the other hand, scripturally are to have longer hair because God has given it to her as a covering. I know this is a rather loose argument, but when you picture Adam and Eve, you picture a man with short hair and a woman with long hair, right? In addition, bald women were described as a shame and a sign of God's judgment in the Scriptures.

Moreover the LORD saith, Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet: Therefore the Lord will smite with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, and the LORD will discover their secret parts. In that day the Lord will take away the bravery of their tinkling ornaments about their feet, and their cauls, and their round tires like the moon, The chains, and the bracelets, and the mufflers, The bonnets, and the ornaments of the legs, and the headbands, and the tablets, and the earrings, The rings, and nose jewels, The changeable suits of apparel, and the mantles, and the wimples, and the crisping pins, The glasses, and the fine linen, and the hoods, and the veils. And it shall come to pass, that instead of sweet smell there shall be stink; and instead of a girdle a rent; and instead of well set hair baldness; and instead of a stomacher a girding of sackcloth; and burning instead of beauty.

Isaiah 3:16-24

Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ. Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you. But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God. Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head. But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven. For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be

covered. For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man.

1 Corinthians 11:1-9

When either man or woman shall separate themselves to vow a vow of a Nazarite, to separate themselves unto the LORD: He shall separate himself from wine and strong drink, and shall drink no vinegar of wine, or vinegar of strong drink, neither shall he drink any liquor of grapes, nor eat moist grapes, or dried. All the days of his separation shall he eat nothing that is made of the vine tree, from the kernels even to the husk. All the days of the vow of his separation there shall no razor come upon his head: until the days be fulfilled, in the which he separateth himself unto the LORD, he shall be holy, and shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow.

Numbers 6:2-5

*Judge in yourselves: is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered? **Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him?** But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering.*

1 Corinthians 11:13-15, emphasis added

Tattoos/Body-Piercings/Jewelry

We know from the Scriptures that women had earrings, necklaces, etc... Rebecca was given a nose ring when the servant came to get her for Isaac, but we clearly see that ornaments are not to be a woman's focus on making herself beautiful, but rather cultivating a gentle and quiet spirit which is of great worth in God's sight. In addition, tattoos were strictly forbidden.

In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works. 1 Timothy 2:9-10

Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear. Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement. 1 Peter 3:1-6

And it came to pass, as the camels had done drinking, that the man took a golden earring of half a shekel weight, and two bracelets for her hands of ten shekels weight of gold. Genesis 24:22

Then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an aul; and he shall serve him for ever. Exodus 21:6

And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me. And all the people brake off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron. Exodus 32:2-3

As a jewel of gold in a swine's snout, so is a fair woman which is without discretion.

Proverbs 11:22

Moreover the LORD saith, Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet: Therefore the Lord will smite with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, and the LORD will discover their secret parts. In that day the Lord will take away the bravery of their tinkling ornaments about their feet, and their cauls, and their round tires like the moon, The chains, and the bracelets, and the mufflers, The bonnets, and the ornaments of the legs, and the headbands, and the tablets, and the earrings, The rings, and nose jewels, The changeable suits of apparel, and the mantles, and the wimples, and the crisping pins, The glasses, and the fine linen, and the hoods, and the veils. And it shall come to pass, that instead of sweet smell there shall be stink; and instead of a girdle a rent; and instead of well set hair baldness; and instead of a stomacher a girding of sackcloth; and burning instead of beauty.

Isaiah 3:16-24

Ye shall not round the corners of your heads, neither shalt thou mar the corners of thy beard. Ye shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor print any marks upon you: I am the LORD. Leviticus 19:27-28

And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Revelation 13:16-17

And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, The

same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name. Revelation 14:9-11

Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised. Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates.

Proverbs 31:30-31, emphasis added

What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

Male Modesty

Now, I know I am reiterating this, but, men, we are not exempt from modesty. There are some things that we need to watch out for too. A lot of guys want to show off their strength and a little muscle, so they wear clothing that does that when “the ladies” are around. If we expect women to dress modestly, we should as well. The Scriptures above which primarily dealt with women can be applied to us if we look hard enough. I’ll leave with that, because the Holy Spirit will convict you if you do not if you don’t harden your heart:

Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me; Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you. A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father. John 16:7-16

About the Author

Ryan M Marks (B.A. in Communications and pursuing an MTS in Theology from Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary) has taught in two local churches and served as an evangelist throughout Missouri. Having begun preaching and writing at 15 following the Lord's call, Ryan has authored a number of books. He serves as Director of and contributor to the blog and online ministry of FocusingOnTheMarkMinistries.com which provides resources for evangelism and discipleship globally.

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