

Bare Facts

It is quite common for a person to be immodestly dressed. However, Christians are to shun this practice in keeping with the Scriptures in 1 Timothy 2:9,10 -- "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." Compare also 1 Peter 3:3,4.

The word of God censures the wearing of gaudy or sensually appealing clothes. A person may be guilty of this by "overdressing" through pride or vanity.

It seems to be equally possible for people to be immodestly undressed. At the season when little boys are thinking of going barefooted, their older brothers and sisters frequently "out-strip" them by baring considerably more than a foot.

Some pretend that this virtual undressing is to make the summer heat more bearable. Whom do they fool? They are not fooling those who have been in tropical climates and have seen demonstrated the fact that the surest way to parch to a crisp is by ignoring the need for a protective layer of light clothing.

Then, too, this disrobing always begins in the spring long before the weather becomes unbearably warm.

The psychologist understands that the wearing of scant clothing is an expression of the yearning which so many have to be bold, daring and risqué. It is a sensual form of exhibitionism. There is no shred of modesty in it.

Time was when such talk pointed to the public swimming places. Now it includes the front lawn, sidewalks, and streets of every city and town.

About all that remains to be done by those who want to be more bold than the rest is complete nudity. How long will our laws against even that be enforced?

Chastity involves more than abstinence from adultery. It includes a modest avoidance of that which encourages adulterous thought.

- by Bob Crawley

One Sinner Destroys Much Good

"Wisdom is better than weapons of war; but one sinner destroys much good" (Ecclesiastes 9:18). Here is a thought that each of us must consider. It tells us that a sinner wields a lot of influence, but it is the wrong kind and it is destructive! Notice that the text doesn't say that "many sinners destroy much good," but "one sinner destroys much good." Many times one sinner does more harm to the cause of good, than one righteous person does to a stampeding herd of ungodliness.

A preacher may be a very effective pulpiteer and he may have a firm grasp on the truth of scripture, but if he doesn't believe what he preaches enough to live it, he is himself a sinner who destroys any good that he achieves (I Timothy 4:11-12).

An elder may have tremendous leadership skills coupled with a broad knowledge of God's word, but if he doesn't practice what he requires about honesty, controlling the tongue, moral purity, and all else, he isn't fit for the position of overseer. He will destroy any good that he accomplishes (I Timothy 5:20; Titus 1:7).

A Bible class teacher may be kind, knowledgeable, and very practical in his application of scripture, but if he is a gossiper, quick tempered, listens to slander, and never asks forgiveness from those against whom he has sinned, any good that he accomplishes will be destroyed by his sins (Romans 2:19-24).

If people visit our assemblies, but they see people there who claim to be Christians that they know to be hypocrites, any good that is accomplished by the congregation will be destroyed (Hebrews 10:26-29).

We should promote good instead of destroying it. If our lives are not what God says they should be we are destroying the good that we or other saints seem to be achieving. We must repent of our sins and start anew. If there is sin in your life, stop it and turn to God. Then, and only then, will the good that we and others are trying to do will not be destroyed.

- by Ron Daly

Leisure Time

The first point we should emphasize is that a certain amount of leisure time is right, proper, and even needful. Our Lord realized this, and instructed his apostles in this regard during a particularly busy period of work. Notice: *"And the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught. And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat. And they departed into a desert place by ship privately."* (Mark 6:30-32). Thus, it should be obvious to us that we need some leisure time. Without it, our physical and spiritual well-being will suffer.

The other essential in this matter of leisure time is to manage it wisely. We are stewards of the time that God has given us, and must regulate our schedules with this understanding. *"Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men, but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil."* (Ephesians 5:15,16 - NASV). Folks who make the pursuit of leisure time their primary concern, are ignoring this concept of time accountability.

Having established that a) we need some leisure time, and b) we need to properly manage it; let us suggest the following do's and don'ts:

1) Engage in activities that will tend to build you up spiritually rather than tear you down. Some types of activities, by their very nature, cause you to be with people and to be in places that yield prolonged and frequent temptations. Make a conscious effort to avoid these (1 Corinthians 15:33).

2) Look for opportunities to spend time with faithful Christians. It is much easier to live righteously when you are around good people. Make it easy on yourself - seek out that kind of company in your leisure time. *"Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another"* (Romans 12:10).

3) Don't be selfish. Remember to include your family in your leisure time plans. We've seen too many fathers and mothers who seem all too anxious to get away from their families at such times. Leisure time is good time to spend bringing your children up in the *"nurture and admonition of the Lord"* (Ephesians 6:4).

4) Constantly keep in mind the importance of your example before others (Matthew 5:16). *"Abstain from all appearance of evil"* (1 Thessalonians 5: 22). And when it comes to leisure time activities, many Christians need to be warned to maintain modesty (1 Timothy 2:9,10).

5) The good general rule in these matters is to *"seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness"* (Matthew 6:33). Never let any such activity interfere with your spiritual service to God. If we will keep our priorities in the right order, then we should be able to make the right decisions about managing our leisure time.

Leisure time - we need some! But as Christians we must be sure to manage it wisely.

- by Greg Gwin