

To Display or Not to Display?

They both were women. They both were royalty. They both were fair to look upon. They both were called upon to display themselves before reveling men on feast days. But, that's where the similarities end.

One woman refused to display herself and lost her position as queen. The other danced and "pleased" the king, causing him to cut off the head of a righteous man. One woman has served through the centuries as an example of purity and modesty; the other as an example of lasciviousness.

Queen Vashti, wife of the Persian King Ahasuerus, was commanded to show off her beauty in front of the nobles and princes of the Medo-Persian Empire - all of which were drunken. She refused to come and was deposed from her throne (Esther 1:9-12,19).

The daughter of Herodias danced before King Herod, his lords, the high captains, and the chief men of Galilee. Herod was so "pleased" with her lasciviousness, he swore that she could have anything she wanted, up to half the kingdom. After a conference with her mother, she asked for the head of John the Baptist on a platter. Herod reluctantly and sorrowfully kept his oath (Mk. 6:21-29).

Today, all women have the same choice - to display or not to display. "Daughters of Herodias" are all around us in the world - especially now that it's summertime. More than tans are being flashed. Bodies are being placed on public display! Where are the "Vashti's"? Surely they can be found among those professing to be God's children. But, alas, so many times, this is not the case!

Christians, both women and men, should dress "modestly, with shamefacedness and sobriety" (1 Tim. 2:9). Ask yourself just one question, "If in a pinch, with no time to change clothes, would I be ashamed to wear the clothes that I wear in other public places to worship services?" If the answer is yes - soul searching is in order. To display or not to display? To be a "Vashti" or "Daughter of Herodias"? Only YOU can decide!

- by Alan Jones

Admonitions to Parents of Teens

- 1. Always Be Consistent with Teens.** Don't compromise your standards just because they wear you down with asking.
- 2. Live What You Expect of Your Teens.** Don't expect something of them you are not willing to do yourself.
- 3. Don't Throw Up Your Hands When You Fail.** Like adults, teens can be tempted. Evil companions corrupt good morals. It takes lots of time, love and understanding to raise up a child in the way of the Lord. When you fail, pick yourself up and go on.
- 4. Don't Be Afraid to Say "I Was Wrong."** Oftentimes that is the hardest thing to do but parents are human and teens will respect you for it.
- 5. Last, and Certainly Not Least, Pray!** What parent goes to bed without praying for his/her children? Prayer is one of the most important things to help parents make it through the teen's years.

- by David Pratt

The Small Tongue

Do you think most people tell the truth? Can you really take what they say at face value? Perhaps they are like the ancient Cretans: "Cretans are liars, evil beasts, lazy, gluttons" (Titus 1:12).

It is through the tongue that all lies are communicated. That small part of the human body can make a huge impact. It can ruin one's reputation. It can destroy a friendship. It can cause never-ending heartache. On the other hand, the tongue has the ability to give comfort and hope in time of sorrow. It can shine the bright light of saving truth into the life of someone wandering in spiritual darkness. It can glorify God and lift up praise to Him.

We shouldn't be surprised, then, that Scripture repeatedly urges us to exercise great wisdom and care in how we use this small part of the body. Proverbs 18:21 is not exaggerating when it warns us that "death and life are in the power of the tongue." James said that the tongue can be as destructive as a fire (Jas. 3:1-12).

So how should this effect us? Let us use our tongues to speak good to others, build up one another, and glorify our Creator in prayer and praise. How are you using your tongue?

- by Shane Williams

Who Gets to Decide the 'Lesser' Issues?

Several years ago in his daily newspaper question and answer column, Billy Graham dealt with the following question: *"Why do different churches disagree with each other about their beliefs, if they are all supposed to be worshiping the same God? Personally I would like to know more about God, but how can I learn when there are so many different opinions?"* Now, that's a great question, wouldn't you agree? It shows the sincere heart of person who really wants to know the truth. And, furthermore, it shows the damning effects of the false doctrines being taught by so many religious groups. This person is confused and doesn't know where to turn. His confusion is a direct result of the doctrinal divisions that exist among those who call themselves Christians.

How did Billy Graham answer this question? *"Although Christian churches may disagree about some lesser issues, you'll find they agree on the basic truths of the Gospel, the divinity of Christ, the need to be saved ... the hope of eternal life ... Many of the differences between churches are not about matters of belief, but about the way they do things . . . Churches also differ in the way they govern themselves ... Don't let these differences confuse you. Seek instead a church where the Bible is central and Christ's message is clearly taught ... "*

We're sorry to say that Billy Graham completely 'missed the boat'! He suggested that it is okay to believe and practice differently regarding the work, worship and organization of the church (he calls these "lesser issues") as long as we agree on the "basic truths of the Gospel". Who is he to determine which issues are "lesser" than others, and which are the "basic truths"? There is absolutely NO such distinction found in the Scriptures (2 John 9-11; Gal. 1:8,9). Paul taught that we should all *"speak the same thing"* and be *"perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment"* (1 Cor. 1:10). Jesus prayed that all disciples would be united and in full agreement, even as the Father and the Son are united (John 17:20,21). Graham's popular notion of "unity in diversity" is one of the most dangerous doctrines being taught in the world today. Many will be lost because of this false teaching.

- by Greg Gwin