

The Clothing of the Godly

People are often identified by the clothes they wear. In the Bible clothing identified people as being widows, harlots, kings, rich men, men, women and wedding guests. Today, just by looking at a person's attire, we can identify doctors, nurses, policemen, firemen, soldiers, football players, ballet dancers, and homeless people. In 1 Timothy 2:9-10, the apostle Paul instructs women to dress in a way which "befits women making a claim to godliness" (NASB). Certainly it would not be fitting or proper for a soldier to dress in the attire of a bum or for a policeman to dress as a doctor. Likewise, it is improper for the godly to dress in clothing which is characteristic of the ungodly.

When Paul instructs us to wear "modest apparel" (1 Timothy 2:9), he is in effect commanding us to dress in a way which is proper for godly individuals. Webster's 7th New Collegiate Dictionary defines the word "modest" as "observing the proprieties of dress." It defines "propriety" as "the quality or state of being proper." But what is proper for those who are godly? The inspired apostle himself gives us the answer. "Modest apparel" for the person who is godly is apparel that can be worn "with shamefacedness and sobriety" (1 Timothy 2:9).

The phrase "with shamefacedness" refers to the fact that a sense of shame is to be demonstrated by our attire. A godly man or woman will dress in a way which shows an appreciation for the fact that God considers nakedness to be shameful (cf. Revelation 3:18). Realizing that God still considered Adam and Eve to be naked even after they had partially clothed themselves with aprons made of fig leaves (Genesis 3:7-10, 21), the godly are not satisfied with being partially clothed. But rather, godly men and women dress in clothes which are designed to cover, not reveal. Now ask yourself, "Are shorts, short skirts, halter tops, sun dresses and bathing suits designed to cover or reveal?" Surely a person cannot wear such clothing in public "with shamefacedness."

What about the word "sobriety" as it occurs in 1 Timothy 2:9? Both W.E. Vine in his Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, and R.C. Trench in his book Synonyms of the New Testament, agree that "sobriety" refers to "that habitual inner self government with its constant rein on all the passions and desires which would hinder the temptation to these from arising." So, godly people dress in a way which hinders temptation. If you profess to be godly, ask yourself, "Are my clothes designed to incite lust or hinder it?" "Do they cause others to stumble, or do they prevent such stumbling?" Often people attempt to justify their clothing by making a claim like the following: "My clothes wouldn't MAKE anyone lust!" But the question is, "Do your clothes HINDER anyone from lusting?"

Those who are interested in conforming to the will of God will be concerned about whether or not they dress in a way that is proper for godly people to dress. Do your clothes identify you as being godly? "Godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life which now is, and of that which is to come" (1 Timothy 4:8b).

- by ***Steve Klein***

I Do, but I Don't

I believe in proper methods, but I don't wear the name "Methodist". I believe in baptism, but I don't wear the name "Baptist". I believe presbyters (or elders) should oversee the local church, but I don't wear the name "Presbyterian". I believe one should be holy, but I am not a "Holiness". I believe Jesus was reared in Nazareth, but I am not a "Nazarene". I believe that these are the "last days" in which we are now living, (Heb. 1:1) and that we are called saints, (1 Cor. 1:2), but I am not a "Latter Day Saint". I believe the church should be catholic, (universal) but I don't wear the name "Catholic". I believe in unity, but I don't wear the name "Unitarian".

According to some arguments (?) used to justify the religious wearing of human names, I would really have a name. I would be a Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian, Holiness, Nazarene, Latter Day Saint, Unitarian, Catholic, Christian! WHEW! What a name! However, I don't wear those names which glorify a person, a method, or a doctrine. I wear the name of Him who was crucified for me; and in whose name I was baptized. (1 Cor. 1:13). Salvation is in no other name, but the name of Christ (Acts 4:12). That's why I am pleased to wear the name "Christian" (Acts

11:26), the "new name" God gave to His people after the Gentiles had seen His righteousness (Isa. 62:2), and which glorifies God (1 Pet. 4:16).

Yes, I do believe in methods, baptism, presbyters, etc., but I don't wear divisive human names, which may honor the teaching, but not the "Author and Finisher of our faith", Jesus Christ. If you obey the gospel of Christ (Rom. 1:16), you, too, can be simply a Christian and wear the name of Christ, which is embodied in the very word 'CHRISTian'.

- by Jim Sasser

It's Hard, but Love Demands It

There are some difficult things that God commands us to do. It's hard, for example, to go to a brother or sister who has sinned, look them in the eye, and tell them that they must repent. It would be much easier to simply "look the other way", but God says we must go to them (Luke 17:3). It's hard to approach a weak Christian, point out their serious neglect of duty, and urge them to turn back to God. It would be easier to just "let it slide", but God says we must speak to them (Gal. 6:1). It's hard to finally withdraw yourself from a disciple who has sinned and refuses to repent. It would be easier to ignore the situation and act as though nothing had happened, but God says such action must be taken (1 Tim. 6:3-5). To all of you who obediently do these difficult things, we express our thanks and admiration. You are truly "the salt of the earth" and "the light of the world" (Matt. 5:13-16).

Now, may we say a word to those of you who might be on the receiving end of such actions? We hope that you understand that your brothers and sisters take no delight in doing such things. It gives them no perverse sense of pleasure. There is no morbid gratification that comes from this. Surely you can see that it is truly difficult. Your fellow Christians can think of a thousand things they would rather be doing. There is absolutely no enjoyment in this. But they do it anyway, because they know two things: 1) God commands them to do so, and 2) It is in your best interest. Please try to understand this, and if it becomes necessary for someone to come to you - in a conscientious effort to serve God and you - please respect them for it. Respect them, appreciate them, and love them for their deep concern for your soul. They are doing one of the really hard things that at God calls upon His people to do – and love demands it.

- by Greg Gwin