

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

They're Not Friendly . . .

They seemed very unfriendly to me. In fact, it would not be a stretch to call them downright rude. There was no greeting when I came through the door. No one offered me help or assistance. They acted as if they did not care if I was there or not. It was clear that they did not value my presence.

It crossed my mind that I might never go to that place again. After all, why should I be treated in this fashion? "I'll show them," I thought to myself.

But then it occurred to me that these folks have what I really need. It would be hard, if not impossible, to find it any other place. I would really only be hurting myself if I decided to never return.

Oh, yes, there are some other places that offer some of the same things. But this place has it ALL! One can come here and find every essential thing.

In the end I finally decided that I would continue to frequent this place because of what they have to offer. And, even though there are some things that I would like to see changed, it is still the best place to find what I really need. Maybe, just maybe, I can help them do better in the areas of friendliness and courtesy. Perhaps by saying and doing the right things myself I will be able to improve the overall situation. But the bottom line is this: what I get here is much more valuable to me than the minor annoyances that I must endure. I'll keep coming back again and again.

Where is this place? Oh, I forgot to tell you, didn't I? I was talking about the big discount store here in town. You know, that new 'super center' of a thing. What? You thought I was talking about the church? Well . . .

- by Greg Gwin