

Let's Start Thinking Right About Modesty: 4 Reasons To Put Some Clothes On

Ben Giselbach
March 21, 2017



Reading Time: 4 minutes

“Great, another modesty article,” some might think.

Let's go ahead and get the necessary caveats out of the way: I don't have a right to tell you how to dress (but God does); it isn't a sin to be pretty/handsome; I am ultimately responsible for my own thoughts of lust and will answer before the Lord in Judgment; the line between being modest and immodest isn't always black and white; modesty isn't just about dress; modesty isn't just for women; yada, yada, yada.

Yet, as much as some want to water this down, the stubborn fact is that God still expects Christians to be modest. He inspired the apostle to write:

[...] Women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire, but with what is proper for women who profess godliness—with good works. (1 Tim. 2:9-10)

Roll your eyes at me, but not at God.

Here are some reasons why Christians need to actively pursue modesty (rather than being indifferent about it - or worse, viewing the Bible's commands with contempt)

1. Modesty is a gift to those around you.

As a guy, I have an admission to make to the women around me: **How you dress affects me.** The more your outfit reveals, the more I *want* to look and the more I *don't want* to look. Then there's the guilt that I even wanted to look in the first place. It's that **huge** conflict between the flesh and my inner being, described in Romans 7:15-25.

This is almost a daily struggle, because even "Christian" women dress in an incredibly revealing way - at the mall, at the post office, on social media, out running, even at church. I know there's something wrong with me - much like almost all Christian men in this regard. **The temptation to lust is always there, and I must fight it until I go on to glory.** I don't want to look. I hate it. And thankfully, there's God's grace - so long as I continue to fight it and maintain boundaries. I understand that at the end of the day, I'm accountable for my own thoughts and actions.

With that said, **you need to know that your modesty is a gift to me.** It makes walking with Christ a little bit easier. And maybe I'm not alone in this.

2. Modesty is the acknowledgment that you are your brother/sister's keeper.

Sure, it may sound liberating to say, "It's my body. I can do with it what I please. If I want to let it all hang out, you can't stop me." Statements like this will get you plenty of applause from worldly people. Yet, **this attitude is anti-Christian in that it pretends that the spiritual state of those around you is inconsequential.** All Christians live within a community of believers, and we need to care **less about self** and **more about others** (see

Gal. 5:13; 1 Thess. 5:11; Rom. 12:10; Heb. 10:24; Eph. 5:21; Phil. 2:3).

Of course, we all know men (and women) are responsible for their own actions: their affairs, their fornication, their viewing of pornography, their lust, and their criminal sexual behavior (rape, sexual assault). No matter how many times Potiphar's wife threw herself at Joseph, he was still personally responsible for refusing her sexual advances (Gen. 39). A woman's lack of modesty does not justify a man's sexual indulgence.

But doesn't the law of Christ demand that we go out of our way to avoid anything that will invite others to stumble (Gal. 6:2)? Some like to dress a certain way because they like the attention, status, and power of being pursued by the opposite sex. But inviting others to sin is just as **sinfully heinous**.

3. Modesty is the Biblical way of fleeing sensuality.

Sometimes people use the [sadly] obsolete King James word, "lasciviousness." Newer Bibles now render the word, "sensuality." The Greek word is *aselgeia*, and it is found in passages like Romans 13:13-14, Galatians 5:19-21, and 2 Peter 2:2, 18. *Aselgeia* refers to activities that arouse sexual desire, movements that accentuate the body, and feelings of unrestraint. Sensuality, as the Bible uses it, is the opposite of being embarrassed by sin.

This is why the King James translates "modesty" in 1 Timothy 2:9 as "shamefacedness." It is the recognition that there are parts of the body that should remain private - parts that should still cause us to blush when they are exposed (either because something is too short or too tight). **There's a big problem when we are more embarrassed to wear modest clothing than we are when we wear revealing clothing.** We should never become so desensitized by culture that we lose our ability to know when we need "greater modesty" for our "unpresentable parts" (1 Cor. 12:23).

The Bible doesn't tell us how long skirts and shorts need to be, what sort of bathing suit to wear, and whether or not men should jog outside shirtless here in hot, humid Georgia (please, don't). **But we don't need to insult God by pretending we're too stupid to know when an outfit lends itself to sensuality.**

4. Modesty is the demonstration that we are more than

just sex objects.

Passages like 1 Timothy 2:9 and 1 Peter 3:3-4 are not teaching that it is wrong to try to look nice. The point the Holy Spirit is communicating is this: Don't try to get attention by your hair, jewelry, or sex appeal – stand out from the crowd by your uncanny likeness to Christ. When you dress immodestly, you're telling people that you don't have anything more to offer than your body.

Conclusion

While I have a general idea, I don't have exact criteria for what is modest and what is not. The Bible doesn't come with any pictures.

But if we believe the Bible, then we cannot minimize God's command to be modest. You were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body. Which means you don't have to strut your stuff. It also means that you shouldn't be ashamed when your peers mock you when put on longer, looser clothes than them. The shame Christians feel when they reveal parts that should be kept private should be of greater importance than the shame of peer pressure.

Your comments are welcome and encouraged, even if they are in disagreement. However, please keep your comments relevant to the article. For my full comment policy, [click here](#).