

Moral Living In An Immoral World

By Jimmy Stevens

INTRODUCTION: Godly faith is designed for facing adversity and sinful challenges. The strength of our faith can be observed in how we handle these challenges. By being well informed about these challenges as well as God's word, we can learn how to strengthen our faith to defeat the temptations we encounter.

I. Marriage between a “real biological” man and a “real biological” woman is a wonderful relationship designed and ordained by God.

- A. Since the creation of man and woman, God intended for them to have a sexual relationship to reproduce people like themselves on the earth.
 - 1. Gen 2:19-25, 1:27-28, God created the sexual union so human males and females could come together to produce children. God set this standard for all time. This sexual union was ordained by God for the good of mankind only in the context of marriage. God designed the beauty of human nakedness and sexual desire to be an important part of what continually draws a husband and wife together binding them with a life-long bond and establishing a home and family. Only in marriage should human nakedness and sexual desire be enjoyed without sin and shame. This special, secret treasure is nobody else's business on earth but theirs.
 - 2. Gen 3:16, 1 Cor 7:1-5, God wants husbands and wives to share nakedness and sexual desire only with each other and not with anyone else.
- B. Nakedness and sexual desire are a natural part of every normal human being, but they must always be controlled so that they are not shared with anyone except their marriage partner.

II. God's law of marriage is specifically designed to protect and preserve these special, secret treasures of the sexual relationship between husband and wife for a lifetime. (Matt 19:1-9, Mark 10:1-9, Rom 7:2).

- A. Remarriage after the death of a spouse, continues to respect those treasures.
- B. God's prohibition of divorce also seeks to preserve those treasures.
 - 1. Adultery shares these treasures with the wrong person, therefore the adulterer forfeits the right to enjoy future marriage—while at the same time, God grants the innocent victim of adultery the right to divorce the adulterer and share these treasures with another, eligible mate in marriage.
 - 2. Divorce for just any cause except fornication or adultery threatens to share those special treasures with someone who has no right to them.
- C. Throughout the history of mankind, people have diluted God's command to preserve this unique, intimate sexual relationship for marriage. Adultery weakens the determination to protect and preserve marriage. So, adulterers will often choose to separate or divorce. Their former marriage no longer has that special bonding power because they have shared their secrets with someone else. The innocent victim no longer feels comfortable with the mate who has betrayed their privately shared treasures. Reconciliation, if it is accomplished, is long and very difficult, because a sacred trust has been broken. ***“Trust is easier maintained than regained.”***
- D. In the last 75 years or so, a correlation can be clearly seen between the rise of divorce among married people and the increasingly relaxed attitude toward preserving the personal, sexual treasures that help strengthen the relationship in marriage.
- E. One of the most aggressive attacks that has weakened this sacred bond between married couples is society's loose attitude toward preserving the power of the attractiveness of the human body that should be shared only in the unique sexual relationship in marriage. (“free love”, “do what feels good”, Hippies of 1960s-70s)
 - 1. The importance of preserving sexual treasures is either ignored or is intentionally flaunted, especially when raising children. This failure is cultivated early in childhood in many families. The treasures of innocent children are allowed to be exploited by the public's eye. It is a blatant disregard that surrounds us in nearly every activity yet is considered normal and acceptable in our society.
 - 2. It is the problem of immodestly exposing and displaying the nakedness of the human body outside the special, private relationship of marriage and it is condoned even among those who call themselves Christians.

III. The focus of our study is summed up in Heb 13:4, “*Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.*”

- A. This text declares two things:

1. God has given the natural desire to embrace the beauty of the human body in the sexual relationship of *“the marriage bed”*.
 2. To share that same beauty of the human body outside of marriage is a sin worthy of eternal condemnation.
- B. **“Marriage is honorable”** God gives honor to this timeless relationship. Mark 10:6-9, The primary point of the expression *“the two shall become one flesh”* is that they have the God-given right to share the nakedness of their bodies in a sexual way without shame that would be shameful in any other relationship. It defines one of the greatest privileges of marriage. Gen 2:24-25
- C. **“among all”** God requires every human to honor this institution of marriage for all times.
1. The **unmarried** are to respect and preserve their treasures in a way that honors the marriage law of God whether they chose to marry or not.
 2. The **married** are to respect and preserve their treasures for each other and not share them with anyone else on earth as long as they live.
- D. **“and the bed undefiled”**
1. **“bed”** identifies the sexual relationship. Deut 27:20, *“father’s bed.”* An **“undefiled”** bed shows God’s approval of the sexual relationship in a marriage.
 2. Anything associated with human nakedness and the arousal of sexual desires, whether mentally—thoughts, verbally—words, physically—touch, or visually—including apparel or suggestive bodily movements are all part of the special secret treasures to be enjoyed **ONLY IN MARRIAGE**.
- E. **“but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.”**
1. It is implied from the context of Heb 13:4, that fornication and adultery are dishonorable because it involves engaging in the same kind of sexual activity in marriage outside the “honorable marriage bed”.
 2. While **Honorable** marriage and **Dishonorable** fornication or adultery are as far apart as God is from Satan, both are defined by the same association with sexual desire and fulfillment.
 3. Anything associated with human nakedness and the arousal of sexual desires, whether mentally—thoughts, verbally—words, physically—touch, or visually—including apparel or suggestive bodily movements are all part the sins of fornication and adultery and are **NEVER HONORABLE** before or outside of marriage.

IV. What promotes sexually immoral thoughts and conduct in our world today?

- A. Mental portrayal of the nakedness of those outside of marriage. **WITHOUT MENTAL IMAGES ASSOCIATED WITH HUMAN NAKEDNESS—NO ISSUE.**
1. Therefore, preventing unlawful images of nakedness helps keep hearts pure. This requires an understanding of what is appropriate (sometimes called “modest”) **apparel** and **conduct**. (**emphasize—not just clothing**.)
 2. **2-Way relationship everyone must honor.** We are all responsible for controlling our own eyes and thoughts to keep them pure. We are also responsible for respecting the eyes of others to help them keep their thoughts pure.
- B. Two keys to understanding what God teaches on appropriate appearance in apparel and conduct.
1. **First.** Nakedness is to be shared, mentally and physically, only in marriage.
 2. **Second.** Determine what God calls shameful nakedness outside of marriage and cover it.
 3. Therefore, the subject of modest apparel and conduct is **DIRECTLY RELATED TO THE MARRIAGE BED, WHETHER ONE IS MARRIED OR NOT. It revolves around the God-given, special, secret treasures of the sexual relationship in marriage. Experienced outside of that relationship, God calls it sin.**

IV. Can we know what God calls modest? “Is there a line?” Has God defined shameful nakedness and modesty in the Bible?

- A. Objecting to objections **Some will say....**
1. **“God did not draw a line for modest apparel.”** ARE THEY SURE ABOUT THAT?
 2. **“Cannot use the Old Testament because we are not under the Old Law”** ARE WE DEALING WITH AN OLD LAW—NEW LAW MATTER?
 3. **“Godly men and women will just know what is modest.”** IF THEY KNOW THEN THEY KNOW WHERE THE LINE IS. BUT IF THERE IS NO LINE HOW CAN THEY KNOW?

4. **Would God give mankind such a powerful and potentially dangerous human desire without clearly defining the guidelines for using it properly?**
 5. **How would God's laws on shameful nakedness be enforced if He did not clearly define shameful nakedness?** Consider the violations related to this. Lev 18, 20
- B. We can know what is **modest** by first understanding what is **shameful nakedness that should be covered**.
- C. Both OT and NT can be used since nakedness is a natural human trait.
1. *Patriarchal, Mosaic and Christian* age human anatomy and psychology have not changed since the beginning. (Cover to Cover in the Bible: Judah & Tamar, David & Bathsheba, Amnon & Tamar, Jesus—Matt 5:28, 1 Cor 5, and many, many more)
 2. 1 Cor 10:6, *Now these things became our examples, to the intent that **we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted**.*

V. Where is God's line between shameful nakedness and modest apparel and conduct?

- A. **Adam & Eve**, Gen 3:6-10, 21. Their choice of clothing still left them shamefully naked before God. V 7, "coverings", "apron, girdle coverings of the waist and hip area". God made proper garments. "a tunic, worn next to the skin...generally with sleeves, to the knees, but seldom to the ankles." "from to cover, coat, garment, robe." God made this a permanent design for **both** men and women. V 21, "them". "Lines" of covering *shoulders* and to the *knees* in Genesis 3 are consistent with what the rest of the Bible describes as the proper covering of the body.
- B. God uses the same standard of shameful nakedness both **literally** and **figuratively**.
1. **THIGHS:** Exo 28:42-43, 20:26, Isa 47:1-3. The knee is a natural, visual, and psychological break in that section of the body. The more the thigh is exposed the greater the anticipation of viewing something higher with sinful thoughts. It often invites "catcalling"¹ from men of corrupt minds. Ask any normal man for further confirmation about the attraction of exposed thighs.
 2. **HIPS:** (midsection). 2 Sam 10:4-5, Isa 20:2-4
 3. **BREASTS:** (chest). A woman's breasts are to give pleasure to her husband and **not other men**. **Exposed cleavage of breasts** is a major part of that attraction. Prov 5:15-20, Ezek 23:3, 8, 10, 18, 21, Hos 2:2-5
- C. When clothing or bodily movements draw visual attention to the **thighs, hips, and chest areas**, they can excite sexual desires whether for **good** in marriage or **evil** and **shame** associated with fornication. It is foolish to argue that God has not drawn a "line".
1. Speaking for men, God intentionally designed the male mind to be drawn to the attractiveness of an exposed female in the honorable relationship of the marriage bed. God established these "lines" to help all of us fight the battle against causing others to sin with their eyes and hearts.
 2. Wives, daughters, and sisters in Christ, the battle against immorality in this world is strong against your husbands, sons, and brothers in Christ. Following God's lines in appearance can go a long way to help prevent lust and sin. All males and females should be on guard to honor God's lines, not just because He says so, but because they prevent lust from being stirred.

VI. Shameful nakedness can be exposed by apparel and body language to cultivate shameful images.

- A. **Bodily movements.** Even fully clothed, body language can suggest nakedness. Dancing, cheerleading, provocative walking, movements, or poses. Godly people turn away their eyes and thoughts leaving ungodly people stare and lust. Hand and facial gestures, suggestive words, lips, and eyes, can stimulate sensual thoughts. Prov 5-7
- B. **Tight fitting.** Fully covered, offering a false sense of security, yet nearly every feature of nakedness is still exposed. (ex: **skinny jeans, leggings, or tights with or without short skirts**)
- C. **Special occasions.** Do not change sexual desire. Ungodly men ignore the occasion and look. Godly men turn their heads away. Thin strap, strapless, or low-cut formal "**prom**" or "**wedding gowns**". Athletics or drama, both male and female. Swimming or outdoor recreational attire, both males and females. **Don't let anyone talk you into surrendering your marriage treasures by insisting you wear immodest clothing for the occasion.**

¹ "the act of shouting, harassing and often sexually suggestive, threatening, or derisive comments at someone publicly"
<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/catcalling>.

- D. **Short and revealing.** Obviously. The exposed human body alone stirs thoughts, even without provocative gestures. It is a common style for people to intentionally expose their underclothing that attracts the wrong kind of attention and expresses a careless attitude.
- E. **Exposing the special treasure of marital nakedness IS THE ISSUE.**

VII. “Godliness” and “good works” promote modest apparel and conduct and therefore promote moral living in an immoral world.

- A. **1 Tim 2:9-10**, “*in like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, 10 but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works.*”
1. **“Moderation”, “modest”**, avoids drawing attention to oneself for the wrong reason. Includes extravagant attire, scant attire, or even decent attire badly displayed. The kind of person we are, is the kind of person we will attract.
 2. **“Godliness with good works”** (context), “*in like manner*” both men and women. Too often, style is more important than **“godliness and good works”**. Not the attitude, **“It’s becomes all about me.”** without regard for others. Can we attract people with shameful nakedness, **then ask them to study the Bible?**
 3. **“Propriety”, “proper”** proper for pleasing God. Godly minds ask first “What would please God?”, then dress and act accordingly. Phil 1:9-10. A person with this kind of mind has no problem with proper dress and conduct.
 4. Godly minds understand that immodest apparel and conduct are the **bait used in fornication**. (whether fornication is committed or not). Therefore, 1 Cor 6:18, “*Flee sexual immorality*”. 2 Tim 2:22, “*Flee also youthful lusts;*” 1 Th 5:22, “*Abstain from every form of evil.*”
- B. **Teach children early.** The home is God’s sex education environment.
1. The age of a child’s understanding of sexual matters is not exactly known. Establish in early childhood the habit of modesty before children mature with questions about sexual matters, and it will make explaining modesty to them easier when they get older. In fact, they will grow up to defend and promote modesty, especially among their worldly peers.
 2. **“Isn’t that teaching that their bodies are shameful?” NO! That is propaganda from people with immoral minds.** It is teaching them that the body is powerful and wonderful with special treasures worth preserving, that should not be made cheap. Teach that God has given them powerfully, special treasures that belong to no one else on earth except their husband or wife. Teach that modest apparel and conduct are how God wants them to respect themselves and their marriage. **INDOCTRINATE THEM!**
 3. Sadly, parents teach children to dress and act like fornicators by letting them share their treasures with the public, then fear for their morality as they get older. **(costumes, uniforms, performances, dance routines, etc.)**. Sadly, many parents are teaching their children that it is OK to give away their purity by teaching that it is OK to expose their nakedness to the public.
- C. Husbands and fathers are the best advisors for wives and daughters on how men look at women, and what is proper dress. **It is possible for husbands to help their wives cheat on them by not encouraging their wives to preserve their nakedness from other men, and wives may not even be aware that they are cheating on their husbands.** Care enough to protect your wives’ and daughters’ special treasures which are yours.
- D. Wives and mothers help preserve decency in their husbands and sons. **All be humble enough to listen.**
- E. Sadly, society promotes the things it abhors. (registered sex offenders, child molesters, sexual assaults, etc., while promoting dancing, immodesty, etc.).
- F. **Professional advice for the workplace**, (Ginny Ervin, Anne’s music education teacher), “Sit or bend over in front of a mirror to see what your students see.” **SEE WHAT OTHERS WILL SEE!** Look at yourself in a mirror or ask someone to help you.

CONCLUSION: The gift of human sexuality is beautifully designed by God to be expressed and enjoyed as a special treasure only in the marriage relationship. Proper attire and conduct are necessary for preserving that treasure. Use your godly character to attract others. 1 Pet 3:3-4, Matt 5:16.