The Makings of Modesty

Introduction

- 1. Modesty, like any biblical topic, must be considered in a comprehensive way i.e. it cannot be fully and accurately understood by isolating parts to the neglect of other parts, and only looking at parts separate from the whole.
 - a. Parts of any topic may be focused on, but any such examination cannot be accurate or fruitful separate from the entire context.
 - b. **Psalm 119:160** all of God's word is truth, and therefore must not be merely sampled to fit our agenda, but fully examined to shape our will to fit God's will.
- 2. In considering modesty, it is helpful to frame the discussion with a question like, "What are the makings of modesty?"
 - a. Makings essential qualities or ingredients needed for something (New Oxford American Dictionary)
 - b. Implied is that the qualities and ingredients independent of one another do not amount to the something. (EX: a recipe)
- 3. It is foolish to take only a part of something and treat it as if it were the whole. It may need special attention for any number of reasons, most fundamentally because it is in fact a part, but it cannot be mistaken for the whole human body, local church, repentance, any doctrine (must harmonize with the rest of the Bible).
- 4. When it comes to bible topics of truth there is hardly, if ever, a time when a matter is reduced to any one thing if ever we speak in this way, it is in effort to draw attention to a main part, or central component, but never to imply that the thing independently is the entirety.
 - a. Example True Worship (John 4:23-24) involves topics concerning authority, form, pattern, sincerity, attitude, love, fear, etc. spirit and truth.
 - b. Not one of these things by itself represents what Jesus was referring to as true worship fully.
 - c. NOTE: Cannot create a false dichotomy its either worship in spirit or worship in truth and we must choose is Jesus not saying that there is a worship which exists and is demanded that simultaneously constitutes worship in spirit and worship in truth?
- 5. Concerning modesty, some act as though that if it is a "heart issue" then the question of a specific standard of dress or coverage is beside the point. Others make the mistake of reducing modesty to the outward adherence to such a standard of dress or coverage, but their heart is far from modesty, and is manifestly so in other areas of equal importance.
- 6. What are the makings of modesty? The question requires us to put all the parts together to be modest according to the biblical standard.
- I. A Modesty Standard
 - A. The Language Implies a Standard
 - a. <u>1 Timothy 2:9</u> <u>"modest"</u> kosmios; from 2889 (in its primary sense); orderly, i.e. <u>decorous</u> (STRONG)

- i. **Decorous** in keeping with good taste and <u>propriety</u> (New Oxford American Dictionary)
- Propriety the state or quality of conforming to conventionally accepted standards of behavior or morals (New Oxford American Dictionary)
- b. **1 Timothy 3:2** *"good behavior"* cf. Matthew 19:16-17 God is the standard of "good."
 - i. Micah 6:8 must be shown.
- B. The Standard of God's Holiness
 - a. Broadly called in everything to the standard of God's holiness 1 Peter
 1:14-16 being set apart, unique, pure, undefiled, etc.
 - b. The question of modesty is one of holiness, purity, and morality which answer can only be found with a revelation of God.
- C. The Standard of God's Revelation
 - a. The inspired word is the standard **2 Timothy 3:16-17**
 - **b.** NOTE: There is perfect harmony in the entire revelation, Old Testament to New.
 - i. Even with the change of law there is harmony regarding purpose and design – Jesus said He came not to destroy but fulfil.
 - ii. God's holiness remains the same moral principles do not display change, but consistency from Old to New.
 - 1. Genesis reflects this with "beginnings" which continue through the Mosaic law into the law of Christ.
 - 2. EX: marriage, sexuality, lying, nakedness, murder, violence, lust, etc.
- II. A Modest Heart
 - A. What do we mean by "heart issue?"
 - a. Only has to do with emotions? Intentions? (for what?) Sincerity? Thinking? Knowing?
 - B. The Bible Says Everything is a "Heart Issue"
 - a. **Proverbs 4:23** out of it spring issues of life.
 - b. **Matthew 15:18-19** all sin is a product of the heart.
 - c. **Romans 6:17** obedience is a "heart issue."
 - d. Matthew 22:37, 40 loving God is a "heart issue" which includes the keeping of the law.
 - e. Is that what we mean by "modesty is a heart issue?"
 - C. The Modest Heart
 - a. Seeks God's will honestly Acts 17:11
 - i. What does God's will say about modesty in its entirety?
 - b. Receives God's will honestly Luke 8:15 (*"honest and good heart,"* NASB)
 - i. Accepting God's will about modesty as it stands rather than attempting hermeneutical, linguistic, or hypothetical gymnastics.

- ii. Or seeking another verse which will alter what is plainly stated in this verse.
- c. Submits to God's will wholly Matthew 26:39; James 2:10-12
 - i. Not submitting to only one part of what God says about modesty.
 - ii. Not dressing modestly while prideful, unloving, indifferent toward other issues, etc.
 - 1. I.e. modesty is not reducible to the clothes we wear!
- d. Driven by God's will emotionally Jeremiah 6:14-15 (shame in disobedience drives us to avoid it); 2 Corinthians 5:9 (honor in obedience drives us to do)
 - i. Avoiding immodesty with great intensity and care.
- e. Opposite Matthew 15:8-9 claiming you are seeking God but appealing to man's will.
 - i. Hardened by self-will in sins Hebrews 3:12
- III. A Modest Character
 - A. Modesty is a Matter of Character
 - a. Focus on inner character 1 Timothy 2:9-10
 - i. "propriety" ("modestly," NASB) ("with modesty," ESV) a sense of honorable shame ("shamefastness," ASV)
 - "modesty which is 'fast' or rooted in the character...' (Davies; Bible English, p. 12)" (VINE)
 - ii. "moderation" ("discreetly," NASB) ("self-control," ESV) –
 "sobriety," (ASV) the inward governing principle which acts in ways appropriate to "propriety."
 - iii. Trained to know what is shameful Ephesians 5:8, 10-12 accepting of this.
 - iv. Moderation = self-control and integrity 1 Corinthian 9:27; Job 31:1-4 (being faithful to God)
 - b. A winsome character 1 Peter 3:4
 - i. **(v. 1)** scenario where a believer is married to an unbeliever wife does not win with her words, but her conduct (such that is rooted in character).
 - ii. (vv. 3-4) not...merely...rather (especially) emphasizing beauty for a Christian.
 - "They no longer needed the former splendor of outward adornment, because [they were] clothed with the beauty and simplicity of Christ-like character." (ISBE, 1915 Edition, ed. James Orr (Seattle, WA: BibleSoft, 1996.), s.v. "Woman.")
 - 2. *"in the sight of God"* (v. 2) fear of God.
 - iii. (v. 1) persuasion, attraction, effect by character "gentle and quiet" – Contrast – Proverbs 21:9, 19

- c. A person may be dressed "modestly" but be an immodest person because their character is flawed. However, biblically, modest apparel is to be a reflection of modest character.
- B. Modest Apparel is a Reflection of Inner Character
 - a. **<u>1 Timothy 2:9-10</u>** their physical apparel is governed by, and therefore a reflection of their inner character.
 - b. **Proper** i.e. fitting, appropriate, congruous, matching.
- IV. A Modest Behavior
 - A. Modesty Involves Chaste Conduct
 - a. Kosmios "good behavior" (NKJV), "respectable" (NASB, ESV), "orderly" (ASV), "dignified" (RSV) – 1 Timothy 3:2 (elder qualifications)
 - b. "A pastor's whole make-up should be 'orderly,' spiritually, mentally, and in his habits." (Lenski)
 - c. What is "good," "respectable," "dignified," and "orderly" is only found with God modesty is God shaped character which translates to God shaped conduct James 4:7-8 cleansed hands and pure hearts.
 i. CONTRAST Romans 1:28
 - d. 1 Peter 3:1-2 "chaste conduct accompanied by fear"
 - i. Literally, "chaste conduct IN fear" i.e. the pure/clean/holy conduct is the in the sphere of the fear of God.
 - ii. **1 Peter 1:17-19** living life in fear of God with the sacrifice of Christ on my mind.
 - B. Apparel is a Part of Conduct
 - Matthew 22:5, 11-13 some had made light of the invitation and scorned it altogether, still some who did come from the highways made light of the occasion with wearing improper, disrespectful garments.
 - b. **Matthew 6:16-18** appearance and apparel may reflect pride.
 - Isaiah 3:16-17 apparel reflecting pride, materialism, loud/ostentatious character, lewdness (*"wanton eyes"*)
 - d. **Proverbs 7:10** there is attire which is associated with the unchaste and lewd behavior of harlotry.

V. A Modest Apparel

- A. Modesty requires a standard, and that standard is God's.
 - a. If I subscribe to and submit myself to God's standard of modesty that is His holiness revealed in His word, then my HEART will be molded by God's will.
 - b. My CHARACTER will be godly, pure, and in conformity to God's will.
 - c. My BEHAVIOR will be godly, pure, and in conformity to God's will as it springs from my God-shaped character.
 - d. If my HEART, CHARACTER, and BEHAVIOR are modest as God's will dictates, then I will not hesitate to conform my APPAREL to God defined modesty.
- B. The Most Basic Part of Modest Apparel is the Coverage of Nakedness as God Defines It

- a. NOTE: When one opposes this most basic component of modest apparel it reflects poorly on their HEART and CHARACTER and is more than likely only ONE example of their ungodly BEHAVIOR.
- b. The thigh Exodus 28:42-43
 - i. *yarek*; from an unused root meaning to be soft; the thigh (from its fleshy softness) (STRONG)
 - I.e. yarek from a root word meaning "to be soft" is used for the thigh because of the thigh's fleshy softness. (not articulating a part of the thigh, but the thigh as a whole)
 - "the thigh, perhaps so called from softness (see root)" (Gesenius' Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon)
 - ii. **Thigh** part of the leg between the hip and the knee.
- c. The buttocks Isaiah 20:3-4
- d. The breasts Proverbs 5:18-20
- e. From the shoulders down to the knees Genesis 3:10, 21 this is coordinate with the prior passages.
 - We know the tunic was one piece hanging down "a long shirt-like garment." (Brown-Driver-Briggs); "coming down to the knees, rarely to the ankles" (Gesenius' Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon)
 - ii. We know it came at least to the knee based on aforementioned passages.

f. A Christian who has a modest HEART, CHARACTER, and BEHAVIOR will dress with APPAREL that adheres to this MODESTY STANDARD.

Conclusion

- Modesty is more than skin deep. It is the harmony of the body, soul, and spirit in conformity to God's standard of holiness. (cf. 1 Thessalonians 5:23)
- 2. Those who claim to be modest because their clothes are proper, but whose character and behavior aren't shaped by Christ's word are fooling themselves, and manifest a heart problem.
- 3. Those who claim to be modest even though they refuse to submit to God's standard of dress are fooling themselves and manifesting a heart problem.
- 4. Let us not have a view of modesty that is more akin to the fleshly and formalistic approach to God that the Jews had merely outward.
- 5. Let us not have a view of modesty that is inconsistent and conforms to the world's standards of purity and dress which are far from the holiness of God.