

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. **1 Timothy 2:9** – “**modest**” – *kosmios*; from 2889 (in its primary sense); orderly, i.e. decorous (STRONG)

- 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**)
 - 1. **"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.
 - 1. "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**

- 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. *yâreḵ*; from an unused root meaning to be soft; the thigh (from its fleshy softness) (STRONG)
 1. I.e. *yâreḵ* 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**)
 2. “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.
 - i. 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

1. 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.**