

M. Thaxter Dickey

Considering the Issue of Modest Dress for Christian Women

by

M. Thaxter Dickey

This was originally a lecture delivered to the YWTO at Florida College during the 2000-2001 Academic year.

I appreciate your presence here today and your invitation to speak to you on this topic of modest dress. At the outset I want to acknowledge that I recognize this to be a situation of "preaching to the choir." The very fact that you have asked me to speak on this subject and that you are here today indicates that we are in basic agreement about the issues involved. Unfortunately those who most need to hear our message are least likely to attend this meeting. In many ways then my task is one of providing you with information that you may use in your own discussions on this issue.

The subject of modest dress is one of the most controversial subjects among Christians today or at least would be if it were discussed as it used to be. It is an issue that every church ought to face. I don't know how many people have left churches over the subject of modest dress but it is certainly as many or more than over most any other single issue. Discussions about limitations on dress seem to bring out the rebellion in a person's heart faster than anything else. Every family and every Christian woman must consider modesty not only as a philosophical, theological, and doctrinal issue but as a practical daily concern.

Immodesty is a problem on such a grand scale in our society today because we live in an age that glorifies immodesty and immorality. In almost all commercial advertisements, whether billboard, television, or magazine ad, and regardless of what the advertised product is, food, clothing, perfume, or automobiles, the focus is not on the product itself, but on men and women who are dressed immodestly. Thus, immodesty has become so commonly accepted that it doesn't bother most people. Many people feel no shame seeing someone on television or in public who is dressed immodestly, and worse they have no problem dressing the same way. At least superficially they seem to have no shame about this kind of dress. I suspect that they do have doubts but they are reluctant to admit them and so suppress them lest they be thought to be "prudes" or religious fanatics or "fashion fascists." And those who ought to be condemning this kind of behavior, fathers, preachers, and elders, often fear to do so for the very same reason.

GOD CONDEMNS IMMODESTY

But let there be no doubt that God condemns immodest dress and especially condemns the heart of flint that is no longer conscious of the shame of sin.

1 Peter 3:3-5

3 Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel;

4 But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.

5 For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands:

1 Tim 2:9-10

9 Likewise I want women to adorn themselves with proper clothing, modestly and discreetly, not with braided hair, and gold or pearls or costly raiment

10 but rather by means of good works, as befits women making a claim to godliness

These passages are primarily a condemnation of finery and ostentation rather than sexual immodesty; but they also contain the positive injunctions to adorn oneself with a meek and quiet spirit and as befits one professing godliness and this surely prohibits sexually enticing dress.

Proverbs 7:10

10. And, behold, there met him a woman with the attire of a harlot, and subtle of heart.

This passage is a powerful acknowledgment that some forms of dress are designed to attract unlawful sexual desire on the part of men and is condemned as such.

Isa 3:16-24

16 Moreover the LORD says: "Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, And walk with outstretched necks And wanton eyes, Walking and mincing as they go, Making a jingling with their feet,

17 Therefore the Lord will strike with a scab The crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, And the LORD will uncover their secret parts."

18 In that day the Lord will take away the finery: The jingling anklets, the scarves, and the crescents;

19 The pendants, the bracelets, and the veils;

20 The headdresses, the leg ornaments, and the headbands; The perfume boxes, the charms,

21 and the rings; The nose jewels,

22 the festal apparel, and the mantles; The outer garments, the purses,

23 and the mirrors; The fine linen, the turbans, and the robes.

24 And so it shall be: Instead of a sweet smell there will be a stench; Instead of a sash, a rope;

Instead of well-set hair, baldness; Instead of a rich robe, a girding of sackcloth; And branding instead of beauty.

The key word here is "wanton." They know what effect they have on men and intend it with their dress and behavior and attitude.

Jer. 8:12

"Were they ashamed because of the abomination they had done? There were not ashamed, and they did not know how to blush; therefore they shall fall among those who fall; at the time of their punishment they shall be brought down, declares the Lord"

The Israelites were condemned by God through the prophet Jeremiah because they no longer had any shame. Are we still able to blush at that which is sinful? Do we blush at the shame of immodest dress? Not only for ourselves but for others who dress that way?

WHY WOMEN AND NOT MEN?

The first question asked in this connection is always why talk about women and not men? First of all because that's what you've asked me to do. But we ought not to limit our admonitions about modesty just to women. Men too ought to dress modestly. But there is an important reason to address women specifically on this issue. By nature men and women differ not only in their physical sex characteristics but also in their sexual natures. Further, because sin has degraded those natures from their original perfected form in the Garden of Eden, men are dramatically more affected by immodest dress than are women.

On average men are vastly more sexual than women. The old joke has validity: The woman asks the man "what do you think about when we're just sitting here quietly like this" and then noting the glint in his eye says hastily "I mean other than that!" I don't know if there is any empirical accuracy to the statistics that men think about sex every few seconds or so but the point is well made that men especially young men are highly interested in sex, almost obsessed with it. So much so that in the opening scenes of the Republic when Socrates asks Cephalus what advantage if any there is to being old he quotes Sophocles that he's glad that at last he has escaped that cruel and fierce master-sex. Though modern culture has increased our openness about sex and acknowledged women's interest in sex more accurately than previous generations did, women by nature are just not as interested in sex as men. Let me offer three lines of evidence of this

- 1) Men's sexuality appears suddenly and almost violently in full strength at puberty whereas women's appears in more moderate and milder fashion even though at an earlier age and increases slowly through young adulthood. Even so it never reaches the intensity and persistence of men's.
- 2) Compare the number of husbands who complain that their wives are not interested in sex to the number of wives who complain of the same thing. Then throw out the cases in which the husband's lack of interest in sex with his wife is because of an extramarital affair and the ratio will indicate

the proportionate strength of men's sexuality vis-a-vis women's. Older married women may be able to partially understand men's sexuality. But I don't know how to demonstrate this to young women who do not experience the same sexual interest and urges that young men of their age do without either resorting to lewdness or running the risk of damaging my reputation. But I will try this: If you young ladies could be a young man for just one weekend, you'd never be alone with one again.

3) Men are more visual in their sexuality as well. That is their sexual interest is easily stirred up by what they see. A man may be sexually excited by looking at a naked woman or women's underwear or a picture in a magazine or even a cartoonish drawing with curves and shading but he will waste his time trying to get his wife interested in sex by parading around the bedroom in his underwear or even naked. Pornography is a male activity almost exclusively. Yes some women do have pin ups in their rooms but these are used differently than men use their playboy foldouts. Women are stirred to a slight sexual fever by romance novels but are not thrown into an almost overwhelming passion by pictures of underwear in a catalogue. Men are stirred up by the hint of looking down a girl's blouse or at her legs that go all the way up. It is the way men are by nature and is exacerbated by living in a sinful world. This is illustrated by a science fiction novel in which alien life forms attached themselves to people's backs and dug into their nervous systems and took them over. The scientists first noticed that something was wrong when the people so used acted strangely. An attractive female scientist observed that the men in the town did not look at her breasts when they talked to her. At first she says she was uncertain of what was wrong because it that behavior was just a background fact of social life that she had gotten used to ever since she was an adolescent. Something that she didn't really pay attention to until it was missing. But by being missing it was dramatic and served as evidence that these men were not normal.

4) The Bible acknowledges this difference between men and women. The Lord did not say, "Whosoever looketh upon a man to lust after him in her heart hath committed adultery with him already in her heart." That's not because it wouldn't be a sin for a woman to do so, nor is it because women have no inclination to that sin whatsoever, but it is because they are not so ruled by the lust of the eye in this area as men are. Women are more commonly given over to lewd and enticing dress with a purposeful and an obvious intent to be admired by men. This is why women, and not men, are warned especially of this excess in the scriptures, (I Tim.2:9-10, I Pet.3:3-4). Dressing immodestly is not so much man's sin nor responsibility as it is women's. Men are more likely to be snared by it. Men may and do sin in their dress but in comparison to the degree to which women may do so; it is very much less likely to cause sin. Men may be given to ostentatious fads, or frivolous extravagance, etc., but as to the intentional science of enticement to sexual interest through dress, they are not as likely guilty nor as likely to be successful if they try. That is why we read in the scriptures of "the attire of a harlot," but we never read of "the attire of a whoremonger."

How much of this sexual lust at the sight of nakedness is a result of man's created nature and how much is the result of the sin? We certainly cannot say that sexual desire is sinful in itself, because it is evident that it is part of creation. But it is not innocent when a man lusts after a woman other than

his wife. Before sin entered the world this God-given propensity for sexual desire was restrained by a spiritual character in man which kept sexual desire in check as indeed it did the desire for food and all other bodily desires. But with sin now rampant in the world and in the man the whole order and symmetry of man's nature is thrown out of alignment, and modern man becomes a chaotic caricature of real mankind with all his interests out of proportion. This sexual desire- a part of man's nature by creation- loosed from its proper sphere by sin must be guarded against lest it overcome the man's spiritual interest and lead him into sin.

Any clothing that accents the figure of a woman's body or shows portions of her body that only her husband should be allowed to see can cause a man to lust after her. No Christian woman wants to knowingly cause a man to lust after her but, unfortunately, it happens all too frequently. Why? Because women have become conditioned to nakedness, to the accentuation of the material nature of life and humanity, to "sexiness," and to immodesty, all under the guise of fashion through the agency of the media and the fashion industry. Almost every Christian woman has observed the difficulty of buying modest clothes especially in juniors sizes.

ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE CHARGE OF IMMODESTY

IT IS THE MAN'S PROBLEM

A common argument made in defense of modern dress for women is that it is the man's fault if he is lustful. The woman argues: "If a man lusts after my body then that's his fault, not mine." But look at *Matt 5:37-28* "*Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.*" Notice in the last phrase of verse 28. It says that the man has committed adultery "WITH" her already in his heart. Therefore she had a part in it. And a woman can have more or less a responsibility for this lust by the degree to which she dresses to accommodate his lust.

Women who dress indecently almost universally claim that their intentions are pure, and that the whole of the havoc and degeneration they create is the fault of those whom they have enticed. It is necessary to assess this claim, for if women are culpable in causing this sin of lust, it is necessary for them to understand their part in this matter and to correct it not only because of the damage that it does to men but the damage that it does to them as well.

In the not too distant past in America when some few women dressed immodestly (probably in the majority style of current dress) they acquired the reputation of an immoral woman. If a woman wore something exposing her feminine shape to the world, it was justly concluded that she meant to attract lustful attention to herself and this won her a well deserved infamy. But now women who dress so are either blind or pretend to be blind to the effect they produce on men and ask the world to share in their blindness. Many men join in to announce that they appreciate the woman's beauty but her dress is not immodest because it doesn't lead them to lust. The lust, both of them, argue is in the mind of the poor man who is inflamed solely by his own lack of spirituality. But who in this

scenario is spiritual minded? The one who allures those whom she knows full well have a weakness to her enticement? The one who relishes the spectacle and claims not to be hindered in his spirituality by it? The one who sees what is happening but places the blame for the lust on the man who falls into the snare while excusing those who set the snare however unintentionally some may have done it being misled by the call of fashion? Or the one who confesses his sin, and seeks to be relieved of the cause of it? And certainly we may all agree that the woman who goes out of her way to avoid causing any man to sin is spiritual minded. (see Romans 14:1-23 ... the weak brother)

NO ONE HAS THE RIGHT TO JUDGE ME IN MATTERS OF DRESS

Of course the single most frequent argument made today, because it has become an overarching value of our time, is that because modesty is a judgement call, a matter of personal taste, no one has the right to judge a woman in her dress. We must be tolerant of her choices. But surely there is still some degree of undress that all would agree is unacceptable. That being so, the discussion about immodesty is not whether it exists at all and whether we may condemn those who are immodest but what that standard is. I will attend to this matter in a moment.

I may also point out that though we do have freedom in matters of judgement that we are provided a standard of using that freedom as well.

Romans 14:13

Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way.

1 Corinthians 8:9

But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak.

THE IMPORTANCE OF MODESTY

I can think of five reasons for maintaining a standard of modest dress:

It is unfair to men.

It is a dangerous threat to chastity.

It is unfair to women

It is an indicator of uncertain character.

It reflects poorly on one's vocation as a Christian

1. It is unfair to men

Given that men may easily be lead into the sin of lust it is dangerous to their souls for women to dress immodestly. And though the weakness may be theirs we would not for that reason justify tempting them any more than we would tempt a smoker or alcoholic or glutton trying to quit their sin. I have already said enough on this point but I mention it again because I think it leads to the next.

2. It is a dangerous threat to chastity

The practice of decency and modesty in speech, action and dress is important for creating an atmosphere suitable for the preservation and valuation of chastity. Chastity must be motivated by respect for one's own body and the dignity of others. Parents, especially fathers who ought to know about such things, should be watchful so that immoral fashions and attitudes do not violate the integrity of the home, especially through the uncritical acceptance of the messages of the mass media.

Other things besides cars and drugs and darkness lead to unchastity and immorality and one of the most important of these is immodesty. Young people today talk glibly about sex. They hear it in the locker rooms and on the street. They see and hear it in movies and on television. They learn it in the materialistic sex education classes in the public schools. And they are exposed to its influence through the sexy dress of the day. And those of us who do not resist this influence foster it. The spirit of immodesty has developed until nothing of the body is sacred anymore neither in speech nor in dress.

Modest dress reflects commitment to a Christlike life and shows respect for oneself, for one's fellow beings, and for God. In the church, in their homes and in public, Christians understand that modest dress has a positive effect on spiritual mindedness and behavior. The body is more than a biological entity; it is a temple that houses an eternal spirit (cf. 1 Cor. 3:16-17) and should be so treated. Physical intimacy is reserved by God for marriage. Enticement of someone of the opposite sex to sexual arousal is likewise reserved for marriage; to do otherwise is to disrespect the sanctity of marriage and to dishonestly tease with the promise of what one cannot and perhaps does not intend to deliver. Thus modest dress serves as a physical and spiritual guard against immoral behavior and its inherent physical, emotional, and spiritual harm.

3. Immodest dress is unfair to women

Standards of immodest dress are unfair to women in that they create a competition between women for the sexual attention of men. Such a competition is unbecoming to women of taste and class and godliness. Such practice reduces the value of all women to that of a sex object. Surely no right thinking woman wants to contribute to such an assessment of her entire sex. Those of you who refuse to participate in such a competition of the body despite being physically attractive strike a blow for all women every where. Further, it is unfair to the women who are less well endowed in these attributes, and thus are forced to ever greater excesses of immodesty just to compete with the more attractive. And how many women have distorted themselves in a vain effort to compete with the select few Hollywood favorites who have even their rare natural beauty artificially enhanced.

It is unfair to women because it forces them into a very restrictive code of dress and beauty that is primarily sexual. Women today find themselves competing with the artificially sexy image of womanhood that Hollywood and Madison Avenue have created. That is the reason for the plethora of women's mental health problems of insecurity and low self esteem as well as the actual physical ill health produced by excess dieting in a futile attempt to measure up.

Women will argue that standards of modesty are too restrictive but in fact modest dress far from being restrictive actually liberates women. As Chanel Coco, the French designer once said, *freedom of a woman involves freedom to move. In a longer dress or full length loose-fitting slacks a woman can cross her legs, stretch, bend down to pick up a pencil, or curl up with her legs beneath her without fussing with her hemline. She can squat down to talk to a small child, sit indian-style, or lie down on the floor to watch tv without worrying about undue exposure. In a skirt that is long enough and full enough, a woman can climb trees, ride horseback, all without being immodest.* One would think that more girls would opt for more modest dress for sheer reasons of comfort, but another heresy in our debased culture has equated formal dress in a woman with discomfort-i.e., high heeled shoes, excessively tight clothing or worse clothing requiring constant attention because it is always on the verge of showing too much.

Here is one woman's report of her determination to be modest in an immodest world: *I threw away any and all pairs of slacks I owned, got rid of any and all tops and dresses with low-cut necklines or short sleeves, and for the first time in a long time, I FELT TRULY FREE! It's something that can't be explained until you live it, but I FELT FREE! My clothing felt more comfortable, and I didn't feel like men were gawking and eyeing me when I walked down the street. I also found that men in public treated me with a certain respect they never did before. I was amazed! Whereas before, while wearing tight jeans or low-cut blouses, men often would whistle at me or even grab me. When dressed modestly I find they often hold doors open for me, and treat me respectfully in other ways. It's really amazing to see the difference in how I am treated!*

4. It is an indicator of uncertain character.

Dress indicates the nature of the person who wears it. It is axiomatic that one may be recognized by what one wears. Thus, the Bible speaks of "the attire of a harlot."

Our current standards of undress indicate the loss of shame that the Old Testament prophets decried in ancient Israel. Even in this country at its inception a woman dressed in the current standards would have been despised as wearing the attire of a harlot. Were women in today's most "modest" swimming suits, or in common business dress for that matter, to have ventured out into the public in the Plymouth colony they would have been put in the pillory. Even if a woman were publicly clad in such clothes as little as fifty years ago, she would have been arrested for public indecency. But today all this is acceptable "Christian behavior" in the minds of many. Such an assessment is only possible because too many have lost a sense of shame. Unfortunately this demonstrates that societal standards of modesty and discretion are merely the habit of sinning glossed over by popularity. John Witherspoon, reflecting upon those who attended the theater in his day, exclaimed, *How hard is it to make men sensible of the evil of such sins as custom authorizes, and fashion justifies? There is no making them ashamed of them because they are common and reputable, and there is no making them afraid of what they see done without suspicion by numbers on every hand. But is there any reason to believe, that the example of others will prove a just and valid excuse for any practice at the judgment seat of Christ? Will the greatness or the number of offenders screen them from his power?*

Consider what such men as the Old Testament prophets would have had to say about what the majority of people today considers a typical dress or an overly modest swimsuit. They would have called both the attire of a harlot. The Puritan William Prynne decried things like women cutting or dyeing their hair, extravagance of dress, face painting, etc. Perhaps some of the dresses that he opposed were coming up off the ankles, and dropping below the collar line! That was the time to sound the alarm! What utter despair and exasperation would such men face today to see the day to day dress of women today, even women professing to be Christian, and insanely supposing to defend their dress with the sacred Scriptures? They would use up their vocabulary and have nothing left but tears.

Modern dress is nothing short of exhibitionism. Women who choose to display their breast, thighs, or buttocks, either mostly uncovered or with form fitting clothes, to public view must at best endure the public attention that it brings and at worst they must enjoy this kind of exposure.

Covering the body has since the sin in the Garden been considered a sign of respectability and nakedness a sign of shame or ignobility. In ancient cultures slaves were often forced to go naked while royalty and other important personages were draped in robes. Peasant girls, slaves and concubines often wore short dresses as an indicator of their lower status and sometimes even to show that they were sexually available. Women of rank have throughout history been outfitted with long garments -queens of ancient Egypt, ladies of medieval France, and of Victorian England all wore gowns that fell to their feet. This cover of respectable women was the case in almost every culture and certainly was in the West until the advent of effective and available birth control, when the situation changed to what we have now. Even in the symbolism of our modern culture we can find remnants of the association between clothing and human dignity. *Judges still wear robes, as do priests, bishops and popes. On ceremonial occasions, professors and graduates wear them as well. In our society, only women are culturally permitted to wear "robes" at any time if they wish to do so.* This is a cultural leftover from times in which the woman's role was recognized as crucial and valuable to society. Women ought to be more than sex objects; but they can only avoid being so if they dress otherwise.

Wearing sexy clothes professes a belief in materialism. It shows what a woman thinks is important when she chooses the styles of the day that emphasis her physical charms as opposed to finding ways to dress that befit women professing godliness.

5. This it reflects poorly on one's vocation as a Christian Woman

While many Christian women believe strongly in chastity and purity, their dress does not always reflect those convictions. In order to correct this situation, we need to recover a sense of why women in the past dressed modestly, and how modest dressing "befits" the dignity and vocation of Christian women. And especially we need to recapture a sense of what the dress befitting women who profess godliness is.

Women, no more than men, want to be viewed as peculiar or set part in an unfavorable way because they do not dress fashionably. But Christians are a peculiar people, a set apart people, and they do cause astonishment in others, who wonder that they do not run to the same excesses. In fact this is often the starting point of evangelism as we are prepared to give a reason to all who ask us.

WHAT IS IMMODEST?

Immodest dress is the type of dress that brings attention to one's body in a sexual way. To expose one's nakedness either by thin, tight, or revealing clothing is immodest. Immodest dress has always been sinful in the sight of God. When Adam and Eve's eyes were opened to sin they realized their nakedness and made for themselves aprons of fig leaves and covered their loins and hid from God. God approved this modesty by making for them other garments with which to cover themselves. Likewise on numerous occasions in scripture the shame of a nation is metaphorically called the exposing of her nakedness.

But the argument goes: "We are not naked. We are clothed. We are merely fashionable." However, the expression "the attire of a harlot" certainly indicates some recognizable form of dress that is immodest. The important question is this: Is this immodesty socially determined or are there some innate standards of immodesty in the revealing of certain parts of the feminine form? Obviously the correct answer is a little of both. Almost every woman will agree that some level of undress is immodest. (Even as I write this I wonder if we've not gone so far that a large number of women would disagree with this, strippers, actresses, "harlots" etc.) But most women will agree that there are some degrees of exposure that are in and of themselves immodest and no amount of fashion can change that. On the other hand I am prepared to admit that some things that might be immodest in one culture would not be so in another: the revealing of an ankle or of a shoulder or even of the face, etc. The difficulty is distinguishing the two: understanding both what is innately immodest so that it may be avoided at all costs and understanding what is culturally inappropriate and should be avoided at one time and in one culture but may be engaged in at another time or in another culture.

Immodest attire is that state of dress (or undress) which flaunts a person's body and sexuality. Most women know full well what they are doing when they dress indecently and by doing so mean to provoke lust in men, and, in most cases, they covet the power of doing so, and study to perfection the art of doing it. Too many women today strut in a studied display of their sexual nature and yet act as though their motives were perfectly secret to the world. This dizzying depth of hypocrisy is nearly universal. If the female sex were ignorant of the effects of their figure upon the opposite sex, it is amazing that they so regularly hit upon this very mark by accident.

Perhaps there are those women who've been raised in isolation of the world and whose fathers have failed in their responsibility to instruct them about men and about proper dress. Indeed I fear this is so too frequently the case among the women at Florida College. While there may be ignorance on the part of some women as to exactly what kind of dress is immodest because they have been misled by the immoral fashion industry, their fathers should know and warn them. And surely all

Christian women know that immodest dress provokes men's interest, that it is a sexual interest, and that they have no right to attract that interest except in their husbands.

Certainly the godly woman will never be at the extremes of her culture. In fact we may assume that she will stay safely behind the outer limits of the standards of modesty of her own society. She will not be the first to take up a new style and she will certainly not be more daring than her secular peers. For this reason she may well be viewed as excessively prudish by those secular peers and those secular standards. So we have now two criteria by which to determine modesty: on the one hand does it cause lust in men and on the other is it viewed as prudish by society?

CONCLUSION

Because modesty in dress cannot be reduced to a matter of particular styles, individuals must use their own judgment to determine what is the appropriate dress in varying situations. Let me then summarize by proposing five questions that one can ask to determine if a particular outfit is immodest:

- (1) Does the outfit create greater sexual interest in the wearer by men? Girls in bikinis are more interesting to men than girls in smocks. If more men are made aware of a woman's sexuality or are made to desire her because of her dress, or rather undress, then she is immodest. No one except a spouse has the right to arouse sexual feelings in someone else. Nor does a woman have the right to arouse sexual anticipation in any man not her husband. Christian women understand that they shouldn't tease a man to sexual arousal by their physical familiarity with his body; to do so with their teasing talk or with their clothing is only a slight degree removed from this same sin.
- (2) Does the outfit make members of the same sex more conscious of their physical inadequacies? If your dress causes feelings of inadequacy in others, then you know you are being immodest. It is not Christian to make other people feel bad because they were not blessed with your physical attributes.
- (3) Is it viewed favorably by an evil and untoward society? That a Christian is comfortable with a sinful world and evil companions is always a bad sign. Equally so it is a bad sign when an evil world is comfortable with what a Christian wears or worse finds it fashionable, sophisticated and sexy. In our current society that is almost always an indication of immodesty. Rather a Christian woman should seek a style of dress that makes the world aware of the difference between its sinfulness and her godliness.
- (4) Why are you wearing or buying the outfit? Most people know what is immodest. When a woman chooses to wear a tight midriff blouse with form fitting jeans, she knows why she's doing it. She wants attention and appreciation for her body. She is not advertising her chaste conduct nor her godliness, but her sexuality. When in doubt about your clothes ask: Are you wearing it to God's glory or your own? Are you demonstrating the qualities of godliness or your concern for

fashionableness? Which values does it express to the world: worldliness or spirituality? Which wisdom did you use to choose these clothes: those of the Bible or those of the world?

(5) What is your goal in wearing these clothes?

Some women may argue that they are not immodest only fashionable; but let them ask themselves; "Am I really checking to see if my attire is modest, or do I try to look as immodest as a good reputation will allow?" Such a standard is not quite so bad as the shameless harlot, but can it really be called modest? Does it befit women professing godliness? If you ever have any trouble choosing proper clothing to wear in public just ask yourself, "Would I want to be wearing this as I stand before God in judgment?" Knowing that nakedness is shameful and immodesty is sinful, you should be able to dress in a manner pleasing to God regardless of the current fashion, the activity of the moment or the temperature.

God bless you in your efforts to serve and glorify Him even in the clothes that you wear.

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