

THE CHRISTIAN WOMAN'S GARMENTS

Lesson 10

I. In Our Series On Bible Garments, We Have Learned Much About The Physical Clothing Of Men And Women In The Bible.

- A. Durable clothing was created by God for Adam and Eve.
- B. Prophets wore coarse robes of animal hair.
- C. Kings wore elegant clothing.
- D. The wearing of sackcloth exhibited great sorrow or repentance.
- E. Priests wore garments designed by God Himself, with specially elaborate garments for the High Priest.
- F. Some disguised themselves with "deceitful" clothing.
 - 1. The Gibeonites tricked Joshua and the Elders of Israel into making a covenant with them, against the commandments of God.
 - 2. The wolf in "sheep's clothing" represents one in the church who is a false teacher or one who intentionally creates dissention.
- G. Brides and grooms wore festive garments, as well as all who were invited to the wedding feast.
- H. These lessons have prepared us to think about our clothing as Christian women.

II. We Have Also Briefly Discussed the Fact That God Does Not Look At Mankind In The Same Way We Look At Each Other.

- A. **I Samuel 16:7** – ⁷ *But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."*
- B. We understand that we do not impress God with a handsome face, nor strong stature nor fashionable clothing, so why is our clothing important?
- C. We make an impression on the lost world around us who will judge the church by our appearance and behavior.
 - 1. **1 Thessalonians 4:11-13** – ¹¹ *that you also aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you, ¹² that you may walk properly toward those who are outside, and that you may lack nothing.*
 - 2. **Philippians 2:14-16** – ¹⁴ *Do all things without complaining and disputing, ¹⁵ that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world,*
 - 3. **Philippians 3:17** – *Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern."*
 - 4. **1 Timothy 4:12** – *Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity."*

5. **Titus 2:3-5** – ^{v3} *the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things—* ⁴ *that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children,* ⁵ *to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, **that the word of God may not be blasphemed.***
6. Our example to those around us in the world is very, very important. God forbid that we do anything that would cause the word of God to be blasphemed.

III. The Bible Provides Us With Some Bad Examples Of How Women Dressed And How They Affected Their Society.

- A. Isaiah is the prophet who describes how the people of Judah, and Jerusalem in particular, have incurred the wrath of God. (**Isaiah 3:13-26**)
 1. Vs. 14 – They are rich because they have taken plunder from the poor.
 2. Vs. 15 – They have crushed the people, grinding the faces of the poor.
- B. Because of their wealth and the heartless way they took it from the poor, Isaiah described how self-centered the “daughters of Zion” had become.
 1. Isaiah shows them as they really are when he describes their attire.
 2. Vs. 16 has several descriptive phrases:
 - a. They “walk with outstretched necks”. This phrase means haughty and proud.
 - b. They had “wanton eyes” - describes a flirting glance, ogling with one's eyes, communicating the message of desire for a possible relationship, seductive in purpose.
 - c. They walked with “mincing steps” – defined as small or dainty to emphasize that they were delicate and feminine.
 - d. They “make a jingling with their feet.” This indicates that they wore ankle bracelets with bells or charms attached for the purpose of jingling. This was to draw even more attention to themselves.
- C. Because the daughters of Zion, who symbolized God's people, are described in this way, verses 17-26 pronounce that the Lord will punish them.
 1. Vs. 17 - He will strike the crown of their heads with a scab at the crown of their head which would cause baldness and shame to a woman.
 2. Vs. 18-23 – The Lord will take away their finery:
 - a. the jingling anklets
 - b. the scarves
 - c. the pendants and bracelets
 - d. the veils
 - e. the headdresses
 - f. the leg ornaments
 - g. the headbands

- h. the perfume boxes
- i. the charms and the rings
- j. the nose jewels
- k. the festal apparel and the mantles
- l. the outer garments
- m. the purses
- n. the mirrors
- o. the fine linen
- p. the turbans
- q. the robes

D. Vs. 24-26 - At that point life as they know it will change:

1. Instead of a sweet smell, there will be a stench (symbolizing corruption).
2. Instead of a sash, a rope (the belt of the poor)
3. Instead of well set hair, baldness (shame)
4. Instead of a rich robe, a girding of sackcloth (sorrow)
5. A branding instead of beauty – ugly scars (defilement)
6. Your men will fall by the sword and you will be defeated in war.
7. You will be desolate and left sitting on the ground.

E. The whole of this description is of a self-centered, vain, haughty woman who is only constantly full of herself. There are many lessons to be learned from her.

F. We took the time to look at this to understand the mind of God on this matter. It is important to God, so it must be important to us.

IV. Considering That Our Example To Others Is Important, What Are Some Things That Christian Women Must Consider In Their Clothing?

A. The Christian woman will be clothed modestly:

1 Timothy 2:9a – *"...in like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation,"*

1. modesty – (a) free from vanity or boastfulness, (b) having regard for decency of behavior, speech, dress, etc.
2. propriety – appropriateness, suitability, correctness
 - a. when one chooses clothing for the day, she considers her scheduled activities in order to choose appropriate clothing.
 - b. Not all clothing is appropriate for every situation.
 - c. I use this example for my fourth and fifth grade Bible Class:
"You do not wear a ball gown to Six Flags and you do not wear shorts to church."
 - d. This brings us to the discussion of whether shorts are ever appropriate or modest. It depends upon:

- the length of the shorts – knee length shorts are as modest as a knee length skirt or dress.
 - the fit – skin tight is never appropriate or modest for the Christian girl or woman
3. moderation – Webster defines this as “not too much and not too little” or “not too expensive” or “reasonable”
- a. moderation then relates to the amount of clothing one wears – as in “not too little and not too much”
 - b. moderation relates to the cost of clothing – “not too expensive”. Of course that is relative to one's income, however, this even puts limits on those who can afford very expensive clothing, jewelry, purses, shoes, etc. One who spends excessively on clothing and accessories is to be seen as one who wants to draw attention to their wealth or to their physical beauty instead of cultivating beauty from within. And of course, one could always use that excessive expense toward things of greater value, such as helping the poor, the orphans, the missionaries, those suffering disasters, etc.
 - c. moderation relates to being wasteful in the purchase of clothing. How many of us have far more in our closets than we can or will ever wear? Yet we keep adding to the collection. Why is that? I am as guilty as any on this and I want to and need to work on it.
4. Modesty must be defined by some steadfast rules based on Christian principles (not fashion of the day) in order to obey the spirit of the word. Otherwise we may become so accustomed to immodesty in society that we begin to accept it as our standard as well.
- a. When in doubt, cover more, not less.
I Corinthians 12:23-24 – “²³ *And those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, on these we bestow greater honor; and our unpresentable parts have greater modesty,* ²⁴ *but our presentable parts have no need. But God composed the body, having given greater honor to that part which lacks it,*”
 - b. **Avoid:** (You may consider these my opinion based on my understanding of Bible standards of behavior for Christians)
 - low cut necklines (no cleavage showing) “low” is not relative.
 - shirts that bare the midriff
 - all garments that expose more than the lower half of the legs
 - sleeveless shirts that expose too much at the arm opening
 - strapless shirts or dresses
 - tight garments that reveal creases from underwear. Please learn how to tell how your garments look from the back. I often see people in public and wonder if they could possibly know how their garments look from behind.

- thin garments that reveal underwear – Please remember that thin garments are very revealing when worn in front of doors and windows where bright light is streaming through. The lack of a slip is VERY noticeable in such situations.
- pants that “sag” and reveal underwear – this is very popular among young men today, but I have seen it in young women as well.
- bra straps that are purposely exposed
Let me share a classic example of this. My daughter and I were watching Scot play football at the Middle School field one afternoon. Sitting below us was a young lady (20's) who was wearing a sleeveless sport shirt (the kind where the sleeves arch upward toward the neck revealing the bare shoulder). Her purple bra straps were purposely showing, and in her hair was a silk flower exactly the color of her bra straps. I remarked to my daughter that fashion had hit a new low when we begin to accessorize to match our bra straps now. Purposely exposing bra straps is NOT a fashion statement, is it simply immodest and in poor taste.
- avoid tattoos - this may not qualify as clothing but today there is an epidemic of young people permanently imprinting their bodies with all kinds of words and art. Many young people are surprised to find that the word “tattoo” is found in the Bible.
 - ✓ **Leviticus 19:28** – *"You shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor tattoo any marks on you: I am the Lord."*
 - ✓ It is true that we are no longer under the Law of Moses where this commandment is found – however, doesn't it make you stop and ask *"Why did God forbid it in the first place if it were not evil in his sight?"* Consider how these scriptures may help us decide whether tattoos are appropriate for Christians:
 - ✓ **I Corinthians 12:16-17** – ¹⁶*Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?* ¹⁷*If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are."*
 - ✓ **1 Corinthians 6:19** – *"Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?"²⁰ *For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's."**
 - ✓ Tattoos have been known to be used by pirates, gangs and other undesirables over the centuries.

- ✓ Still in today's society, even when it is so prevalent, they are still called "tramp stamps" on women by more conservative thinkers in society.
 - ✓ I hardly think it is a good way to "glorify God in our bodies".
5. Proverbs indicates that discretion should also be part of modesty.
Proverbs 11:22 – *"As a ring of gold in a swine's snout, so is a lovely woman who lacks discretion."*
- a. Discretion is being watchful or cautious or prudent in behavior, which often keeps one from plunging headlong into sinful or immoral situations.
 - b. Proverbs reminds us that putting a beautiful, valuable gold ring in a pig's nose does not disguise or improve a filthy pig. We still know he is a pig.
 - c. In the same way a woman without discretion cannot be disguised or confused with a virtuous woman.
6. Discretion defined as the quality of having or showing discernment or good judgment.
- a. According to **Hebrews 5:12-14** we learn that the discernment that God wants us to have is only found in deep Bible study.
"¹² For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. ¹³ For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. ¹⁴ But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."
 - b. Discretion and discernment based on God's word is definitely needed when Christian women are choosing their wearing apparel, accessories and hair styles.
7. The problem with modesty in today's society, is that even Christians often trust what is "socially acceptable" as the measure for what is "modest" today.
- a. By comparing an immodest garment against a more immodest garment, then we can justify that even immodest dress can now be accepted as "modest".
 - b. Here is an extreme example to make the point: Wearing a bikini is more modest than being nude. That does NOT justify the wearing of bikini's as modest clothing.
 - c. That is why deep study of the Bible is the only way we can learn the principles of Christian living and apply them to our discernment regarding our clothing.

V. A Woman's Clothing Includes Hair Styles And Accessories

A. **1Timothy 2:9b** – "...not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing,"

1. Jewish womanhood in the first century had sunk very low.
 - a. She was considered property either as a daughter or a wife or a slave.
 - b. She was uneducated.
 - c. She few legal rights.
 - d. Acceptable jobs for women were very, very limited.
 - e. Many women left on their own turned to prostitution as a last resort.
 - f. The influence of the heathen women in their midst was a deteriorating influence on society as a whole.
2. The gospel of Christ lifted women up to equal value with men in the eyes of God. It was the first time they were truly valued for themselves and as a class of society.
 - a. **Galatians 3:28** – *"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus."*
 - b. The Jewish women had direction for modest dress, including a veil that was to cover her hair when in public. At times, it even covered her face.
 - c. The women of the heathen nations around them had no such restrictions and were commonly seen in much less modest clothing.
 - d. Christian women of the first century were called to higher standards as their value and esteem was raised by being called a child of God.
3. Modest apparel need not be tasteless or coarse. It is no dishonor to a woman that she likes to dress properly and attractively.
4. This passage mentions also the "braiding of hair", which seems a very little restriction. However, as usual, this statement is based on the practices that occurred in the first century.
 - a. Apparently elegant hair styles had become a status symbol, even in the church.
 - b. Women of that time had extremely complicated braiding techniques that took hours to accomplish. Such an excess of time spent to impress others can only indicate a self-centered woman who only wants to impress as well as "outdo" other women.
 - c. This warning was never meant to include the simple pigtail braid.
 - d. We might compare this to hair weaves or the costly and time consuming effort to braid of all of the hair in small strands or other extremely time consuming and expensive treatments for hair today.
 - e. This does not condemn women who simply try to style their hair attractively in order to maintain good grooming.

5. Neither are Christian women forbidden to wear ANY gold or pearl jewelry. What about silver or diamonds or rubies or emeralds or platinum jewelry – they aren't forbidden.
 - ✓ Again, here the point is to considering what too costly or showy or gaudy in the extreme.
 - ✓ Is the purpose to draw attention to your wealth?
 - ✓ Moderation is the answer to almost every item a Christian woman selects for her wardrobe, including her jewelry.
 - ✓ Our fashions today are often bright and colorful (which adds no extra expense), so I see no problem with those who prefer more colorful fabrics to wear. That is simply a matter of taste.
6. That which is becoming of women professing godliness may be modest and beautiful in moderation.
 - a. not extremely costly
 - b. not extremely luxurious or gaudy
 - c. We must not measure our success as a person, and especially as a Christian woman, by our fashion sense or our costly garments.

V. The Christian Woman's Beauty Must Come From The Heart.

- A. **1 Peter 3:3** – “³ Do not let your adornment be merely outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel—⁴ rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.”
 1. True beauty comes from the “hidden person of the heart”.
 2. It is an “incorruptible beauty” that comes from a “gentle and quiet spirit”
 3. This kind of beauty is “precious in the sight of God”.
 4. Isn't that what we are truly striving for? To be beautiful to God?
- B. If that is the case, why do we worry about clothing?
 1. **Matthew 6:28-29** – “So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin;²⁹ and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.”
 2. Verse 30 follows with the answer: “³⁰ Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?”
 3. **Luke 12:23** – “Life is more than food, and the body is more than clothing.”
 4. **1 Timothy 6:8** – “And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content.”
- C. God is only concerned with the beauty of the heart:
Joel 2:13 – “Now, therefore,” says the LORD, “Turn to Me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning. So rend your heart,

***and not your garments;** return to the Lord your God, for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness; and He relents from doing harm.”*

1. When the Jews wanted to show sorrow for their sins and to humble themselves before God, they tore their outer garment. Even then God preferred a “change of heart” to the tearing of garments. When we change our hearts to constantly seek the will of God in our lives, we will be beautiful to God.
2. This lesson has focused on our physical clothing. Next week we will examine our “spiritual clothing”.