

As the priests were to wear certain clothing in their service to God, so are New Testament priests (1 Peter 2:5,9) to wear modest apparel as they serve the Almighty. Since Christians are lights to the world (Matthew 5:16), how they dress will (1) show Jesus to the world and (2) allow the world to see God's standard for modesty. Scaringly, some Christians do not follow a godly standard of modesty. Each person bears a responsibility

- *Parents.* To teach their children how to dress modestly.
- *Teenagers.* Dress in such a way as to please Jesus. Causing lust in another thereby exciting attention is sinful.
- *Husbands.* Explain to your wife that she should be proper and godly in her dress.
- *Wives.* Dress in such a way to please God. One's body is ONLY for her husband and the dress should evidence this.

Our bodies belong to God (1 Corinthians 6:19-20), so let us let him define and determine modesty. Note three observations.

*Be modest in worship.* Clothing in worship is very important. One's clothing can either distract or detract others' attention from the service. We should give God our best. This means wearing things that are proper, nice, and NOT immodest. We do not want to be the cause for another's lust in worship.

*Our heart is important.* Immodesty begins in the heart and not when one puts on the article of clothing. One said, "you are addressed as you are dressed." [11] How we dress shows the world and the church who we are and want to be. If one is going to be modest in clothing, he must be modest in heart. [12] We do not want to make excuses too for immodesty.

- "Well, I just want to look pretty."
- "Well, I just want to look good for my husband."
- "Well, its warm outside."
- "Well, times have changed."
- "Well, I would look weird if I don't dress this way."

These are all unjustifiable reasons to dress immodestly. Let us make sure our hearts are right, so are actions can follow (Proverbs 23:7; Matthew 15:18-19).

*What questions are we asking?* Before we go to

the wardrobe let us ask a few questions.[13]

- "Will what we are wearing, doing or saying bring God glory" (1 Corinthians 10:31)?
- "Does what we are wearing meet or exceed God's standard for being modest?" (Genesis 3:21; Exodus 20:26; 28:40-43)?
- "Will our clothing, speech or actions help or hurt my influence for Christ" (Matthew 5:16; 1 Peter 2:12)?
- "Is our clothing too short?"
- "Is our clothing too tight?"
- "Is the neckline too low?"
- "Can our skin or undergarments be seen through our outer clothing?"
- "Is what we are wearing appropriate and respectful" (Genesis 41:14)?
- "Because of how we dress, act or speak, would someone mistake us for a worldly individual" (Proverbs 7:10)?
- "Will our apparel, actions, or speech cause someone to lust after us, thus causing others to stumble and sin" (Matthew 5:28; 1 Corinthians 8:9)?

The topic of modesty is no topic to take lightly, nor is it something at which to scoff. If we will change our hearts and motives about how we dress and carry ourselves, then we will begin to please the Lord. Overall, if we are clothed with the Savior (Galatians 3:28), our physical dress will please Him.

#### Endnotes

- [1] <https://gbntv.org/the-truth-about-modesty/>  
 [2] Thayer, eSWORD  
 [3] Dan Cates, MSOP Class Notes, "T Epistles," 2021  
 [4] Thayer, eSWORD.  
 [5] <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g766/kjv/tr/0-1/>  
 [6] [www.beavertonchurchofchrist.net/sermons/sermons/2002/06/09/modesty](http://www.beavertonchurchofchrist.net/sermons/sermons/2002/06/09/modesty)  
 [7] <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/modesty-misunderstood>  
 [8] Ibid.  
 [9] Don Blackwell: <https://>  
 [10] [www.granbychurchofchrist.org/Studies/Modesty2.htm](http://www.granbychurchofchrist.org/Studies/Modesty2.htm)  
 [11] <https://churchofchristlekki.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Modesty-in-Today's-Immodest-World--The-Christian-Perspective.pdf>  
 [12] Louis Rushmore, *Preaching the Whole Counsel of God to the Whole World Volume 4*, p. 276.  
 [13] The following come from: <https://granbychurchofchrist.org/Studies/Modesty2.htm>

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# What's In Your Wardrobe?

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The 28th president of the United States, Woodrow Wilson had a woman come into his office one day. After she left, one man noted that she was intelligent and attractive. The president replied to the man, “She was a well-dressed woman.” The man replied, “I didn’t know what she was wearing,” to which the President said, “this is how I know she was well dressed.”[1] One tactic taunted by the tempter is immodesty. Short skirts, revealing swimming wear, and shirts showing cleavage, seem like the normal attire among sinners and even Christians. It appears that many do not even give a second thought as to what they are wearing or not wearing. Instead of asking the question, “is this modest,” many ask, “is this appealing,” or “how short can my shorts be?” Weather, status quos, comfortability, or certain situations are NEVER the standard for dress. While wanting to look attractive is not a sin, stimulating sexual desires in others is (Matthew 5:28). Nakedness (Exodus 20:26) and the attire of a harlot (Proverbs 7:10) should not exist in current culture today.

God has called us unto holiness (1 Peter 1:15-16), but immodesty taints that. Clothing often defines character, for it is with our clothing that we tell the world who we are. The word “modest” (1 Timothy 2:9) means “well arranged, seemly.”[2] Similar words appear in Titus 2:5. Modesty describes a person who is humble, reserved, and has a gentle spirit. A person who is modest will not draw attention to themselves, whether it be by putting too much on or by taking too much off. Modesty is a disposition of heart that manifests itself in action. With these things in mind, let us ask ourselves, “What is In Our Wardrobe?”

### **The World and Modesty**

If one takes a quick glance at billboards, television, ads, and books, he will soon learn that the world has a lackadaisical stance on modesty. It is unfortunate and utterly sinful, to see the world treat women as objects and for those women to seek attention in sinful ways. While the world defines beauty by the body, God defines beauty much differently (1 Peter 3:4). Immodesty shows three things.

*It shows a lack of respect for oneself.* Immodesty makes the body a tool for unrighteousness (Romans 6:13). When people dress immodestly, they are not confident in who they are and they feel insecure, thinking that they must flaunt themselves around to gain attention. The physical is not all that matters (Psalm 139:14; Proverbs 31:30; 1 Peter 3:4). One said, “The outfit that she should be wearing are the good works which she does,”[3] not the immodest wear.

*It is rooted in lasciviousness.* People would not dress immodestly if there was no purpose. There are many reasons for immodest dress. Perhaps it is to gain attention, to cool off because of the weather, or because of the influences at school. Some though purposefully wear immodest apparel for sensual purposes. The word lasciviousness is defined, “as filthy words, indecent bodily movements, unchaste handling of the males and females.”[4] One said too, “unbridled lust.”[5] Immodesty can lead to lustful thoughts. One designer of a mini-skirt in the 60's, purposefully designed the skirt “in order to seduce a man.”[6] Too much revealment can lead to lust if one is not careful (Proverbs 6:25). It was the attire of the harlot that likely caused the man to go with her (Proverbs 7:10-13). David sinned by lusting (2 Samuel 11:2-3) which is the first sin before more destructive ones. The world loves immodesty because of man’s unrestrained sexual desire.

*It is founded in pridefulness.*[7] Immodesty is another tool in the world’s toolbox to show everyone it is all about itself. When men and women dress provocatively, others’ eyes are drawn, and attention is given. It is no wonder why people dress in this way. Also, many people (even Christians) claim “My body, my choice. I can wear what I please.” This is against the statement from sacred Scripture (1 Corinthians 10:24).

Instead of keeping sexuality pure and holy, the world promotes immodesty pointedly. The world wants too much sexual expression when it comes to clothing; something of which is against God’s call for holiness.

### **God and Modesty**

In modern businesses, it is normal to see certain clothing requirements for their employees. The purpose

is for professionalism. Of more importance is the way that a Christian dresses. What a Christian wears can have an effect on how others look at the church. While the New Testament does not give a specific list on what to wear and what not to wear, it would be wise to examine the Old Testament and perhaps even use it as a standard for our families. Note:

*The word “nakedness.”* To people, some are “half-naked,” when to God they are fully naked. Nakedness in the Bible is not always seen as one who is fully without clothing. Exposing the backside was called nakedness (Isaiah 20:4) and in John 21:7, Peter is noted as being naked. When we let God define nakedness, we seem to understand and appreciate modesty a little better.

*The first immodest apparel* (Genesis 3:7). Adam and Eve’s sin caused their eyes to behold their nakedness. At first, they clothed themselves with “fig leaves...and made themselves aprons,” however, these “aprons” or “belt (for the waist)”[8] was not enough (Genesis 3:21). God’s clothing included a “shirt like garment, robe.”[9] We see from this account that it would be improper to have the chest area exposed. How many women wear shirts showing much cleavage or even men who wear no shirts at all? One noted that BOTH Adam and Eve had the same standard.[10]

*The priestly standard* (Exodus 28:40-42). To God, what His servants wore was important. The word “breeches” is defined by Strong’s Concordance as “in the sense of *hiding*; (only in dual) *drawers* (from *concealing* the private parts).” To God, nakedness was the exposing of the thigh. If the priests failed to be modest, they would have died (Exodus 28:43). How many today wear shorts too tight or shorts too short? Does not God lay forth a good principle for those who ask, “how long should my shorts be?”

Throughout the Old Testament, one sees an interesting standard of modesty and the definition of nakedness. Although we do not live under the Law of Moses, we could ask, “Has God’s thoughts and standards about modesty changed?”

### **The Christian and Modesty**

