

The Spirit and Practice of Modest Apparel

by Denny Kenaston

Denny Kenaston's sermon explores the biblical principles of modest apparel, emphasizing the importance of aligning outward appearance with inner character and godliness.

Duration: 1:21:12

Scripture: Genesis 3:21, Matthew 22:37-39, Romans 12:2, 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, 1 Corinthians 10:31, 1 Timothy 2:8-10, 1 Peter 3:15-16

Topics: "Modest Apparel"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of the message conveyed by our clothing. He uses the example of a young man with long hair and casual attire to illustrate how our clothing can reflect what is in our hearts. The preacher then refers to 1st Timothy 2:7-10, highlighting the need for modesty in clothing. He specifically mentions the issue of thin materials and the need to avoid following fashion trends that take us away from God's desires. The sermon also references Romans 12:2, emphasizing the need to be transformed by renewing our minds and not conforming to the world. The preacher concludes by discussing the spirit and practice of modest apparel, comparing it to a truly good cake that is both right on the outside and inside.

Transcript

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It's been a blessing to be here this morning already. After hearing the children's lesson, I wondered if I should change the name of my sermon to a truly good cake. A truly good cake.

We just heard about a cake that looked like a good cake but wasn't a good cake. I thought maybe I'll change my message to a truly good cake this morning. I feel led by the Lord to bring this message this

morning, the spirit and practice of modest apparel, and I'll give it a second title, a truly good cake.

One that's right on the outside and right on the inside is truly a good cake. And that is what we long for. When we talk about Bible modesty, we are longing for one that is right on the inside and right on the outside.

Truly a good cake. Amen. It has been a burden on my heart for some time to bring this message.

I realize that for some people that might hear this message, it might be a little touchy. Not necessarily in this room, but I've had the burden for some time. And it is often that way when I get a special burden from the Lord to give a message, I also must wait very patiently and give it exactly on time.

And I trust that's what I'm doing this morning. Many have come to me from time to time over the last probably two or three years and asked, when are you going to speak on modest apparel? And I've told them, I have a message and I'm waiting to preach it. Brethren, oh, I guess it's probably six, eight months ago, we discussed a little bit about modest apparel in a brother's meeting and I received encouragement from the brothers to go ahead and bring this message, but I still had to wait until I got a clearing from heaven to give it.

So I'm going to ask all to hear me out this morning and allow me just to be a faithful shepherd and speak to you like a father, maybe some of you. Clothing can be a means of self-expression. One book says it this way, and maybe you've read the book before, it's a book on Christian apparel.

I don't agree with a lot of what is in the book, but the name of the book is Your Clothes Say It For You. And I'm sure that we'll all agree that our clothes say a whole lot about us, what we wear, our appearance. It has a message in it, and may I say it this way, clothes have a silent message that goes out all the time from our lives.

We've spoken a lot about a life message and I believe that each and every one of us, we have a life message. That has to do with the message that comes out of our lives, the way we live, what we do when we go somewhere, the way we talk, the way we carry ourselves, the way we clothe ourselves, the way we conduct our families, the kind of business we have. Every little part of our life is our life message.

And I trust that each and every one of our hearts is about the business of bringing our lives in accordance with the Word of God, so that our message and this message will line up. And thus then people will be able to read the Bible in our lives. Well, in this matter of clothing, I think it's very important that people be able to read the Bible in our lives, and I'm specifically speaking to the sisters this morning, although I think every brother ought to listen to this message for the sake of choosing a wife, for the sake of guiding your wife, for the sake of directing your children, for the sake of being the head in your home.

I think each one of you should also listen with an intent heart. The message of our clothing, it has both an inward and an outward message. It says something about the way we live.

It says something about what is inside of our heart. It can be a very self-expressive thing. We don't have to go very far out into the world to realize that people are using the clothes they wear to express the very heart that is inside of them.

We don't have to go far for that. We can go to New York City or even to the streets of Lancaster and we can see there a young man with long hair hanging down to his shoulders, a dirty t-shirt on, a pair of cut-off

blue jeans and bare feet. And the message of his clothing is saying something.

And we can look at his clothing and say, I know what's going on inside that young man's heart most of the time. Well, the message of our clothing has an inward and an outward message and it speaks a thousand words to everyone who meets us, who walks with us, who comes into our acquaintance. So I feel it's a very important message and I'd like for us to just turn to 1 Timothy.

We all know the scriptures, but I'd like to read them and then show you a picture that I have up here on the board. I trust that the picture I have on the board will be an expression of these verses that we're going to read. First of all, 1 Timothy 2, verses 7-10.

Paul speaking. He says these words, Whereunto I am ordained a preacher and an apostle, I speak the truth in Christ and lie not, a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and in verity. Now, I read that verse so that we could show by the reading of that verse how important the other things are that we're going to read here in these scriptures.

Paul saying, if we could skip the parentheses. Whereunto I am ordained a preacher and an apostle, a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity. And that word verity means there the depth of truth.

He's saying in that word verity, I don't just go around and tell you what is right and what is wrong, but I teach a depth of truth. I teach the principle of the truth. I teach the deepness and the deep meaning of the truth when I go unto the Gentiles.

And if we could just look at the context again of what Paul was about there, we know that the Gentiles, they had no kinds of standards of dress at all in their lives. Now, we know that the Jews did, but the Gentiles had none. So here comes Paul the apostle, a teacher of faith and the depth of truth, and he has been called to be the apostle and the preacher and the teacher to the Gentiles to express to them God's way to live.

I will therefore, verse 8, because I am that preacher and apostle and teacher, I will therefore that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands without wrath and doubting in like manner also that women adorn themselves in modest apparel with shamefacedness and sobriety, not with broided hair or gold or pearls or costly array, but with that which becometh women professing godliness with good works. And then turn also to 1 Peter 3. I thought if we could divide the two texts, we could say that 1 Timothy 2 deals more with the outward and 1 Peter 3 deals more with the inward and thus you have a truly good cake when you're done. Not one that's rotten on the inside, but right on the outside.

Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands that if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation or the life of the life. While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear, whose adorning, let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair and of wearing of gold or of putting on of apparel, 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. For after this manner in the old times the holy women also who trusted in God adorned themselves being in subjection unto their own husbands even as Sarah obeyed Abraham calling him Lord, whose daughters ye are as long as ye do well and are not afraid with any amazement.

So here we've read these scriptures and in this one here in Peter that we just read it even speaks about the holy women of old. So this picture has been on my heart for a long time. Some of you know the

picture.

It's a picture that is on the little booklet about the covering. The booklet called Letter Be Veiled. I don't plan to speak about the covering this morning although I believe in it that I believe that every holy woman who has light about the covering will receive it and obey it.

But we're not going to talk about the covering this morning. We're just going to talk about these virtuous women up here, these women, holy women of old, these women who are adorned in modest apparel with shamefacedness and sobriety. I think it's very clear as we look at the picture that their modesty goes a lot deeper than the surface of the little cake that we learned about in the children's lesson.

My heart and prayer to God this morning is that you'll be able to see further in this message than just the clothes that are worn, but you'll see deep down inside the heart of the face of those sisters and you sisters will come out of this sermon with a longing cry in your heart that that inner character which is expressed on the face of those two and three women will be wrought by the Spirit of God inside of your heart. That is the only way you can truly be that modest woman that was read about in the Scriptures. I think the Scripture is true when it says that holiness is beautiful.

And I'm not sure what your response is to this picture up here, but when I look at it, it says that's beautiful. There's not anything more beautiful than that picture this morning. Holiness is beautiful.

And to the sanctified heart and the sanctified eyes, it's got to make the twangs of your heart and the joy bells go off when you look at a picture like that. However, I'm not saying that we have to go out of this place today and put on the garbs that they put on 2,000 years ago. I'm not saying that.

I'm not making a new standard by putting a picture like this up here, but I'm simply putting the picture there that we might grasp the Spirit and the principle of Bible modesty this morning. That is my heart. Someone once said that imitation is the greatest form of admiration.

I believe that's so. And I would encourage you sisters to do a little imitating, to do a little meditating this morning, to just take your heart and open it up. I don't know how much God uses pictures, but I prayed that God would use this picture this morning, that He would take His finger and He would write upon our hearts and He would put a beautiful picture within each one of our spirits this morning of what Bible modesty is all about by the example that I have in back of me here.

Now let's turn back to the text in 1 Timothy. We want to read a few verses and look at a few words. And then we want to look at some of the basic principles that lie within modest apparel or Bible modesty.

And then we also want to take a look at some practical ways that we can help you to fulfill this picture of these Bible women that is behind me. In 1 Timothy 2, verse 9, Paul says in like manner also, I will therefore, I desire, I will therefore, I want it to be so that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel. Now the first word we want to look at very briefly is the word adorn.

That word means to order, to arrange, to deck, to trim, and to garnish. It's the same word that is used out in the world when they adorn a Christmas tree with ornaments. It's the same word that is used when somebody adorns a room.

And Paul is saying here, and God is saying here, it is my desire that the women adorn themselves. Trim yourselves, ornament yourselves, order yourselves, arrange yourselves, and garnish yourselves with

modest apparel. The word adorn is not a bad word.

It's a good word. It means just what it says. Make yourself beautiful.

I will that the women would make themselves beautiful that they would hang the ornaments of modest apparel upon themselves so they'll be beautiful. That's what the word adorn means. The second word we want to look at is the word modest.

Modest apparel, it says. The word modest means orderly, decent, harmonious, discreet, humble. These are some of the words for modest.

Let me read it again that way. I will, therefore, that the women adorn themselves in orderly apparel, in decent apparel, in harmonious apparel, in humble apparel, in modest apparel. Here are some synonyms of the word modest.

I thought it would be helpful for us this morning. Other words that mean modest. Other words that are used to express the word modest.

Reserved, discreet, quiet, unassuming, humble, meek, bashful, not boastful. Isn't that interesting? When you move away from the word modest apparel and just look at the word modest, you get away from the clothes and you get right into the heart. Notice those words again.

Reserved, discreet, quiet, unassuming, humble, meek, bashful, and not boastful. Modest. Here are a few words which are antonyms of the word modest, which are words that mean the opposite of modest.

Of course, immodest, vain, boastful, ambitious, showy, shameless, brazen, unseemly, improper, and loud. Those are words that mean the opposite of modest. In like manner also that women adorn themselves in modest apparel with shamefacedness.

Now, I looked up that word shamefacedness and I copied it word for word out of Vine's expository dictionary of New Testament words because I thought it was beautiful. It says, that modesty that is fast or rooted in the character. Shamefacedness or shamefastness is that modesty that is rooted or made fast in the character of the person.

That's shamefacedness or shamefastness. Now, some of the expressions of shamefacedness, if you want to look at this girl right here in the picture, there's an expression of shamefacedness. She's looking somewhere, but she's not boldly looking there.

She's looking up, but she's not looking directly up. There's a shamefacedness in her. Her head is a little down.

She's looking where she's supposed to look, but she's not boldly looking there. That is an expression of shamefacedness. It's beautiful.

Another word for shamefacedness is humility. Humility. Humility.

Shamefacedness is not a bad word. It's a good word. It has the connotation of a reverence.

It has the connotation of you're better than I am. You have something more to say than I do. What you have to say is more important than what I have to say.

You are important, and I'm less important. Those are expressions of shamefacedness. And every one of us need that for sure, not just the sisters this morning.

Alright, a little further down. Well, maybe we should look at the word apparel also. The word apparel here is the word katastola.

Katastola in the Greek. Kata means down, and stola means wrapped around. A katastola.

Kata means down, and stola means wrapped around. We get our word stole from stola. You know what a stole is? It's something that a woman wraps around her.

A katastola is something that is down, and something that is wrapped around, and I believe that these women in this picture have something somewhat like the katastola on their bodies in this picture. Now, the katastola was the Greek garment. The word apparel didn't just mean apparel.

The word apparel meant a katastola, or the specific garment that the Greek women wore in the days that the New Testament was written. And I believe that these sisters have a katastola on them. A katastola was a double-layered garment.

It wasn't single. It was double. It was a double-layered garment that was laid around the body in folds in such a way that it would break up the contours of the body so that a woman would not be revealing parts of her body that should not be seen.

And I think we can all agree that these sisters up here are modest without question. They are not dressing to draw any attention to their bodies, but they are dressing to cover and conceal, which I believe is God's will, for clothing. So, the word apparel means katastola.

Now, one man once said to me, how can you use the word apparel and say that we must wear a double-layered garment? Well, I say this to that man, if we can't do that, then neither can we use the word apparel to tell a sister that she must wear a dress. Because if apparel is used in a general sense like it is here in America, then it means anything. Apparel in America means hat, it means coat, it means shoes, it means undergarments, apparel means all of those things in a general sense here in America.

But that is not what it meant in the Greek sense back in the days when the Bible was written. The word apparel was a specific word which described the type of garment that the Greek women wear. Now, I have not this morning telling any of us that we need to wear a katastola, but the principle of modesty and the principle of covering, I'm saying that we need to hold on to.

We don't want to throw that away. Okay, and one other thing in these verses, with shamefacedness and sobriety not with broided hair or gold or pearls or costly array. Now, I'm not going to say a lot about that.

I don't think we need to deal with the congregation about braiding their hair and wearing gold and wearing pearls and putting on costly array. But those are the things that Paul was telling them that they shouldn't be adorning themselves with. And I do think that those are worthy words.

Verse 10 goes on to say, but rather, adorn yourself with that which becometh women professing godliness. And I believe in this verse what Paul the Apostle is saying is dress so that you look like a godly woman. That's what he's saying.

Dress in such a way that will line up with a godly life. And I say amen to that. That's the way it ought to be.

We ought to so desire to clothe ourselves that our clothes will line up with the godly life that we're endeavoring to live. Now, let's move on from there over to Peter. We want to look at those verses also.

First Peter. Here we get more into the heart matter of modesty, which is a great blessing to me. As I studied these verses fresh and new in light of this subject, they came alive to me.

Likewise, ye wise, be in subjection to your own husbands, that if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the life that the wife lives. Notice verse 2. While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear. That word chaste, I studied, it means pure, holy, no mixture, and clear.

It means all of those. So here we're looking at a woman who needs to so live before a wayward husband that he will notice the way she lives a pure, a holy life. A life with no mixture.

A life that is clear. A life that is without question both on the inside and the outside. When he sees that kind of life being lived, it will begin to influence him.

It will begin to win him over to the ways of God. And earlier this morning, as I was meditating upon this text, I was sort of walking around here in the auditorium and I was praying and I was looking at this picture and I thought to myself, I began to imagine one of these women winning their lost husband by their chaste conversation coupled with fear. And I thought, they got a pretty good chance.

If their inward life, if what we see here in the picture is any expression at all of their inward life, they have a very good chance of winning a wayward husband. Alright, going on to verse 3. Who's adorning? Let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting a hair and of wearing of gold or of putting on of apparel. There we have those same words, missed it again.

But we'll move on to verse 4 and look at the heart of the matter. But let it be, rather let the adorning 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. Now here is what God lays out to every sister that she should covet after.

A meek and a quiet spirit. If you're going to adorn, let your adorning start inside your heart with the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit. There is nothing more beautifying than a meek and a quiet spirit.

Nothing more beautifying than that. Do you sisters believe that this morning? Let me see your hands. Nothing more beautiful.

When you have that, you've got everything you need. When you have that, you've got the thing that will bring the most glory to God in your life. A meek and a quiet spirit.

And the Bible calls it an ornament. And the Bible says that in the sight of God it's of great price. Now I had to think as I was looking at these pictures here.

Surely, that is pleasing to God. Surely, the way those women are dressed and the spirit by which they are manifesting in that picture is pleasing to God. And if I were you sisters, I would just long and long and long and long for that.

Right there. If I were you, I would long after it. I would covet it.

I would pray for it. I would seek God about it. I would fill my heart full of His Word that would rot within me.

That hidden man of the heart that expresses itself with a meek and a quiet spirit. For it is of great price. And brothers, it is of great price.

I thought also I'd just go and see what Daniel Webster has to say about modesty. I'll read it to you out of the Webster's Dictionary. I don't know if this would be in the new Webster's Dictionary, but mine is dated 1919.

Listen to the definition of modesty. A natural delicacy or shame regarding personal charm or relationships. Modesty is a natural delicacy or shame, carefulness regarding personal charm or relationship.

You have pretty eyes? Modesty is a natural delicacy concerning that personal charm of those pretty eyes. You have a big bright smile? Modesty is a careful delicacy over that personal charm that you have in your life or relationships. Either one.

A careful delicacy over relationships. A little further. Modesty is purity of thought and action.

Modesty is due regard for propriety in thought and action. Modesty is being free from familiarity in relationships. Modesty is a lowly temper.

The absence of self-assertion, arrogance and presumption. A lot on the heart. I believe that that is where God wants us to start is on the heart.

But I do not believe this morning that God wants us to wait for our heart if we know what Bible modesty is supposed to be. I don't believe this morning that God is saying, wait on your heart and then change the outside. The outside is a Bible principle and the inside is a Bible principle and both of them must be obeyed.

Alright, let's move along here and look at some of the purposes of modest apparel. The first verse that came to my mind as I thought about modest apparel was this verse. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and love thy neighbor as thyself.

Now you may wonder now, what are you reading that verse for? That's a Sunday night verse right there. That's a revival verse. That's a let's get our hearts right verse.

That's a oh the Jesus I surrender verse. Well, that happens to be the verse on which every Bible principle in the Bible hangs on. That one right there.

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. If we cannot hang this sermon this morning on that verse, then we better not even talk about what we're talking about this morning. We better be able to hang it on that verse first.

And truly we can. The Bible speaks about loving God with all of our heart. Who made this body of ours? And what was God's design for clothes? Without turning to the Scriptures, we can go into the Old Testament and back into the book of Genesis when God made clothes for Adam and Eve.

And if we look there and look down and meditate a little bit on the principle there, God made clothes for Adam and Eve to cover and conceal their bodies. Before they fell, they could not see each other. They did not know that they were naked.

Personally, I feel they were clothed with a body of light. But I don't know that I can prove that someday. I'm going to find out in heaven if I was right or not.

But I feel like they were clothed with a body of light. And that body of light covered them. And when they sinned and disobeyed God, they lost that body of light.

And all of a sudden, they could see each other and they knew that they were naked. And the Bible says that they tried to cover themselves with fig leaves. Their first instinct was, cover up, cover up, something's not right here.

We don't know what's wrong, but something's wrong and let's get something to cover ourselves up. And when God came walking in the cool of the day there in the garden looking for Adam and looking for Eve, they ran and hid themselves. And what did God do? He made coats, He took coats of skin and He made clothing for them and He covered their bodies.

From there, we can see God's design, right there. God made us. We need to glorify God in this body.

And I believe with all my heart, if we truly love God and want to please Him, one of the ways that we can express that love is to clothe ourselves in a way that is consistent with His design and purpose for clothing. And God gave the clothes to cover and conceal. The devil makes clothes to uncover and reveal.

We need to stay on the other side in this matter of clothing. A couple other verses that I wanted to read in light of clothing and they can be applied to many things, but I think they need to be applied here. 1 Corinthians chapter 10.

Let's turn there first. 1 Corinthians chapter 10 and verse 31. Whether therefore ye eat or drink or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.

Reading on. Give none offense, neither to the Jews nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God, even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved. So the scripture we're looking at here is that whatever you do, whether therefore you eat or drink or whatsoever you do, do it to bring glory to God.

Back to chapter 6 of the same book. 1 Corinthians 6 and verse 20. Verse 19.

We'll read chapter 6, verse 19 and 20. What? Know ye that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own. For ye are bought with a price.

Therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's. I believe that when we're looking at this matter of the spirit and practice of modest apparel, that we need to acknowledge the principle that this body of ours has been bought with a price. It doesn't even belong to us.

It belongs to God. He shed His blood to redeem us. And He did not just redeem our spirit, but He redeemed this body.

Hallelujah! And someday it's going to be resurrected. And it belongs to Him. It's His property.

Therefore glorify God in your body because your body belongs to Him. And I know that can be applied in many ways, but this morning we'll apply it to this matter of modest apparel. Alright.

Let's turn also to Romans 12. I want to read a verse there. Romans 12, verse 2. The Scripture says, Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Now what this verse is saying is simply this, that we need to have a desire in our heart that we're not conformed to the world around us, but rather seek to be transformed into a new person by the renewing of our mind. And this is what we renew our minds with. And then it tells us why.

That you or so that you may prove or show what is the good, acceptable, perfect will of God. I can say this morning as I point to this picture on the board, this is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God. The sisters that looked this way and dressed this way 2,000 years ago in the days when Jesus was upon this earth, they were living out the good and acceptable and perfect will of God in their lives concerning their apparel.

And I think that we need to desire to do the same thing. There are two people that we can glorify in the choices we make. We can seek to glorify God or we can seek to glorify me.

And I think in this matter of our apparel, we need to be very careful that we are glorifying God and not me. It's very easy to slip over on the other side and begin to want the glory yourself, sisters. It's very easy to slip over on the other side and get in front of that mirror and start thinking, this would look nicer, this would be prettier, I'd like a little of this, I'd like a little of that, and the whole thing is drawing attention away from God and it's drawing it down to you.

We don't want to do that. We want to glorify God in our bodies, not bring glory to ourselves. You get enough attention.

Alright? Another principle and purpose of modest apparel is the principle of love. We quoted the verse, part of it, we'll quote the other half again, love your neighbor as yourself. I believe that having a love for your brothers ought to motivate each one of you to be careful what kind of clothes you wear.

I believe there ought to be a love for your brothers when you sit down at that sewing machine and start creating a new dress with a new idea or a new material or whatever it might be. I believe that one of the motivations that should be in your heart is a motivation of love for your brother. Because that's the second in great commandment is to love your neighbor as yourself.

Paul said these words, sisters, If meat maketh my brother to offend, I will eat no meat as long as the world standing. That's pretty strong words, isn't it? And all he was talking about is eating a piece of meat that was offered unto an idol. And Paul was saying, I know that an idol is nothing.

I know that there's nothing to an idol. And I know that there's nothing wrong with me eating that meat. But if it's going to offend my brother, then I'm not going to eat any of that meat as long as the world stands.

And I would just encourage you, sisters, to think these kind of thoughts in your heart. If my clothing offends my brother, I will not wear those kind of clothes as long as this world stands. Is that a right application? I think it is.

In fact, I say more so. More so. We know that clothes and how they are worn can be a constant temptation to the brothers.

If you know that your clothes are drawing the eyes of the brothers your way, then you need to go home and get in front of the sewing machine and change what you wear. And some of you sisters, you know. Because there's something inside of every sister that likes the eyes and the attention of a man.

And if you're drawing that with the clothes that you wear, you know it. You know it and you like it. And if you know it and you like it, you need to go home and do something about it.

Every one of you sisters know. You know when you're drawing the eyes of the men. When even moving around through the fellowship, when you see their eyes your way, again, again.

Oh, they look away when you look. But you know that their eyes are going your way, and your way, and your way. And then you see them look away when you look.

Maybe it's not all his fault. It might be your fault. It might be what you're wearing and what you're making is drawing the eyes your way.

You wouldn't want to do that. That's not good. That's not loving your brother.

Well, you may say, is it right to change what I wear for my brother's sake? I say, yes. Here's what your heart cry ought to be. Oh God, I don't want my brother to stumble.

Oh God, I want my brother to walk with God. Oh God, I want the church to be strong. I don't want to be a stumbling block to my brother.

You could say that. Or, I thought of the opposite response, and I thought we'd look at a couple of those so we can see how selfish they really are. The opposite response could be, well, they just need to learn how to look away.

Well, they have an impure heart. They need to purify their heart. Well, they need to learn how to control their mind.

Well, that's true, but I think we need to tell them that. We need to tell each other that. You sisters, you shouldn't think, yeah, well, they just need to learn to look away.

Yeah, well, they've got an impure heart. Yeah, well, they need to learn how to control their mind. No.

You need to say, I don't want my brother to stumble. I want my brother to walk with God. I want my brother to have a pure heart.

And I'm going to do what I can do to help him to have a pure heart. Amen? Let love prevail. Let's turn to 1 Thessalonians.

Very interesting verse. In 1 Thessalonians 4, we want to key in on verse 6, but I'd like to read from verse 3 through 8. I'd like you just to be pondering this word and this definition of this word as we read the context here. The word defraud.

In the margin of my Bible, it says to oppress or overreach. Defraud means to oppress or overreach. One man said it this way.

The definition of defraud is stirring up desires in others that you cannot lawfully fulfill. That's a good definition for defraud. So let's keep that in mind.

To defraud someone is to oppress them. It's to cause pressure on their spiritual life. To defraud someone is to stir up desires that we cannot lawfully fulfill.

That's what defrauding is. Now let's read the context. For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication, that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honor.

What a beautiful verse. Not in the lust of concupiscence, which is the impure heart desires. Not in the lust of impure heart desires, even as the Gentiles, which know not God, that no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter, because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified.

For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness. He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his Holy Spirit. Now in this context, Paul is telling the Thessalonian church, this is big stuff.

You need to possess your vessel, your body, in sanctification and honor. And don't go beyond and cause a pressing down of the spirit of a brother or a sister. We can apply it either way.

We should not cause a pressing down of spirit upon a brother or a sister. We should not overreach ourselves and reach into areas with a brother or a sister that is going to hurt them and cause them to stumble. It's called defrauding.

Many sisters do not realize how much they defraud the very brothers that are in the church. They do not realize it. That they are defrauding them.

That they are stirring up desires in them that cannot lawfully be fulfilled. And what happens instead is this. Most of the time in church, the fornication doesn't come.

The holiness is preached and men are kept in line that way. But what happens is evil concupiscence instead. And evil concupiscence is all of those things taking place inside the mind.

Where the men are struggling with lustful thoughts and things, imaginations in their mind, and sisters, you don't want to be a part of that. You don't want to be a part of that which stirs up those kind of thoughts in the very brothers that you're going to spend eternity with. You don't want to be a part of that.

Love prevails in this matter of modesty. One of the little articles that I was studying a couple days ago said, let the men tell the ladies how their clothes affect them. I thought that was a very good statement.

Let me just speak for the men to you ladies. Your clothes affect us. They make us struggle.

They draw our eyes away when they shouldn't. Let the men tell the ladies how it affects them. I think there's real wisdom in that.

Be ye careful when you sit down at the sewing machine or go to the material store. Another principle and purpose of modesty is the principle of simplicity. In Matthew chapter 6, I believe the scriptures do teach that we are to live in an attitude of simplicity about our clothing.

Simplicity? Simple. Simplicity? Not a lot to do. Not a lot of care about it.

Take no thought. What ye shall eat, what ye shall drink, what ye shall wear. Don't worry about those things.

Don't spend a lot of time being concerned about what you're going to wear. For all those things, that's what the Gentiles do. And don't they? Don't they sisters? We can go out to the stores every spring, every fall, every spring, every fall, and they're all laying aside the clothes they bought last fall, and they're buying new ones, and then they're laying aside the clothes that they bought last spring, and buying new ones, and they go on shopping trips to do it, and they spend lots of time, they watch the television to learn what the fashions are, they look at all the magazines, and they spend lots and lots of time being concerned about the clothes they're going to wear.

Now Jesus said, don't be that way. Don't be so worried about your clothes. Don't take thought about them.

Just have some, put them on, and wear them. I believe that's what Jesus was saying there, as applied to what we're talking about here. Have some, put them on, and wear them.

But I'm afraid that many times it's not that way. But every wedding, and every spring, and every fall, and every family reunion, a new dress comes, and when you get grown, you don't outgrow them once you get grown, they just sit there in your closet, one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, maybe ten, maybe twenty. Then when it's time to put a dress on, here you stand in front of your closet trying to figure out, which one do I wear? Right? Which one do I wear today? Not good.

Not good. Just have two or three dresses that you wear, put them on, and forget it. Don't worry about it.

Clothes are to cover and conceal the body. That's all. Just wear them.

I believe that's the spirit of simplicity that Jesus is laying out to us. But it's not so many times, is it? And then it gets a little worse than that, then we start seeing, well, somebody else made theirs a little bit more this way, the next one I make, I'm going to add a little of this to it, then the next one I'll add a little of this to it, then pretty soon you have five or six styles hanging there along with five or six colors, and then it's even more difficult to decide which one do I want to wear. Just make a couple dresses and wear them and forget it.

Amen? Just forget it, sisters. It's not that big of a deal. No.

It really isn't. It shouldn't be. The principle of simplicity.

You know, I lived that way a few years back. I had several suits in my closet and several shirts in my closet and several ties in my closet and all the suits and shirts and ties, they all matched each other or contrasted each other and that's what I did when it was time to get dressed in the morning. I stood in front of my closet the same way and I said, what do I wear today? Shall I wear red? Shall I wear blue? Shall I wear a sport coat? Shall I wear silver and blue? Black and white? What shall I wear this morning? You know, when this matter of simplicity came to my heart, I gladly threw all that away and I'm glad now when I go there it's the same old pair of pants and same old kind of shirt and put them on and forget it.

That's a blessing. Amen? It is a blessing. Sisters, you need to find some of that.

If you find yourself standing in front of that closet and you've got all kinds of clothes in there and you don't know what to do with all of it and you're already thinking how you can find another reason to make another

one, oh, Lord deliver you from it. There's a better way to live than that. Alright, we're going to move right along here and look at a few of the practical ways I think that you can be helped this morning if you'll open your heart and listen to me and I just want to assure you that this is what I have in mind.

This is what I want for every one of you sisters. Inside and the outside. And I realize this morning that we face the traditional swing here in this room that many of you have come out of a traditional setting where everything was done just because that's the way mom did it, just because that's the way the church said it.

And I realize that and I realize that some of you are swinging away from that, but I just want to give you this yellow light this morning while you're swinging away from a traditional approach to clothing, don't swing away from this. Don't swing away from the spirit and practical application of what we see on the board this morning. Don't do that.

God wants that for each and every one of you. A question. Let me ask you this morning.

Concerning your clothing, what are the extras for? What are the extras for? You know, the puff sleeves and the high collar and the lace that goes around it or I'm not sure what you call it, but where you make a big collar and you make it kind of ruffled around the edges. What are the extras for? Is God laying on your heart to add puff sleeves so you can glorify God with your clothes? What are the extras for? What are the buckles for? If the next time you go to make a dress, you're thinking it'd look real nice with a buckle right here, what is the buckle for? And the buttons? And the ties? You know, you get the sleeve down about right here and you need something to gather it, so rather than just put a little elastic in here, you come up with a new idea of putting some material through here and tying a nice bow so that whenever you reach for something, you got a little bow hanging down here and a little bow hanging down there. What is it for? That's the question we need to ask ourselves this morning.

Why am I hanging a bow on my elbow? Why do I have one hanging back here? What are they for? That's the question. Do you know that the latest style in the world, or one of the latest styles in the world, is to make a garment that puffs at the shoulders so that it looks smaller at the waist? It's really not smaller at the waist, but they puff the garment at the shoulders so that when they wear the whole thing, it looks like the waist is smaller and it makes you look like you're thinner than you really are. That's what the world does.

Why do we puff the garments? Why are the sleeves getting puffy? What's the purpose? These questions I think you need to ask yourself. Someone said, Well, I don't want to wear that. It'll make me look fat.

Who cares if you look fat? Who's looking to see if you're fat? What does it matter? Right? I mean, let that one man in all your life find out someday that you weren't as fat as you look like. Let one man find out. Not every one of them in the congregation.

I don't want to look fat. I wear my dress because I don't want to look fat. Well, if he picks you for that, you got the wrong one anyway.

Right? Let's just come to grips with some of these things. These are thoughts that go through the minds of women, of sisters. Isn't it? All the extras move away from the principle of simplicity.

All the extras move in the direction that the world is going. That's what they are. You see, sisters, we can do the same thing the world is doing.

We can just do it with a different style dress. We can do exactly the same. We can do all that they do out there, just a different style dress.

Oh, we wear a cape dress around here. But we puff it, and tuck it, and roll it, and extra lines, and tie it, and bow it, and hang it, and we do all those things. We wear a cape dress.

That's a joke. That's a joke. Just simple Bible modesty.

That's what God wants. Let's stay away from what the world is doing, what the fashion designers are doing, and let's not enter into the fashion design, sisters. I realize some of you are learning how to sew, and you like that, and your creativity wants to make something a little bit different.

But, when you're making something a little bit different, aim this way, not this way. And, you know, the tucks, and the buckles, and the ties, and the puffs, and all that stuff, aim this way. I think you'll be better off, and I know that all these brothers over here will be better off for it.

Alright, let me say something also about the types of material. That's something that you face every time you go to the material store. I've heard the cry of many a sister say, what do we do when we go to the material store? They keep changing the material on us.

We find a material that works, we find a material that's serviceable, we find a material that lasts, we find a material that doesn't cling, and we make our dress out of it, we go back six months later, and it's not there anymore. Discontinued. This is the new material.

And all they're doing is moving the fashion world right into the material store. And slowly, and in just in eight years that I've been going to material stores, I've seen that thing move a long ways. Just in eight years.

So what do you do about it? Well, one thing you don't do, you don't compromise because the material store is. That, we know we don't do that. Right? We don't move along with the material store if the material store is moving along with the world.

We don't do that. We know that. We all got that one down.

We know that principle. So what types of material do we get? Well, I think the scripture would teach that we get moderate materials. Moderate is in the middle.

Moderate is not too bright and not too dull. Moderate is not real elegant and not a burlap bag. It's in the middle.

You see? That's what moderate is. One of you sisters show up here next Sunday morning with some old hard gunny sack on for a dress, I'll tell you, you're not modest. Because that's not modest.

That's extreme. But I think it'd be good for us to take a look at the other side of that too. And when we go to that material store, don't go looking for the brightest material that we can find.

Because that bright material, here's what it will do. That bright material will draw the eyes of every man your way. Because you look bright.

You look pretty. He likes that. The color is pleasing.

It'll draw his eyes your way. You know the saying, pink makes boys wink. How many ever heard that one before? Boy, look at all them hands.

We all wear a lot of pink around here for all knowing that. Is it true or not? What kind of materials do we get at the material store? Moderate. Something in the middle.

Not too far this way. Not too far that way. Not always the brightest.

Not always the lightest. Moderate. And by the way, not the gaudiest either.

You know some of the colors in the material store can be, they're not even, they're not even attractive. They're offensive. Bright, gaudy colors.

You don't want those. That's not modest. Modest is down the middle.

What else? Not the elegant. Not the silks. You say, well, I wouldn't buy silk.

That's costly apparel. No, I know you wouldn't buy silk. But now they're making material that looks like silk.

Do we buy that? It's not silk, but it looks like silk. Looks like silk. Feels like silk.

Clings like silk. But it's not silk. I tell you, it's silk.

They just figured out a way to make it out of synthetic stuff. It's silk, sisters. It's expensive.

It's costly. It draws attention. It's shiny.

You see what I'm saying? Little by little, we're just moving, moving, moving, and it always happens little by little. It always happens little by little. Well, let's make some big leaps backwards.

Let's do what the Christian way is and make some big leaps backwards. Another thought. Types of material, not too thin.

Not too thin. But the materials are getting thinner all the time. But not too thin.

But it's hot outside. You reckon they were hot when they wore that? I don't see anything wrong with being careful about the materials you buy when it's hot outside. But sisters, I mean, some of the material they sell now, that's the summer material, you put your hand up behind it, you can see right through it.

I mean, some of the materials are so bad, you have to buy, if you buy a dark blue material, you have to buy a dark blue slip to put under it. If you put a white one on, you'd see the white through it. And they buy the material and get the dark blue slip and go on.

Not right. That's transparent material. Not too thin.

Not too clingy. There are materials that hang. And there are materials that hold close to the body.

Don't get the ones that hold close to the body. Get the ones that hang. They hang nice.

Just a word of encouragement to you sisters. When the wind blows a little bit, the men shouldn't have to turn their head. When you reach to get something, when you reach down to pick up a little baby, the men shouldn't have to turn their head.

Your material shouldn't be so thin that a man has to turn his head when you reach for your baby. That's too thin. When the undergarment, the lines of the undergarment show by the material, the material is too thin.

Amen? It's too thin. I realize it's getting harder and harder to go to the material store and buy material. But sisters, we can't just follow the material store.

We cannot do that. We are following God. We cannot follow the material store.

It's taking us further and further and further away from what God wants. A little bit about legs. In a brother's meeting, I guess it's probably a couple of years ago now, all the brothers that are sitting over here, and there's probably more of them over here now than there was then, but all of them that were here agreed.

All of us agreed that a woman's leg attracts attention. Everyone agreed. Every one of us agreed that a woman's leg has appeal to the man.

Wrong kinds of appeal. And we agreed that they ought to be covered. We agreed that they ought to be toned down, not enhanced up, but toned down.

We all agreed that the type of shoe a woman puts on her foot in combination with the type of stocking a woman puts on her legs, if you put the right two together, you have got an attention getter just like that for a man. We all agreed. So, I'm just telling you this morning how the men see it.

That is how we see it. And I would just plead with some of you sisters that you take a look at your legs in the eyes and in the light of the brothers who walk with you and are among you day by day. Take a look at the way your foot and your leg looks by the shoes you're wearing, by the way you're covering your legs.

And we agreed this. The Bible teaches that the legs should be covered. We all agreed.

We're not telling you how to cover them. If you want to cover your legs with a longer dress, Amen. If you want to cover your legs with thicker stockings, Amen.

You can do that. But we all agreed that they should be covered. And if I could just give some of you a little encouragement there.

When we had in mind that you, if you want to wear the thinner nylons that you wear a longer dress, we had in mind that your ankles showing not, you know, this much of the leg. So if you want to wear that, no problem. But make the dress longer.

And if you prefer to wear a little shorter dress, no problem either. But make the stockings thicker so that when somebody looks at your legs, it doesn't draw attention to how beautiful they are. That's for one man, not all the men in the room.

Okay. I'd like to give you a few helpful alternatives. I don't want to just leave you here stuck, not knowing what to do in despair.

I'd like to give you some helpful alternatives. One is this. If you find yourself and your dresses fitting your body, and you're looking for a way to eliminate that, I realize some of the materials, they do that more.

Here is a way that you can eliminate that without even changing the materials. All you simply do is make the skirt of your dress fuller. I'm not sure how many yards it takes to make a dress or the skirt of a dress.

Maybe if you take three yards to make it, maybe you ought to take four and a half yards. And then gather it. If you gather the skirt of the dress, then it won't cling so tight and reveal the form of your body which you do not want to reveal.

Putting pleats in the skirt of your dress will do the same thing. Buying a heavier material will do the same thing. Buying a thicker slip will do the same thing.

Lining your dress will do the same thing, although I think that one's pretty impractical. That if the material that I buy is so thin that I have to put a special lining in it to wear it, that doesn't make sense. It seems to me right just to get a little bit thicker material.

But there are ways that you can deal with the material store today. If your heart is for modesty, there are ways that you can do it. You don't have to just sit back in despair and say, what do we do? The material store is giving us this kind of material.

We can't buy the other kind anymore. There's still something you can do. Make that dress fuller.

Make that dress looser. It is not God's design that a dress reveal your body. It is designed that the dress conceal and cover your body.

Okay. Here's my plea to everyone of us. My plea is for an earnest meditation on this subject.

I speak to the young ladies. I speak to the mothers. I speak to the fathers.

I'm pleading for an earnest meditation on this subject. It was very interesting to me as I was studying for this subject. I went to the Mennonite Information Center and there they have a library and they have some archives there where they're storing old books and things like that and they're way down into the basement and under the ground in a fireproof room where they cannot catch fire.

And in there, there's an old man and he's still alive now. His name is Christy Charles and he gathered articles for, I don't know, forty or fifty years on every Christian subject imagined. And I just went there and told him I'd like the file from Christy Charles' library on modesty.

And they went out and brought me a whole box like this. And I sat there and I went through all these articles and basically, it was the writings of the Lancaster Conference over the last forty years. And I'll tell you what, the writings were right.

I mean, they had it. It was right. It was good writings.

Good principles. And I had to think, well, what happened then? Those writings were the teachings of the preachers to the Lancaster Conference churches over the last forty years. And now look at the Lancaster Conference in the area of modesty.

Have they lost anything? Brothers and sisters, they lost just about everything. Another thing that I noticed as I read each one of the articles that the preachers, they kind of tiptoed through the subject. You know what tiptoeing is? They didn't want to offend anybody.

They were real careful what they said. They went out of their way to give it in a nice gentle way. I noticed that in most of the articles and I thought, there's something not right there when the preacher can't be the preacher and just say, brothers and sisters, this is the way it is.

Let's take a look at it. Let's make some changes and go on from there. But I didn't sense any of that.

I sensed in those articles, I sensed those preachers, I sensed those preachers being a little like Baptist preachers often are, trying to convince the people, why don't you go this way? This will be okay. Yeah, you'll like it. Go this way.

It's a good way. And all the people seemingly, they listened to what they had to say and they probably shook his hand on Sunday morning and said, thank you preacher, we needed that. And they went on their way and continued to make the clothes and the dresses the way they wanted and now we have what we have.

I don't think we need to go that way. And another thing that I noticed in there, as I read the articles, was that most of the time the parents were having a real hard time giving any direction to the children about their clothing. It came out in the articles, one after another.

In fact, there were even articles there instructing the parents on how to gingerly go through the subject with their teenagers so they won't be offended. And I just said, yuck! Whatever happened to authority? They lost their authority. And brothers, I'll just encourage you on this side of the room, don't be afraid of your daughter.

You sit your daughter down and if you don't like the way she's dressing, you sit her down and you say, my daughter, you are not dressing that way. It's wrong. It doesn't line up to Bible modesty.

It draws my own attention your way. You have to change the dresses that you wear. And brothers, if you don't have enough courage to do that, you need some help.

You need some help. Those fathers, in that Lancaster conference, they were just kind of tippy-toeing their way through the modesty issue. And their daughters were going like this, yes daddy, I understand what you're saying and they just kept right on going their own way.

Nobody said, that's enough. Nobody. The preachers didn't even say, that's enough.

We're not going to have it. That's not right. We're not going that way.

They didn't do it. And today, we all know the result of it. So my plea is, that we won't just shake our head this morning and say, boy that was, we needed that.

God bless you brother Denny. God bless you for being courageous and all those things and then just go home, go your way. My plea is, let's take a real good look at some of the clothes that are coming off the sewing machines in the congregation here.

I agree. Modesty stops and immodesty begins in the heart. There's no question about it.

And I think a discerning father and a discerning mother will spot it before that dress ever comes off the press. That there's something wrong in the heart that's making the dress. I'll say this in closing.

And this is a quote that I got out of one of the articles and I thought it was beautiful. A holy life and a holy face and holy garments remind men of godliness and command respect and honorable recognition. May I say it again? A holy life and a holy face with holy garments remind men of godliness and command their respect and recognition.

That is my heart's desire. For you sisters, that you'll have a holy life that comes from a holy heart and it'll express a holy face and be clothed with holy garments that God might truly be glorified in every area of your life. Let's kneel together for prayer.

Father, we come to You in the name of Jesus at the end of this service, at the end of this message. And God, we're just resting in You. I'm praying, Lord, that You'll bless each and every heart.

I'm praying, Lord, that You'll write upon our hearts. I'm praying, Lord, that You'll put holy desires in our hearts, O God. Let us admire these women on this picture here, God.

Let us admire them, Lord. And let us deal with our heart if we don't like the picture on the board. For it's beautiful, Father.

And I pray, Lord, that after that admiration You'll bring some imitation, not of a Greek Catastrola, but of holy garments that cover and conceal and are a blessing to all the men in the congregation. Father, I just commit the further service into Your hands. And Lord, we just give You praise.

We thank You for all that You do for us. Thank You for the Word You've given us this morning. We pray in Jesus' name.

Amen.

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