

CHRISTIAN MODESTY

PRESENTED BY
JESS HALL, JR.

GREEN LAWN CHURCH OF CHRIST

INTRODUCTION: SERMONS LIKE THIS ARE DIFFICULT TO PREACH. THEY ARE PERSONAL. THEIR APPLICATION CANNOT BE MISSED. BEFORE IT IS OVER I SHALL HAVE SAID TO SOME, "THOU ART THE WOMAN." HOW DIFFICULT IT MUST HAVE BEEN FOR NATHAN TO POINT AT DAVID AND SAY, "THOU ART THE MAN." THEY HAD PLANNED THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE AND ITS SERVICES TOGETHER. BUT AS GOD'S SPOKESMAN NATHAN HAD TO REBUKE DAVID'S SIN BECAUSE HE LOVED HIM AND DID NOT WANT HIM TO DO WRONG. THIS IS OUR MOTIVATION NOW.

I. A GOVERNING PRINCIPLE--I TIMOTHY 2:9--IN LIKE MANNER ALSO, THAT WOMEN ADORN THEMSELVES IN MODEST APPAREL, WITH SHAMEFACEDNESS (SHAMEFASTNESS) AND SOBRIETY... MODEST IS TO BE THE SPIRIT OF ALL CLOTHING WORN BY THE CHRISTIAN WOMAN OR GIRL.

A. DEFINE: MODESTY

1. MODEST--A REGARD FOR PROPRIETY IN DRESS, SPEECH, OR CONDUCT.
2. MODESTY--OBSERVING CONVENTIONAL STANDARDS OF PROPER DRESS AND BEHAVIOR; FREE FROM COARSENESS OR INDECENCY; CHASTE IN THOUGHT AND CONDUCT.

B. GREEK TERMS:

1. MODEST--KOSMIOS

- A. BULLINGER--WELL ORDERED, ORDERLY, I.E., WELL BEHAVED, DISCREET, DECOROUS.
- B. THAYER--WELL-ARRANGED, SEEMLY MODEST.

2. SHAMEFACEDNESS--AIDOS

- A. VINE--A SENSE OF SHAME, MODESTY, IS USED REGARDING DEMEANOR OF WOMEN IN THE CHURCH. "SHAMEFASTNESS IS THAT MODESTY WHICH IS 'FAST' AND ROOTED IN CHARACTER..." (DAVIES; BIBLE ENGLISH)
 - B. BULLINGER--THE INNER GRACE WHICH RECOILS FROM ANYTHING UNSEEMLY OR IMPURE, AN INNATE MORAL REPUGNANCE TO THE DOING OF A DISHONORABLE ACT, SHAMEFASTNESS, MODESTY.
 - C. THAYER--A SENSE OF SHAME, MODESTY. IT PRECEDES AND PREVENTS THE SHAMEFUL ACT.
3. SOBRIETY--SOPHROSUNE--SOUNDNESS OF MIND, DISCRETION, PRUDENCE, WHICH CONTROLS
 - A. INORDINATE DESIRES, AND EXERCIZES A DIGNIFIED RESTRAINT ON ALL THE ACTIONS.

II. SOME BASIC (PRELIMINARY) CONSIDERATIONS.

A. SUBJECT CANNOT BE DISASSOCIATED FROM SEX.

1. SEX IS A POWERFUL FORCE. GOD MADE IT THAT WAY. BUT IT WAS GOD'S PLAN THAT SEX SHOULD BE USED TO ATTRACT HUSBAND AND WIFE AND TO HOLD THEM TOGETHER THROUGH THE YEARS. IT WAS NOT GOD'S WILL THAT SEX SHOULD RULE THE WORLD AND MAKE EVERYONE A SLAVE TO ITS PASSION.
2. GOD CREATED MEN AND WOMEN WITH PHYSICAL DESIRES. THESE ARE NOT BAD AND SEX IS NOT WRONG, BUT THEY MUST BE GOVERNED BY THE RESTRICTIONS AND RULES WHICH THE GOD WHO CREATED THEM HAS PLACED UPON THEM.
3. GOD'S PURPOSE IN DEMANDING MODESTY IS THAT HE RECOGNIZES THERE IS A NEED TO STIMULATE THE APPETITE FOR SEX IN MARRIAGE BY LIMITING THE PUBLIC DISPLAY OF SEX AND EXCITEMENT.

B. IT IS A SUBJECT PRIMARILY FOR WOMEN.

1. BIBLE INSTRUCTION DIRECTED TO WOMEN.

2. SEX EMOTIONS DIFFERENT IN MEN AND WOMEN.

- A. MANY WOMEN AND MOST YOUNG GIRLS DO NOT FULLY REALIZE HOW VAST THE DIFFERENCE IS BETWEEN WHAT STIMULATES THEM AND WHAT EROTICALLY EFFECTS THE MALE.
- B. THUS, TOO MANY WOMEN FIND IT HARD TO BELIEVE THAT WHAT THEY WEAR OR DON'T WEAR MAY CAUSE A MAN TO LUST.
- C. THEY FEEL THAT BECAUSE THEY ARE NOT STIMULATED BY THESE THINGS THAT A MAN IS NOT--THIS IS NOT TRUE!!!

3. THIS DIFFERENCE IS WELL RECOGNIZED.

- A. DR. WM. C. MENNIGER, MENNIGER CLINIC, TOPEKA, KANSAS: "MANY BOYS AND GIRLS HAVE REAL DIFFICULTY IN UNDERSTANDING ONE ANOTHER'S ACTIONS AND ATTITUDES WHEN IT COMES TO THE SUBJECT OF SEX. BELOW ARE SOME COMMENTS WHICH ILLUSTRATE THIS POINT:

ALVIN--WHY DO GIRLS WEAR SUCH SCANTY CLOTHING? THEY WEAR ONLY HALTERS, OR THEY GO SWIMMING WITH PRACTICALLY NOTHING ON. THEN THEY ARE SORE--OR PRETEND TO BE--WHEN BOYS MAKE PASSES AT THEM.

"HOW TO UNDERSTAND THE OPPOSITE SEX" P. 5.

- B. JOHN KORD LAGEMAN, "THE SPECIAL NATURE OF WOMEN," READER'S DIGEST, JUNE, 1959, P. 70. IN ASSIGNING DIFFERENT REPRODUCTIVE ROLES TO MEN AND WOMEN, NATURE GAVE EACH SEX ITS OWN SPECIAL KIND OF VULNERABILITY. TO ENSURE PROCREATION SHE PROVIDED MEN WITH INSISTENT AND EASILY AROUSED DESIRES FOR A MATE."

C. WOMEN CAN TEMPT MEN.

1. LAWRENCE LANGER, THE IMPORTANCE OF WEARING CLOTHES, "IT IS SUPERFLUOUS TO CONSIDER THE MANY WAYS IN WHICH CLOTHES HELP TO STIMULATE MEN TO RESPOND TO THE SEXUAL ATTRACTION OF WOMEN."

2. JANUARY 1960 LADIES HOME JOURNAL REVEALED A GALLUP POLL IN WHICH STATISTICS SHOWED THAT OVER HALF OF THE YOUNG WOMEN INTERVIEWED SAID THEY DRESSED FOR MEN, NOT FOR OTHER WOMEN. (AND WE ALL KNOW THAT THE VITAL DIFFERENCE IS IN HOW THE BODY IS EMPHASIZED OR SHOWN.)

3. FASHION KNOWS THAT WOMEN CAN TEMPT MEN; THEODORE REIK, "OF LOVE AND LUST," P. 464, 465. "THE OTHER DAY THE OWNER OF ONE OF OUR MOST ELEGANT DRESS STORES STATED THAT A DRESS IS SUCCESSFUL WHEN IT AWAKENS IN THE MAN WHO LOOKS AT THE WOMAN THE WISH TO TAKE IT OFF, TO UNDRESS HER."

4. ADVERTISING KNOWS THAT WOMEN CAN TEMPT MEN;

- A. A NEWSPAPER ARTICLE ON "HOLDING THE HANDBAG." TO SHOW THE PROPER WAY TO CARRY A HANDBAG, THERE WAS AN ACCOMPANYING PICTURE OF A WOMAN HOLDING A BAG CORRECTLY--DRESSED IN A BATHING SUIT.

B. AUTO-PARTS ADS.

- C. SEX IS USED TO SELL EVERYTHING FROM CIGARETTES TO SHAMPOO; BOOZE TO AUTOMOBILES.

5. THE WISE MAN KNEW WOMEN CAN TEMPT MEN; "AS A JEWEL OF GOLD IN A SWINE'S SNOUT, SO IS A FAIR WOMAN WHICH IS WITHOUT DISCRETION." PROVERBS 11:22.

D. CLOTHING IS THE SYMBOL OF CHARACTER.

1. IF A PERSON DRESSES DIRTILY AND SLOVENLY THEN THEY WILL BE SLOPPY ABOUT OTHER THINGS THEY DO.

2. IF ONE DRESSES LIKE A CLOWN, HE WILL FEEL LIKE A CLOWN.

3. IF A WOMAN DRESSES IMMODESTLY--HER THOUGHTS AND ACTIONS WILL BE IMMODEST IN OTHER AREAS.

4. IF A WOMAN DRESSES IN A TIGHT FITTING, LOW-NECK LINE AND HIGH HEM LINE DRESS (SEXUALLY APPEALING TO MEN) HER ATTITUDE AND BEHAVIOR ALSO WILL BE FLIRTATIOUS AND ENTICING.

- A. THE YOUNG WOMAN WHO MAKES A POINT OF DRESSING . . . TO EMPHASIZE HER SEXUAL ATTRACTIONS IS MORE APT TO MISBEHAVE THAN IF SHE DRESSES MORE CONSERVATIVELY, SINCE SHE INVITES THE COMPLEMENTARY MISBEHAVIOR ON THE PART OF THE MEN TO WHOM SHE OBVIOUSLY CONVEYS HER FEELINGS BY HER CLOTHES. LAWRENCE LANGER, THE IMPORTANCE OF WEARING CLOTHES, P. 149.
- B. NOTICE WHAT A PSYCHOANALYST SAYS ABOUT HOW CLOTHING REPRESENTS CHARACTER: "A PSYCHIATRIST IS THOUGHT TO BE CONCERNED ONLY WITH THE 'INSIDE' OF PEOPLE BUT THE OUTSIDE TELLS US A LOT, TOO. . . . UNCONSCIOUS FACTS GUIDE YOUR CHOICES OF CLOTHING AS SURELY AS THOUGH YOU WERE FOLLOWING A BLUEPRINT AND YOU WEAR WHAT SATISFIES YOUR TRUE FEELINGS ABOUT YOURSELF—WHETHER YOU CONSCIOUSLY KNOW IT OR NOT.

"JUST AS A PAINTING REVEALS THE ARTIST'S STATE OF MIND, YOUR APPEARANCE CAN REVEAL YOURS AND SEND OUT A MESSAGE TO EVERYONE WHO SEES YOU. YOUR STATE OF MIND MAY CHANGE FROM DAY TO DAY, OR YEAR TO YEAR, AND YOUR CLOTHES WILL REFLECT IT. THIS PHENOMENON HAS PROVED MOST HELPFUL TO ME AS A PSYCHOANALYST IN UNDERSTANDING THE PERSON I'M TRYING TO HELP." ALEXANDER SYMONDS, M.D., "WHY YOU DRESS THE WAY YOU DO," THIS WEEK, MAY 27, 1962, P. 18.

III. WHAT IS IMMODEST APPAREL??? (IT CAN BE SEEN FROM WHAT HAS ALREADY BEEN PRESENTED, BUT LET US LIST SOME SPECIFICALLY.)

- A. MIXED SWIMMING
- B. SHORTS AND FORM FITTING SLACKS (SOME SITUATIONS WHERE SLACKS ARE PERMISSABLE)
- C. SHORT SKIRTS
- D. PLUNGING NECKLINES, BACKS, SHEER FABRICS.

IV. SINS COMMITTED.

- A. MT. 5:28—"BUT I SAY UNTO YOU, THAT WHOSOEVER LOOKETH ON A WOMAN TO LUST AFTER HER HATH COMMITTED ADULTERY WITH HER ALREADY IN HIS HEART."

LK. 17:1,2—"THEN SAID HE UNTO THE DISCIPLES, IT IS IMPOSSIBLE BUT THAT OFFENCES WILL COME: BUT WOE UNTO HIM, THROUGH WHOM THEY COME! IT WERE BETTER FOR HIM THAT A MILLSTONE WERE HANGED ABOUT HIS NECK, AND HE CAST INTO THE SEA, THAN THAT HE SHOULD OFFEND ONE OF THESE LITTLE ONES."

- B. I TIMOTHY 2:9—"IN LIKE MANNER ALSO, THAT WOMEN ADORN THEMSELVES IN MODEST APPAREL, WITH SHAMEFACEDNESS AND SOBRIETY. . ." (SOME ARE WEARING DRESSES IN WORSHIP TODAY THAT COULD NOT BE WORN ON THE STREETS OF MOSCOW.)
- C. INFLUENCE—

V. OBJECTIONS:

- A. MODESTY IS RELATIVE.

- WHAT IS MODEST NOW WAS IMMODEST 50 YEARS AGO; THUS SOME FEEL IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO DRAW A LINE AND SAY THAT EVERYTHING UP TO IT IS MODEST AND EVERYTHING BEYOND IT IS IMMODEST.
 - CARRY IT TO ITS CONCLUSION—COMPLETE NUDITY WOULD BE MODEST IF ACCEPTED CUSTOM.
 - THE LINE—HOWEVER A WOMAN MAY DRESS THAT CAUSES OR INVITES SEXUAL INTEREST IN HER ON THE PART OF THE MALE OBSERVER, IS IMMODEST AND WHAT DOES NOT CAUSE IT AND DOES NOT INVITE IT IS MODEST.
- IF WHAT MANY ARE WEARING TODAY IS MODEST, WHAT WOULD IMMODESTY BE?
- YOU REALIZE IMMODESTY OF WHAT YOU WEAR AS YOU TUG AT YOUR SKIRTS TO KEEP THEM DOWN.
- YOU REALIZE THE IMMODESTY OF SHORTS AS YOU SLAP AT YOUR WIND-BLOWN SKIRT TO KEEP FROM SHOWING WHAT YOU FREELY DISPLAY IN YOUR SHORTS.

B. NO ONE THINKS ANYTHING ABOUT IT.

1. NOT EVEN TRUE OF WOMEN--SANTA MARIA.

2. STATISTICS DO NOT BEAR IT OUT--MORE ASSAULTS IN SUMMER.

A. IN JUNE, 1962, J. EDGAR HOOVER SAID: "ACCORDING TO SEASONAL TRENDS, FORCIBLE RAPE WILL RISE APPROXIMATELY 16 PER CENT ABOVE ITS ANNUAL AVERAGE DURING THE NEXT SEVERAL WEEKS.

B. PSYCHOLOGIST ALBERT ELLIS--MORE SEXUAL OFFENSES ARE COMMITTED IN SUMMER THAN DURING ANY OTHER SEASON OF THE YEAR, (TWO PAGES LATER) . . . SUMMER IN OUR COUNTRY IS, OF COURSE, THE TIME THAT WOMEN WEAR LITTLE CLOTHING. THEY APPEAR ON BEACHES IN STATES OF NEAR-NUDITY, AND ARE MOST LIKELY TO BE AVAILABLE. IT IS HARDLY SURPRISING THAT UNDER THESE CONDITIONS A MAN'S MIND AND SPIRIT WILL BE RECEPTIVE TO SEXUAL ATTRACTION.

C. MEN JUST HAVE DIRTY MINDS.

CONCLUSION:

I. I PETER 2:11--DEARLY BELOVED, I BESEECH YOU AS STRANGERS AND PILGRIMS, ABSTAIN FROM FLESHLY LUSTS WHICH WAR AGAINST THE SOUL. . .

II. THE BIBLE TEACHES THAT CHRISTIAN WOMEN ARE TO BE DIFFERENT. THEY ARE DIFFERENT BECAUSE THEY HAVE PLEDGED THEMSELVES TO A HIGHER CODE AND A NOBLER STANDARD OF LIVING THAN THE COMMON WOMAN. THE WORLD EXPECTS MORE OF A WOMAN WHO CALLS HERSELF A CHRISTIAN; AND IF THEY DO NOT GET IT, THEY CRY THAT SHE IS A HYPOCRITE. BECAUSE OF THIS, THEY MUST SEE THAT CHRISTIAN WOMEN DO HAVE A HIGHER STANDARD OF MORALITY.

III. THERE IS A STORY THAT A FATHER ONCE TOOK HIS LITTLE GIRL OUT INTO A MEADOW. IT WAS A HOT DAY, AND HE LAY DOWN UNDER A BEAUTIFUL TREE. THE LITTLE CHILD RAN ABOUT GATHERING FLOWERS AND BROUGHT THEM TO HER FATHER SAY, "PRETTY, PRETTY!" SOON THE FATHER FELL ASLEEP AND THE CHILD WANDERED AWAY. WHEN HE AWOKE, HIS FIRST THOUGHT WAS, "WHERE IS MY CHILD?" HE SHOUTED AT THE TOP OF HIS VOICE, BUT ALL HE HEARD WAS HIS VOICE ECHOING BACK. RUNNING TO A NEARBY HILL, HE LOOKED AROUND BUT SHE WAS NOT TO BE SEEN. THEN, HE LOOKED OVER A NEARBY CLIFF, AND THERE UPON THE ROCKS AND BUSHES BELOW HE SAW THE MANGLED BODY OF HIS BELOVED LITTLE GIRL. EVER AFTER, HE ACCUSED HIMSELF OF BEING THE KILLER OF HIS LITTLE CHILD, BECAUSE WHILE HE WAS ASLEEP, HIS CHILD WANDERED OVER THE PRECIPICE.

HOW MANY FATHERS AND MOTHERS ARE NOW SLEEPING WHILE THEIR CHILDREN WANDER OVER CLIFFS AND ARE FALLING INTO INDIFFERENCE AND SIN? NOW IS THE TIME TO TRAIN CHILDREN IN CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLES. NEXT YEAR MAY BE WAY TOO LATE. WHAT A TRAGIC DAY IT WILL BE FOR YOU, IF YOU SHOULD AWAKEN FROM YOUR SPIRITUAL INDIFFERENCE TO FIND THAT WHILE YOU WERE SLEEPING YOUR CHILD WANDERED AWAY.