

SCRIPTURE READING: Deuteronomy 22:8.

INTRODUCTION:

1. 1 Timothy 2:8-10 and the three guiding principles of proper dress.
 - A. Dressing “modestly” means, “dressing or behaving so as to avoid impropriety or indecency, esp. to avoid attracting sexual attention.”
 - B. Dressing “discreetly” means being “careful, judicious, circumspect” in our choice of clothing. The original Greek word is *sophrosune*. It means to dress with “good sense ... literally *soundness of mind ... sanity*” (Lenski). “Inherent in this ... word is the use of ‘good judgment’ in the matter of dress” (Fee).
 - C. Why is putting far more emphasis on inward than outward beauty key to adorning ourselves with proper clothing? Because dressing properly requires more than modesty and discretion. It also requires us to keep clothes, even modest and discreet clothes, in their proper place. If we focus on adorning our body to the neglect of more important matters, we are still far from properly dressed.
2. One thing we must think carefully about when we choose our clothing is how our clothing might effect other people. Deuteronomy 22:8; Matthew 18:7.
3. Without question, people are profoundly effected by what they see. 2 Sam. 11:2-5; Matt. 14:3-11; 5:27-29.
4. Without question, brethren have been profoundly effected by what they’ve been seeing at worship. Examples: The elders last Sunday night before the business meeting; the ladies last Tuesday morning in the hospital room.
5. In this morning’s lesson, I want to talk about dressing properly. We realize that for some, the following may be new. You just need to be taught and you’ll change. We also realize that for others, we ought to know better and it is past time for us to do better.



DISCUSSION:

1. We need to think of four groups of people when choosing our clothing.
 - A. Other people.
 - B. Their spouses, parents.
 - C. God. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; 10:31-11:1. Examples: teaching Bible class; distributing the Lord’s Supper.
 - D. Ourselves. Yes, it is their problem but it’s not just their problem. It’s also our problem if we dress provocatively or if we enable provocative dress – buying, allowing, saying nothing, etc.
2. Cleavage is provocative. The Modesty Survey. “Showing any cleavage is immodest. Strongly agree 36.6%; Agree 33.8%; Neutral. 14.7%; Disagree 12.7%; Strongly disagree 2.3%.” I can go down the list and tell you which ladies show cleavage and it’s because I’m a man, not a dirty old man. I dare say most of the men of this congregation could do the exact same thing.
3. Why do people dress provocatively?
 - A. Some are naïve.
 - B. Some want to be provocative.
 - C. Some want to dress fashionably more than they want to dress properly. I’m convinced many women dress to please other women, not men. The key for many women is fashion and fashion is often far from modest. It is possible to dress properly and attractively, if not fashionably. Classy modesty is timeless. The Modesty Survey. “Girls can dress attractively without being immodest. Strongly Agree 78.3%; Agree 19.1%; Neutral 1.9%; Disagree 0.7%; Strongly Disagree 0.1%.”
4. If you can look down and see cleavage, so can we. Please cover yourself. Hosea 2:9; Genesis 3:8-11, 21; Exodus 20:26.
5. Please don’t force the elders take additional steps.
6. Please be careful in how you approach people. There is judgment involved. Humbly focus on how clothing effects other people.
7. The tract, “Dressing For Spiritual Success.”

CONCLUSION:

If you could say one thing to your sisters in Christ about modesty, what would it be? The Modesty Survey.

Age 24 Sisters in Christ, you really have no concept of the struggles that guys face on a daily basis. Please, please, please take a higher standard in the ways you dress. True, we men are responsible for our thoughts and actions before the Lord, but it is such a blessing when we know that we can spend time with our sisters in Christ, enjoying their fellowship without having to constantly be on guard against ungodly thoughts brought about by the inappropriate ways they sometimes dress. In 1 Corinthians 12 the apostle Paul presents believers as the members of one body - we have to work together. Every Christian has a special role to play in the body of Christ. That goal is to bring glory to the Savior through an obedient, unified body of believers - please don't hurt that unity by dressing in ways that may tempt your brothers in Christ to stumble.

Age 26 In high school, the place of greatest temptation toward lust was my church. Girls wore things to church that they thought were fashionable and dressy, but they would not have passed the dress code at my public high school. Church should NEVER be a guy's greatest source of temptation, in any way. Please, be especially careful when picking out your dress clothes for church, and make sure they are modest when sitting ... not just standing in front of the mirror.

Age 16 As a Christian guy, modesty is SO attractive. I don't mean attractive in a lustful way, but that to see a girl living out God's standards in her life really is beautiful. And you have no idea just how much you would be helping your Christian brothers by being modest. We're not trying to blame you for our impurity, that's between us and God, but you can do so much to encourage and help us in our battle by being modest.

Age 16 Please don't take modesty lightly. As your brother in Christ I value the relationship that I will have with my wife someday. When I am tempted because of you I lose a part of myself that I am trying to save for her. When I'm tempted because of you I become that much more accepting of the perversions in the world. When you remain pure and modest, my life is made so much easier. Instead of watching to ensure that I don't sin I can focus on you as a person and fellow follower of Christ. I appreciate modesty more than you'll ever know. Please, show respect of yourself and of me and be modest.

Age 17 There are enough attacks the devil launches at us in the area of lust as it is without having to, as often in my experience, stare at the floor the duration of Sunday School.

Age 15 This really is a hard challenge that we all must overcome and I would appreciate if our sisters in Christ were the one group of girls that we could count on to help us with this challenge.

Age 18 For those of you trying to be modest, thank you, thank you, thank you! I certainly notice it and am grateful for it. For those of you who aren't sure about modesty, it is hard enough for us guys as it is; please don't make it harder.

Age 21 Thank you to all my sisters who seek to please God with modest clothing and behavior. You really show love and care for others when you dress modestly ... There are some especially modest, attractive women in my church who realize that their brothers need help in this area. We men don't appreciate and thank you sisters enough for the thoughtfulness and work you put into dressing modestly. Please keep it up. Not only is your modesty helpful in keeping your brothers from sin, but it is also an attractive quality in a future wife (Proverbs 31:30).

Age 17 It's appreciated more than you know. You have no idea how much I appreciate my sisters in Christ who dress modestly, because I can be around them without having to struggle to keep my thoughts pure. And I find girls who dress modestly more attractive than those who dress immodestly. It speaks volumes about the kind of person you are. It might be a cliché, but real beauty IS on the inside.

Age 16 The female body is a powerful gift, intended for one man. Just as you wouldn't give your most prized possession to everyone on the street, so you shouldn't share the secrets of your body with any man other than your husband. Modesty will attract a man who is suitable to be your husband. Just as moths flock to a candle flame, so guys will flock to an immodest girl. But are you going to be satisfied with a moth when you can have a butterfly?

Age 22 Modesty is only partly about you. The benefits you receive from it are a secondary effect. "When you build a new house, you shall make a parapet for your roof, that you may not bring the guilt of blood upon your house, if anyone should fall from it." (Deuteronomy 22:8) My sister has often heard from other girls, "It seems the whole point to this modesty thing is to try and hide the fact that I'm female. If I do that, how will a guy ever notice me?" In my opinion, modesty is no more about hiding the fact that a woman is a woman than having a parapet around a roof is about hiding the fact that the roof is a roof. The point of the parapet is so that no one falls from the roof and dies bringing guilt upon the homeowner. The point of modesty is so that no man's soul falls from the grace of God and dies bringing guilt upon the woman. Is it true that you can't keep all men from lusting? Yes, just in the same way that you can't keep a man from jumping off of a roof with a parapet. The parapet is there to keep men that don't want to jump from falling. If a man wants to jump, you can do all you can to stop him, but if he forces his way

past and jumps anyway, the guilt is on his head, not yours. It's the same with modesty (Deuteronomy 22:23-29). So the question of, "What is modest and what isn't?" can be likened to, "How tall of a parapet should be put around a roof?" The wrong way to judge this choice is by asking, "How low can I make the parapet and still fulfill the requirements?" The question that should be carefully asked is, "How tall should it be so that it will protect those on the roof?" The first question may be answered with a 12-inch-tall rail or by a six-foot wall that has four-foot gaps between the slats. Technically speaking, either way, the roof has a parapet. The problem is, these railings might actually do more to cause someone to stumble off the roof than if there was no wall at all. There is no safety. The second question could be answered by a nine-foot, solid-brick wall ensuring that even Goliath would have a hard time forcing himself over the railing if he were so inclined. This would fulfill both requirements, but it's obviously a bit overkill. Instead of a roof, you've got a third story without a roof. You don't have to hide the fact that your house has a roof or that you are a woman. You don't have to build a nine-foot wall or wear a gigantic paper bag over your body. But you do have to do what you can to protect the lives of your guests and the souls of your brothers. In this, you are protected. If someone falls, the guilt is not on your head. You show honor to your God, your father, your husband, your children, the Body of Christ, and yourself. Your modesty shines. Even if a guy doesn't know what it is, he will notice that there's something different about you. That's the good kind of attention. (Modified).

Age 22 God cares more about the way you dress than I do. Do it not for me, but for Him. Also, you can't clean up an internal problem by applying external solutions. Make sure your heart is right as your clothing changes or ultimately it won't make a difference and you'll be back where you were from the beginning.

Age 19 I think, based on what some girls have told me, that a lot of girls are so concerned about the way they dress because they compare themselves to other girls, not as much because they are concerned about looking attractive to the boys. If this is true, please stop judging each other and encouraging each other to buy more clothes and to spend so much time and money on influencing your appearances. Character, personality, and self-confidence in one's worth are so much more important for being an exemplary Christian, and they are also very attractive to Christian guys.

Age 19 If any guy ever tells you that he thinks that something is immodest, you should probably listen to him, because it's incredibly awkward to tell a girl that, so he's probably really bothered.

Age 30-34 If a girl would think in terms of a man being someone's husband, perhaps that would help her not want to draw the eyes of another woman's husband and a little girl's dad. She would see that she can actually give a man a moment's relief from his constant fight for faithfulness to God and to his future wife. A moment to lower his guard and catch his breath again is really refreshing.

Age 40-49 Don't let your taste for "fashion" or desire to be accepted or fit in with other girls be your guide. Even the nicest girls seem to be doing so many things now in the name of "fashion" or looking "cute" which they are simply borrowing from the world's ideas of what looks good. Many of these things can be a stumbling block to guys. You run the risk of attracting the wrong kind of attention and portraying messages about yourself that may not be true.