

## Modest Apparel

*"In like manner that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefastness and sobriety, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly raiment; but (which becometh women professing godliness) through good works" (1 Tim. 2:9).*

Paul has shown that men are to be leaders in spiritual realms, praying in every place *"lifting up holy hands"* without wrath or disputing. And just as the man is to be sober and orderly, so women are also to express the same piety. First Timothy 2:9 has often: 1) been used to prohibit something which was not the object of the apostle and 2) has been pressed to a limited use of the word *"modest"* when the passage says much more than sometimes it is thought it does.

Our Pentecostal friends use 1 Timothy 2:9 to condemn the wearing of gold and jewelry. It is wise to consider Peter's writing along the same line regarding the dress and behavior of godly women. *"Whose adorning let it not be the outward adorning of braiding the hair, and of wearing of jewels of gold, or of putting on apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in the incorruptible apparel of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price" (1 Pet. 3:4).* It is evident, from Peter's words, that strict prohibition of wearing jewelry and gold was not the thrust of the apostle's words, for were that so, the prohibition would apply equally to wearing clothes, for if the words *"whose adorning let it not be the outward adorning ... of wearing of jewels of gold"* is adamant prohibition against wearing said items; the phrase which follows *"... or of putting on apparel"* would be equally so. Yet, no one understands Peter to condemn the wearing of clothes! Peter shows that the real adornment of women is not the jewelry they have nor clothes they wear, but the adornment of women is that adornment with which they dress their spirit. Peter, along with Paul shows that the greatest adornment a woman can have (comparable to a man's *"holy hands"*) is that of good works, coupled with a meek and quiet spirit.

The expression *"modest apparel"* is oftentimes placed in contrast with the brief attire so prevalent in modern society, and it is proper to so use the phrase. If the skimpy attire worn by the "enlightened woman" of today constitutes *"modest,"* pray tell what the woman will have to further remove for their dress to become immodest?! The short, brief, tight, revealing, suggestive dress which many (a majority?) of women wear today is not the apparel of the godly women who desires to please God more in her dress than to dress to make herself desired (lusted after) by man. There is a flip side to this passage, however. Short, skimpy dress is not modest, but on the

other hand, many garments are costly and ostentatious; *"immodest"* attire for women professing godliness. And, to our Pentecostal friends who use 1 Timothy 2:9 to forbid wearing gold rings and jewelry under any circumstance, the same verse forbids costly raiment. I have seen many such women whose dress covers them up, but which obviously are expensive, sparing no dollars in the purchase of them. If 1 Timothy 2:9 forbids of wearing of any gold jewelry at any time, then Pentecostal ladies should make their dresses of burlap, or in the language of yesteryear, make all their dresses out of "flour sacks" (for those who live in our enlightened age but on whom this expression is "lost," during the depression companies which sold flour would use cotton material from which women would fashion clothes for their entire family).

We should always remember that our body is a *"temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have from God? and ye are not your own; for ye were bought with a price: glorify God therefore in your body"* (1 Corinthians 6:19f). We should not abuse our body nor sin against our body by dressing it in such a way as to dishonor God whose temple it is! It matters how a woman (or man) dresses. The most important dress is not the way one dresses the body but how one adorns the spirit! The meek and quiet spirit is of great price!

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