

The Christian And Modest Clothing

By

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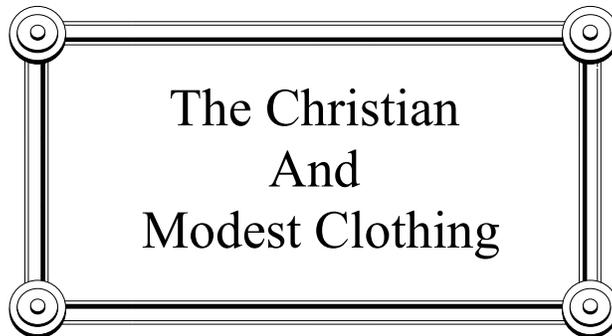
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Children of God are to be holy (I Peter 1:15-16), seeking things which are above (Colossians 3:1). As Christians live pure lives they are not to be conformed to the world (Romans 12:2). This lesson on modest clothing is designed to help the student to identify immodest apparel, and discover what God's word teaches about modesty. Surely, if the world can recognize what is not godly, Christians, with the assistance of God's word can determine what is modest and contributes to the purity of life and example of God's children.

I **CLOTHING HAS A LOT TO SAY ABOUT THE WEARER.** Dirty clothes may tell of the labor that the wearer has engaged in, while dirty, ragged clothes may speak of the poverty of the wearer. Clothing which costs hundreds of dollars

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testify to the affluence of the wearer, but clothing costing very little may speak of the limited income of the individual.

Military uniforms tells us which branch of service the wearer is in while civilian uniforms identify policemen, firemen, postmen, and a host of other workers or servants of society.

Clothing talks, and speaks volumes about the wearers' work, financial status, pride, and even declares one's spirituality.

Proverbs 7:7-10, "And I beheld among the simple ones, I discerned among the youths, a young man void of understanding. Passing through the street near her corner; And he went the way to her house, in the twilight, in the evening of the day, in the middle of the night and in the darkness. And behold, there met him a woman with the **ATTIRE OF A HARLOT**, and wily of heart."

The clothing of this woman identified her as a harlot or a prostitute, an immoral woman. As clothing identified individuals in the days of Solomon, the same is true today.

In a front page story, a reporter for the Nashville Banner (9/16/74), tells of a section of Nashville where, "you can get anything you

want there — drugs, booze, and broads.” While still daylight, “prostitutes already are out on the street in force. They easily are recognizable: heavy make up, skin-tight pants and revealing mini-skirts.” Clothes advertise and identify. They can identify one as a citizen of God’s kingdom, or Satan’s kingdom.

The spirituality and dedication of many congregations is attested to today by the type of clothing worn in the worship services, during fellowships, and during periods of congregational recreation.

II WHAT IS THE PURPOSE BEHIND CERTAIN TYPES OF CLOTHING?

Mary Quaint, dress designer, who is known as the “mother of the miniskirt” has been quoted in *Newsweek* magazine (11/13/1967) as saying, that mini clothes are symbolic of those girls who do not want to wait until dark to seduce a man into bed.

“Fashion designer Mary Quaint, mother of the miniskirt, tells it as it is, or at least the way she sees it: “Am I the only woman who has ever wanted to go to bed with a man in the afternoon? Any law-abiding female, it used to be thought, waits until dark. Well, there are lots of girls who don’t want to wait. Mini-clothes are symbolic of them.” (*Newsweek*, November 13, 1967).

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The purpose of fashion is identified by Mary Quaint in the March 1970 issue of *McCalls* magazine. She is quoted in an interview as saying, "I mean today's woman is proud of her body. She knows about dieting. She doesn't need clothes with built-in shape. She is the shape. And so she wants clothes that just sort of flow over her. She dresses to say I enjoy my body, I am sexy, I like men, I enjoy life." She further declares that clothing is worn for "decoration, provocation, and look at me. A lot of look-at-me-about-it."

Consider the definition of "sexy." 1) Spicy or racy with references to or portrayals of sexually stimulating matter. 2) Sexually suggestive: erotically stimulating." (*Webster's Third New International Dictionary*).

Several years ago a survey, concerning the clothing girls wear, was taken among a group of high school boys and revealed the following information.

- Does fashion use sex appeal? — 96%, Yes.
- Can a girl tempt a boy by the way she dresses? — 98%, Yes.
- Do you believe boys are more stimulated by sight than girls? — 92%, Yes.
- Do you believe the passions of boys are:

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- ⇒ 1) More easily aroused than girls?
- ⇒ 2) Less easily aroused?
- ⇒ 3) Same?

* 87% answered “1)” More easily aroused than girls.

- Do you feel that girls really understand the problem of immodest apparel?

— 50%, No
— 50%, Yes

- Which part of the female body as seen in public most quickly arouses your emotions?

- ⇒ 1. 60%, legs.
- ⇒ 2. 36%, bust.
- ⇒ 3. 2%, face.

- If you were married, would you want other men and boys to lust after your wife?

— 96%, No.

- If she dressed like most girls do today, would most boys be tempted to lust after her?

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— 77%, Yes.

Several years ago while in Memphis, Tennessee, I removed (with the manager's permission) a poster which is reproduced below.

Super Star Productions Presents

A HOT PANTS DANCE

Friday - Dec. 3

9 to 1

At the Second Presbyterian Church Gym

Popular at Goodlet

Featuring - **POST**

ALL GIRLS wearing HOT PANTS get in

at 1/2 price

\$1.50 - regular

.75 - HOT PANTS

COME AND ENJOY THE SCENERY

I must admit that I was amazed at the outright honesty in this advertisement. Please note the last line, "Come and enjoy the scenery." This statement explodes the often used justifications for immodest apparel, "I wear this type of apparel for comfort, or to keep cool."

 **III** DOES ABBREVIATED, SKIMPY, OR OTHER
-WISE REVEALING CLOTHING CREATE A
PROBLEM IN OUR SOCIETY? "Dear Ann
Landers: I have had enough of you. I am a 17-

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year-old boy who thinks your advice to the girl whose steady has 'wandering hands' is all wet. Instead of telling the girl to give the eight-handed idiot 'a clonk in the chops' or how ever it is you worded it, why don't you put the blame where it belongs - on the girl? No guy in his right mind ever starts to paw a perfect lady. The chick who suddenly finds a guy's hands all over her has asked for it one way or another. Sometimes it's not in words, it's the way a girl gets herself together. The miniskirts are a pretty good eyeful when a girl is standing up. When she is sitting down, it's like she is wearing a bikini. No normal guy can look at all that flesh and not get ideas. Transparent blouses and sweaters, and jeans that fit like sausage casings are worn to get guys excited, and when a normal guy gets excited, he wants to do more than just look . . .

When the Portuguese rebels took over the cruise ship Santa Maria it is interesting to note the change in the behavior of the American women who were on board. According to the dispatch, those women were afraid that the swarthy rebels might have designs; so they left off wearing "enticing" clothing. It seems that the world recognizes what "Christians" do not. These women quit appearing in shorts and halters, and quit going swimming in the pool - until they were

satisfied that the rebels had no designs upon them.

The hijacking of T.W.A. Flight 847, June 2, 1985: "The hi-jacking of T.W.A. Flight 847 was, until President Reagan's surgery in the news daily. One news story, carried by the *Houston Chronicle* on June 23, reported that one lady passenger was being molested by a hi-jacker. Fortunately for her, he was restrained by their leader. The leader, after restraining his fellow hi-jacker explained to her that the short pants she was wearing was inappropriate and had conveyed to the terrorist that such advances might be welcomed by her. A few minutes later he brought her a blanket and told her to wrap it around her waist. The passenger reported that, in spite of the 100 degree temperature, she kept the blanket on for the rest of the ordeal." (Quoted by David Roper in *Waymarks*, August 4, 1985).

IV **HOW DOES THE WORLD VIEW ABBREVIATED CLOTHING?** Note the news releases which have been gleaned from newspapers and various publications over the past years.

- ♦ CAIRO — Miniskirts Banned — Police Chief Zaky Elag said Saturday girls who

wear miniskirts in public will be charged with indecent exposure and offending public morality. (*Dallas Morning News*)

- ◆ BERLIN — AP - The U.S. Army's Berlin command has declared war on shorts and other casual attire for American dependents on the garrison. Officers and enlisted men were told in a special directive that their wives and children should wear appropriate dress while in public. (*The Nashville Tennessean*).

- ◆ Miniskirts banned in UGANDA. "The banning of minis, maxis with a V-shaped slit in front and hot pants was received with mixed feelings all over the country. While many elderly people were jovial some young women were not feeling too happy . . . Mr. Benon K. Batwaza stated that the banned dresses were a real shame to Uganda. (*Ugana Argus*).

- ◆ Under the headline, "Dress Smart, Not Embarrassingly," *The Houston Post* carried an AP story on the front page of its paper of July 16, 1971, which read in part: "Criticized for wearing hot pants, Miss Bangkok has vowed she won't do it again. Trouble awaited leggy, 19-year-old Supak Likkul when she returned home this week after taking second place in the Miss International contest in Long Beach,

California. She got off the plane in a smashing hot pants outfit. What had been planned as a warm welcome turned chilly. Her mother told her that nice Thai girls don't wear such outfits. Society columnists offered some "catty" remarks and a lady wrote a letter to one newspaper saying, "I thought she was a sweet, nice and very lovable girl before she went away. What happened to her? Did she catch a disease from the girls abroad?" (*The Houston Post*)

V While the world is not the Christian's standard, these statements surely established the fact that God's children can not be the proper example for (Matthew 5:16), nor be able to convert (Mark 16:15) non-Christians while wearing clothing that those of the world considers to be inappropriate attire.

WHAT DOES GOD'S WORD TEACH ABOUT MODEST CLOTHING?

At the creation of man and woman the Bible tells us that, "And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed" (Genesis 2:25).

After they ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, their eyes were

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opened and they knew that they were naked. Upon this discovery the Bible states that they “sewed fig-leaves together, and made themselves aprons” (Genesis 3:6-7).

Aprons is the Hebrew word *chagorah* and is translated girdle or loin cloth. It is evident from pictures taken in Africa that the loin cloth covers very little of the human body.

Evidently the loin cloths were not sufficient for Moses states that “Jehovah God made for Adam and for his wife coats of skins, and clothed them” (Genesis 3:21). The word *coat* from the Hebrew *kutoneth* is translated tunic, a long shirt-like garment. The words *chagorah* (number 1 above) and *kutoneth* are used in contrast in Exodus 28:4 showing that there is a difference.

In the Old Testament it was considered nakedness when one uncovered the thighs (Exodus 28:40-42).

Consider the example of King David (2 Samuel 11:1 through 12:15). David was not “just a dirty old man” (Acts 13:22).

The New Testament teaches modesty in dress. The apostle Paul wrote to Timothy, “In like manner, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefastness and sobriety; not with braided hair, and gold or

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pearls or costly raiment; but (which becometh women professing godliness) through good works" (I Timothy 2:9-10).

In the sermon on the mount, recorded in Matthew 5,6 and 7, Jesus said, "Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt not commit adultery: but I say unto you, that every one that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart" (Matthew 5:27-28).

Some will lust after the opposite sex regardless of what they wear. The apostle Peter speaks of those who have eyes full of adultery, in II Peter 2:14. In this case there is no blame placed upon the individual who is the object of lust.

If the individual is dressed or acts in a manner which creates that lust then they are guilty of lasciviousness. See the information on this term in "F" below.

Writing to the churches of Galatia the apostle Paul identified activities which were classified as works of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-21). Paul further stated that, "they who practise such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (Galatians 5:21). Numbered among these works of the flesh is lasciviousness. Translated from the Greek *aselgeia*, it is

defined as:

- ⇒ Licentiousness (Lewd, Unchaste)
- ⇒ Debauchery (Seduction from virtue)
- ⇒ Sensuality (Lewd)
- ⇒ Indecent conduct (Morally offensive)
- ⇒ Licentious desires (Lawlessness, Lewd)
- ⇒ Lewd (Exhibiting or preceding from lust)
(**A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature**, by William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich).

The dictionary defines lasciviousness as, “1. Inclined to lechery (1:inordinate indulgence in sexual activity . . .) Lewd, Lustful 2. Tending to arouse sexual desire.” (**Webster’s Third New International Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged, Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc.**).

Turn back and compare the definition of “sexy” with the definition of lasciviousness. In view of Romans 12:2; Colossians 3:1-11; Matthew 5:16; Matthew 6:33; Matthew 5:27-28, what should the Christians relationship be to lasciviousness and being “sexy?”

The problem is not really immodest apparel — the problem is with attitude, whether the individual will be submissive to the word of God, or live according to its

desires. Too many Christians are smitten with the “I will do my own thing” syndrome, and this attitude has produced and continues to produce generations which do not recognize the difference between nudity and modesty.

WHERE LIES THE BLAME?

The blame for this attitude rests upon:

a. The Home, b. Elders, and, c. Preachers.

THE HOME — To be a “Pom Pom” girl, cheerleader, majorette, a member of the girls marching battalion, or other organizations which appear in the public eye in various stages of nudity, permission comes **first** from the **home**.

It is beyond comprehension how husbands and father can allow their wives and daughters to appear in public dressed in apparel which exposes the flesh of their loved ones, and brings lustful and ungodly comments from those of the world.

It would be good to review again what is involved in being “sexy.” Is this a desirable characteristic for a son or daughter of God?

ELDERS — are to exercise the spiritual oversight over the flock (I Peter 5:2), and are responsible for feeding those who are under

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their care (Acts 20:28). In view of the fact that they will give an accounting to the chief shepherd (Hebrews 13:17), they have the responsibility to see that the congregation is taught God's standard of morality which includes the Biblical teaching on modesty. After the teaching is done the elders have the further responsibility to lead and encourage the congregation to follow God's way which leads to a life of purity. Guidelines should be set by elders to govern congregational activities (picnics, outings, recreational activities, retreats, camps, etc.), and these guidelines should include a Christian standard for apparel.

One of the most effective ways for elders to help the congregation understand God's teaching concerning modesty is to ask the preacher to preach God's truth on the subject. Following the lesson, the eldership can commend the truth to the congregation.

PREACHERS — must preach the whole counsel of God. This involves **ALL** of God's word, even those subjects which are not popular with the Lord's people (II Timothy 4:1-5). In preaching, the herald of God does not seek to please men (Galatians 1:10), but his preaching has the object of preaching God's power of salvation (Romans 1:16) in such a way that souls may be saved, and Jehovah God be pleased. ■