

**MODEST AND IMMODEST APPAREL BY GOD’S STANDARD**  
**1Tim.2:9,10; 1Pet.3:3,4**  
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**I. INTRODUCTION**

1. From the biblical principle that nakedness is wrong in God’s sight, as per our previous lesson, “Scriptural Concept Of Nakedness,” application must be made about how much is sufficient and adequate to cover the shame of nakedness.
2. God does establish some standards – not necessarily in inches of length or yards of material, but in specific words – words which cover the matter, not only of overexposure of the body, i.e., under dress in a provocative way, but also of over dress, i.e., in ostentatious display, or overly expensive and elaborate dress of the body for show and attention of the wrong kind.
3. In this lesson we shall attempt to learn and to establish what is modest and immodest apparel by God’s standard.
4. We must keep in mind that what matters is what God has to say about it, not what man thinks.

**II. DISCUSSION**

**A. 1<sup>ST</sup> TWO N.T. PASSAGES WHICH ESTABLISH GOD’S STANDARD BY A “NOT-BUT” CONSTRUCTION.**

1. 1Tim.2:9,10 and 1Pet.3:3,4 address this matter in a “not-but” construction contrasting the two, i.e., modest and immodest apparel – wherein we offer a preliminary summary of the two passages.
  - a. What is forbidden in each passage is outward, over dressing, or an ostentatious display in expensive, elaborate dress for the purpose of show, etc.
  - b. What is required of “women professing godliness with good works” in each passage is that they “**adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefastness and sobriety,**” “**even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.**”
2. In a “not-but” construction, such as both Paul and Peter use in the matter of modest apparel, stress is to be placed on one thing as

opposed to the other, because of the relative value or importance of one over the other.

- a. “Not-but” constructions are common in the N.T., but are not designed to be a total exclusion, else we would have to accept the conclusion that in 1Pet.3:3 that Peter was forbidding the “putting on of apparel” which would be a command to be naked.
  - (1) Furthermore, it is not the “plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold,” in and of itself, that is wrong.
- b. Jno.6:27 illustrates how “not-but” constructions are used.
  - (1) Note that Jesus is not forbidding working for food that nourishes our physical bodies.
  - (2) If so, there would be a contradiction. For in other passages he requires us to work for such things.
  - (3) The condemnation in Jno.6:27 by a “not-but” construction is their following him for physical food rather than spiritual.
  - (4) Cf. 2Th.3:10,11; Eph.4:28.
- c. In 1Tim.2:9,10 Paul uses the same construction in language that is almost exactly parallel with Peter. The “not-but” in 1Tim.2:9,10 is between the braiding of hair, wearing of expensive jewelry and “good works” “which becometh women professing godliness.”
- d. Both 1Tim.2:9,10 and 1Pet.3:3,4 deal with outward, ostentatious, elaborate, expensive dress – overdress is wrong.
- e. Both texts deal with modest apparel from the standpoint of overdress or ostentatiousness and under dress or exposure of the body in a provocative way.
  - (1) “Under dress” summarizes the insufficient covering of the body, such as the case of Adam and Eve when they had inadequately clothed themselves.
    - (a) This is true whether or not the person doing it so considers it!
  - (2) As to the latter, i.e., “under dress”, Prov.7:10 pictures the scene of “a young man, void of understanding,” being seduced by a harlot and refers to her as having “the attire of a harlot.”
    - (a) She was so covered or uncovered as to leave no doubt what her intentions were.

- (b) If a female does not want to be thought of as such, why dress so nearly like one as to possibly be mistaken for one?!
- (3) At least some county and state institutions recognize the effect “under dress” has on the opposite sex.
  - (a) At least some county jails and state prisons, if not all of them, have certain guide lines for the dress of visitors to such institutions.
  - (b) Such as: “Dress and conduct yourself in a professional manner. FEMALE VOLUNTEERS ARE NOT PERMITTED TO WEAR SHORTS OR TANK TOPS...”

**B. 2<sup>ND</sup> AN ANALYSIS OF THE STRUCTURE AND MEANING OF 1TIM.2:9,10.**

1. V.10, “...that women adorn themselves in modest apparel” (Gr. “en katastola kosmio”, literally means “in clothing orderly”) has to do with physical attire.
  - a. Vine, I, 32, “primarily to arrange, to put in order...Hence, to adorn...one’s person.”
2. Then, the negative phrase “not to adorn themselves” (V.9), which obviously has to do with “over dress” (ostentatiousness) first, before it is used by implication to the adorning of the soul “with good works,” (V.10).
3. Paul first uses three words which lay down broad based, general principles in reference to “clothing” (Gr. katastola).
  - a. The first word in the KJV is “modest” which is translated from the Gr. word “kosmio” – kos’-mee-os.
    - (1) This word in the Greek does not convey what our English word “modest” does.
    - (2) Our English word “modest” means “chaste, pure, decent, virtuous, not displaying one’s body” (Webster’s).
    - (3) This word in the Greek has to do with what is orderly, well arranged or suitable, to put in order.
  - b. The next word is “shamefastness” (Gr. “aidos” – ahee-doce’)
    - (1) It addresses the inner part of a woman and conveys the feeling that restrains from impropriety – a sense that “would always restrain a good man from an unworthy act...” (Trench, p.68.)

- (2) Trench says further, "...that 'shamefastness,' or prudence, which shrinks from overpassing the limits of womanly reserve and modesty, as well as from the dishonor which would justly attach thereto..."
  - (3) Vine, IV, 17: "a sense of shame, modesty, is used regarding the demeanor of women in the church, 1Tim.2:9. ... is that modesty which is 'fast' or rooted in the character"
  - (4) It has to do with the restraints of the woman who is unwilling to overstep the boundaries of what is proper, in God's sight that is.
  - (5) It is a sense of shame which causes a woman to dress in proper respect for the body and an avoidance of wrong exposure. Cf. Gen.3 – Adam and Eve.
- c. The third word Paul uses to regulate proper clothing is "sobriety" (Gr. sophrosune – so-fros-oo'-nay)
- (1) This word mean soberness, serious minded, soundness of mind, as opposed to frivolous, or worldly.
  - (2) Vine, IV, 44: "sound judgment practically expresses the meaning; it is that habitual inner self-government, with its constant rein on all the passions and desires, which would hinder the temptation to these from arising, or at all events from arising in such strength as would overbear the checks and barriers which shamefastness opposed to it."
4. He next presents a "not-but" construction contrasting outward "over dress" with "inner dress". Cf. 1Pet.3:3,4.
- a. Notice carefully that the "not-but" construction is not contrasting "good works" with "modest," "shamefastness" and "sobriety." That it not how the sentence is structured.
  - b. Rather, the "not-but" construction is a contrast between "over dress" and Godly demeanor.
  - c. Outer dress, itself, is not condemned; but elaborate, ostentatious dress is.
  - d. The emphasis should be on "good works." Greater care and attention and behavior rather than the mundane vanities.
  - e. Remember that when Peter used the "not-but" construction it was a contrast between "outer dress" and the adoring of the "hidden man of the heart with a meek and quiet spirit."
5. Finally, dress and behavior should be governed and directed by that "...which becometh women professing godliness..."

- a. I have yet to see a woman, or a man, have problems with observing proper attire who really understands God's word and whose lives really stress "Godly" character, for the simple reason that character generally governs dress and, conversely, dress generally indicates character.

### **III. CONCLUSION. FINAL THOUGHTS IN APPLICATION.**

1. A classical illustration of outward "over dress" is the display of slinky, elaborate, outrageously expensive, glamorous, dress worn by movie stars who try to outdo each other.
  - a. Their pride is apparent in their attempts to be pre-eminent and recognized.
  - b. Why do they dress so elaborately, so ostentatiously, and so scantily, etc., etc.? The answer is obvious!
2. "Under dress" – Abbreviated clothing that reveal more and more of the body, or improperly display the body; such as: short shorts, mini-skirts, halters, swimming suits, bikinis, low-cut, skin-tight, hip-hugging, belly button exposing, attire that is designed to be provocative or "sexy" all say something about character, lack of faith and spiritual dedication. Their very design is evident in what they accomplish.
3. Examine your attitude and dress in three ways.
  - a. First, be directed by a desire to please God above all things.
  - b. Second, be governed by a sense of shame that will restrain you from unworthy acts. In this way, you will not be desirous of being considered as "provocative," nor willing to take the chance that you would be so considered.
  - c. Third, be noble enough to guard against a bad influence of effect you might have on others. Do not take the chance of being a tumbling block for those who are trying to live godly lives.
4. People professing godliness dress from the inside out.
  - a. It is not our culture that sets the norm nor does our society determine how Christians live and conduct themselves.
  - b. It is our reverence for God that directs us.
  - c. Godliness always asks, "What would God have me to be?"

- d. Such people rarely, if every, have a problem making the specific application to proper attire or dressing modestly under any and all situations.
5. This item, for which an immense amount of effort, time and money are expended, is but a development of that first primitive attempt to cover shame in Gen.3.
- a. Is it any wonder that the Bible scorns those who spend all their time primping and adorning the outward body while inwardly their true shame is uncovered, Isa.3:16-24?
  - b. Is it any wonder then that God has revealed to us his standard of modest and immodest apparel along with the attitude that must prevail to motivate us to recognize and apply it in practice?