

MODESTY

1 Recently I was asked to look at the idea of modesty and to bring a lesson on it. In...

1 Tim 2:9

2

9 Likewise, I want women to adorn themselves with proper clothing, modestly and discreetly,

The term “modestly” or as the KJV translates “Modest,” comes from the Greek...

Kosmios (NT:2887),

3

Means "orderly, well arranged, decent, modest" (akin to kosmos, in its primary sense as "harmonious arrangement adornment"; cf. kosmikos, of the world, which is related to kosmos in its secondary sense as the world), is used in 1 Tim 2:9 of the apparel with which Christian women are to adorn themselves; in 3:2 (RV, "orderly; "KJV, "of good behavior"), of one of the qualifications essential for a bishop or overseer. "The well-ordering is not of dress and demeanor only, but of the inner life, uttering indeed and expressing itself in the outward conversation" (Trench, Syn., Sec. xcii). In the Sept., Eccl 12:9.

The Greek, Kosmios, is translated once as “Modestly” in the New American Standard and once as “Modest” in the King James. But it is also used in 1 Tim 3:2 in the qualifications for Elders and there is translated as “Good behavior” or “Respectable.” The idea behind the word isn’t just appearance in the way we dress, but encompasses a much wider spectrum of understanding.

In the passage we read in 1 Tim. 2:9 it references the manner in which women are to dress. It is used there, along with discreetly, as an adjective modifying their dress, so women are to dress in an orderly, well arranged manner, presenting themselves in their appearance as respectable, which is how the word is used in 1 Tim. 3:2 for the Elder, also translated as “Good Behavior.” The picture that is being painted then is that this word means to act in “Good Behavior,” “Respectably,” while presenting themselves in an “Orderly,” “Well Arranged” manner.

So the other term used here is “Discreet,” which also modifies the apparel of the woman. This comes from the Greek...

Sophrosune (NT:4997)

4

Denotes "soundness of mind" (see SOBER, A), Acts 26:25, "soberness"; 1 Tim 2:9,15, "sobriety"; "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 aidos (shamefastness) opposed to it."

Another word that comes from the same root as sophrosune is Nepho. Nepho is defined as...

Nepho (NT:3525)

5

Signifies "to be free from the influence of intoxicants"; in the NT, metaphorically, it does not in itself imply watchfulness, but is used in association with it, 1 Thess 5:6,8; 2 Tim 4:5; 1 Peter 1:13; 4:7, RV (KJV, "watch"); 5:8. Cf. eknepho and ananepho, under AWAKE, No. 3 and Note.

This is an important understanding of how the term “Sober” is used in the scriptures. The idea of being “Sober Minded” speaks to having one’s mind free from outside influences that tend to cloud our understanding, keeping us from thinking clearly.

We have looked at a few definitions of how the word is used in the scriptures, now there are some thoughts that we want to look at as we apply this idea of modesty. The scriptures talk about being...

- 6** 1) Modest in Appearance
- 2) Modest in Speech
- 3) Modest in Actions

As we saw in 1 Tim. 2:9, women are given instruction to be modest in their apparel. Paul goes on to elaborate what he means by this in...

1 Tim 2:9-10

7

9 not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly garments, **10** but rather by means of good works, as is proper for women making a claim to godliness.

- 8** 1) Modest in Appearance

Paul explains the thought about being modest and discreet in their appearance by illustrating what is not modest or discreet. We might argue the point all we want that the idea of first impressions isn’t valid, or that God doesn’t care what we wear to services, as long as we are there, but the truth of the matter is, they are and He does. Paul writes...

1 Cor 9:19-22

9

19 For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I may win more. **20** To the Jews I became as a Jew, so that I might win Jews; to those who are under the Law, as under the Law though not being myself under the Law, so that I might win those who are under the Law; **21** to those who are without law, as without law, though not being without the law of God but under the law of Christ, so that I might win those who are without law. **22** To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak; I have become all things to all men, so that I may by all means save some.

Paul understood that how he was seen by others made a difference in how they received what he was saying. What message are we sending to the world by what we wear? Do we wear a tuxedo or formal to picnic? Now that’s not necessarily the best example, but it illustrates the point. Are we dressed appropriately for the occasion? When we come to services, are we dressed to show respect for the occasion of worshipping God? Do we give God His due? Does what we wear reflect something about our attitude? When we go to someone’s home, do we treat them with respect in how we present ourselves there? And the real impact of what Paul is saying is that how we present ourselves has an influence, whether we like it or not, on others, on the world. The world sees us in all our glory, in what we wear. Being modest in our apparel means that we are of sound mind in how we appear to others. Remember the thought behind being “Sober?” Free from outside

influence. Why do we wear what we wear? Is it the current fashion? Is it what our friends and peers are wearing? Are we worried about being made fun of if we don't look like what the world looks like? None of these things fit the scriptural idea of being modest. I have heard it argued that to wear a dress to a swim party is immodest, because it stands out as being inappropriate. The problem with that argument is that it implies that being appropriate is being dressed like everyone else, but, maybe, everyone else is dressed inappropriately. If so, then dressing like them would still be immodest and a sin. This is a difficult topic because of the vastly different styles and opinions of clothes. Some people think that a t-shirt or shorts worn to services is immodest. Others think that trying to appear like something we aren't is just as immodest. I think that is why God depends on us to use good judgment in accordance with His word. If I have to be in court, I don't show up wearing a tank top, shorts, and sandals. If I am going to someone's home, I make sure that what I am wearing is not only appropriate for the activity we are going to do, but also appropriate to what God expects from me, not to mention that it should not be offensive to anyone. I attended a seminar many years ago called "Dress for Success," their point was that how we dress has a major bearing on whether we will succeed. The humorist Mark Twain said...

10 *"Clothes make the man. Naked people have little or no influence on society."*

This isn't to be crass, because his point is very well taken. If what we are wearing, or not, in the case of his quote, will color how people view us and what we say, then we need to be careful what we wear. This brings us to our next point, not only are we to be careful to present ourselves as God's children in what we wear but also in we are to be...

11 2) Modest in Speech

Col 4:6

12

6 Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.

Paul talks about our speech being seasoned with salt. The following is an excerpt from Barnes Commentary on this passage...

13 *[Seasoned with salt] Salt, among the Greeks, was the emblem of wit. Here the meaning seems to be, that our conversation should be seasoned with piety or grace in a way similar to that in which we employ salt in our food. It makes it wholesome and palatable. So with our conversation. If it be not imbued with the spirit of piety, it is flat, insipid, unprofitable, injurious. The spirit of piety will make it what it should be—useful, agreeable, beneficial to mankind. This does not mean that our conversation is to be always, strictly speaking, religious—wherever we may be—any more than our food should be mere salt; but it means that, whatever be the topic, the spirit of piety should be diffused through it—as the salt in our food should properly season it all—whatever the article of food may be.*

I love these old commentaries, but they do get a little wordy. What Barnes is saying is that everything we say should be well thought out before we say it. We should always give consideration to what God says before we say anything on any topic. That doesn't mean that the scriptures address

every topic, they obviously don't. I can't find anything in there about the Warriors losing to Cleveland in the NBA finals, but God and His word, still should govern what I say about it. Using foul or hurtful language is always a sin regardless of the topic. You see God doesn't need to cover specifics when He has already ruled on the general.

Eph 4:29

14

29 Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear.

Paul instructs the Ephesians to be on guard with the things they say, to be MODEST, if you will.

James 3:7-11

15

8 But no one can tame the tongue; it is a restless evil and full of deadly poison. **9** With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God; **10** from the same mouth come both blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be this way.

We should never think that the tongue doesn't matter. James says it can be full of evil and poison. But it can also come with blessing. Who decides which tongue will show up? We do. We choose if we will control what comes out of our mouths or not. I'm sorry, that is the wrong way to say that. That would imply that there can be occasions or circumstances where we don't control what comes out of our mouths, what we say. That is not the case, we are always in control of what we say, and while we are on this topic, the same must be said for the modern day tool of communication, social media. As careful as we must be in what we say, that goes double for what we put out there for the world to read. James must have been writing to people who had a real problem with this, note...

James 1:26

16

26 If anyone thinks himself to be religious, and yet does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this man's religion is worthless.

The thought behind what James is writing is this...

Regardless of our own self-analysis concerning our relationship with God, and we might consider ourselves to the epitome of what a Christian should be, if we can't, don't, won't control our tongue, the things we say, then our religion, our relationship with God, is worthless. Our speech is to be as controlled by us as is the cosmos by God, discreet, seeking to build up or at the least to edify. Paul writes in...

Col 3:17

17

17 Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.

This brings us to our last point...

18 3) Modest in Actions

This idea of “In the name of the Lord” brings us back to the authority of God. What is it that God tells us we should be doing in His scriptures? How does God want us to present ourselves in appearance, speech, and deeds to the world? It is difficult to emphasize the importance of this. Take note what Jude says in...

Jude 14-15 **19**

14 It was also about these men that Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied, saying, "Behold, the Lord came with many thousands of His holy ones, **15** to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds which they have done in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him."

Ungodly deeds were and will be again punished by the Lord, and take special note of the end of the passage, there is that idea of speech again, God will punish. So here again is the thought that our relationship with God is seen in our speech as we saw in James 1:26 but also in our actions...

Titus 1:16 **20**

16 They profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him, being detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed.

The world sees us, what does it see? Notice...

1 Peter 2:12 **21**

12 Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation.

Peter tells us that there is always the possibility that someone might see how we conduct ourselves in the face of the world's trials and wonder why they don't seem to affect us the way they do others or themselves. That is possible when we conduct ourselves in a manner such as reflects the love of God in our lives. Only when we conduct ourselves in modestly and discreetly can we reflect God in ourselves. But Satan is doing everything he can to disrupt us in what we say and do, note what Paul says in...

2 Cor 11:15 **22**

15 Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds.

The world will be judged according to its deeds, just as everyone will...

2 Cor 5:10 **23**

10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

What is modesty to you? The better question is what is MODESTY to God? That is what will judge us in the end.