

THE GREENWOOD BULLETIN

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Modest Dress with Propriety and Moderation

By Tim Nichols

The perceived extremes regarding any Bible principle do not alter the principle. There really are some Biblical principles that relate to dress. The fact that some well-meaning people have gone to extremes regarding them does not remove them. Whether you admire or disapprove of the veiled women among some religious groups who cover themselves from head to toe or those who wear only the plainest possible garments of black and white, does not change the truth that there really is a sort of dress code that God imposes upon His children. It is sad that Christians sometimes suppose that the plain garments of the Amish and some other groups are extreme in one direction while seeming not to notice that the clothing worn by so many around us every day of the week is extreme

in the other. Television and movies may very well have become the measures by which some have wrongly ascertained the norms, not recognizing that these examples are extremes and often beyond the limits imposed by God's word. If the lines between what is appropriate and what is extreme are not always easily defined, they exist -- and the Christian can certainly find a manner of dress that is absolutely within the bounds. There may be a "gray area" between how far one can lean over the side of a high cliff and yet be safe -- and how far is too dangerous -- but most of us seem to know how to remain on the safe side of that line without claiming that we have found its exact location. If there is an extreme that might be called "excessive modesty" (an oxymoron?) on the one hand, there is a more dangerous extreme that inspiration calls "the attire of a harlot" (**Proverbs 7:10**). Paul was not just giving his opinion when he was

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inspired to write that Christian women ought to "adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, ... which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works" (**1 Timothy 2:9-10**). He was simply telling the truth. Modesty is first of all a condition of the heart and it is expressed or, conversely, shown not to exist by outward behavior and dress (**Isaiah 3:16-24**). The word that Paul used means "orderly, well-arranged, decent, modest" (Vine's). It is a quality that must be possessed and expressed by one who would serve as an elder (**1 Timothy 3:2** -- translated "good behavior" and not connected with apparel in this case). It follows that a decent person will wear decent clothing and behave decently. The inner person will be expressed by what is on the outside (**1 Peter 3:3-5**).

The word for "propriety" (translated "shamefacedness" in the KJV) conveys the idea of "a sense of shame, modest..." (Vine's). It is not the idea of awkwardness that would cause one to become easily embarrassed without cause. It is more a sense of the point at which shame is in order and a keeping of oneself from that

which ought to cause shame -- in order to remain free from it.

The word for "moderation" (translated "sobriety" in the KJV) "denotes soundness of mind... 'sound judgment' practically expresses the meaning...." (Vine's). These words obviously impart an obligation upon a woman to give careful thought to how her dress might complement her good works in "professing godliness."

While there may be some disagreement as to the exact point at which the line is crossed from acceptable to too tight, too short, too much flesh exposed, too flashy, too inviting of lustful thoughts... there is plenty of room for morally right choices to be made before those lines are approached. These principles can be followed. Maybe a few suggestions will help the process along.

Before leaving home, look in the mirror and ask yourself, "Why am I wearing this?" If your self-learned motive seems to violate any of these (or other) Bible principles, then it is time to change your outfit.

Look in the mirror and ask, "What will be the likely impression that others will have when they see me wearing this?" You might want to picture

specific people, -- the elderly, the young, the brethren, the opposite sex.... Are you able to foresee any result of wearing what you have on that might hinder your profession of godliness? If so, then it is time to change your clothes. In the end, this is not a matter of merely avoiding criticism from others. It is a matter of really, from the depths of your heart, wanting to live a life that will glorify God. "For the Lord takes pleasure in His people; He will beautify the humble with salvation" (Psalm 149:4).

Top Two Hindrances to Making Marriage Work

By Mark Broyles

How do you make a marriage work? Maybe a better question would be – how do you work to make a marriage? As with any worthwhile endeavor work is the factor that is most vital to success. However, in marriage we often expect success with very little effort. In Ephesians 5, Paul instructs husbands to love their wives and wives to submit to and respect their husbands— instructions based on the God given needs of both. Easy

words but frequently complicated concepts and applications. Two problems seem to be most prevalent in causing these needs to remain unmet and therefore preventing the marriage from thriving the way God intended.

First, we are ignorant. It sounds harsh but it is true. Have you ever found yourself either thinking or saying, "I never realized you felt that way" or "I didn't know it meant that much to you"? Ignorance of my spouse's real needs will almost certainly mean they will largely go unmet. We understand that we are to love our wives and to respect our husbands but how exactly do we do that? Not only are their needs different but also the method of fulfilling those needs. I know what I like, want, and need for fulfillment. That knowledge comes to me naturally with no real effort required, but the needs of my spouse are not nearly so easy to understand. Ignorance may not be easy to admit but it is easily corrected. Whatever I am ignorant about only requires that I put forth effort to study and learn. Marriage is no different. In the seminars we have presented on marriage the last ten years one of the most

evident truths is the lack of real effort of husbands and wives to use the resources available to better understand their spouse. There are some wonderful resources based on God's principles to help us understand our spouse's perspective. Read, attend classes, and ask your spouse! How much effort are you putting forth to really understand your husband or wife?

Second, we are selfish. Once we know what our spouse truly needs we must be willing to devote ourselves to fulfilling that need. Selfishness is the problem of all mankind including husbands and wives. Jesus taught often, even those who were closest to Him, that we must serve others rather than seeking to be served ourselves (John 13). That is never easy. I like me. I like to be comfortable, satisfied, and fulfilled. When I am tired, uncomfortable, aggravated, over stressed, or underappreciated it becomes even more difficult to focus on my spouse. When our thoughts are focused on what our spouse needs to do to fulfill our needs then we have departed from the mindset of Christ. The commands in Ephesians 5 are independent of one another.

Each of us has the same role in marriage. That role is to glorify God by devoting ourselves to fulfilling our spouse's needs. Where would we be if Christ was only as focused on serving us as we are on serving our spouse? How hard will you work to forget self to fulfill your spouse?

The key to a happy healthy relationship in marriage is to learn each other's unique needs and strive to meet them to the fullest of your potential.

Who Ever Heard Of A Man . . .

Who preferred to drown rather than get into a boat with a hypocrite? Who quit going to the movies because the manager did not speak to him? Who always quit on the second day of the job because he made a mistake on the first?

Who never did anything about his illness because he wasn't interested in the subject? Who refused to eat because he didn't understand how it could give him physical strength? Who was too busy to breathe? Who never made any kind of promise to anyone because he was "afraid he couldn't hold out?" Who scorned a personal invitation to have an audience with the President of the

United States because he would have to give up some of his friends? Who refused to obey the law of the nation because it might upset his family members? Who failed to improve himself because someone might laugh at him?

IN THE WORLD . . . NEVER! IN RELIGION . . . OFTEN!

--Author Unknown (via *Exhortations & Stuff*)--

Afghani Convert to Christ about to be Executed by Muslim Government

Borrowed From The Lincoln Bible Reader

Said Musa is a former Muslim who converted to Christ about eight years ago. He has been sentenced to die by the Afghan government for the Islamic crime of apostasy.

A spokesman for the so-called Ministry of Justice said, "The sentence for a convert is death and there is no exception." This is one of the truly terrible things about Islam: it has no respect for freedom of religion and conscience, precious values for us in the West.

As Congressman Trent Franks and Doug Lamborn wrote last fall, this is a "government that allows the same restrictions on basic human rights that existed under the Taliban."

The United States . . . has spent enormous treasure and spilled much American blood to provide stability for the people of Afghanistan. It is not too much to expect our government to insist that the Afghan government spare this man's life and grant him and his family asylum in the United States.

Musa is the father of six children, one of whom is disabled, and is himself an amputee, having lost a leg to a landmine while serving in the Afghan army. He had been working for the Red Cross/Red Crescent as an adviser to other amputees. While in prison, he has been subjected to mocking, beatings, and sexual abuse because of his faith. In a letter he smuggled to the West, he pleads, "Please, please, for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ help me."

--Via American Family Association Website—

Note: This is exactly the conduct we would see in this country if Islam ever becomes the majority religion of the United States. Islam is a religion of peace if (and only if) you are deemed to be a faithful Muslim, and are willing to lie to and when order to kill non-Muslims.
