

## *Christian Clothing & Adornment*

Clothing is one of the most divisive issues in the Christian churches which has successfully divided and destroyed institutional religion. All throughout the history, religion are divided on the issue of clothing, adornment, hair styling, and jewelry. The conservatives advocate illogical and unrealistic restrictions and taboos principles. The liberals advocate unfounded and unsupported principles which are not different from the worldly system.

The omniscience of God knows that this issue on clothing will become a wildfire of controversy and therefore provided every necessary detail to settle it. Let us consider these principles:

The clothing of the ancient Christians are not applicable for the modern Church Age believers. To require the modern believers to adopt such style of clothing is irrational and madness. There is nothing spiritual about wearing the clothes of the 1st century believers. Their clothes were adjusted to their climate, surrounding, social and political setting.

Clothing styles continues to change. The clothing changing pattern and style are brought by various factors which are in most cases different from one region to another, from one generation to another, from one culture of influence to another. The changing pattern is difficult to predict, because the clothing trend is like the wind that is constantly changing its direction.

The clothing of the ancient believers has the same pattern for both male and female. There was a similar pattern and cut for the clothing of men and women. The slight difference was on the pattern of their under dress or under garment.

Both the men and women were wearing the same clothing style and pattern distinguished only by material and color used. Fine clothing materials were used by the rich and powerful (Matthew 11:8, James 2:2). Only the rich wear colorful and expensive clothes, most people wear white or brown cotton. It is dogma to say that the men or women of the ancient times did not wear the clothes of the opposite sex. It is a dogma to disallow women from wearing pant.

The first century believers attended the gathering of believers for Bible study in their respective social attire. The slaves and the poor were less dressed or what we might consider as "wearing only under wear". Those in the middle and upper class came in their respective working or daily attire.

They did not have Sunday attire which the European introduced. The rich are distinguished by their fine or soft clothes and adornment (James 2:2) without trying to make social distinction. The Christians are mandated not to make such social preference (James 2:3).

The believer must come for worship of God through the study of His Word without the intention of being seen and admired by the worshippers. In the past, the local churches have become the fashion ramp of the arrogance and carnal believers. They used the Sunday meetings as their gallery for displaying expensive clothes, jewelry, shoes and adornment.

And let not your adornment be merely external braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses; but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God (1 Peter 3:3-4).

Clothes cannot prepare your souls for worship and it has nothing to do with spirituality. Clothes do not in any way contribute to your spiritual growth. God does not mind what you wear for Sunday worship or Bible study but it reflects the spiritual status of your soul.

Your dress, jewelry, and adornment are nothing but external, lifeless and material things that speak for what is inside your soul. God loves the most beautiful thing inside your souls which only the Bible doctrine can build and established by the power of the Holy Spirit. Christians with Bible doctrine in their souls are beautiful in the sight of God.

Likewise, I want women to adorn themselves with proper clothing, modestly and discreetly, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly garments; but rather by means of good works, as befits women making a claim to godliness (1 Timothy 2:9-10)

The apostle Peter warned the Christian women not to be engrossed with their beauty routine such as braiding hair, wearing gold jewelries, putting clothes popular among the women of the world. As a principle, Christians must give priority to their spiritual health rather than engulfed by worldly fashion and trend.

The worldly women during the time of apostles Peter and Paul wear improper and costly clothing, noticeable jewelries, and braided hair that took several hours to make. The issue here is the principle of biblical adaptation. The Christians cannot adapt the style and the trend of the world. There must be clear distinction between the believers and the unbelievers when it comes to clothing, attire, hairstyle, and adornment. The Christian ladies must be externally identified.

Clothing has nothing to do with spirituality but a spiritual person is not going to give in to immodesty being without discrimination for the things of the world. Immodesty is the state of the soul that is arrogantly conceited about his style, fashion, or trend adapted from the world. An immodest person can walk naked because arrogance has dominated his soul. Immodest people are proud to display their bodies for the consumption of sexual passion and lust.

The Christians on the way to a local church must consider the following principles:

Your presence is for the purpose of worship of God not for fashion show. You are there to study the Word of God not to be seen or admired. Your presence must never disturb the concentration of others. You are to wear clothes that do not catch the lust of the flesh or pride of life. Your clothes must never be similar to that of worldly celebrities and whores. Never make a scenario of immodesty.

The Christians on the way to public places must realize the following principles:

The people around you must never have the impression that you are just one of those immodest women of the world. Let your clothing be an expression of your hidden beauty and modesty. Never create the impression that you are not different from unbelievers by wearing the clothes popularized by indecent celebrities.

God designed your body to be admired and adored by your spouse not by the public; therefore you need not display it by wearing clothes that calls attention.

Proper clothing by definition refers to type and style of clothing that are decent and respectable before the Christian community. Modern clothes have lost their basic purpose of covering against the elements but use for social status symbol or fashion. It is difficult to define what proper clothing is, in these changing times affected by changing cultural and social trend.

How do you determine what is proper clothing? It does not distract or hinder others from their concentration on the Word of God. It is not regarded as irritating to the eyes of others; it does not attract carnal attention. It is decent, modest, and respectable. Ladies must be careful not to wear clothes commonly used or popularized by TV and movies celebrities.

Carnality and worldliness is a state of the mind. Worldliness is not the material or things that we wear or put on our physical body but the attitude of the soul. A Christian lady is worldly not because of the things she wear, but because she wears it.

Her persistent and arrogant relentless to wear controversial clothing is worldliness. Simplicity, modesty and decency are the standard for wearing clothes, apparel, adornment and jewelries. Let your clothes be the covering of your body not your means of sexual attraction. A thing is not Christian just because it was invented, introduced or popularized by believers. This is the sin of spiritualizing the material things. Genuine Christianity is the state of the soul personally related to God through Christ.

Worldliness is the state of the soul that personally cherishes the things of the world (1 John 2:15). She is the person who loves the clothes, the apparel, and the adornment of the world. She is also obsessed with the trend and style of the world.

INNER BEAUTY (1 Timothy 2:9, 10, 1 Peter 3:3, 4) If you depend on outer attractiveness to appeal to your husband, or anyone else, and exclude inner beauty, you cannot succeed in witnessing for Christ, to him or to anyone else.

When you stay filled with the Holy Spirit, you have an inner mental attitude of love, minus jealousy, hatred, envy, implacability, etc., and these results in inner beauty. Part of a woman's inner beauty is her love for her husband. Inner beauty survives the attacks of time, while exterior beauty is corruptible and destroyed by time.

The Bible tells us the emphasis should not be on the outer appearance to the exclusion of inner beauty. There is no prohibition of the outward appearance, but if you are beautiful on the outside and have bitterness, hatred, envy, jealousy on the inside, there is no impact for Christ on the unbelieving mate or anyone else.

Inner beauty is in the mind. It is what you think. Inner beauty is ageless. A woman cannot win her unbelieving husband to the Lord apart from inner beauty, which is accomplished through the filling of the Holy Spirit and knowledge of the Word of God. This result in a relaxed mental attitude, grace orientation, mastery over the details of life, and the capacity for love and life associated with inner happiness.

This is the woman's charm, but it also belongs to all believers who will be controlled by the Holy Spirit and have the mind of Christ (1 Timothy 1:9, 10, 15).



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