Modesty: It begins with the Heart

Zanesville, OH | December 2, 2018 | Sermon Notes

**Foundational Scripture:** 1 Tim. 2:9-10; 1 Pet. 3:3-4

**Intro**:

* The topic of **Modesty** (as it pertains to clothing) is certainly no small issue among individuals in our society and among our brethren. We often get wrapped up in the emotional and opinionated sectors of this issue that blind us from seeing the objective truth: **Modesty begins in the heart!** God lays out His unwavering, unshakeable and unchangeable pattern for how His people ought to dress and that’s not up for debate. So, I ask this morning that we rid ourselves of any pre-conceived notions, emotions and opinions that will ultimately taint what the word of God says on the subject. Let’s approach this with an open mind and heart willing to hear what God has to say.

**It begins with the Heart**

1. **Carnal focus vs. Spiritual focus**
   1. The primary problem with modesty is that we put emphasis on the outer rather than the inner. This goes back to the decision each individual makes to put on Christ and to become a *“new man.”* (cf. 2 Cor. 4:16; 5:17; Eph. 4:22-24; Col. 3:1-17).
   2. If we call ourselves Christians and we profess to follow Jesus, then we must understand that there is nothing exempted from change and improvement including modesty.
   3. Modesty can be defined this way: *“Modesty, therefore, consists in purity of sentiment and manners, inclining us to abhor the least appearance of vice and indecency, and to fear doing anything which will justly incur censure”* (Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature).
   4. In both foundational scriptures, note that an appeal to the heart is made:
      1. *“…but rather* ***by means of good works****, as is proper for women making a claim* ***to godliness****”*
      2. *“…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”*
   5. Modesty most certainly begins with our hearts. An individual who is inclined to think carnally will make decisions and act based on that line of thinking. One who thinks spiritually will seek then the things which are befitting for God first and then for his/her neighbor (cf. Matt. 15:18-20; 22:37-39; Rom. 14:13).
2. **What does my clothing say about who I am?**
   1. Modesty begins with the heart but continues outwardly in terms of how we dress and behave. Both men and women have to be considerate and mindful of the fact that what they wear will speak volumes about what’s in our hearts!
   2. Paul and Peter both point out that how we dress as Christians should reflect an attitude of good works, godliness and a gentle and quiet spirit. The point is that we should not seek to draw attention to our bodies and ourselves in what we wear and how we wear it, but we should be manifesting Christ who lives in us (cf. Gal. 2:20).
   3. Women in particular have the power to limit what a man sees in the way they dress (Matt. 5:28). Being modest is taking advantage of that power and controlling what they can investigate. Now, does that mean that men will cease to lust? No. But it does mean they can cover their bodies (nakedness) and keep it hidden for their spouse or future spouse.
   4. Your identity doesn’t come from what you wear and who is impressed by it. Your identity is in God (Eph. 1:5; Col. 2:10). Cultural acceptance and standards are dynamic and hypocritical. God’s standards have never changed, and He has our best interest at heart.
   5. The purpose of what we wear should not be to display our bodies to the world (1 Cor. 6:20). Your body belongs to God first and foremost and then to your spouse. If you are not married, then you are not to reveal yourself to anyone until you are married (1 Cor. 7:3-4).
   6. If our priority lies in how impressed others are by our manner of dress and the showing off of our bodies, we are only harming ourselves and committing a great evil against God.
3. **Will God be glorified?**
   1. The body is a very dangerous weapon and vessel of sin if we are not careful. We should seek to glorify God with our bodies and this can be fulfilled in marriage (Prov. 5:18-19; Heb. 13:4).
   2. Women, will God be glorified if we wear something that is too low, too short (revealing nakedness), too tight (revealing form) or too much (drawing unnecessary attention to ourselves)? Married women, your body belongs to your spouse. Don’t display it for other men.
   3. Men, will God be glorified in the way we dress and carry ourselves? Are we showing too much, letting our eyes wander where it shouldn’t and formulating thoughts and images in our minds that are impure? Married men, your body belongs to your spouse. Don’t display it for other women.
   4. Parents let us teach our kids (men who have daughters and granddaughters especially) to be modest in heart and in how they dress. Let them know that culture does not have to dictate how they dress and behave. All of us in Christ, can choose to display modesty, discreetness and godliness. We are to be holy as God is holy (cf. 1 Pet. 1:14-16)!

**Consider these things…**

1. Remember who you are and who you are serving; obey God’s pattern of modesty!
2. A modest heart will lead to modest dressing and modest dress reflects a modest heart.
3. Do not yield to culture and the influence of the world. Seek that which is above.
4. Practice those things which will glorify God and lead the lost to Christ.