

GLAD TIDINGS

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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The Godly Mind Behind Modest Apparel

Jerry Fite

Paul writes, “*In like manner, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefastness and sobriety...*” (I Timothy 2:9). That which was to cloth or hang down upon a woman was to be *modest* (*KOSMIOS*) emphasizing “orderly”, “well arranged” or “decent” dress. Without locking in for all time a certain style of clothing, Paul appeals to the heart and mind to determine the attire for any generation. Modest clothing will manifest itself upon one who has a orderly mind coupled with “*shamefastness*” and “*sobriety*”.

Shamefastness (*AIDOS*) is that all important sense of shame that “*shrinks back from*” crossing “*the line of impropriety*”. God’s revelation helps the *shamefast* mind draw the line dividing what is proper from that which is improper. From the very beginning, having portions of the body covered with an apron or girdle of fig leaves still left the first man and woman “naked” (*Genesis 3:7*). God responds by making coats or garments to cloth them (*Genesis 3:21*). Both Old and New Testaments consistently establish the principle that one can be “naked”

when he or she has some clothing, but is not sufficient to properly cover the body (*Job 22:6, James 2:15*). The *shamefast* mind does not overlook the fact that Scripture reveals “nakedness” as being present when one exposes the thigh of the leg, and “nakedness” is hid when one covers the thigh (*Isaiah 47:2-3, Exodus 28:42*).

These passages from the Old Testament are not given to force Old Testament customs upon New Testament Christians, but are offered for our learning (*Romans 15:4*). Will a *shamefast* mind reflect on how God defines nakedness in Scripture and still wear swimsuits equivalent to nothing more in body coverage than an apron or girdle of fig leaves? Will the *shamefast* mind deliberately dress the body in “shorts” that expose ones’ thighs to the public eye?

Shamefastness also characterizes a mind constantly concerned with how one’s dress affects others. In Luke 11:7-8, we see the opposite attitude in the “*importunity*” (the negative of *aidos*) of the person who wanted his bread regardless of how much he put his friend through to provide it.

He was persistent, but “shamelessly” so. Knowing sinful lust can be aroused when one looks upon one in revealing or tight, form fitting clothes, the *shamefast* will shrink back from dressing in such attire.

“*Sobriety*” (*SOPHROSUNE*) is the “*sound mind*” manifesting itself in “*sound judgment*”. It is the mind that governs by placing a constant rein on all passions, thus avoiding unholy desires. One with such a mind will not be swayed by fashionable styles advertised as “*sexy*”, “*revealing*” or “*provocative*”. The “*latest fashion*” or such “*ostentatious*” appeals do not determine the dress of the godly man or woman.

Some teach today that I Timothy 2:9 has nothing to do with “shorts” or “swimsuits”. Yet, *shamefastness* and *sobriety* do. Some claim Old Testament passages were not meant to determine “modesty”. They consistently offer God’ illustrative definitions of “*nakedness*”, helping the *shamefast* mind determine proper attire in any generation. Think godly. Dress modestly. God demands it!