

Glad Tidings

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

Vol. XXII

August 5, 2012

No. 32

Modesty: “Well Arranged”

(Jerry Fite)

The Greek word “*kosmios*” is translated in the Scriptures as “*modest*”. When we think of our universe or “cosmos”, we see things well arranged for life. Something well arranged for a certain situation is the concept of modesty.

Regarding our attire, we should wear clothing that is well-arranged. God commands women to “*adorn themselves in modest apparel...*” (1 Timothy 2:9). But, the adornment should be well-arranged for what purpose?

Some might consider skimpy clothing as well-arranged for swimming in order to guard from being hung up or dragged down with too much or too heavy clothing. What would be clothing well-arranged for running track or executing gymnastic moves? One might determine clothing cut up to the hips, allowing the free movement of the legs, as being well-arranged for optimal performance in these sports. Some would therefore consider the body-revealing and the leg-freeing attire as modest.

The fallacy in such thinking is that one is not equating modesty with the right purpose. While “function” certainly is an important consideration when we dress, God connects modesty with the inner man, or the heart. Our attire should be modest or well-arranged with a heart desiring to emphasize one’s inner godliness, not one’s outer appearance. Not that outward appearance is unimportant, but God is condemning the ostentatious spirit that leads one to “*braided hair, and gold or pearls, or costly raiment*” (1 Timothy 2:9). He is demanding that women adorn themselves in modest apparel which is well-arranged with the heart of a woman “*professing godliness through good works*” (1 Timothy 2:10).

When young women wear their skimpy two piece bikinis to the beach or public swimming pools, are they modest? We should ask ourselves, “Is such attire manifesting an ostentatious spirit? Is it consistent with a woman professing godliness through good works?” A woman in a bikini may not be bringing attention to her wealth, by wear-

ing gold or silver, or expensive clothing, but she is willing to bring attention to her exposed body. One can be just as ostentatious in skimpy attire as by dressing extravagantly.

Is the bikini really about “function”? If we connect modesty with function, could we not argue that maybe swimming in the nude is more modest because there would be no chance for clothing to weigh one down?

God connects modesty with “*shamefastness*” and “*sobriety*,” two more attitudes of the heart (1 Timothy 2:10). Shamefastness is an inner sense of shame that seeks to shrink back from crossing the line of impropriety. Along with sound judgment, shamefastness is concerned with how one’s attire will affect others. A modest, shamefast, and sober heart will be concerned about attracting lust in hearts of the opposite sex. Women thinking soberly will admit their bikini outfit leads to lustful thoughts in the hearts of men, not leads one to think they are looking at a woman professing godliness!