

Purity and Propriety in Clothing (1 Timothy 2:9-10)

in like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works.

⁹ Ὡσαύτως [καὶ] γυναῖκας ἐν καταστολῇ κοσμίῳ μετὰ αἰδοῦς καὶ σωφροσύνης κοσμεῖν ἑαυτάς, μὴ ἐν πλέγμασιν καὶ χρυσίῳ ἢ μαργαρίταις ἢ ἱματισμῷ πολυτελεῖ, ¹⁰ ἀλλ' ὃ πρέπει γυναιξὶν ἐπαγγελλομέναις θεοσέβειαν, δι' ἔργων ἀγαθῶν.

Literal word order: Likewise [also] females in a garment orderly with shame and sensibility to be ordering themselves, not in braided and gold or pearls or costly clothing

ESV likewise also that women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire, but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works.

NAU 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 is proper for women making a claim to godliness.

NET Likewise the women are to dress in suitable apparel, with modesty and self-control. Their adornment must not be with braided hair and gold or pearls or expensive clothing, but with good deeds, as is proper for women who profess reverence for God.

“in like manner also” – *hosautos* – likewise – in the same gender-specific intent of godliness

“that the women” – *gunaikas* – female, with no indication of age – this is largely an issue that affects all ages and is something that needs to be taught from the earliest age on up. Train your daughters from childhood to be modest!

“adorn” – *kosmein* – present infinitive verb form of the word for “modest” in “modest apparel” – the idea of “to order” with an objectively defined order (as “designed” or “ordered” by God) – we do not establish our own idea of order, but live in light of God’s created and revealed order. You are to “adorn” yourself in light of and in accordance with God’s design. This is present tense – modesty is ongoing. Modesty is modesty. There is not one modesty for church and another for the pool. If dressing a certain way causes men to lust in one place, it most certainly will do so in another. {Ernie}

“themselves” – modesty is an ongoing, all-the-time personal responsibility. You are not to wait to have someone “dictate” or define modesty. You are to proactively dress as God dictates. It is not someone else’s job to make you dress in a modest way.

“in modest” – *kosmioi* – same root as “adorn” – describes the garment to be worn – orderly, as in accordance with God’s creative order.

“apparel” – singular – *katastole* – robe against – your garment, not your coat. Your normal outfit. Seems to indicate a long flowing garment (“stole” itself indicates a long robe).

“with propriety” – *aidous* – shame or shamefacedness – some discard this passage as being only for jewelry or fancy clothes (which it does address) – this term seems to counter that strongly – we are to have a sense of shame, a sense that we are to cover ourselves. There is a shameful way to dress (Note the response of Adam and Eve in the garden when they sinned.)

“and moderation” – *sophrosunes* – sensibility; reason – our clothing is to be dictated by with a proper understanding of shame, and with reason or sense. We need to think about what we wear, and change our clothing as we think things through. Does this cover me? Would dressing this way provoke others to impure thoughts? Will it cause me to draw attention to myself?

“not with braided hair” – *plegmasin* – “braided” – could be hair, or anything braided – addresses elaborate arrangement. Our dress and our styles should be subdued, not “wowing.”

“or gold or pearls or costly clothing,” – immodesty via drawing attention to oneself via elaborate cost.

“but, which is proper for women professing godliness” – ἀλλ' ὃ πρέπει γυναιξὶν ἐπαγγελλομέναις θεοσέβειαν There is proper (*prepei* – Eph 5:3; Tit 2:1) and improper dress (Prov 7:10), which indicates godliness (or ungodliness) specifically in women. Dress is not neutral or non-biblical.

“with good works.” – A woman’s modest adornment should include good works. What is ultimately attractive about a woman should be her good works, not her immodest or elaborate clothing. (What part of a woman’s body is highlighted in Prov 31:10-31?). Time focused on spiritual adornment.

Summary: A woman should dress with an understanding of shame and sensibility, and should not draw attention to herself by her dress or by her décor. Her dress should be affected by her faith, and should reflect godliness. Her good works should be her attention-drawing characteristic.

Some Bible-related preliminary thoughts:

1. ***Clothes were given to cover our bodies, not to reveal them.*** (and not just for women, if God's response in the garden means anything). God clothed Adam & Eve both with cloaks, which appear to be long, covering pieces of clothing. Based upon "nature," how God designed men, covering up nakedness would involve concealing:
 - **Skin** – *Women should cover themselves.* Where you draw the line is the tough thing. Some areas of skin are probably (obviously?) thought less sensual than others to most.
 - **Shape** – *Women should hide their curves.* You can wear a dress and still be immodest. You can wear pants and be modest. Loose-fitting clothing is essential (regardless of the shape, and not dealing with the sloppiness issue). Shape-hugging clothing isn't modest. Modesty hides. Clothing was given as a means of covering nakedness, not as a device to reveal.
2. ***Clothes (and hair) are to signify gender.*** ("as women professing godliness;" Deut 22:5; Rom 1:26; 1 Cor 11:1-16). There is such a thing as masculinity and femininity in dress. "What's the big deal about same sex marriage? We've had same sex marriage for a long time." (No distinctiveness in roles, function, or dress.) Gender is seen in clothing even in our now mostly pagan culture. What signifies gender on a bathroom door?

Deuteronomy 22:5 A woman shall not wear anything that pertains to a man, nor shall a man put on a woman's garment, for all who do so are an abomination to the LORD your God.

Romans 1:26 For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature.

1 Corinthians 11:14-15 Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him? ¹⁵ But if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her; for *her* hair is given to her for a covering.
3. ***The loss of modesty draws attention to oneself rather than one's Creator*** (Rom 1:25). Immodesty can happen without sensuality (per 1 Tim 2 - gold, jewelry, costly array) potentially by anything that draws attention to oneself (brand name, color [purple hair], flashy clothes, etc.). Dressing sensually or spectacularly is causing yourself to take attention that belongs to God, and in addition is drawing people into sin. Immodesty is dress or décor that is extravagant, showy, revealing, sensual, or gender-blending.
4. ***Modesty (kosmos) seems to bring with it the idea of "according to God's designed order."*** ("Doesn't even nature itself teach you..." - nature being God's created design).

Clothing and Activities

1. ***Not all activities are meant to be done in mixed company,*** because God made us male and female. Why would a man be belaying for gals anyway? (strength? skill?) Why would this be "required"? Why not say "no thanks"?
2. ***Not all activities are meant to be done.*** There are no commands to climb walls, strip down and swim, etc. Just because it can be done doesn't mean it should be done. Can we not defer, and do things that may place us in immodest situations?
3. ***Activity does not define modesty; modesty should determine activity.*** A swimsuit that equates to coverage of underwear or a mini-skirt doesn't instantly become modest because we're swimming, etc. Modesty defines modesty.

Romans 1:24-25 Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, ²⁵ who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

Clothing sends a message:

Proverbs 7:10 And there a woman met him, *With* the attire of a harlot, and a crafty heart.

Dress indicates:

- Your understanding of God, God's provision of clothing, God's differentiation of gender (men dress differently than women)
- Your humility, intelligence, and yieldedness
- Your heart. A modest heart always precedes modest dress. Modesty is humility applied to dress.
- Your consideration of others
- Your understanding of sinful hearts,
- Your understanding of nakedness and intimacy as being reserved for marriage
- Your understanding that some dress is inappropriate – shameful
- Your understanding that we should have a proper sense of shame
- Your understanding that you are not to attract attention to yourself by what you wear, but by your good works