

## Knowing God: Formality And Customs (Part Five)

Specifics Regarding Christian Adorning

John W. Ritenbaugh

Given 04-Jan-03; Sermon #591

We know that knowing God is an all-important goal in our life if we ever are going to be in His image. How can we possibly make right choices and walk in His steps, conformed to Him, if we do not know what His point of view is?

Today I have a potpourri—a sort of salad-of-thoughts and evidences—of what God's point of view is on a number of loose ends that I think will help close off those ends in regards to this subject.

A number of times I have mentioned that the world essentially says that God only cares about what is in our heart, not what is on the outside. Brethren, that is nothing more than a deceived sheer-nonsense justification and excuse for a lazy, irreverent attitude toward God. People who say this are exposing either their ignorance of God, or their lack of love for God, or perhaps both. God is *very* concerned about both the inside *and* the outside.

You may recall in my last sermon I used Isaiah 47:1-10, in which God shows a relationship between how a person dresses and the reality of what he is in his heart. Now added to this is that Jeremiah 17:9 says "the heart is deceitful above all things, and is incurably sick." This fact in Jeremiah 17:9 has a direct tie to the illustration God used in Isaiah 47. The deceived Babylon, portrayed as a woman, looks very attractive on the outside to the deceived, but God shows that Babylon herself is *among* the deceived. She says of herself that "she is a lady," when, by God's righteous judgment, she clearly is not. We are going to add another principle to this that also comes from the book of Isaiah.

**Isaiah 5:20** Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil [This is what we are seeing in Isaiah 47.]; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!

He is talking about people who have everything backwards from the truth; that is, everything in terms of God and His purpose. He is talking about the *deceived*. They judge things from a different (than God's) and *wrong* point of view. They speak *admiringly* of Babylon, calling her "tender and delicate." But from God's point of view, the reality is shown when He tells her, "Take off your skirt and bare your thigh." He said that, because when God looks on her heart—the place where the conduct is generated—He sees a *harlot*.

This difference between perception and reality is important to understand. It is not difficult for one's "incurably sick" heart to see things *different* from their reality, and that is why it calls "evil good, and good evil."

Now this false perception is true regarding clothing styles. Every parent ought to understand this principle because of their experience with children. Children rankle under, and they groan, resist, and fight against your decisions regarding what they *can* do and what they cannot do. The reason is they do not understand as fully as you that choices have consequences.

Clothing—what is worn on the outside—*should* reflect our conversion, witnessing that we are the sons of God. And at one and the same time, in a reciprocal manner, clothing will *affect* conduct. Marketers know this, and in terms of morality the conversion of our heart should always determine the selection of what we wear. Unfortunately, not everybody thinks this way, and it is very easy for our heart to misjudge clothing's effect on others and us. But brethren, it is not unimportant to God. Clothing is one of the *major* symbols used in the Bible to reflect a person's righteousness, and unrighteousness.

We are going to go back to the New Testament to one of Jesus' early teachings in the Sermon on the Mount.

**Matthew 7:15** Beware of false prophets which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

This is exactly the way Babylon came to people. They thought she was *tender and delicate*. God saw that she was a *harlot*. Here Jesus is applying this same principle in regard to false ministers. On the one hand false ministers look, on the outside, as though they are all right, but actually on the inside they most assuredly are *not* all right.

A minute or so ago I said that not everyone thinks like God, and so here Jesus brings our attention to be on guard against false teaching. The illustration that He used reflects the subject of this sermon, and in fact this whole series. There are deceived people who distort the truths of God—God's word—and misinform their hapless victims. In this case the sheep's clothing is being used as a deception much as in Isaiah 47. It is very interesting that Jesus used this term. Sheep's clothing confirms the fact that the sheep—God's representatives; God's children—should be known by the clothing they wear.

One of the indirect lessons of this little teaching right here is that clothing should match what is in the heart. God has made us, and in Psalm 100 He says, "We [His children] are the sheep of His pasture," and that His ownership of us should be visible by what we wear as part of the conduct of our life.

Jesus is warning us that some people appear to be one thing, but the reality is another. The truth is that "sheep's clothing" is *distinctive*. There should be a distinct and appropriate modesty in our attitudes, words, conduct, and our dress should also reflect the same.

**Matthew 22:8-14** Then said he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as you shall find, bid to the marriage. So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests. And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment. And he said unto him, Friend, how came you in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless.

Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen.

Again, Jesus makes use of the parallels, the symbolism, between one's outward appearance (clothing) and righteousness. They should *match* what is appropriate to the Bride's party. In this instruction the emphasis is aimed at *urging* us to understand and make use of the privileges of our calling while there is time. "Many are called, but few are chosen." He is urging us to conform to God's way, to be appropriately clothed with God's righteousness. There is a parallel all the way through the Bible between *clothing* and *righteousness*, and between *clothing* and *unrighteousness*. Once again, clothing is the illustration. There is definitely a tie between the symbolism of clothing, and the practical application in one's life.

Our clothing does not have to be uniform in the sense that the Amish draw it to, but it must be uniform in terms of morality and God's customs if we are going to please and glorify Him.

First I am going to read Revelation 3:17-19 from the *King James Version*, and then I am going to read it from the *Amplified Version* for a little bit of clarification.

**Revelation 3:17-19** Because you say, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing: and know not that you are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel you to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that you may be rich: and white raiment, that you may be clothed, and that the shame of your nakedness do not appear: and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

**Revelation 3:17-19 [AMP]** For you [a converted but deceived person] say, I am rich; I have prospered and grown wealthy, and I am in need of nothing; and you do not realize and understand that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked. Therefore I

counsel you to purchase from Me gold refined and tested by fire, that you may be [truly] wealthy, white clothes to clothe you and to keep the shame of your nudity from being seen, and salve to put on your eyes, that you may see. Those whom I [dearly and tenderly] love, I tell their faults and convict and convince and reprove and chasten [I discipline and instruct them]. So be enthusiastic and in earnest and burning with zeal and repent [changing your mind and attitude].

Here we have the lackadaisical, self-righteous church that thinks and acts to its deceived self that *it already has it altogether* (as we might say today). But from God's point of view, the reality is again altogether different. In His judgment (just like His judgment of Babylon), they are "blind" and they are "naked" and cannot even see the fact that they lack the proper clothing.

Once again Jesus uses clothing that does not meet His standard to illustrate their true spiritual condition, telling them to repent and to *change* their clothing. God is once again illustrating righteousness and unrighteousness through the motif of how one is dressed.

Now just to reflect on something that appeared in a previous sermon in this series, I want to remind you that the roots of all of this is all the way back in Genesis 3 in Adam's and Eve's experience in the Garden of Eden. When God's statements here are coordinated with all of the other references to clothing in scripture, He is implying that the material external attire is *indeed* a reflection of what is in the heart, and that as they move to change their spiritual condition of the heart, the change will be reflected in what they wear. So we move, symbolically, from filthy rags to sheep's clothing. Do you get the point?

Let us go now to Revelation 19, and we will take the "sheep's clothing" one step further.

**Revelation 19:7** Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife has made herself ready.

This is what she did with her life. She made herself ready to be approved before God, to make sure she was wearing the right things for her wedding.

**Revelation 19:8-9** And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white [symbolic of sheep's clothing]: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he said unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he said unto me, These are the true sayings of God.

Again I am going to read this from the *Amplified Version* to help clarify.

**Revelation 19:7-9 [AMP]** Let us rejoice and shout for joy [exultant and triumphant]! Let us celebrate and ascribe to Him glory and honor, for the marriage of the Lamb [at last] has come, and His bride has prepared herself. She has been permitted to dress in fine [radiant] linen, dazzling and white—for the fine linen is [signifies, represents] the righteousness [the upright, just, and godly living, deeds, and conduct, and right standing with God] of the saints [God's holy people]. Then [the angel] said to me, Write this down: Blessed (happy, to be envied) are those who are summoned (invited, called) to the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he said to me [further], These are the true words [the genuine and exact declarations] of God.

Now linen was the most readily available fine clothing material of the day. By "*the day*", I mean at the time these things were written. Symbolically it is used throughout the Bible to represent success, wealth, and therefore power. When this symbolism is applied to God and His children, it represents holiness, righteousness, and success in the most important areas of life. This leads right into the matter of "*dressing up*" to be in God's presence.

It is very obvious that the fig leaves of Adam and Eve did not cut it. They were not *dressed up* enough to be in God's presence. The same is true of the guests at the wedding feast. The person was not *dressed up* for the wedding. The Laodiceans were clearly told to "*dress up*," and the Bride of Christ is

clearly pictured as *being dressed up*, and in the right clothing. My emphasis here is on *dressing up*—dressing up toward the standard that God finds acceptable; not *down*—those things that might be acceptable to a man, or to society, or to the world in general. We dress *up* ! God's standard is higher than the world's in terms of morality. It may not be higher in terms of the quality of the material necessarily, but *morally* it will always be moving us up to meet the standards of God so that we do not fall short, and sin.

You might recall that when Moses and Joshua were in the presence of God (about forty years of time difference between the one and the other; first Moses, and then Joshua), they were told to take off their dirty shoes. It was not appropriate. It was not fitting. It was not right for them to be in the presence of God, walking on the same ground as He walked on with their dirty-soled shoes that they were wearing. Now what kind of an application does this have for us? Of course always there is the spiritual. It is the *unseen* part of this whole discussion. But even though it is *unseen* , it is *the* most important part. But like I said, the outside should reflect the inside.

We are going to go back to Genesis 35:1. The context here is Jacob fleeing from Laban, returning to his homeland. He has just had the encounter with his brother Esau, and God took him through that.

**Genesis 35:1-2** And God said unto Jacob, Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there: and make there an altar unto God, that appeared unto you when you fled from the face of Esau your brother. [This was twenty-some years before this that he fled.] Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that were with him, Put away the strange gods that are among you, and *be clean* , and *change your garments* .

When Jacob made that altar and began to make the offering, they were going to be in the presence of God. "Clean yourself up, and change your clothes."

Let us read Exodus 19:9-11. Here the circumstance is they are at Mount Sinai, and God is addressing Moses, telling him to make an announcement to the people to get prepared, because He was going to be before them.

**Exodus 19:9-11** And the LORD said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto you in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with you, and believe you forever. And Moses told the words of the people unto the LORD. And the LORD said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them today and tomorrow, and let them *wash their clothes*. And be ready against the third day: for the third day the LORD will come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai.

Genesis 35 and Exodus 19 are two examples of people *dressing up* in preparation for being in God's presence. In the first, Jacob voluntarily prepares, clearly following an already-established custom. In the second, God *commands* it. *Dressing up* to be in God's presence is a matter of respect, and God expects it. You can tell that especially from Exodus 19. It is a matter of respecting His holiness, and honoring the dignity of His office as Creator and Ruler.

The bathing of oneself and the changing of clothing symbolize that the internal cleansing of the heart is either already done or it is in progress. Cleansing, dressing up, in short symbolize the process of justification and sanctification. If you thought the day of symbolism and ceremony is over, you are wrong! It did not end with the Old Covenant, but it continues right on through, and we are to acknowledge it.

You can even attach this same principle that we are dealing with here to the matter of eating matzos (unleavened bread) during the Days of Unleavened Bread. It *pictures* something to us. It *teaches* something to us. And though they are not the biggest thing in the world in terms of our spirituality, it is awfully good to go through what God shows us here.

We are going to go now to Ezekiel as we continue to draw things out here. I think you understand enough about the background. God is giving us a word-picture here, and He is portraying Israel, first as a young girl and He is meeting with her, cleansing her, and entering into a marriage with her, and then Him fulfilling the role of a husband to her.

**Ezekiel 16:8-9** Now when I passed by you, and looked upon you, behold, your time was the time of love, and I spread my skirt over you, and covered your nakedness: yes, I sware unto you, and entered into a covenant with you, says the Lord GOD, and you became mine. [He married her.] Then washed I you with water. [Now we are beginning to see the process of sanctification. Paul wrote, "We are washed with the water by the word."] Yes, I thoroughly washed away your blood from you, and I anointed you with oil.

In the next verses let us notice the way He dresses her. He is showing us in general terminology certain things regarding clothing.

**Ezekiel 16:10-16** I clothed you also with embroidered work, and shod you with badgers' skin, and I girded you about with fine linen, and I covered you with silk. I decked you also with ornaments, and I put bracelets upon your hands, and a chain on your neck. And I put a jewel on your forehead, and earrings in your ears, and a beautiful crown upon your head. Thus were you decked with gold and silver; and your raiment was of fine linen, and silk, and embroidered work; you did eat fine flour, and honey, and oil: and you were exceeding beautiful, and you did prosper into a kingdom. And your renown went forth among the heathen for your beauty: for it was perfect through my comeliness, which I had put upon you, says the Lord GOD. But you did trust in your own beauty, and played the harlot because of your renown, and poured out your fornications on every one that passed by; his it was. And of your garments you did take, and decked your high places with different colours, and played the harlot thereupon: the like things shall not come, neither shall it be so.

Verse 16, where it says, "decked your high places with different colors" is an interesting one to consider, because if you think of this in terms of a woman, where would her high places be? Her high places would be her face and her hair. What did she do? She colored her face and her hair, which is not a good indication here regarding cosmetics.

**Ezekiel 26:17-19** You have also taken your fair jewels of my gold and of my silver, which I had given you, and made to yourself images of men, and did commit whoredom with them. And took your embroidered garments, and covered them: and you have set my oil and my incense before them. My meat also which I gave you, fine flour, and oil, and honey, wherewith I fed you, you have even set it before them for a sweet savour: and thus it was, says the Lord GOD.

When Israel became God's by entering into a marriage covenant with Him, God then performed one of the responsibilities of a husband by providing her with the good things of life. Fine clothing and jewelry with which to attire and adorn herself were among those things. One of the important things here is that God says He *directly* provided them. God clearly dressed her *up* .

When compared to other scriptures, this shows that there is a balance required of us in their use in terms of attire and adornment. Israel obviously abused this privilege by "going over the edge," as we might say today. The clothing and the other adornments were used by Israel in a salacious and seductive way of the world to attract attention to herself in the same general manner as a harlot, and so her attire, rather than being the attire of a beautiful and submissive wife, honoring the Almighty, was altered and used as the attire of a harlot, selling herself to the nations. It is very interesting, because this can be compared to Isaiah 47, and there is a direct parallel between Israel and Babylon, both in heart and in conduct.

Let us go back now to Isaiah once again. In the first 15 verses of Isaiah 3, He takes the men to task. It does not mention much about clothing there, but in verse 16 He begins talking about the women.

**Isaiah 3:16-24** Moreover the LORD said, Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet: Therefore the Lord will smite with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, and the LORD will discover [uncover] their secret parts. In that day the LORD will take away

the bravery of their tinkling ornaments about their feet, and their cauls, and their round tires like the moon, the chains, and the bracelets, and the mufflers, the bonnets, and the ornaments of the legs, and the headbands, and the tablets, and the earrings, the rings, and nose jewels, the changeable suits of apparel, and the mantles, and the wimples, and the crisping pins, the glasses, and the fine linen, and the hoods, and the veils. And it shall come to pass, that instead of sweet smell there shall be stink; and instead of a girdle a rent; and instead of a well set hair baldness; and instead of a stomacher a girding of sackcloth; and burning instead of beauty.

I am going to read that to you from the *Living Bible*, and maybe it will be more understandable because they have updated the terms.

**Isaiah 3:16-24 [TLB]** Next He will judge the haughty Jewish women, who mince along, noses in the air, tinkling bracelets on their ankles, with wanton eyes that rove among the crowds, to catch the glances of men. The Lord will send a plague of scabs to ornament their heads. He will expose their nakedness for all to see! No longer shall they tinkle with self-assurance as they walk, for the Lord will strip away the artful beauty, and their ornaments, their necklaces and bracelets, and veils of shimmering gauze. Gone shall be the scarves and ankle chains, headbands, earrings, and perfumes, their rings and jewels and party clothes and negligees, and capes and ornate combs and purses; their mirrors, lovely lingerie, beautiful dresses and veils. Instead of a sweet smelling perfume, they will stink. For sashes they will use ropes. Their well-set hair will all fall out. They will wear sacks instead of robes.

Actually this whole chapter shows what God is going to do to Israel's women, and why. Actually the whole chapter shows what God is going to do to Israel, because He takes the men to task very strongly as well in the first part. He specifically singles out the attitudes, conduct, manner of dress, and ornamentation of Israel's women. These all go together as a package. They reflect each other.

The book of Isaiah was written sometime between 740 and 700 BC If you ever thought that ancient women wore only dark robes, I think you had better

dispel that thought, because this description reveals a far different reality, because the illustration is drawing upon what the women of that time were wearing and doing. How could God resolve to alter these things if they were not wearing and doing them? He mentions 21 items of clothing, jewelry, hair dressing, perfume, and even appliances, like a mirror, used to make her fashionable to her *peers* rather than to God. What was in her heart was the acknowledgement of beauty from her peers.

The sum of His anger points to the undeniable fact that her outward adornment reflects the arrogance, haughtiness, pride and aggressive seductiveness of their self-centered hearts. God is clearly showing that the way women dress is a force to be reckoned with in the making or breaking of a nation.

This might be a little aside, but I think it is interesting. Did you notice that He mentioned *women's mincing steps*? A number of years ago I read an article on women's clothing fashions that at one point addressed an interesting subject. It reported the results of a survey of clothing fashion designers that asked, among other things, "What item of clothing has contributed the most toward making a woman more seductive?" In the opinion of the designers, the winner, in a landslide, was the *high-heeled* shoe. This is because of the effect that they have in drawing attention to seductive areas of the woman's body, especially as she walks.

High heel shoes reform the curvature of the calf of the leg and ensure that the hips and breasts will be thrust out to some degree, because the heels throw the natural stance of the body out of alignment. They also cause the hips to sway more extensively, and the breasts to bounce, because the woman walks *harder* as she compensates for the imbalance that the heels create. The designers know what they are doing! The designers are doing those things deliberately.

**Exodus 28:1-3** And take you unto you Aaron your brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office, even Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's sons. And you shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother for glory and for beauty. And

you shall speak unto all that are wise hearted, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, that they may make Aaron's garments to consecrate him, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office.

I want you to notice that Aaron cannot do the ministering without the clothes. Just think about what they symbolize.

**Exodus 28:4-6** And these are the garments which they shall make; a breastplate, and an ephod, and a robe, and an embroidered coat, a mitre, and a girdle: and they shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother, and his sons, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office. [He needed the garments to do the ministering. That is very clear.] And they shall take gold, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen. And they shall make the ephod of gold, of blue, and of purple, of scarlet, and fine twined linen, with cunning work.

All of this was taking place in the preparations for making the place to worship God—the Tabernacle—and now they have progressed to the place where He is giving directions for the priesthood and the clothing they are to wear so that they can serve God *at* the Tabernacle. The instructions for the clothing do not end here. They go on and on and on, and we are going to jump all the way to verse 39.

**Exodus 28:39** And you shall embroider the coat of fine linen, and you shall make the mitre of fine linen, and you shall make the girdle of needlework.

Incidentally, this is the end of the instructions for making the clothing as far as Aaron is concerned. Verse 40 now tells about the garments to be made for Aaron's *sons* .

**Exodus 28:40-43** And for Aaron's sons you shall make coats, and you shall make for them girdles, and bonnets shall you make for them, for glory and for beauty. And you shall put them upon Aaron your brother, and his sons with him; and shall anoint them, and consecrate them, and sanctify them, that they may minister unto me

in the priest's office. And you shall make them linen breeches to cover their nakedness; from the loins even unto the thighs they shall reach. And they shall be upon Aaron, and upon his sons, when they come in unto the tabernacle of the congregation, or when they come near unto the altar to minister in the holy place; that they bear not iniquity, and die: it shall be a statute forever unto him and his seed after him.

You can see very clearly that for them to be in God's presence they have to dress *up* to this standard. The description begins with Aaron and the high priest's garments. It is good to remember that Aaron was a type of Jesus Christ, our High Priest, and He is represented in the stunningly beautiful clothing in which each piece and color represent some attribute of His office and His character.

We skipped most of it, but in verses 40 through 43 it then addresses Aaron's sons. Under the symbolism, and under the New Covenant, *we* are Aaron's sons. This is *our* clothing being described. We are priests, are we not? We are a kingdom of priests. God is forming us. These clothes for Aaron's sons do not possess the stunning beauty of the High Priest, but neither do we have the office, attributes, nor the character of Christ. It is nonetheless beautifully made, and the Jews in their commentaries insist that the ordinary priests' clothing was *stunningly white!* It is interesting that in Revelation 19 the church is dressed in white—in white linen.

The references to both the high priest's and the normal priests' garments contain the description for *glory* and *honor*. Modern translations are likely to render those words "for dignity and magnificence," or "for dignity and grandeur." One says, "To lend dignity to his work." But again, this goes all the way through the Bible. *Clothing reflects status*. This is very important. Clothing reflects *WHO WE ARE* and where we stand in relation to God. God is using clothing to set His people off, to set them apart, to sanctify them. Even as the Sabbath sanctifies us and sets us apart, so does clothing.

It is also interesting to note that as one comes closer to God, (that is, first of all, removed from just one of humanity to a priest, to a *high* priest), the clothing becomes more obviously distinctive and beautiful. This symbolizes

the way one's image of God, the way one's character, should be. You might recall that when Christ was transfigured before Peter, James, and John, He appeared in a dazzling brilliant white from which they undoubtedly had to shield their eyes.

The manner of dress should reflect who, or what we are. It makes clear that at the very least the clothing arrangements for the priests, when rendering their service to God, coming into His presence to worship and to make sacrifices, that not just any old clothing would do. We are to be clean, and we are to be *dressed up*, not down, for God. When the men in the Church of the Great God, and in the Worldwide Church of God before that, gave sermons and sermonettes, they were to *adorn* themselves in *white* shirts, not colored shirts, and in suits, not sport jackets.

I might add something here regarding pant suits. They have a plus in that they cover well, and they are often made of fine material. However, even in secular society they are neither as formal or as acceptable for dress-up occasions as a dress. Brethren, in an overall sense, we ought to be able to see that symbolism is important to God because it is needful for our development. It will help to produce the understanding of very important spiritual reality.

We are going to go back to the New Testament now to I Timothy 2:9-10. Paul begins by saying, "In like manner also." This is referring back to the first 8 verses, where, as he said to the men, he now says to the women. We are also going to use I Peter 3:1-5.

**I Timothy 2:9-10** In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with braided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array. But (which becomes women professing godliness) with good works.

**I Peter 3:1-5** Likewise, you wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without [or apart from] the word be won by the conduct of the wives: While they behold your chaste conduct coupled with fear. Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and

of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel: But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands.

We are going to go back again to I Timothy 2:9. In verse 9, the word translated "adorn" is translated from the Greek *kosmeho*. It is Strong's #2885. Our English word "cosmetic" is derived from exactly the same root; however, cosmetics is not what Paul is talking about here. He is very clearly talking about dress, and as we will see, something else as well.

*Kosmeho* might sound familiar to you. It comes from the same root as *cosmos*, which is Strong's #2889. *Cosmos* is the word that is translated "world" in the scripture. Now *cosmos* is a noun, and it means *order, arrangement, orderly aggregate*, or if it is applied to the conduct of a person, which it can be, it indicates *regular disposition, even temperament*.

There is a third word here. In verse 9 it is translated "*modest*." But believe it or not, this word in the Greek is *kosmeos*, Strong's #2887. We have #2885, #2887, and #2889 all from the same root, and it is the word translated "*modest*" in this same sentence. This same word (#2887) also appears in I Timothy 3:2, and it is used in describing the qualifications, the requirements, for an elder.

**I Timothy 3:2** A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of **good behavior** [ *kosmeos*, #2887].

There is *kosmeos*. It is translated **good behavior**. Now back to I Timothy 2. That same word translated "modest" and "good behavior" would probably be translated today as *orderly, decent, or sensible*. This word is kind of interesting, because Zodiates, quoting the Greek philosopher Plato, said "It indicates a citizen who quietly fulfills the duties incumbent upon him, and is not disorderly. It indicates someone self-controlled, who voluntarily sets limits on his own freedom." That was #2887.

We have #2885, #2887, and #2889. We are going to go back to the original one (#2885; *kosmeho*), which is the verb form of this word. It means, first of all, "to set in order." Paul said, "In like manner, also, that women adorn (set themselves in order, arrange or decorate)...." This is logical, because "adorning" and "decoration" is the result of putting things in order. It is like a progression. You will notice that all three words have a sense of order, of regularity, of structure, suggesting consistency, dependability, and self-control.

The *King James* translation is fairly close to being correct. In a way it is pretty hard to improve on it, because that is literally what it says. But one commentator suggested that it could be translated, "Women should adorn themselves in adorning attire." This is one you have to think about, but this translation allows room for the clothing and jewelry to be attractive, but it also draws a line in that it must be modest and reflect self-control.

We are going to go back to I Timothy 2 again, and we are going to look at the rest of these descriptive words. The next word is translated in the *King James* "shamefacedness." This reinforces the sense of modesty. That word today means "decent." It has the sense of withdrawing, of being bashful, and it directly confronts the aggressive seductiveness of the harlotry God portrays in Proverbs 7, Isaiah 3, and Ezekiel 16, and I might add also Isaiah 47.

The next word translated "sobriety" means "soundness of mind." It means "sanity." It figuratively means "self-control." Today it might be translated "with propriety." Propriety means *fit, correct, dignity, decorum, appropriate*. That word "sobriety" is Strong's #4997. Regarding this word, Strong says: "Having complete control over the passions and desires so that they are lawful, and reasonable; a certain curtailment and regulation of passions, both removing those that are improper and excessive, and also arranging those that are necessary to the proper time, and in moderation." Paul really gives quite a description here.

Now let me sort of sum this up. A woman once asked an English minister what manner of dress was proper for a Christian woman. He replied, "Madam, so dress yourself so that people who have been in your company can hardly recollect what you had on."

The whole context of what Paul wrote reflects what that English minister said, but we will put it into modern terminology: "She should not put herself in order in any manner that draws overt attention to her person, or to any particular part of her body, whether her hair, eyes, breast, navel, hips, or legs."

Our clothing should reflect cleanliness. It must be appropriate to the occasion. It must reflect modesty, simplicity, gentleness, and reverence, as Paul taught, and also a quiet spirit, or contentment, as Peter recorded.

The first line of verse 9 of the *Living Bible* says: "And women should be the same way; quiet, and sensible in manner and clothing."

Both Peter and Paul reflect the biblical theme concerning attire, and that is that the *inner* (the heart or spirit) and the *outer* (the conduct and attire) must parallel each other, and that the inner must be motivated by respect for God, self-control, modesty, and decency.

**Matthew 18:3-10** And [Jesus] said, Verily I say unto you, Except you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receives me. But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea. Woe unto the world because of offences! For it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence comes! Wherefore if your hand or your foot offend you, cut them off, and cast them from you: it is better for you to enter into life halt or maimed rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire. And if your eye offend you, pluck it out, and cast it from you: it is better for you to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire. Take heed that you despise not one of these little ones: for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.

**Matthew 18:3-10 [AMP ]** And [Jesus] said, Truly I say to you, unless you repent [change, turn about] and become like little children [trusting, lowly, loving, forgiving], you can never enter the kingdom of heaven [at all]. Whoever will humble himself therefore and become like this little child [trusting, lowly, loving, forgiving] is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever receives and accepts and welcomes one little child like this for My sake and in My name receives and accepts and welcomes Me. But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in and acknowledge and cleave to Me to stumble and sin [that is, who entices him or hinders him in right conduct or thought], it would be better [more expedient and profitable or advantageous] for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be sunk in the depth of the sea. Woe to the world for such temptations to sin and influences to do wrong! It is necessary that temptations come, but woe to the person on whose account or by whom the temptation comes! And if your hand or your foot causes you to stumble and sin, cut it off and throw it away from you; it is better [more profitable and wholesome] for you to enter life maimed or lame than to have two hands or two feet and be thrown into everlasting fire. And if your eye causes you to stumble and sin, pluck it out and throw it away from you; it is better [more profitable and wholesome] for you to enter life with only one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into the hell [Gehenna] of fire. Beware that you do not despise or feel scornful toward or think little of one of these little ones, for I tell you that in heaven their angels always are in the presence of and look upon the face of My Father Who is in heaven.

I went through that because ladies, the single most prominent complaint that I receive against you by both men and women, but especially from men, is in regard to how you dress. The complaint is that it is too sexually stimulating.

Now think about this. Do you want your teen-age daughter to be a stumblingblock, leading men and boys to sin? Perhaps you are unaware of a specific way that men and women are different that touches on this issue. Men are much more sexually stimulated by the sense of sight than women, and that is why pornography is aimed directly at men, and why fashion

designers design women's clothing to reveal certain body areas. And so tops should not be so tight as to draw attention to the breasts, or expose portions of the breasts. Hemlines should be below the knees. Skirts should not be slit so high that they draw attention to the thighs, and be loose enough so that they drape nicely to cover the thighs when seated. Attire must not be that which overtly draws attention to the self in a vain or a casual display, but parallels the childlike innocence that Jesus taught.

The principle here as taught by Jesus is serious, because the manner of dress may reveal the carelessness and the lack of love in one's heart. Regarding I Timothy 2:9 and I Peter 3:1-5, one commentator expressed, "What the hair and the clothing signal is that in the heart of that person ignoring these things is a worldly-minded preoccupation with what is on the outside rather than what is in the heart." These same principles are true for men, but because men have the power in the fashion industry, they exploit women for their own sexual titillation.

Now let me add here, as an overall evaluation from your pastor, that most of you women are modestly and tastefully dressed. Most of the breakdown, but not all, occurs with the teenagers. This is understandable because they are so impressionable, and because they are driven so hard to meet the standard of their peers, but it still is not right, and it should be addressed by you parents.

Regarding the use of cosmetics, they certainly were used in ancient times, as any study of Egypt will clearly show. They were not used in Israel however to the same extent. It was not near so common as in the Gentile nations. This is understandable because Israel, despite their many sins, still had a measure of instruction from God's word. There are no "Thus saith the Lord" regarding cosmetics in the Bible. The clearest example is made with the harlot Queen Jezebel, and it is entirely negative because of the association of her well-known deceitful and seductive heart. Incidentally, Jezebel the queen, the wife of King Ahab, was a Gentile. She was a Zidonian.

I think Herbert Armstrong's assessment regarding the use of cosmetics is correct when cosmetics are seen against the backdrop of the overwhelming biblical evidence regarding attire. He concluded that it is a vanity and that it should not be used. Now why? What is a vanity that makes it bad?

Today *vanity* is most frequently associated as a synonym of conceit and desire for admiration. Indeed these senses are contained in the word; however, that is not the foremost usage in the Bible. In the Bible it means *futile, useless*. But the question we must ask is, futile or useless in regard to what? The answer is futile and useless in regard to God and His purpose. More specifically, it means futile and useless to favorably impress God and glorify Him and earn His respect; futile and useless toward helping to prepare one to be in God's image and to be in the kingdom of God.

Now cosmetics, along with today's fashions, do not depict the godly, harmless, childlike innocence Jesus taught. Just a little over one hundred years ago in this country the use of makeup was rarely even seen in public, but as American contact with the world outside increased, fashions changed, and the use of makeup increased. One commentator said, "In the *Gay Nineties* the ankle became visible. In the *Roaring Twenties* the leg appeared below the hemline, and in the *Soaring Sixties* the thigh was exposed for any and all to see. The same manner of degeneration occurred in the use of makeup: from nothing *anywhere* to everything *everywhere*. Makeup is used to hide reality." That is very interesting

As our nation lost its innocence and became more cosmopolitan—there is that word again: *cosmos-politan*)—values changed, and America degenerated from the high ideals that it formerly had.

Herbert Armstrong said several times in my hearing that the First World War was a watershed. He said that was when we lost our innocence as a nation. Now this nation has not only joined the world, we have become the world's leader—the trend-setter—in immorality. Humpty Dumpty has fallen off the wall.

Brethren, I hope we have learned that clothing has a great deal of spiritual and moral significance, and that the traditions and customs of the church have a strong scriptural base. They have not been randomly plucked from thin air, and they are not the ideas of an elderly Victorian man. I hope that through this series we have come to know God and His point of view regarding dress standards better. I hope that we have been fortified in our belief so that we can dress with understanding and conviction, that it is

appropriate toward representing God, and if changes need to be made, that we, because of this understanding, are motivated to make them.