



Preacher's Pen *by Gene McCoy*

Modesty

Modesty is honored when the aim is upon being **ATTRACTIVE** without becoming the **ATTRACTION**.

One of the liveliest discussions during our midweek Sizzlin' Summer Study Series was on the topic of modesty. As is usually the case, most of the comments focused upon the responsibility of the ladies. But let's approach this in a way you may not have anticipated.

Many women admit they notice a man's posterior and have expressed that attraction in the same terminology that they consider crude and crass when men express their attraction to certain parts of a woman's body. Don't ask me to explain, much less to understand this attraction! Regardless, it has become fashionable among some men to wear their pants very low on their hips. Actually below the hips. But this style exposes more than what respectable women consider appropriate. It is distracting and



distasteful. We are certain most women disapprove the wearing of pants worn well below the waistline to reveal . . . shall we say . . . the great divide. Yet some of these same women think it is fashionable and acceptable when they reveal the great divide of a different kind. Now, I realize the effect on the female is not the same as it is on the male in these two scenarios. And that is precisely the point! The principle is the same, however. Neither is modest or appropriate, for each draws undue attention to self, whether it incites disgust or distraction.

Imagine a man asking his wife if his droopy drawers expose a respectable amount of his buttocks without violating the principle of modesty. Or if the amount

of exposure falls within the realm of appropriateness. Does a woman consider it appropriate and respectable when the man bends over and exposes even more of the flesh that should always be shielded from the ultraviolet rays of the sun? Should the same consideration be given to the anterior upper torso as is applied to the posterior lower torso? Perhaps we could say in this respect that what is good for the goose is good for the gander. And that there would be a lot less "gandering" if the geese didn't invite and incite it.

You say, "Now wait a minute. We're not talking about the same issue. What you have described is not lust but disgust." Granted. A woman does not respond lustily when confronted by the intergluteal cleft. But when a man is confronted by the exposure resulting from a revealing neckline or a short skirt, his response is less likely to be one of disgust and more likely to be that of the other sort. Advertisers capitalize upon the reality that strategically uncovered bodies have a powerful effect. Some of the same women who decry companies that use such exploitive tactics to sell their products dress provocatively themselves (albeit to a lesser degree) even in an assembly where the worship of God is supposed to be the focal point! And that brings us to the ladies.

Many are the jokes and horror stories relating to the inquiry of a woman as to whether a certain garment makes her look fat. Women apparently **do** give credence to a man's opinion on **some** things! But men respond in fear and trepidation to such a loaded question. Nevertheless, no man wants his wife or daughter to appear as a slob — or a slut. *(cont. on p. 3)*



"His last words were, 'Yes, Dear, those jeans make you look fat.'"

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Wives and daughters who ask if the clothing they wear is modest need to be told the truth by the man in their life. These women understand that men see things differently than women and they want to know if they are drawing undue attention to their bodies in the clothing they have selected. Men, be a man and tell her the truth! **Clothing that reveals or accentuates may draw attention that is neither wholesome nor holy.**

Whenever this topic is raised, someone—usually the guilty—become very defensive, alleging that the church is trying to impose a dress code. Let's be honest. Everyone has a dress code, a standard by which decency is measured. It lies somewhere between nudity and complete coverage. Reasonable people can arrive at a reasonable conclusion regarding modesty.

Read Mrs. Hall's letter, "A Concerned Mother" and Sandy's letter, "Only A Woman Can Say It" www.ccmhar.com> Info Center> Articles

Although some men are overly sensitive and have overactive imaginations, women cannot claim complete innocence. Nor can they deny responsibility. One woman, a professed Christian, recently confessed that she has deliberately worn revealing clothing to draw attention to herself. Some people do know what they are doing when they wear provocative clothing. They are not innocent, therefore, but culpable in the sin of causing a fellow Christian to stumble, the result of a selfish desire to be noticed.

It is possible to be stylish without being stimulating; to be presentable without being provocative. That most Christians dress appropriately—within the boundary of modesty—testifies against those who make excuses that they are somehow unable to find clothing that does not excite, incite, entice or otherwise call undue attention to self.

Paintings have a focal point to which the observer's eyes are drawn. The lines and shapes in this example illustrate it in a way that translates to its application in the fashion industry. Fashion designers utilize this artistic technique to various purposes. Smart dressers select clothing that enhances their appearance. It is sensible to select clothing that does not call attention to less attractive characteristics. The fact is we can control the focal point—where the observers' eyes will naturally focus. The strong appeal of lines and shapes is unmistakable and can be used to good and respectable ends, as well as bad and immodest purposes.



In this regard each individual must submit to self-examination. Is your motive to be presentable or provocative? Is modesty a primary concern when selecting and wearing your clothes? It's one thing to be stylish and another to be stimulating. By our personal presentation we may excite imagination and incite fantasy, arousing lust. Or we may glorify God in our body (1 Cor. 6:20) by adorning it in a way that does not glorify the flesh, thereby robbing Him of the focus of attention He is due.

Perhaps we can summarize this discussion in a single sentence. **If to the reasonable observer it invites, excites or incites, calling undue and allegedly unwanted attention, it is immodest and should be avoided.** All of us are responsible for the way we present our self. We are responsible to God above all. We are also responsible to those who observe us because we do have a level of control over the focus of their attention. Our responsibility also extends to our family and to the church, which is to shine like stars in this dark world (Phil 2:1). 

**MODEST IS
HOTTEST**