

"Tell me nothing but the truth in the name of the LORD?"-1King 22:16



"Shamefastness" and Dress

In the context of holiness, Paul instructs women to "...adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefastness and sobriety; not with braided hair, and gold or pearls or costly raiment; but (which becometh women professing godliness) through good works" (**I Timothy 2:9-10**).

We communicate many things about our selves through dress. It should not be surprising that the woman of a "wily" heart is dressed "with the attire of a harlot" (**Proverbs 7:10**). The disposition of heart not only finds expression in word but often it manifests its character in dress.

The ostentatious or showy spirit often finds an outlet through extravagant hair styles, expensive jewelry and costly raiment. Paul is warning women readers to guard against inappropriate dress.

How does he combat the problem? Fight fire with fire. An unbecoming spirit is behind inappropriate dress, so if we concentrate on having a right spirit when we dress, our adornment should be appropriate.

One characteristic of a holy and godly heart is "shamefastness". According to Vine, this "is that modesty which is 'fast' or rooted in the character." Like "bedfast" is describing one confined to bed, "shamefast" is modesty firmly imbedded in character. This godly heart understands the limits or boundaries of propriety and shrinks back from

ever crossing the line instead of seeing how close one can come to the line.

Shamefastness is that character of heart that is concerned with how certain actions will affect others. We see this clearly when Jesus speaks of the "importunity" or "shameless persistence" (the opposite of shamefastness) of one who approaches the door of a friend at midnight. He is persistent in asking for bread, but shamelessly so. He does not care if his friend is in bed at midnight with his children or what the friend will have to do to accommodate his request. He has no shame regarding how his actions are affecting his friend (**Luke 11:5-8**).

Our dress has an effect upon others. "Shamefastness" factors this in and makes sure the dress for the occasion will be fitting within the limits of propriety, therefore not adversely affecting others.

Our purpose in assembling this morning is to worship and honor God, not put on a show with the new spring fashions. Shamefastness does not keep women from new things, it keeps her within the limits of modest dress, that manifests sobriety. Her dress never distracts other worshippers from the lofty purpose of honoring God by bringing undue attention to herself, or attracting the envious or even lustful gaze of the distracted.

Spring and summer seasons also tempt the ostentatious and showy spirit to show off more of the body rather than keep it modestly covered. Shamefastness will not allow an ostentatious spirit to take root and find expression in skimpy clothing. The woman with shamefastness considers how shorts exposing the thighs; halter tops, attracting eyes to the bare midriff; or swimsuits boldly revealing the female form will attract the wrong kind of response from men. So, she avoids such attire before the public's eye.

The woman wanting to dress becomingly as one who is manifesting godliness can do so in any society. Developing shamefastness will help tremendously in dressing for all occasions.

- Jerry Fite

HAVE YOU STUDIED YOUR BIBLE TODAY?

Rumors: How They Fly!

Reporting is hard business. It takes a disciplined mind. It's hard to be objective. A good reporter must divorce himself from all his pre-suppositions, prejudices, pre-conceived notions. He has the responsibility to his readers or



viewers to report facts as best as he can determine them. He has no business reporting hearsay, opinion, or other part-truths unless he identifies them as such. It takes concentration and a high regard for truth.

Distributing any truth requires the same integrity as that which is necessary for the good journalist. It, too, calls for intense concentration, an unbiased mind, a desire not only to know the truth, but to use it for good whenever and wherever possible. No person has the right to distribute untruth, hearsay, gossip.

The Scriptures assign an attitude for those who would dare speak of things to others publicly. For instance, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God" (1 Pet. 4:11), addresses the tendencies to report opinions and is God's warning against such. "There is a time to keep silence, and a time to speak" (Eccles. 3:7) speaks to the tendency to want to speak more than the occasion calls for, a constant problem for all of us it seems. "But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine" (Titus 2:1) calls to mind the necessity of adorning the doctrine of Christ with a disposition toward correctness, making sure that you do not speak opinion or promote your own surmisings.

The Scriptures also warns about speaking things to others privately as well. "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt" (Titus 2:8) reminds us to make sure that our speech has just the right flavor, that we make sure we do our best to say palatable things in every situation. "A fool is full of words," says the wise man (Eccles. 10:14), indicating that you become suspicious when you say too much about a thing. "A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger" (Prov. 15:1) tells us about how to handle

controversial matters and is a passage everyone would do well to commit to memory.

Then there are those private reporters, those who speak in hushed tones and report in secret, those who seemingly take great delight in spreading rumors and other hurtful information. A Gossip is a newsmonger, one who carries about information that is mostly undocumented in nature and unproductive in effect. It is speech which is seldom intended to edify and will usually include such things as idle talk, tattling, rumors. Sadly, most everyone has participated in it at one time or the other. And even more sadly, many have done so with full knowledge of what they were doing.

"Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth!" (Jas. 3:5). It takes only a small amount of kindling to start a huge conflagration and the skilled gossip knows just how to do it. He may just lift an eyebrow or crook his mouth. He may offer some innuendo or half-truth. He may start some rumor in a place where he knows it will spread like wildfire. He may write something without confirming the source or examining all the facts just because the rumor he is reporting fits what he wants to report.

Gossip is ugly. Gossip is sinful. But gossip is effective, too. "Dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savor; so doth a little folly him that is in reputation for wisdom and honor" (Eccles. 10:1). A man's reputation, which may have taken years to build, can be destroyed by one little, well-placed rumor, just as the ointment which may have taken months to prepare can be destroyed when one little stink-fly lands in the potion. It is a serious thing to report information which is not true or pass along what has never been proven. But people do it all the time. And get away with it.

Two things would help.

Don't repeat anything you don't know for sure. The world of gossip operates on a chain reaction. When the chain is broken, the gossip stops.

Remember you are responsible for what you tell. No matter where you got it, it's still your responsibility. Just don't re-tell and you won't have to worry about it. Make sure it needs to be told before you tell it. - Dee Bowman

*"My son, be attentive to my wisdom;
incline your ear to my understanding,
that you may keep discretion,
and your lips may guard knowledge."
(Proverbs 5:1-2)*

HAVE YOU STUDIED YOUR BIBLE TODAY?