

more to be MODESTY

it is about more than clothing

What we wear and how we present ourselves is the first impression we give to others. It is like a magazine's front page, communicating to the onlooker what will be found inside. So my question for you is does your outside appearance and behavior reflect the inner truth of who you are?

Sometimes we send mixed messages because we're in the midst of an identity crisis. Other times, we use clothing as a costume, pretending we're somebody else in order to be liked or to protect ourselves from harm. Clothing can also become a sort of sorority pledge experience, wearing what friends deem worthy regardless of personal taste.

The way we dress ought to be simple a reflection of our individual personality, while meeting the practical needs each occasion warrants. Most of all, our inner beauty ought to be the most captivating part of our appearance. If this is our goal, then pursuing modesty what we wear and how we behave doesn't become a burdensome set of rules, but rather a framework for honoring God.

defining modesty

Modesty is a lifestyle that encompasses how one dresses, behaves, and even speaks. The concept of modesty is that what is on the outside should not distract from the character of a person on the inside. Also, it should not tarnish or destroy a testimony of faith. The outer appearance should be consistent with one's beliefs as well considerate of others.

spiritual modesty

The Scriptures give us wonderful instruction on how we should pursue beauty and live modestly. According to the Lord, we are beautiful when our behavior lines up

with God's instructions as we live with a reverence for the Lord. It is our character, words, and actions that make a woman beautiful. When what we say and do is consistent with Scripture, an unquantifiable inner beauty takes over. This is the essence of a modest woman, as she seeks to fulfill the call in the following Scripture passages.

1 Peter 2:3-5

³Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes. ⁴Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight. ⁵For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to make themselves beautiful.

Colossians 3:12-14 The Message

So, chosen by God for this new life of love, dress in the wardrobe God picked out for you: compassion, kindness, humility, quiet strength, discipline. Be even-tempered, content with second place, quick to forgive an offense. Forgive as quickly and completely as the Master forgave you. And regardless of what else you put on, wear love. It's your basic, all-purpose garment. Never be without it.

Isaiah 52:7

How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, "Your God reigns!"

Psalms 45:11 NIV

The king is enthralled by your beauty; honor him, for he is your lord.

Proverbs 31:30

Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised.

physical modesty

As we grow in relationship with the Lord, our inner beauty reshapes our outside appearance. However, we still must be practical as we consider what we should wear and how we behave. We want to communicate an

attractive, God-honoring message, even before we open our mouth. While our clothing is significant, so is our speech and body language. Our words should be modest by refraining from fowl language, gossip, slang, and being rude to others. The way we carry our body should also be modest by not flirting, bending, or leaning in ways that tempt guys to want to be more than friends.

Modesty is especially important when considering the men in our lives. It is our responsibility to not cause them to stumble by what we wear and how we behave (1 Timothy 1:5). God made males visual creatures. They are awakened by a woman's body (read Song of Solomon)! When our clothes are tight or reveal too much skin, guys don't have to use their imagination to visualize what is underneath. It is our job to keep our package wrapped modestly until we may share the precious gift of our body with our husband! There should be no preview shows, with or without clothing on. Yes, guys are required to exert self-control, but so should we. We can help keep them from sinning by treating them as brothers in Christ. Think of your own weakness -- would you like your friends to set you up to fail every time? NO! So consider how you clothe yourself (and carry yourself) in the same regard.

Use these general guidelines to develop a habit of physical modesty that gives way to revealing your inner beauty.

Shirts & Dresses

- the neckline should not reveal cleavage in any position
- if shirt or dress has a plunging neckline, use a camisole underneath
- if it has a modest neckline, but plunges when you bend over, be sure to use one hand to keep it close to your skin or opt for another style
- if it is too loose that it doesn't stay on your shoulders or has extra large armholes, be sure to wear a camisole underneath
- if it is too short when you raise your arms, wear a camisole underneath
- if it is too short when you sit, revealing your backside, wear a camisole tucked into your pants or pulled down over the top of your pants
- bras and straps should be concealed; if you can see the bra through the shirt, the shirt is either too tight or the bra is too dark in color

- a shirt or dress is too tight if you can see the bra and panty lines, if it pulls across the bust, belly, or butt, or if you can see skin between the button holes
- always wear a slip under a dress to prevent it from clinging, riding up, or being see through

Pants, Shorts, & Skirts

- pants and shorts are too tight if you can't pull them away from the leg and if you can see your panty lines
- even short-shorts shouldn't fit like bathing suit bottoms; there should be at least 3 inches of material from the center seam to the bottom of the short on the inner thigh, so at least you are covered when you sit indian style
- better yet, wear shorts that are the length of your longest finger, when your hands are straight down your side
- a skirt should not be shorter than four fingers above the top of the kneecap
- you should always wear a slip with a skirt, unless it is lined with a satin material, to prevent it from clinging, riding up, and being see through

Final Notes

- Undergarments should never become outer garments. Bra straps should not be exposed, etc. keep sports wear for athletics and lounge wear at home
- Be sure to look at yourself in the mirror moving into various positions. What looks good standing upright, may become revealing as you sit or bend over. If it doesn't fit right, don't wear it or buy it.
- Use modesty in your movements, regardless of what you are wearing. Cross your legs gracefully in a skirt or dress, and even when wearing pants. Don't bend at the waist to pick something up, instead bend your knees to reach the floor. Don't lean over a table with your butt in the air!

Remember, the purpose of this is to encourage you to be beautiful and modest on the outside, in order to not distract from what you really want others to see -- your heart and personality and love for the Lord.

Additional Resources:

<http://www.therebelution.com/modestysurvey/>

<http://affiliate.purefashion.com/modesty>

<http://isthismodest.com/>

<http://www.purewarrior.org/index.php?id=230>