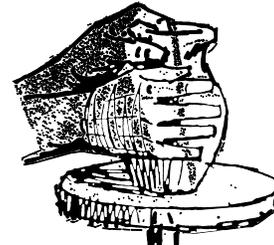


His Workmanship at Westside

*"For we are His
workmanship, created in
Christ Jesus for good works."
—Ephesians 2:10*



Isaiah 64:8

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Modesty: Virtue Ignored, Part 2, Loving the Things in the World *by Jim Harmon*

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any one loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." —1 Jn 2:15-16

The apostle John's laser-sharp exhortation embodies the essence of how Christians should manage their lives in a world that *"lies in wickedness,"* 1 Jn 5:19. The apostle Paul echoed John's warning: *"And be not conformed to this world,"* Rm 12:2. The Lord, as He did with Adam and Eve, grants His people great freedom, but to "love the world" is not one of them. The "world" in this context is the whole human scheme of things, organized in terms of human wisdom to serve self, to attain a human goal, without reference to God, His laws, His values, or His ultimate judgment. The world, by nature, is hostile to the Word of God.

It is the world in which Jesus said *"I will build my church,"* Mt 16:18. There will come a time when this "spiritual house" will be finished. Christ's church will be completed, perfected just as the Father planned. Until that

time, the world is so arranged that everything we come in contact with has been conceived, shaped, or influenced in some way by worldly ideas, standards, or practices. This includes the clothes we wear. The result is the obvious trend in popular fashion against modesty and toward public undress. This should be a particular concern for the church in that revealing and provocative styles pepper not only every public venue today, but also strut in the sanctuary. The fashion industry is creative, colorful, and dynamic. It radiates celebrity and glamour. Like television and the motion picture industry, it is a stronghold of self-interest and self-expression that has no regard for Biblical values, particularly modesty.

The gurus of fashion have long mesmerized an adoring public, which each year eagerly anticipates the designer's proclamations of what it should be wearing. For many, talking about and wearing what is "in" is a ruling principle in their lives. Whether the issue is "hot" fashion, the latest book or phone, or the opening of a mega grocery store, the frenzy that surrounds these occasions attests to what it means to "love the world" and

"the things that are in the world." In *Christian Modesty and the Public Undressing of America*, Jeff Pollard observes this about fashion: "The fashion industry does not believe that the principal purpose of clothing is to cover the body; it believes that the principal purpose of clothing is *sexual attraction*. This is the very opposite of Christian [sic] modesty."

Signs of the times. For evidence, we need look no further than the windows and walls of many of our clothing stores to see large, explicit displays. *Victoria's Secret*, for example, leaves little to the imagination in marketing its "Very Sexy, Very Now" and "Fun & Flirty" fashions. *Abercrombie & Fitch* go even further in featuring barely-clad college-age youth in a recent catalog. Both businesses have long been targeted for boycott by The American Decency Association because they *"aggressively use eroticism in marketing their product."* On their website, the ADA questions the lack of concern in the church. *"Where is the outcry,"* they ask, *"especially from those in the religious community? Too often those within the church live no differ-*
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"Likewise, 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." —1 Timothy 2:9-10

ently from those outside." They add this warning: the marketing tactics used by A&F are being followed by other companies. If A&F continues its push, with little public outcry, expect a deluge of pornography in the marketplace in the not so distant future.

Amid the fashions that do not honor God, there are numerous attractive, stylish, and complimentary choices that do. Regrettably, it's the daring, on-the-edge choices that tend to capture the public's fancy. Remember we said: *"We are living in a time of moral confusion, and our generation's indifference to moral concerns is reflected in many of today's styles. Christians should be concerned that many fashions, particularly for women, are harlot-like and amount to public undress."* The attire of a harlot (prostitute) has a distinctive look that is designed to draw attention and stimulate desire, Pr 7:10. Whether for street wear or dress-up, the fashions listed below succeed in sidestepping modesty in some way, casting reminders of the attire of the harlot. They represent the clothing that should not be on each Christian's 1Thes 5:21 list ("Prove all things; hold fast what is good."): tube, halter, or skim tops; tanks, camisoles, anything that shows bra straps; mini-skirts; sheer, see-through clothing; low-cut shirts, blouses, jeans; dresses blouses with low fronts or backs; skirts, dresses with slits; racy sayings on T-shirts; glitter that brings attention to chest or hips; ill-fitting garments (too tight or too loose, such as pants on men that seem to be falling off); excessive piercings; tattoos, hair color.

From a Christian's perspective, problems with any garment should become self-evident by examining it to determine if anything about its design

or use "appeals to the flesh." For example, the camisole was originally an undergarment. Obviously, as a short and lacy outer garment, it offers an opportunity to think of *sexy*. Dressing to look sexy is an invitation to lust. Lust, of course, is a sin which especially men are cautioned in Scripture to avoid: Pr 6:25; 11:6; Ezek 23:5-20; Mt 5:28; Rm 1:24-27; 6:12; 13:13-14; 1 Cor 10:6; Gal 5:16-17; Eph 2:3; 4:22; 1 Thes 4:5; 1 Tim 6:9; 3:6; Tit 3:3; 1 Pet 1:14; 2:11; 4:2-3; 2 Pet 1:4; 2:10, 18; 3:3; Jude 16-18. It is a stumbling block for others when women Christians dress in revealing fashions.

Fashion emergencies. Notwithstanding the condemnation of *nakedness* in the Old Testament and the New Testament's clear teaching on practical modesty, these styles tend to confirm that the popular is not necessarily *stylish*. For example, bare midriffs, the combination of the short T-shirt or cami and low-rise pants often reveal unflattering tummies, navels, and unbecoming tattoos. Body types being what they are, these styles quickly make a myth of the idea that one style fits all. Bare legs look better with hose. Dyed and bleached jeans may not be particularly revealing, but the patterns may accentuate private areas. Instead of eliciting an appreciation and respect for God-given femininity, they tend to expose the wearer's naiveté and lack of fashion sense.

We shouldn't be surprised. "Sexy" is the operative word for many stores catering to pre-teens, teens, and college-age customers. Express features a pant line it calls the "Sexy, low-rise, slim-fit fashion story" as well as "Recklessly Sexy Jeans." Limited punctuates its wall décor with artistically scripted slogans—"Smart - Mod-

ern - Sexy;" "Casual - Sexy - Cool;" "Sexy Sweater;" and "I Love Sexy Pants." This kind of marketing has proven effective in turning heads and stirring emotions, particularly among youth and young women whose world revolves around *Cosmo Girl* and Justin Beiber. Other stores, such as Rampage, The Gap, and Miller's Outpost feature essentially the same styles, but seem more restrained in featuring the word, "sexy." Men's fashions typically are not as revealing. However, some males (pre-teens to college-age) have adopted Hip Hop fashion, wearing their pants so baggy and low off the hips that one wonders how they stay up and marking knuckles. These styles are imitative of those popular among inner-city youth and came from prison styles. Even though graceless and cumbersome, they are said to be "cool." ("Cool," of course, is an elastic word that represents a complete endorsement of the object of its attention.) Graceless quickly turns to vulgar (in female fashions, as well) when the wearer's underwear and butt-crack show as they lean over or sit down. That said, a greater reason for concern, particularly for parents, is that these fashions cannot be easily separated from the influence of Hip Hop culture and the explicitly sexual and violent lyrics and imagery that permeate many of its stage events and music videos.

It is in the area of beach attire and swimwear for women that modesty is most openly ignored. For many sun-worshippers, water enthusiasts, and beach athletes, wearing the legal minimum is the norm. Carousing spring breakers push even that line, rewarding bosom-baring exhibitionists

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Psalm 133:1



Fill your can-teen in 2013

“May you be filled with all the fullness of God.”

—Ephesians 3:19

Modesty, from p. 2

with rousing hoots and whistles. As was pointed out in Part I, modesty was a common consideration in women’s swimwear right up to the 1920s. Styles were designed to cover a woman’s figure from neck to ankles. It had to do with the prevailing view of decency. Today, skimpy attire that one wouldn’t dare wear to school, on the street, or in the mall, is considered okay for the beach or the pool.

It’s not just about clothes. “Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.,” 2 Tim 2:22. At the beach or pool, nakedness is on parade, not in a programmed or published medium, but in real time. Yet Christians, even those who diligently avoid certain movies, television programs, and literature because of offensive content, happily join in. Pollard makes this sobering point: “Swimwear not only legitimized nakedness but its Siamese twin, *voyeurism*. The female form was no longer a fantasy hidden under layers of cloth and petticoats: it was now a stark, sensual reality for all those who wanted to look.”

A voyeur is one who obtains gratification from seeing sexual objects, acts, or scenes. Voyeurism is most commonly associated with sexual perversion, pornography, “Peeping Toms” and the like. It represents the

antithesis of purity of conscience. A God-fearing Christian will not succumb to this kind of behavior, but Christians should not underestimate the *tendency* toward voyeurism that can be stimulated by continued exposure to forms of indecency. Seemingly innocent “girl and boy watching,” unadvised and ungoverned, will eventually numb the conscience. Impure thoughts will engage the mind freely.

Voyeurism (though it’s not called that) is today a mainstream pastime, popularized effectively by *Playboy* magazine. Porn magazines, with their slick format and striking photography, front an unholy but thriving empire of celebrity, glamour, sensuality, and sex. *Sports Illustrated* has joined the party with its annual swimsuit edition. But guess what? The issue is not really about swim suits! Even though its photographs are contrived, silly, and even vulgar, *SI* has successfully amended the meaning of “sports illustrated” to take advantage of an ever-growing market. Add the worldwide web, and the voyeur’s field of dreams has no boundaries.

Almighty over all. In the days of old, God laid on Israel what might be characterized as The Great Requirement: “*And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways, and to love Him and to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, to keep the commandments of the LORD, and His statutes, which I command you this day for your good? Behold, the* continued on p. 4

Special Sunday in 2 weeks—WHO IS GOD? We’ll seek to understand and grow closer to the God Who reveals Himself in His word. Invite your friends!

Expecting Marie Carlson—July 1 girl
Amy Vander Kooi—August, boy

Discipleship Here At Home

PRAY FOR healing, protection, help, and comfort here and away

Madge Wallace—passed away early this morning from lung cancer

Gary Boyd—recovering from pneumonia

Judy Sartin—acute bronchial pneumonia

Mark Campbell—in rehab after second head injury; recovering at home

Matt Reames—home, great improvement

Judy Strand’s son Joe Huff—recurrence of neurological symptoms, black-outs, from brain injury he suffered in a 2007 car accident

CHRONIC CONDITIONS

Logan Corray; Rocco Sangelli Jr;

Addison Tope; Pat Wilkes—asthma

Pearl Chapman—leg pains; pancreatitis

Nell Free—new pacemaker; back pain

Rod Green—thyroid trouble

Autumn Hadders—epilepsy

Jonathan Hadders—RA

Kirk Johnson—worsening MS; needs help around his house

Menards—aging; **Lloyd**, diabetes;

Virginia, now legally blind from rapid macular degeneration; high BP

Sandra Perry—neuropathy from diabetes

Cheryl Reames—diverticulitis; fibromyalgia

Judy Sartin—spinal stenosis; pain

Lynda Szymanski—COPD, lung

Job concerns **Andrew Tope, Lorenzo Gonzalez, and Frank Savarese** are seeking jobs.

Traveling **Pat and Larry Campbell** are in AR caring for Pat’s parents.

The **Wilkeses** are in NC for their grandson **Drew’s** HS graduation.

REJOICE **Brennan Blicharski**, who studied the Bible online with **Joel Walker** and **Jonathan Hadders**, and **John McLaughlin**, a co-worker of **Vickie Reingrover**, were recently baptized.

Modesty: Virtue Ignored, Part 2 from p. 3

heaven and the heaven of heavens is the LORD'S, the earth also, with all that is in it," Deut 10:12-14. God ordained Israel as "a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation," Ex 19:6. He set specific standards regarding faith and conduct. Purity and rites of purification were major issues for the people. Peter, invoking the same language that signified God's stamp on Israel, reminded Christians of their position and duty as New Testament priests. Notice his phrasing points to moral purity: "But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that you should show forth the praises of Him Who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light...Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; having your conversation honorable among the Gentiles, that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.," 1 Pet. 2:9, 11-12. Moral purity will express itself in forms of modesty. Purity in thought and modesty interrelate as the means by which one can "abstain from fleshly lusts." Together they reflect a heart that desires to please God and to be considerate of others. Yet modesty is really not so much about dress as it is undress. Modes of undress have long been characteristic among heathen peoples. Christians were often noted for their modesty. Today, the distinctions are blurred. The church, to its shame, is mimicking the world. While moral purity is a personal issue, it is first a Biblical issue.

Who is to be pleased? It's clear that Biblical modesty and popular fashion represent opposing world views. Biblical modesty is of God; popular fashion is not. But regarding modesty, there is the risk of getting legalistic. Throughout history institutions have enforced certain codes of dress to bind their people to a certain ethic to assure a certain outcome. But it is not legalistic when Biblical precepts intended to inform men's minds and consciences are applied. Diverse and relevant principles of modesty, embedded throughout Scripture, are to rule over the opinions and preferences of men. For the Christian, every question involving dress ultimately comes down to Whom does he want to please—God or man? Who sets the standards that Christians are to live by—God or man? Who said, "you shall be holy; for I AM holy"—God or man? The answers are easy; putting them into practice is not. Paul warns, "Be not deceived: evil companions corrupt good manners," 1 Cor. 15:33. "Evil companions," means associating with "bad company." Christians are in bad company when they are apathetic or complacent about the worldly influences that swirl around them. The psalmist's insight is vitally instructive for us today: "How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word. With my whole heart I have sought You; O, let me not wander from Your commandments! Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You!" Ps 119:9-11.

Westside church of Christ

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Pastors

Larry Campbell (303) 462-4987
DeWayne Howell (303) 973-7283

Preacher

Jim Reingrover (303) 973-5102

Assembly Schedule

Sunday

Bible classes	9:00 am
Morning assembly	10:00 am
Afternoon assembly	1:30 pm

Wednesday

Bible classes	7:30 pm
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This afternoon:

▲ Walk in Their Sandals Series

"Esau," by Jonathan Hadders