

THE BIBLICAL DRESS CODE

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[The Seed of Abraham](#)

Ever since the Fall of Man, “humans have made and worn clothing (Gen. 3:7, 21) for modesty, protection (from the elements), and status.”²

Many Christians in the USA dress like the world around them—immodestly. They have never been told by their pastors or have ever stopped to think about how Jesus would want them to dress? Christians are like orphans who have been adopted by a family and who now must learn the ways and values of their family. Our Father, who has adopted us through the death and crucifixion of His Son,³ has His ways and His ideas of how we should do things, what we should value, and also how we should dress. It’s written in His Word. He has both a conceptual way for us to dress (modestly) and some specific ways.

The Apostle Paul speaks of ‘our ways vs God’s Ways’ in Romans 12:1-2:

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present *your bodies* a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And *do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind*, that you may prove what is that *good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*”⁴

The Prophet Isaiah reveals just how different God’s ways and thoughts are from our ways and thoughts. Is this really surprising, seeing how God is infinite and we are finite, and that He is all-wise and we, many times, delude ourselves into thinking that we are wise?

“‘For My thoughts are not your thoughts nor are your ways My ways,’ says Yahveh. ‘For as the Heavens are higher than the Earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.’” (Isaiah 55:8-9)

In other words, how we dress and appear may very well be fine with us, but directly opposed to God. I think we can agree that if God has certain ways for us to clothe ourselves, that we should find out what they are and act accordingly. We can either conform to His ways or deny Him.

The Apostle Paul told the Corinthians that of our spirit *and* our body were the Temple where God dwelt:

‘What? Don’t you know that your body is the Temple of the Holy Spirit, which is in you, which you have of God *and you are not your own?* For you are bought with a price, therefore, *glorify God in your body* and in your spirit, which are God’s.’ (1st Corinthians 6:19-20)

Some Christians, in trying to justify the way they dress, might say, “God looks at the heart. God doesn’t care what you look like on the outside.” It’s true that God looks at the heart, but Man cannot see the heart. *Man sees the outer.* The outer appearance, then, is an important indicator of what is in the heart, especially

¹ The foundation for this article was taken from [The Bible’s Dress Code](#).

² Geoffrey W. Bromiley, General Editor; Everett F. Harrison, Roland K. Harrison and William Sanford LaSor, associate Editors, *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, Volume Three (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1979), p. 401.

³ See Gal. 4:5; Eph. 1:5.

⁴ God says in Isaiah: “For as the Heavens are higher than the Earth, so are My Ways higher than your Ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.” (Isaiah 55:9)

when a person can only see or look at the other person (e.g. in a supermarket or walking on a street). In a woman's case, does the way she dress attract attention to her and her body, causing men to potentially stumble and sin, or is she cognizant of the fact that she should dress so as not to cause men to lust?

God does care how we look or dress. If He didn't He wouldn't have given men and women basic rules in how to dress. God made men and women differently. Men are stimulated by sight. That's why pornography is sold mainly to men. This is why Yeshua (Jesus of Nazareth) told the men of His day, 'whoever looks upon a (married) woman to lust after her has (already) committed adultery with her in his heart' (Matthew 5:28). He didn't say that to women (not that it might not be true, but the overwhelming people in those days who looked upon the opposite sex like that were men).

Men are generally attracted to a woman physically before they are connected to her emotionally. In fact, most men don't even want to pursue the possibility of an emotional relationship if the physical attraction isn't there.

On the other hand, women are generally stimulated by touch. It could be a physical touch or an emotional 'touch.' All a man has to do is look at a woman and he can be stimulated. A woman needs to be spoken to in a tone that isn't angry or demanding, but gentle. That's why God has given certain commands to women regarding their appearance *so they will not stimulate men*. God has also given commandments to men, such as in 1st Cor. 7:1-2, which states that men shouldn't touch women:

'..It is good for a man not to touch a woman. Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.' (KJV, 'touch;' also ASV, NASB, NKJV, NRSV)

While a woman is commanded to dress a certain way so that men are not stimulated, men are commanded to act and behave a certain way, so women are not stimulated. That is why the rules are different. That's why the man is commanded not to touch a woman (other than his wife or mother, etc.), which at its very basic level restricts men from shaking hands with women (or hugging them, etc.). The rules for a woman's appearance are for a woman's own protection and blessing. They are designed to protect her from the lusts and perverse advances of men, but let's start first with the rules for men.

Rules for Men

There are basically five rules in the Bible for how a Christian man is to dress. Deuteronomy 22:5 states,

'The woman shall not wear that which pertains to a man and neither shall a man put on a woman's garment, for all that do so are an *abomination* to Yahveh your God.'

So much for unisex clothing and transgenderism. A man should not wear a woman's clothing. Scripture does not say that a man who puts on a woman's garment has (only) sinned, but that he has committed an *abomination* in God's eyes. Lying and stealing are sins. If a man puts on a woman's garment he has not only committed a sin, but he has committed an abomination before God. In other words, a total perversion of how God made man. To give some context as to how God sees this, bestiality (having sex with an animal),⁵ is also an abomination.

⁵ C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, vol. 1, *The Pentateuch* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2001), pp. 598-599: "it was forbidden to 'lie with mankind as with womankind,' i.e., to commit the crime of *paederastia*, that sin of Sodom (Gen. 19:5), to which *the whole of the heathen were more or less addicted* (Rom. 1:27), and from which even the Israelites did not keep themselves free (Judg. 19:22ff.); or to 'lie with any beast...Into no beast shalt thou give thine emission of seed...and a woman shall not place herself before a beast to lie down thereto'...Lying with animals was connected in Egypt with the worship of the goat, at Mendes especially, where the women lay down before he-goats (*Herodotus*, 2, 46; *Strabo*, 17, p. 802). *Aelian* (*nat. an.* vii. 19) relates an account of the crime being also committed with a dog in Rome; and according to *Son-*

The second rule for men regarding appearance is found in 1st Cor. 11:14, where the Bible says, ‘Does not even nature itself teach you that *if a man has long hair it is a shame unto him?*’ Some might point to the long hair on the life-long Nazarites of Samson, Samuel and John the Baptist, with their hair that was never to be cut. These three, though, are divine asterisks—the *God ordained* exceptions to the rule.

In the days of Messiah Yeshua the common duration of a Nazarite Vow was 30, 60 or 100 days, certainly not enough time for the hair to grow very long, especially as it was shaved off before the Vow began and when the Vow ended (Num. 6:18-20; Acts 18:18). Also, God commands that the hair of the Levitical Priests in the future Temple be trimmed (Ezk. 44:20). Long hair on a man is a sign of rebellion, and hence, the ‘shame’ that Paul speaks of. The hippies of the 60s and the Hell’s Angels certainly fall into this category of long hair symbolizing rebellion against God.

The third commandment concerning the appearance of a man is the full, untrimmed beard,⁶ which is one of God’s marks of distinction for men, separating them from the world.⁷ All the men of the ancient nations trimmed their beards in certain distinct ways, but the full, untrimmed beard speaks of *belonging* to the God of Israel. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, King David and all the Prophets, as well as Yeshua and all His Apostles, had full and untrimmed beards. If not, they would have sinned. Isn’t it interesting that most men in the world and in the Church shave? That isn’t from God, but Satan, who loves to defile.

A fourth point speaks of men wearing tassels or *tzit’ziot* (Num. 15:37-41). These are God’s physical reminders of His commandments and for men to know His commandments and to observe them.

The fifth point is an understanding from ancient Jewish culture that a man should not expose his body: his thighs, chest or arms to his elbows. The ancient Jews, including Yeshua, wore robes or mantles that covered their entire bodies. This would mean that shorts, bathing trunks and short sleeve shirts, as well as skin tight clothes, are not something for men to wear.

The *Illustrated Manners and Customs of the Bible* states that the outer garment for an ancient Hebrew man covered his entire body:

“The Hebrew men wore an ‘outer garment’ consisting of a square or oblong strip of cloth, 2 to 3 m. (80 to 120 in.) wide. This garment...was called the *coat, robe, or mantle*.⁸ It was wrapped around the body as a protective cover...The poor man used this outer garment as his bed clothing (Exodus 22:26-27).”⁹

Whenever a man would have to do some type of laborious work, such as teaming up his oxen and plowing his field, he could, if he desired, pull up the back bottom part of the skirt of his garment that went down to his ankles, through his legs and tuck it in his band that girded his waist, giving his legs more room to move. The Bible calls this, ‘girding up the loins.’

It’s truly informative how our Savior appeared to John in His glory, with a garment that went down to His feet:

“and in the midst of the seven Lampstands One like the Son of Man, *clothed with a garment down to the feet* and girded about the chest with a golden band.” (Revelation 1:13)

nini, R. 11, p. 330, in modern Egypt men are said to lie even with female crocodiles.” There is ‘no end’ to the perversion of men and women.

⁶ “You must not shave around the sides of your head, *nor shall you disfigure the edges of your beard*.” (Leviticus 19:27)

⁷ For more on the full and untrimmed beard for the Hebrew men, see [The Biblical Beard](#).

⁸ This is the ancient Talit, today called the prayer shawl. In biblical times it wasn’t used for prayer, but worn daily as a full robe that covered the body of the Hebrew male, called *m’il*.

⁹ J. I. Packer and M. C. Tenney, Editors, *Illustrated Manners and Customs of the Bible* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1980), p. 480. It was upon this Talit that the *tzit’ziot* (fringes; Num. 15:38-41) were worn.

Rules for Women

Turning to the rules for women, we read again from Dt. 22:5 where it states that women aren't to dress like men or wear anything that "is a man's:"

"A woman shall not wear *anything* that pertains to a man, nor shall a man put on a woman's garment, *for all who do so are an abomination to Yahveh your God.*" (Dt. 22:5)

If a woman dresses with a button-down shirt, T-shirt, pants, men's hats (e.g. a baseball hat or a Fedora), or wears men's clothes, God says she is an *abomination* to Him. Someone might say, "Well, God hasn't told me that." My answer would be, "Does God have to tell personally you everything in His Word for it to apply to you? Did He tell you not to murder or steal? Does that mean you can murder and steal? Isn't reading His Word enough for you to know *His will* for you?"

In 1st Timothy 2:9 the Apostle Paul speaks of some things which apply to all Christian women;

"...women (should) adorn themselves in *modest apparel*, with *propriety and moderation*; not with *braided hair, gold, pearls or costly clothing.*"

Women should adorn themselves in modest apparel, and with 'propriety' or 'shamefacedness' (i.e. humility, as opposed to being disrespectful, proud-faced or brazen-faced), and 'sobriety, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly array.' Sobriety or propriety basically mean, *the state of being sober* (i.e. sensible or subdued), not boisterous, arrogant or loud, like ungodly men and women calling attention to themselves. Peter echoes the same godly sentiments:

"Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the Word (meaning, they aren't saved), they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives when they observe *your chaste conduct accompanied by fear*. Do not let your adornment be merely outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold or putting on fine apparel—*rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit*, which is very precious in the sight of God. For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands." (1st Peter 3:1-5)

A Women's Clothes Should Not Pertain To A Man

Gordon Fee, in his commentary on First Timothy for *The New International Commentary on the New Testament*, speaks about *women* in 1st Timothy 2:9 meaning all women, not just married women:

"Paul turns next to *women* (without the definite article, implying a broader context than merely wives). The concern has to do first of all with their dress and *demeanor*...There is a large body of evidence, both Hellenistic and Jewish, which equated 'dressing up' on the part of women with both sexual wantonness and wifely insubordination.¹⁰ Indeed, for a married woman...to dress in public was tantamount to marital unfaithfulness... 'A wife who likes adornment is not faithful'¹¹...Thus women are *to dress modestly, with decency*

¹⁰ Gordon Fee, Author; Gordon D. Fee, General Editor, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1988), p. 76. "For bot one example of this perspective, see Juvenal's *Satire 6*: 'There is nothing that a woman will not permit herself to do, nothing that she deems shameful, when she encircles her neck with green emeralds and fastens huge pearls to her elongated ears...So important is the business of beautification; so numerous are the tiers and stories piled one upon another her head!...meantime she pays no attention to her husband' (Loeb, pp. 121ff.). Cr., among others, 1 Enoch 8:1-2; Testament of Reuben 5:1-5; ...Seneca, *To Helvia* 16:3-4; Plutarch 26.30-32; *Sentences of Sextus* 235."

and propriety. Inherent in this last word is the use of ‘good judgement’ in the matter of dress. This is then specifically defined as not wearing *braided hair* (liter. ‘with plaited hair,’ cf. 1 Pet. 3:3)...*or gold or pearls...or expensive clothes*. Indeed, women who are believers are to be ‘clothed’ in better things (humility) and “*with good deeds*, which will later be defined as, among other things, ‘brining up children’ (5:10). The point is that” it “has to do with conduct that is *appropriate for women who profess to worship God*, not conduct that is immodest or indecent, as is characteristic of women intent on *seduction*.”¹²

The *Wycliff Bible Commentary* states that what Paul writes is reflected in Peter’s writing at 1st Peter 3:3-5, and that, “the wearing of modest and appropriate clothing...(is) the proper accompaniment of a true confession of godliness.”¹³

Applying the rules to the different garments women should wear will determine which garments agree with the biblical dress code and which do not. Women should not wear pants because it violates the first rule. It is man’s apparel¹⁴ and Dt. 22:5 says it’s an abomination, which puts it in the sins of bestiality and homosexuality. Women wearing pants is very serious to God.

Common sense tells us that pants are a man’s apparel and not for women. If you get off an airplane in any country in the world, in a place where they don’t speak English, you don’t need to know their language to know which bathroom to go into. You’ll see a picture on the bathroom door. It will either have a picture of someone in slacks or someone in a skirt.

Women are appalled at the thought of a man wearing a dress, but many men and women think nothing of a woman wearing pants—at least today, but it hasn’t always been that way. There was a fashion designer a number of years back who decided he was going to come out with a line of dresses for men. He appeared on the Phil Donahue show, and Phil had all these handsome male models come out wearing the dresses designed just for men—they paraded them around the stage on the show *and all the women thought it was vulgar*. When Phil went into the audience with a microphone, many of the women said it was preposterous that a man would wear a dress. Someone said:

‘Don’t these men know any better? Don’t they have any self-respect? Don’t they have any concept of manhood that they would parade around in a dress?’

Mr. Donahue said something that revealed the irony of it: ‘Well,’ he began, ‘they said the same thing fifty years ago when women started wearing pants.’

No woman in any society in the world wore pants until the mid 1900s; less than 100 years ago. A woman should not wear pants because they are a man’s garment and God says it is an *abomination* for a woman to wear a man’s garment.

In biblical days Hebrew women did not wear crotched garments. Pants have a crotch. The Hebrew priests

¹¹ Why this would be so is because adornment (e.g. jewels and hair in braids) is attracting to men, and if a woman is married she shouldn’t be dressing to attract and sexually arouse men.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 71-72.

¹³ Charles F. Pfeiffer, Old Testament; Everett F. Harrison, New Testament, *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1977), p. 1,373.

Even if a woman isn’t intentionally seeking to attract and seduce men, her dressing speaks louder than her naiveté, which means, “The state or quality of being inexperienced or unsophisticated, especially in being artless, credulous, or uncritical.”

¹⁴ [Pants](#)-wearing became an everyday affair in Europe for men during the eighth century, after the fall of the Roman Empire, when the continent fell under the rule of warriors who fought from horseback—the knights. So wearing pants became associated with high-status men and gradually spread to other males...Elizabeth Miller is often credited as the first modern woman to wear pants. [Miller](#) created her Turkish-style pants one day in 1851 while working in the garden. They were long baggy pants that narrowed at the ankle and were worn under skirts. These early pants were designed to give women more freedom of movement while still preserving their modesty.

wore ‘pants’ or britches under their garment (robe) so that when they ascended the Altar of Sacrifice their nakedness would not be exposed (Ex. 20:26).

Pants are called britches in some English Bibles and britches were worn exclusively by men.¹⁵ Even though the garments worn by men and women in biblical days were similar, they weren’t the same. The women wore a slightly longer, flowing robe, and men wore a less colorful outer robe. *Underneath* the priest’s robe would be britches that went down to the knees. Women didn’t have that nor did the average Hebrew, as he had no need for it, for he didn’t ascend the steps of the Altar of Sacrifice as the Sons of Aaron did.

A Woman’s Modest Clothes

The second reason that women shouldn’t wear pants is because *pants are not modest*. They reveal the woman’s figure. In 1st Timothy 2:9 it states that women should adorn themselves in ‘modest apparel.’ The Greek word for *modest* is *katastolay* καταστολή¹⁶ and it means *a long, flowing garment*. In Paul’s day Hebrew men wore a robe or a mantle, and Hebrew women wore a long, flowing robe that *concealed* their entire body, legs and arms.

In their *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains*, Louw and Nida, state that *katastole* is,

“clothing as a symbol of *behavior*—‘manner of dress’ (and) ‘women should dress themselves in a proper manner with modesty and good sense,’ or ‘women should be *modest and sensible* about the clothes they wear, and dress properly,’ 1st Tim. 2:9.”¹⁷

1st Timothy 2:9 states that women are to adorn themselves in a long, flowing garment, not a short, tight garment (pants or shorts), and especially not a man’s garment (i.e. pants of any kind). That is what *biblical* modesty requires—long and flowing for a woman. Pants do not flow. Even if pants are ‘long’ they do not qualify as a long, *flowing* garment (*katastole*). If a modest, biblical garment is a long, flowing garment, pants are not biblically modest for a woman.

James Moffat, writing for *The Expositor’s Greek Testament*, states of *katastole* in 1st Timothy 2:9 that it,

“conveys the idea of external appearance as *principally* exhibited in dress. It is deportment, as exhibited eternally, whether in look, manner or dress.”¹⁸

¹⁵ Editor’s note: Only men of other lands (cultures other than the Jews) wore crotched pants alone, such as we might see in Babylon or Persia, etc., where a loose fitting crotched pants was common. In Egypt the men often wore a short, kilt-like garment that ended by the knees.

¹⁶ καταστολή Walter Bauer, augmented by William F. Arndt, F. W. Gingrich and Frederick Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (third edition, 2001; Accordance Bible Software), p. 527: “the basic idea is keeping something in check, hence the use of this term in the sense of ‘reserve, restraint’...here personal deportment is certainly meant. The verb στέλλω means to ‘furnish, equip’, a sense that extends itself to the putting on of garments. Hence καταστολή readily serves to express outward attire, either the character one exhibits in personal deportment or something to cover the body, namely *attire, clothing*...also appears to be used in this sense...*dress in becoming manner* (REB; *dress modestly* NRSV) 1st Tim 2:9. The writer skillfully moves from the literal sense of garments to personal characteristics of ‘modesty and self-control’ as appropriate adornment.”

Timothy and Barbara Friberg and Neva Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), p. 222: “strictly, *arranging in order*; may denote an adjustment in behavior or dress...1st Tim. 2.9 may be either *with proper behavior* or *in proper clothing*; the first seems preferable in view of the parallelism in 2:8 and the specific term for clothing in 2:9.”

¹⁷ Johannes Louw and Eugene A. Nida, Editors, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains*, vol. 1 (New York: United Bible Societies, 1989), p. 526; 49.12.

Concerning the outer garment for a Hebrew woman, the *Illustrated Manners and Customs of the Bible* states that,

“The Hebrew woman’s outer garment differed from that of a man. It was longer...to cover the feet (Is. 47:2; Jer. 13:22).”¹⁹

Whereas the man’s outer garment would go down to the ankle, a woman’s garment went down to, and covered her feet.

1. The tunic was a simple garment for men (Heb. *kutonet*; Grk. *chiton*; 2nd Sam. 15:32; Mt. 5:40) that corresponds to an ordinary long shirt or nightgown (for it was also used to sleep in, as well as the mantle or cloak over it). When a person had only this on it was said that he was naked (1st Sam. 19:24; John 21:7).²⁰
2. The outer mantle or cloak was forbidden, under Mosaic Law, from being held overnight as a pledge because it was used as a blanket for the poor (Ex. 22:25-26; Dt. 24:13; Mt. 5:40). It was upon this garment that the *tzit’ziot* (four fringes of Num. 15:37-41) are found.²¹
3. Hebrew men generally wore a turban on their heads, or at the very least, a band of cloth.²²
4. The outer garment of a Hebrew woman differed from a man’s in that the material was finer and more colorful, and it was slightly longer, covering her feet.²³

In biblical days all the women and men wore robes, but they were different styled robes so that all could tell a man from a woman. The only mention of pants for the Hebrews speaks of the special need for underwear or underpants for the priests that went from their hips to their knees. Obviously, these pants weren’t seen because of their outer priestly robe (Ex. 20:26; 28:42-43; 39:27-28).²⁴ The *Jewish Encyclopedia* states another difference in the robes between men and women:

‘The garments of the women were...wider than those of the men, and therefore, *better adapted to conceal the figure*.’²⁵

Clothes that reveal and/or expose a woman’s figure (i.e. her arms, legs, chest, cleavage and breasts) attract men’s eyes. This causes many men to sin and stumble in their minds. Exposing oneself that way also presents the woman ‘as available’ for sex; not a godly relationship. For a godly, Christian woman to dress this way is not only inconsiderate and ‘tempting,’ it’s also sin because it expressly goes against God’s Word (e.g. 1st Tim. 2:9).

¹⁸ James Moffatt, D.D., Author; W. Robertson Nicoll, Editor, M. A., LL. D., *The Expositor’s Greek Testament*, vol. four: *Thessalonians, Timothy* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2002), p. 108.

¹⁹ Packer, *Illustrated Manners and Customs of the Bible*, p. 482.

²⁰ Merrill F. Unger, *The New Unger’s Bible Dictionary* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1988), p. 319.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid., p. 320.

²³ Ibid. Also, see pp. 322-323 for pictures of a man and a woman in their attire. Note that their bodies were fully covered and also their arms were fully covered, their sleeves going down to their wrists.

²⁴ Editor’s note: The ancient *tallit* (*me’il*) with its *tzit’ziot* (tassels of Num. 15:37-41) was worn over the undergarment (1st Sam. 2:19; 15:27). This, like the *me’il* of the High Priest, reached below the knees close to the ankles, and it was a garment made of either linen, cotton or wool. Every respectable man wore the upper garment (*tallit*) over the *ketonet* (undergarment); for any one dressed only in the *ketonet* was considered naked (1st Sam. 19:24; Amos 2:16; Is. 20:2; Job 22:6; 24:7, 10). For the five articles that men wore in the days of Yeshua, and also to understand why the modern *tallit* is not something Yeshua ever saw, let alone wore, ask for the PDF *the Tallit and the Tzit’ziot*. For why the *tallit* is not what Yeshua meant when He spoke of going into your prayer closet, as some Christian preachers teach, ask for the PDF *The Tallit and the Prayer Closet*.

²⁵ Taken from <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/view.jsp?artid=822&letter=C>.

What about tight skirts? One Bible college had rules for dressing, which is common for Bible colleges. Women had to wear dresses and skirts. They weren't allowed to wear slacks, but a lot of the girls wore very tight dresses and skirts. You could see every curve on their body. Was that modest? Of course not because it revealed their figure, and the garment didn't flow. If it flowed it wouldn't have revealed their figures. They dressed in such a way as to draw attention to their figure, which is a very carnal, not godly, attitude. A tight garment or dress is not modest, regardless of how much flesh it covers. Granted, it may go down to the ankle, but the woman isn't modest nor is she walking in humility. A dress is modest if it covers the legs and it's not tight nor reveals the form of the woman.

A Woman Should Dress With Humility

Paul commands women to dress with shamefacedness (humility) vs. brazenness, wantonness or pride. This means *they are not to try and draw attention to themselves* by their facial attitude. 1st Cor. 13 says, 'Love does not behave itself unseemly.'

Yeshua said that if a man looks on a (married) woman with lust in his heart he has already committed adultery with her. If any woman dresses in such a way that it shows her form and figure, and accentuates her breasts, and a man lusts after her, she has just seduced him.

Someone might say, 'Well, he didn't have to look.' This is a poor, perverse and ungodly answer because the responsibility is with the woman and how she dresses, not with the man and if he should look. Besides, most Christian men would have to go around all day with a bag over their heads, not to look at women dresses immodestly. That statement tries to shift the sin of provocatively dressing and her seductive attitude onto the man who happens to see her. God made the eyes to see 'everything' in their view, and so anyone or anything coming into their view will be seen. It's not possible to see something that is provocative and then not to see it. A man can quickly turn away from immodesty, and many godly men do, but others, Christian and non-Christian, continue to stare, and they see a lewd woman's dress and manner as an invitation to her. The problem isn't with the man. A Christian woman should not be tempting men with the way she dresses and her attitude.

Only a full and flowing skirt and blouse, or dress, qualifies as a *katastole*—a long, flowing garment. Since a long, flowing garment, a skirt/blouse or dress, is the only way a woman can dress without showing off her figure, then only these are modest. Since pants do not flow, but accentuate the hips and thighs, etc., they are not modest.

Shorts and mini-skirts aren't long and flowing, and so they are not modest because they do not meet the length requirement and they also reveal the form of the body. A *katastole* is a long and flowing garment.

A second reason why shorts and mini-skirts are inappropriate for a woman is because the Bible specifically says that *when a woman's thighs and legs show, she is naked*. It's not our secular understanding of what 'naked' is, but God's understanding. Will we conform to His ways and His thoughts? Isaiah 47:2-3 states,

'Take the millstones and grind meal. Uncover your locks (which means a woman has a head covering), *make bare the leg, uncover the thigh*, pass over the rivers. Your *nakedness* shall be uncovered! Yes, your *shame* shall be seen! I will take vengeance and I will not meet you as a man!'

God considers it a shame and nakedness for a woman's legs and thighs to be seen in public. God wanted to disgrace the 'virgin daughter of Babylon' (i.e. the Babylonian women) so there would be a time when she would walk across the river and lift up her skirt so her legs and thighs would show. She would be ashamed and she wasn't even a godly woman. This reveals how far from God's standard most Christian women are today.

God said that when her thighs and legs were exposed she would be naked and her shame would be revealed, and that this pagan woman would uncover the locks of her hair (take off her head covering), and that her 'nakedness' would 'be uncovered.' The thigh goes from the hips to a little above the knee. If a Christian woman dresses in such a way that her thigh is exposed God says she is naked. Mini-skirts, shorts and bathing suits expose that part of the body and God says the woman is naked. Therefore, shorts, bathing suits and mini-skirts are very immodest because they are not long and flowing, and they expose a woman's nakedness. Their head coverings also seem to have concealed a part of their nakedness.

We think that if we get a swimsuit on and our genitals are covered that we are clothed, but God says, no, you don't just cover your genitals. You cover your legs and thighs. Plus, the swimsuit shows off the form and the figure and is certainly not modest, but extremely revealing.

Some women might ask, 'Well, what about fashion?' Romans 12:2 says that we are *not* to be conformed to the world. Proverbs 25:29 teaches that 'the fear of man brings a snare.' We don't need the latest style. We do not have to be afraid of fashion, but at the same time, 1st Cor. 7:31 says, 'And they that use this world, as not abusing it, for the fashion of this world passes away.'

We don't want to be a slave to fashion. We don't have to spend all of our money, time and resources making sure that we have the latest styles and fads, but at the same time, we don't have to throw away our clothes because they happen to be fashionable, as long as they're modest. The command of God is to be *modest*, and that women wear humility and sobriety on their face.

What about pretty clothes? It's no sin to wear pretty clothes. In fact, God wants your clothes to be beautiful as an expression of His love within you and for others. God also wants a woman to be beautiful for her husband. Proverbs 31 says that the 'virtuous woman will wear pretty clothes:'

'She is not afraid of the snow for her household, for all her household are clothed with scarlet. She makes herself coverings of tapestry; her clothing is fine linen and purple. (Proverbs 31:21-22)

The virtuous woman wore beautiful clothes, but not immodest clothes. To be biblically, spiritually beautiful is different than worldly beauty, which is meant to 'show off' and to lure men, which is based in lust, pride and fear, which is not becoming for a godly woman.

1st Peter 3:1-6 and 2nd Timothy 2:9-10 give us clarification for what is appropriate for the Christian woman, both the outer appearance and the inner heart attitude.

Make-up and Perfume

The only woman in Scripture who accented her eyes was Jezebel, 'painting her eyes' (the original mascara? 2nd Kings 9:30; see also Jer. 4:30). This isn't a godly thing to do as it's meant to attract undue attention to a woman. The same applies for lipstick, eye liner and eye shadow, etc.

What about perfume? In the Book of Esther, after she bathed she anointed her body (Esther 2:9). Some who would oppose the use of perfume, say that Esther was in a pagan setting, and they might also point to Isaiah 57:9 and Rev. 18:13, where wicked women wore perfume.

Among Jewish women the use of perfume and facial lubricants was common, again, with moderation and modesty in mind. We read several references where perfumes were used by godly women who loved the Lord (Proverbs 27:9, Song of Solomon 1:3; 3:6; 4:10, Esther 2:12). Godly women used perfume and the Bible describes the Lord adorning His bride Israel with it. He adorned her with jewels, pretty clothes and perfume (Ezk. 16:10-14). The Messiah's Bride is adorned for Him and also, a man should adorn his wife on their wedding day because the wedding is a very special occasion (as well as for Sabbaths and Feasts as they are special and holy occasions).

A Woman's Head Covering

In Numbers 5:18 and First Corinthians 11:1-10 Scripture speaks of the head covering for a woman. In Numbers the head covering is seen when the High Priest, because the woman is suspected of being adulterous, takes off the woman's head covering:

“Then the priest shall stand the woman before the LORD, *uncover the woman's head*, and put the offering for remembering in her hands, which is the grain offering of jealousy. And the priest shall have in his hand the bitter water that brings a curse.” (Numbers 5:18 NKJV; also KJV, Septuagint, NET).²⁶

The Hebrew word for ‘uncover’ is פָּרַע (*peh'rah*). According to the *Hebrew and English Lexicon* it means to unbind the hair by removing a turban²⁷ (i.e. a head covering). It also means, ‘to expose’ the head by letting the hair hang down loosely, in which case the hair would be disheveled.²⁸

Jacob Milgrom, in his commentary on the Book of Numbers, speaks of the woman's head (now) being bare, with the obvious inference that it had been covered. The baring of one's head in ancient Israel was a sign of either deep mourning (cf. Lev. 10:6; 21:10), or of being a leper (Lev. 13:45), and so these two instances reinforce a head covering for women. In a case of a suspected adulterous it was ‘an indication that the woman was in disgrace.’²⁹ R. Winterbothan states that with the uncovering of the woman's head she,

‘had forfeited her glory by breaking, or seeming to have broken, her allegiance to her husband (1st Corinthians 11:5-10).’³⁰

Paul speaks of women needing to cover their heads especially when they pray or prophesy because their hair is their glory, and covering their hair is also a sign of submission to authority:

“Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ. Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things and keep the traditions just as I delivered them to you. But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.” (1st Corinthians 11:1-3 NKJV)

Paul lays out the hierarchy of the Kingdom: the Father, the Son, Man, and Woman, and then says:

²⁶ Others speak of what seems to be the consequence of the High Priest taking the woman's head covering off, which would see the hair as disheveled or let down:

ASV, NASB: let the woman's hair go loose.

ESV: unbind the woman's hair.

HCSB: he is to let down her hair.

NIV: he shall loosen her hair.

NRSV: (he shall) dishevel her hair.

The High Priest would never touch a woman's hair, especially one suspected of adultery, and as Paul taught the Corinthian women (1st Cor. 11:1-16) they were to wear head coverings as a form of modesty and submission to authority.

²⁷ Francis Brown, S. R. Driver and Charles A. Briggs, Based on the Lexicon of Wilhelm Gesenius; Edward Robinson, translator and E. Rodiger, Editor, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon*, Abridged (Accordance Bible Software), paragraph 18,257.

²⁸ Ludwig Koehler, Walter Baumgartner, and J. J. Stamm, Authors; M. Richardson, translator, *The Hebrew-Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, vol. 3 (Boston, MA USA: Brill Academic Publishers; 2002; Accordance Bible Software), p. 970.

²⁹ Jacob Milgrom, Nahum M. Sarna, General Editor, *The JPS Torah Commentary: Numbers* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1996), p. 40.

³⁰ R. Winterbothan, author; Henry D. M. Spence-Jones and Joseph S. Excell, Editors; The Pulpit Commentary Series: *Numbers* (New York: Anson D. F. Randolph, 1890; Accordance Bible Software, 2017), paragraph 23,320.

“But every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head, for that is one and the same as if her head were shaved. *For if a woman is not covered, let her also be shorn.* But if it is shameful for a woman to be shorn or shaved, let her be covered.” (1st Corinthians 11:5-6 NKJV)

Someone might say that Paul is only speaking about when a woman prays or prophesies, but the next verse (6) seems to declare that a woman should always be covered; “*For if a woman is not covered, let her also be shorn.*” Of course, it can be taken to speak of only prayer and prophecy, but godly women would always have their heads covered. With Paul speaking of the Corinthians imitating him as he imitated Messiah Yeshua, it would seem to parallel that Gentile Christian women would imitate Jewish Christian women who always wore head coverings as a sign of modesty and submission to authority.

Many Christians would say that head coverings in Paul’s day were part of their culture, and so Christian women don’t have to wear them today, but this is a poor justification. First, the reason that Paul wrote it was because the Corinthian women in his day didn’t wear head coverings. Second, head coverings on women span cultures (e.g. Jewish, Arab and Indian, etc.). Third, the reason for a woman’s head covering hasn’t changed with technology. It’s because a woman’s hair is her glory and men are attracted to it, and that’s the reason for the head covering: to hide a woman’s hair from men, which would cause them to stumble or sin. There are many things that modern women throw off in their quest to be ‘free,’ and the biblical head covering is one of them.

CONCLUSION

The Scriptures give us God’s will as to how we should clothe ourselves. Because of the differences in how God made Adam and Eve there are different dress codes and things to consider appropriately, but both contain the central themes of modesty and humility, both in appearance and attitude.

Men

Women are affected by touch, either emotional (verbal) or physical, and so men should be aware of this and not engage in casual conversations with a woman, and certainly not touch them. In ancient times in Israel men had little or no social interaction with women (cf. John. 4:27 to see how surprised the Apostles were that Yeshua was ‘just’ speaking with a woman).

1. Men should,

- a. not wear unisex clothes or a woman’s clothes.
- b. Men should not have long hair, as that is a sign of rebellion.
- c. Men should not wear shorts, which reveals their legs, and should wear long sleeved shirts (which can be rolled up at the cuffs; cf. Ezra 9:3; Is. 15:2; Jer. 41:5).
- d. Men should not expose their chest, legs and arms as this is not only uncomely, but immodest.
- e. Men should have a full, untrimmed beard, which is one of God’s distinctive marks for men that immediately distinguishes him from a woman and allows him to be physically more like Yeshua as He had a full, untrimmed beard, as did Adam, Noah, Moses, King David, Peter and Paul, etc.
- f. Men should wear the tassels that God commands for men (*tzitzit*; Numbers 15:37-41), as Yeshua did. Not to wear them is a sin in disobeying God.
- g. Men ought to care for, be concerned and oversee how their wives dress because they are biblically responsible for them, just as Messiah Yeshua is for His Bride. There are some who may say, ‘Well,

I don't care how my wife dresses. If she wants to dress that way, that's fine,' or 'I like my wife revealing her breasts and legs in public.' These aren't biblical attitudes and norms, but ungodly and indecent. The man should want to protect his wife from acting as fish bait for other men. *It's the husband's biblical responsibility to teach, lead and protect his wife*, with Christ's love, from the leering eyes of other men.

Women

Men are very visual and so are attracted to women by sight, especially when a woman's flesh is exposed. This pertains to how the woman dresses, her hair and her demeanor (her facial attitude). Godly women need to consider these things for how they are to dress and appear:

1. A woman should strive for a gentle and quiet spirit, and not be brazen-faced and ready to fight a man if he doesn't agree with her. Eye contact with men should be limited, as this encourages men.
 - a. A godly woman's clothing should act in such a way as to present the woman's face, so the glory of the Lord can shine forth from her eyes.
 - b. A woman should always dress with humility on her face. This is seen through her eyes, her voice and her demeanor. If she 'dresses' with humility then the things a man could be attracted to would be her countenance—her face, eyes and her character. Then the Lord will be able to bring the right man to her if she isn't married. Holiness and humility are godly traits. 1st Peter 3:1-6 states:
 - "Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear. Do not let your adornment be merely outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold or putting on fine apparel—rather let it be the hidden person of the heart with the incorruptible beauty of *a gentle and quiet spirit*, which is *very precious in the sight of God*. For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror."
2. A woman's garment should be modest, long and flowing.
 - a. The garment should go down to at least the ankles. The garment should not draw attention to her form or figure.³¹
 - b. The garment should not, in any way, reveal her thighs, legs, chest, arms,³² breasts or cleavage. Revealing those things, whether literally her skin or through skin-tight clothes, is sensual and sexual, and very ungodly.
 - Hebrew women wore full length robes/dresses down to and covering their feet, which today translates into a full length dress or a skirt to at least the ankles, and a full blouse that covers her upper body and arms, which doesn't reveal any flesh from the chest area.
 - c. A woman should not wear anything that pertains to a man including unisex clothing.
 - d. A woman should not wear mascara, eye shadow, eye liner or lipstick, etc., as these attract undue attention and make her look like Jezebel. Eve didn't have any of those things.
 - e. The Bible states that a woman's hair is her glory. She should always wear a head covering so her hair isn't a temptation to men.³³ This is a form of blessing and protection for her.

³¹ Concerning sleeves they should be at least 3/4 length, covering the arm to the middle of the forearm.

³² Sleeves down past the elbow, which reveal part of the arm past the elbow, are considered acceptable, although down to the wrist or just slightly above it is biblical.

3. Another reason for a woman to dress and look modest, especially for a woman who is married, is for her husband. When a woman dresses in such a way where she shows her form and/or shows her nakedness, what she is doing is taking something that belongs to her husband and giving it to another man. A woman might say, ‘Well, I didn’t go to bed with him.’ She may not have, but she showed him something he had no right to see because her body belongs to her husband (and she causes many men to sin).
 - a. Even if a woman is not married her body belongs to Yeshua (1st Cor. 6:16-19) and to her future husband, if she marries. If she reveals her body to others before she is married she is displaying to others what is rightfully only his.
 - b. Another woman might think, ‘I have to show my body and hair off to get a husband.’ This thinking is ungodly and carnal because it shows no trust in Yeshua to provide a husband for her. Also, there’s a good chance that she will get the wrong man for her husband if she dresses immodestly.

God has a higher standard than the world and He commands Israel to be a peculiar people, treasure or special people.³⁴ We cannot do ‘our own thing’ and follow our own rules, but should obey God’s rules. In both the Old and New Testaments God reiterates this. He wants us to be *different* from the world, not just to be different, but to radiate His Light and understanding of His nature (holy and humble).³⁵ That is why He told Israel to dress a certain way. It’s not just ‘what’s in our heart’ that counts. God’s character needs to be displayed through us in how we dress, how we speak and how we act because we are a chosen *priesthood* (1st Peter 2:9). People ought to be able to look at the way we dress and know that we are not like the world in its immorality, rebellion and shamelessness. God wants us to look, speak and act differently than non-Christians, and unfortunately, many Christians, in order to honor and please Him with our bodies, not ourselves.

Men whistle, shout and call out to a scantily dressed pretty woman passing by, but those same men won’t make a sound when a fully covered pretty Muslim woman goes by. Truly, a woman’s dress either encourages male carnality or discourages it.

God has chosen us for Himself and we are to be holy unto Him. It’s not hard—we just have to follow the rules. The Apostle John, in Revelation 1:12-15, reveals how our Savior appeared to him:

“Then I turned to see the Voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven gold Lampstands and in the midst of the seven Lampstands One like the Son of Man, *clothed with a garment down to His feet* and girded about the chest (stomach, as a belt) with a gold band. His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a Flame of Fire. His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His Voice as the sound of many waters.”

Psalm 111:10: “The *fear* of Yahveh is the *beginning* of Wisdom. A good understanding have all those who *do* (keep/observe) His commandments. God’s praise endures forever.”

*We’re not to bend God’s Word to our lifestyle,
but to bend our lifestyle to God’s Word.*³⁶

³³ For a biblical in-depth understanding of why a woman should always wear a head covering (1st Cor. 11:5, 10, 13) ask for Ruti Yehoshua’s PDF, *A Woman’s Head Covering*.

³⁴ Exodus 19:5; Dt. 7:6; 14:2; 26:18, Psalm 135:4, Ecclesiastes 2:8; Titus 2:14; 1st Peter 2:9.

³⁵ Num. 12:3; Mt. 11:28-30; Gal. 5:22-23.

³⁶ Revised on Monday, February 22, 2021.