

# “HOLY HANDS AND MODEST CLOTHING”

I Timothy 2:8-10

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## INTRODUCTION

The Lord will not tolerate indecency from his professing people; let us see his words to the people of Judah through the prophet **Isaiah** in chapter **3:8-9, 16-26**.

God will not stomach our rebellion and he will not tolerate our indecent behavior; he will judge his people. We men and women and young men and women of Berean Baptist Church must be different than our culture. We must do right though the stars fall and though culture around us collapses into a cesspool of immorality in indecency.

**MEN YOU MUST PRAY WITH UPLIFTED HANDS THAT ARE HOLY; WOMEN YOU MUST MANIFEST GOOD WORKS AND TAKE AWAY THE EMPHASIS FROM YOUR EXTERNAL APPEARANCE.**

- I. MEN ARE TO BE SPIRITUAL LEADERS IN THE CHURCH [In every place where the gospel is preached; every local church]
  - A. Men must focus on Prayer
  - B. Men’s hands must be holy – fulfilling the proper purpose for them in relation to God, and being morally clean and upright.
  - C. Men must not come to worship with “wrath and dissension.”
    - They must not have an angry spirit.
    - They must have forgiven those who have offended them and not hold bitterness.
    - They must not have unresolved quarrels, or disturbing questions and doubts.
  - D. Women are not to be leaders in the worship of the church.
  
- II. WOMEN ARE TO FOCUS ON GODLY LIFESTYLE AND NOT ON EXTERNAL APPEARANCE. (9-10)
  - A. Women are to adorn themselves properly. [Paul gives both **positive** and **negative** examples]

**Positive :**

    1. “Proper clothing”
      - Both the verb “adorn” and the adjective “proper” are the source of our English word “cosmetics” and have to do with a neat and orderly arrangement.
      - “Modesty and appropriateness” are the ideas expressed
    2. “Modestly”—The term depicts feminine reserve in matters of sex. The term has reference to a female’s **innate moral repugnance** to the doing of the dishonorable, and also to her healthy **self-respect**. It is a blend of modesty and humility.
    3. “Discretely”— Self-mastery (491), a command over bodily passions, a state of perfect self-mastery in respect of appetite, good judgment, self-control, decency, chastity—once again it has a sexual nuance—putting constant rein on all the passions and desires. One who has this quality has good sense and is sensible.

4. Women must not attempt **to show off**; not attempt to “be flashy” and to attract undue attention. They can dress according to fashion, **as long as fashion is not indecent or immoral**. A deliberate attempt to look “old fashioned” or odd is really a violation of this passage, for again it calls undue attention to the person. Hendrickson notes aptly, *“It must ever be borne in mind that a proud heart is sometimes concealed behind a mask of pretended modesty. That too is sin. Extremes must be carefully avoided. That is what ‘good sense’ implies”* (106). The **outward dress must be a reflection of inward modesty**. Hendrickson also adds: “Be not the first by whom the new is tried, nor yet the last to lay the old side.”

**Negative:**

1. Not With Braided Hair
2. Not with gold
3. Not with pearls
4. Not with Costly Clothing

See I Peter 3:3-4 for a parallel passage. Peter clearly is not forbidding all gold or braiding any more than he excludes all clothing! Moreover, Paul makes clear that he forbids indulgence and excess by the use of “costly” in reference to the clothes.

The point seems to be that all dress and hair style should be appropriate and modest and should not call undue attention to one’s self – and especially to one’s physical body. Yet surely one should be “decent and in order”! Paul here outlaws **extravagance**. Vain display is an offense to the Creator. See Isaiah’s mockery of female vanity in 3:16-24. See Peter’s discussion in I Peter 3:3, 4. Such vain display is always wrong, but especially among those going to attend church! “Showy clothes ill befit broken and contrite hearts, the kind of hearts which God welcomes at the service of the Word” (H. 108). In the best case, such dress evidences “pride and self-centeredness”, qualities contrary to godliness and true worship; at worst, improper attire mimics the dress of prostitutes (Earle, 361).

B. Women are to adorn themselves with good works (10)

1. Christian women make a profession of faith.
2. Christian women declare that they are God-fearing.

Paul’s point is well taken; a Christian woman can contradict her profession by the way she dresses. But she will confirm her profession of faith through appropriate attire and through good works. On the entire statement to the women, see I Pet. 3:4: ladies must focus on “the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God.”

**CONCLUSION**

Christianity has always been counter cultural.

Men, will you take the challenge that Paul gives you in I Timothy 2:8?

Women, will you take the challenge Paul gives you in I Timothy 2:9-10?

Don’t let Hollywood set your agenda! Challenge cultural standards; dare to be different; dare to please God instead of men!

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**BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES DEMANDING MODESTY IN DRESS STANDARDS:**

1. God invented human clothing and was the first to properly cover Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:21)
2. The wrath of God against sin and corruption demands that we dress modestly and decently (Rom. 1:28-32).
3. The nature of man calls for modesty in dress; temptation often comes through the eye-gate, especially for men. The Bible warns us against becoming a stumbling block to others (Matthew 5:28-29; I Corinthians 8:11-13).
4. Our love for and consideration of others, especially our Christian brothers and sisters, demands that we dress modestly. When we dress immodestly, we disobey the two great commandments – love for God and love for men. The emphasis of I Timothy 2:9-10 focuses on those two emphases.
5. Our respect for our church, fellow Christians, and family members demands that we dress modestly we do not show respect for others when we dress inappropriately.
6. Scripture tells us to “mortify” – put to death – our flesh (Romans 8:13). It is difficult to mortify the flesh when we are flaunting it!
7. We must avoid the “slippery slope” in our standards of dress. Each time we lower our standards it is easier for us to do so the next time.
8. Our dress evidences our philosophy of life. Again, this is Paul’s emphasis in verse 10 of I Timothy 2.
9. The way we dress affects our attitudes, behavior, and even our work performance – a fact maintained not only by Christian authors but by secular authors. This is probably one reason why the Lord prescribed special clothing for the priests when they came to worship before God.
10. The bottom line for dress standards is I Corinthians 10:31 – do all to the glory of God.

**Remember three things:**

- My body belongs to God (I Corinthians 6:19-20).
- Jesus is my Lord over every aspect of my life (Romans 14:8).
- I am a member of a different kingdom (Romans 12:2).

It is quite common in our society to “dumb down” practically everything – including dress standards. Especially in the West attitudes tend to be more casual. Let us be careful not to allow the world, or our own carelessness, or laziness, or convenience determine how we dress – especially when coming to church. We need to be an example for those who are watching us – children, other believers, and the unsaved world.

**Most of all we must determine our dress by our love for and relationship with our God.**