

- *Read I Timothy 2:5-10* The Apostle Paul, writing here to the preacher Timothy, gives instructions to both men and women about how they should conduct themselves within what seems to be the worship assembly. The men were to pray and lift pure hands that were free from wrath and dissension, and the women were to make sure that they were clothed in an appropriate way. All of this, and the following verses that I didn't read on the women's role in the assembly, was to be done according to Paul for the purpose of faith and truth. The recipients of this letter, if they were concerned with faith and truth, would be sure to follow the instructions if they wanted to honor and glorify God.
- This morning, I would like for us to give our attention to vv. 9,10. Something that stands out to me in this text is the fact that Paul wants women, specifically here in this text, to make sure that they are sending the right message with their dress. It seems that the ladies of the church of Ephesus were having some contests among themselves about who could gain the most attention through the way that they dressed for their worship assembly. They were sending a message of "Hey look at me!" Yet, Paul was not pleased and gave them instructions on how they ought to dress. I would suggest that this principle of sending the correct message through our dress is something that we should be aware of when we choose what clothing we will cover our bodies with. So with this in mind, I would like for us to consider the message of our dress and what exactly that message we are sending should be.

I. Everything we do sends a message.

- A. Our thoughts are only known by God, and they still give Him, alone, insight into our heart. But...our words and actions speak loudly to those around us.
 - 1. While others might not be able to read our minds, God sure can and He knows our hearts based upon our thoughts.
 - 2. For everyone else, they can get a glimpse into our hearts based upon our words and our actions.
 - 3. As far as clothing goes, we can look to the Bible to see that the clothing of individuals said something to others:
 - Sack cloth & ashes were worn as a sign of someone who was either mourning or in great repentance. (**Gen. 37:34**)
 - Joseph's coat of many colors sent a clear sign to his brothers that he was his fathers favorite. (**Gen. 37:3,4**)
 - The harlot of **Proverbs 7:10** was said to be dressed like a harlot. People who knew what she was by what she wore.
 - When the prodigal son returned, his father ordered that a robe, ring, and sandals be put on him. These articles of clothing sent the message that his man was a part of the family and not a slave like he said he should be. (**Luke 15:22**)
 - 4. Then even today, those who are married wear wedding bands so that folks recognize that they are married and to remind themselves of the vows they made for their marriage.
 - 5. It is pretty easy to recognize that we send messages by the things we put on our bodies.
- B. We are responsible to do everything we can to make sure that we are sending the right messages to others.
 - 1. Simply put...this means that we must think before we speak or before we dress ourselves.
 - 2. We ought to do this because people will come to conclusions about us based upon what we wear.
 - 3. Remember the harlot was known to be a harlot based upon her dress. If we see two ladies on the sidewalk, one dressed in regular clothes (Jeans & t-shirt) and one wearing tight and revealing clothes and we had to choose which one was a prostitute...which one would be chosen?
 - 4. I guarantee that it doesn't take people long to recognize that I am an alumnus of the University of Tennessee or that I am a fan. Why is that? Because many of the clothes that I wear are orange and represent the University of Tennessee. It just makes logical sense.
 - 5. It is something that cannot be ignore, the clothes we put on our bodies says something about us.

II. The messages we send give insight into what is in our heart.

- A. Our thoughts, words, & actions are outgrowths of what we have in our hearts set on.
 - 1. It is our mind and our heart that leads us to decide what it is that we will put on our bodies.
 - 2. It must be accepted that the external portion of man has something to do with the internal parts of man.
 - 3. Notice the way that Peter puts this in **I Peter 3:1-4**. Peter seems to make it pretty clear that he & God desires for these women, & I would argue all women and people in general, to behave in a chaste and respectful way. And that they clothe themselves according to what it is that should be on the inside...a person with a gentle and quiet spirit.
 - 4. The inside of us all is shown in how we adorn or behave on the outside.
- B. A good heart will produce good thoughts, words, & actions while a bad heart will produce bad thoughts, words, & actions.
 - 1. Remember that James put it this way...a fresh water fountain doesn't produce salt water and a salt water fountain doesn't produce fresh water. (**James 3:11,12**)
 - 2. A fig tree cannot produce olives and a vine doesn't produce figs. (**James 3:12**)
 - 3. The source of words, thoughts, and actions determines what is put out. We cannot think that we can have a heart full of ungodliness and then clothe ourselves in such a way that we send the correct message.
 - 4. Let's go back and take a closer look at **Proverbs 7:10**. Notice what the wise man Solomon says is the source of the harlots clothing. Yup, you guessed it. It is her heart. The heart of the harlot that is full of ungodliness and lasciviousness is what leads her to clothe herself in such a way that screams "Hey, come pick me up and we'll go have a good time!"
 - 5. As Christians, our dress should NEVER send such a message to those around us. What then should be the message?

III. The message of our dress should be that our heart is set on godliness.

- A. I'm sure that some either here this morning or those listening later on might be waiting for me to give a proclamation that our clothing should reach to this place or be this loose or be this or that, but I just simply cannot give such a binding statement because I cannot go to any text in the New Testament and find that God either shows, tells, or implies to me that a particular line is the line of modesty. Although, I think some things should be obvious. Example: We don't wear our underwear out in public.
- B. Therefore, we are left with the responsibility to make the wisest decisions in terms of what will be the standard for how we will dress, and it seems as if there are two standards that we can go by.
 - 1. One option is to use society and culture as our sole influence on how we will dress.
 - a) No one can deny that culture does shape the way we dress, but is our culture truly a good standard to dress by.
 - b) While it has not always been the case, our society is moving farther and farther away from wearing what is appropriate. Instead of clothes becoming more appropriate or remaining appropriate, they are becoming flashier, more captivating, smaller, more revealing, & much tighter.
 - c) The normal persons thoughts on clothing is that they simply want to remain in style. They want to seem normal to others by wearing the clothing that is popular for that time. They don't want to feel like the odd ball because they wear different clothing. Instead of considering God's will for their clothing, they would much rather just go with the flow. "Everyone else is doing it" is not an acceptable motivation to our God. (**Matt. 7:13,14**)
 - d) I might also add that this isn't something that I notice simply because I'm a preacher or member of the Lord's Body, but this is something that those outside of Christ's church recognize. Some of you might have heard of Steph Curry? Yeah, he's the best basketball player on the planet right, now. Anyways, his wife, Ayesha Curry, recently took to Twitter to bemoan the current state of fashion in our society. She said the following "Everyone's into barely wearing clothes these days huh? Not my style. I like to keep the good stuff covered up for the one who matters....Just looking at the latest fashion trends. I'll take classy over trendy any day of the week." In other words, there are some messages that we only ought to be sending to our spouse.
 - 2. The other option, that Ayesha refers to as classy, I would refer to as godly. Our standard for our dress should be that of godliness. Let's look at again at **I Tim. 2:9,10**. Paul wants Christian women to dress exactly like that... Christian women. He wants them to dress in such a way that godliness is being screamed by their choice of dress.
 - a) Notice the descriptions that Paul lays out in these two verses: proper, modestly, & discreetly. I believe the immediate context is focusing on social modesty, but the words could also be applied to sexual modesty.
 - b) They were not to compete with one another to see who could look the most well off by their flashy clothing and screaming to others "look how well off I am by the way I dress!" We're here to worship, not compete for a fashion prize.
 - c) Similarly, they were not to draw attention to their bodies by wearing things that would take the minds of others away from the purpose of worshipping God. I want my full attention to be on worshiping God, not Sister.....
- 3. Sure this is in the context of worship, but would we say that it is ok to send a different message to people outside of the assembly. Certainly, we would not believe that to be the case.
- 4. Let me add, the fashions of society are not automatically against God's will. Sometimes they are appropriate for the Christian to wear. However, our first and foremost thought ought to be whether it sends the message of godliness... NOT does this look cute, will others like it, or will I fit in by what I wear.
- C. Let me close by making this final point. It is not about simply wearing something that we deem long or loose enough. It's not about that. God isn't seeking for us to simply "meet some requirement" in our dress. Instead, God is seeking for us to give Him our hearts through the way we choose to dress.
 - 1. Our hearts should seek to glorify God in all that we do, and that includes the clothes that we put on our bodies. Part of glorifying God and seeking godliness for ourselves in our dress is striving to help our fellow Christian achieve godliness, as well.
 - 2. This means that we don't put our brethren in a position to stumble through our clothing. We don't lead them to lust (**Matt. 5:28**) or envy by what we wear. We don't try to draw attention to our bodies or our incomes by what we wear.
 - 3. We seek to send a simple message of godliness. Our dress should be right in line with the way that we behave as Christians. Our dress can't scream "I love the world" and our actions say "I love God". That is illogical and there is a major disconnect between those two things.
 - 4. The one who loves God should shine that message of godliness loud and clear through his or her choices of dress.

It's so easy for us to get caught up in the world in different areas of our lives. Sometimes, we get caught up in the way we dress and only consider if it is cute or fashionable. May God help us to have hearts that ask more important questions than that. May we be a people who ask instead, "does this choice of clothing send a godly message." If this is our focus and we achieve to answer that question then God will be pleased. He will be glorified without us even saying a word, and our influence will be seen on those around us. May God be praised and glorified through the message of our dress.