

# A Beautiful Ornament

**Introduction.** God cares how we dress. He cares enough to leave us commands to obey and examples to follow. He also warned us against lust. Because God cares, we should care.

Perhaps a less frequently examined aspect of this is that choices of dress, along with choices of language and friends, will stem from the inner spirit of a person. Not only does God care about how we dress, God also values the inner quality of modesty which will be the subject of today's lesson.

## I. ***God Encourages Emphasizing The Inner Spirit***

A. Peter's instruction to husbands and wives emphasizes the inner spirit (1 Peter 3:1-7).

1. Do not let your adornment be merely outward (i.e., from without). Peter does not condemn arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel, but simply deemphasizes them (a "not ... but" construction).

2. Rather, "let it be the hidden man of the heart."

a) With "the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit."

(1) "Ornament" is supplied in the KJV, and other versions render it "incorruptible beauty" (NKJV), "imperishable quality" (NASB), and "unfading beauty" (NLT).

(2) "Meek" means "mild or humble" (cf. Matthew 5:5; 21:5) and "quiet" means "still, peaceable, or undisturbed" (cf. 1 Timothy 2:2).

b) This spirit is "in the sight of God of great price" (cf. Mark 14:3).

3. Though specifically for women, these instructions apply to men too (1 Peter 3:7).

B. Paul's instruction regarding the saints emphasizes the inner spirit (1 Timothy 2:8-11).

1. Men are to lift up holy hands, which emphasizes inner quality and outer quality.

2. Women are to dress modestly, with decency and good sense.

a) "Not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array."

b) "But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works."

(1) "Modest" means "well arranged or seemly."

(a) "Shamefacedness" is "reverence, regard for others, and respect."

(b) "Sobriety" is "soundness of mind and self-control."

- (2) This is proper for a woman professing (announcing or proclaiming) godliness. You look at her and instantly know that she is godly.
- (3) "With good works" distinguishes our conduct from our apparel in this text.
- c) "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection."
  - (1) The emphasis is on quietness (i.e., silence) and submission.
  - (2) This is comparable to Peter's "without a word" in 1 Peter 3:1.

## II. ***Do We Encourage Emphasizing The Inner Spirit?***

- A. This same principle is encouraged in other areas of our spiritual lives (cf. Matthew 23:25-28; Luke 11:39-41).
  - 1. Paul had concerns about younger widows becoming busy bodies (1 Timothy 5:11-14; cf. 2 Thessalonians 3:10-12).
  - 2. All men were to aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind their own business (cf. 1 Thessalonians 4:9-12; 1 Peter 4:15).
- B. When the inner spirit is right, it will manifest itself outwardly (Matthew 15:11-20).
  - 1. This means guarding our hearts (Proverbs 4:23; Psalm 19:14).
  - 2. This means renewing our minds (Psalm 51:10; Romans 12:1-2; Ephesians 4:23).
- C. Three practical questions.
  - 1. Should I dress as a duffel bag in order to manifest my inner spirit?
    - a) God approves of beauty. As a matter of fact, the holy garments were encrusted with jewels in Exodus 28:40.
    - b) One can be pretty outwardly, but unattractive on the inside. Another one can be unattractive on the outside, but beautiful on the inside (cf. Proverbs 31:21-22, 30). Which is more precious in the sight of God? Which should we value and emphasize more?
  - 2. Should I become a door mat or a wallflower to manifest my inner spirit?
    - a) Women are created in the image of God and have intrinsic value. They should not devalue themselves (Proverbs 31:23-29, 31; Galatians 3:28; 1 Peter 3:7).
    - b) Women in the Bible, such as Job's daughters, Deborah, Esther, Ruth, Anna, and Mary, all show how much God values faithful, proactive women.
  - 3. What should I do to train my child to manifest a beautiful inner spirit?
    - a) Children of this world are taught from an early age to emphasize physical beauty. How much time do our young people spend worrying about their looks? Probably quite a bit! Parents, your responsibility is to foster the emphasis of inner beauty early

(Deuteronomy 6:6-7; Proverbs 22:6; Ephesians 6:4). How much time do our young people spend worrying about their character? Probably not a lot!

- b) If your children, daughters especially, do not learn to value who they are over what they look like, they will invariably have unhealthy self-esteem issues and this will inevitably manifest itself in their selection of a spouse. This also applies to young men -- they will pick the beauty queen instead of wisely evaluating a young woman's level of spiritual interest.
- c) Fathers, you will not hurt your children by withholding makeup from your daughters, or the latest and greatest fashions from your sons.
  - (1) Wait for them to demonstrate that they value what is more important before you let them handle what is less important!
  - (2) Many fathers give in much too early for fear of what others in the world may think, instead of abstaining in fear of what God may think and what is actually best for their child's character (cf. Lamentations 3:27; Luke 16:15).
- d) If you lead in such a way, you will set the stage to avoid major challenges with modest apparel, evil companions, and other issues that arise during the maturation process of your children.

**Conclusion.** We live in a culture obsessed with outward beauty. Though we live in the world, we must not be of the world (John 17:14-16). Our daily challenge is not to be swept up in the ways of this world (cf. 1 John 2:15-17), but cherish the part that God's cherishes.

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