

# “THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

## A Teenager Appeals for Modest Dress: Modesty – No Exceptions or Excuses!

By Kristiana Burk

The subject of modesty should be a topic of great importance. How should Christians adorn themselves? Are we, as children of God, pleasing our Heavenly Father with the way we dress?

People frequently use excuses to justify immodest apparel. The excuses, “It’s so much cooler to wear these clothes” and “The stores don’t sell anything else,” are used to justify the wearing of clothes which people know are wrong. True short shorts, halter tops, swimsuits, and things like that are cooler, but are you showing what you shouldn’t be showing? The excuse that stores don’t sell anything else is very poor. I find things constantly that are modest. Another excuse, “But Mom, everybody else does,” doesn’t make it right either. Being a teenager myself, I want everyone to accept me. In John 15:18-25, we find that to be an acceptable Christian, we will be different. That’s how our light will shine! Other verses, such as Matthew 7:13-14 and Luke 6:22-23, 26 show why we are different. Are you willing to risk your soul just to be popular? Are you risking it just to be cooler or because everybody else does?

Parents and others admit that very tight pants and short shorts are immodest. The same goes with halter tops and very short mini-skirts. The problem is, we make exceptions. Let me bring to your attention exceptions made in everyday life. Gym clothes in schools are usually short shorts and a T-shirt. Can’t you wear longer shorts to run in? Cheerleading is another example. In our society it’s not proper to do flips and jump around in a dress while in public or really anywhere else, but isn’t that exactly what you’re doing while cheerleading? During pep rallies, what do the cheerleaders do but a dance with provocative movements in short, skimpy skirts with nothing but underwear beneath, for the benefit of the football players and everyone else. Is that not sinful?

The same thing goes for swimming. There is nothing wrong with swimming — you’re just getting wet. The thing that makes swimming in mixed company wrong is the swim wear. A few years ago I argued, “But Mom, that’s what everybody else wears.” She pointed out that a swimsuit (one piece) was no different from wearing a tank top and underwear. My brothers and I were looking for lawns to mow, when the oldest one came and said, “Kristi, that lady came to the door with her bra on!” It turns out she had on her bikini, with a towel draped around her waist. Is it any different?

Lots of people love to swim – so do I. Parents, invest in your own pool so you can set your own rules. My parents bought a cheaper, above the ground, four foot pool. I remember the day we put it up our whole neighborhood of kids helped. We told them they could go swimming if they wore a one piece bathing suit and long shorts (the boys wore a shirt and shorts) and everybody loved it. It’s a good investment, parents.

The Bible teaches the immutability of God. In Isaiah 47:1-3 we find what God calls immodesty; **“Come down and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon; sit on the ground: there is no throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans: for thou shalt no longer be called tender and delicate. Take the millstones, and grind meal; uncover thy locks, make bare the leg, uncover the thigh, pass over the rivers. Thy nakedness shall be uncovered, yea, thy shame shall be seen. I will take vengeance, and I will not meet thee as a man.”** Here we see that the uncovered thighs are called nakedness. If God never changes, then don’t you think he feels the same today? From the very beginning we can see that he demanded nakedness to be covered. In the beginning for Adam and Eve, he made robes. In Genesis 9:20-27 we find that it is shameful to be naked in public. Noah’s two sons, Shem and Japheth, covered their eyes so they wouldn’t see their father’s nakedness. Ham was cursed by him for seeing it and doing nothing about it. In Exodus 28:42, the priests were to have trousers from the waist to the thighs – this was to cover their nakedness. The definition of thigh, in the *World Book Dictionary*, is “part of the human body, from the hip to the knee.” Therefore, to **“cover your nakedness,”** the thigh, from the hip to the knee, must be covered.

As Christians, we are to love God and keep his commandments. We are to shine forth in the world. Yes, we’re to

be different. It's not easy, but as Paul said in Philippians 4:13, ***"I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me."*** We will suffer persecutions and trials, but think of the grand mansion and place by God's side that awaits us. ***"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life"*** (Rev. 2:10). – *Truth Magazine*, August 16, 1990. ■

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## How Do We Look?

By Carolyn Rix

Proverbs 31:22 - ***"...her clothing is silk and purple."***

In Proverbs 31, the writer describes a worthy woman. Verse 22 indicates that she is interested in her appearance. Fine linen and purple were associated with wealth and riches. We cannot assume that a worthy woman must be wealthy, but rather that she adorns herself in the best that is available to her and that she is not cheap or gaudy. Certainly, she does care about how she looks.

We have no reason to believe that God does not see and care about how we appear in His presence and in the presence of others. He looks at our appearances and knows that they reflect what is in our hearts (Prov. 23:7).

The world, on the other hand, is unable to see what is in our hearts. It judges us by how we look and how we behave. Matthew 5:14 says, ***"Ye are the light of the world."*** Verse 16 says, ***"Let your light so shine that others may see your good works and glorify your father which is in heaven."*** When our appearances do not support our Christianity, we let God down.

The Bible often speaks of the physical appearance and voices concern with the clothing of the body, as well as of the heart. ***"In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array. But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works"*** (1 Tim. 2:9, 10).

*Vine's Expository Bible Dictionary* defines *modesty* as "orderly, well-arranged, decent, harmonious arrangement." Galatians 5:19 condemns lasciviousness; and one of the definitions of lasciviousness is indecent. Therefore, immodest clothing is sinful because it incites lust. Consider David and Bathsheba (2 Sam. 11:2).

Clothing is indeed a symbol of one's character. We tend to behave the way we look. ***"Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price"*** (1 Pet. 3:3, 4). These verses do not condemn fixing our hair, wearing gold, or putting on clothes. Rather, they teach what is acceptable – a meek and quiet spirit.

### Bible Examples

1. In the beginning, when Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit and learned the difference between good and evil, the first thing they did was look about for something to cover their nakedness. They were afraid and ashamed.
2. Genesis 10:21-25 tells of the curse placed on Noah's son Canaan because he saw his father's nakedness.
3. John 21:7 tells us that Peter, when he heard that Jesus was approaching, girt his fisher's coat about him (for he was naked) and cast himself into the sea. This indicates that Peter cared about how he looked when he greeted his Lord, that he respected Him, and that he knew being unclothed was unacceptable.
4. Proverbs 7:10 speaks of a woman ***"with the attire of an harlot."*** This indicates that her appearance provided evidence that enabled those who looked at her to know what she was.

We need to be certain that our appearances give evidence of what we are – Christians. – *Knollwood church of Christ Articles*, June 1999. ■

Service Times - Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM - Wednesday: 7:00 PM

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