

# LIVING HOLY

## Holiness in Appearance

**Life Application:** Recognizing that if we are walking in purity and humility before God, the inevitable result will be spiritual attractiveness and a modest, discreet, and wholesome outward appearance.

**Key Verse for Meditation:** Give unto the LORD the glory due His name: bring an offering, and come before him: worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness. – 1 Chronicles 16:29

**Focus Scriptures:** Proverbs 31:30; Isaiah 61:10; Romans 14:13; 1 Timothy 2:9-10; 1 Peter 3:1-5; 5:5; Revelation 19:7

### A Beauty Awakening

Several years ago, in my husband's native country in the South Pacific, I experienced a kind of "beauty awakening" which provoked some thought and a new appreciation for the subject.

When I first arrived, I wanted to make a good impression, so I reluctantly put away my Western clothing and donned the local attire. Immediately I realized that my hair-styling routine also had to change due to the intense heat and humidity and the lack of regular electricity. The hair dryer and curling iron I had brought were completely useless. I found this to be



a bit humbling and felt that what little sense of style I might have had by United States standards had suddenly taken a serious nosedive.

While I was struggling to adapt to these changes, I asked my husband just what was considered beautiful in his islands. He thought for a moment, grinned, and explained that in order to be beautiful, you needed to have smooth, light brown skin, eyebrows that were dark and prominent, and hair that reached past your waist. Having some gold teeth was also helpful, and being overweight was considered healthy



**Lesson Key:** Outward appearance reflects one's inward condition. For that reason, as holy and devoted people of God, we take care that our appearance, dress, and demeanor speak of Christ and are appropriate for one who represents Him.

and attractive. Since I had reddish, shorter hair, freckles, almost non-existent eyebrows, no gold teeth, and a thinner build, I knew he definitely did not marry me for my looks!

One day we were visiting a different village and some children asked me with concern, "What happened to your skin?" I was baffled at first, but then observed that they were looking at my freckled arms. "Oh," I said with a smile, "These are kisses from the sun." I could see by the expression on their faces that I had not convinced them that I was okay. One girl pityingly asked me, "Will they go away?" "No." I replied, "It's okay! That's the way God made me." Then I went ahead and told them about Him. Hopefully, they will always remember the day a lady with strange skin told them about Jesus!

While pondering my beauty predicament, I decided to look more closely at what

really constitutes attractiveness. It came to me that there are characteristics found in both cultures which anyone—man or woman—can possess if we choose to. These begin on the inside and radiate outward, resulting in a sincere and ready smile, a warmth of expression, a joyful countenance, and above all, an aura of peace. These attributes create an irresistible attractiveness—no matter where we live on the globe!

This beauty can be found on the face of a brand-new child of God the moment he joins our heavenly family. It also can be found on the face of the aged Gospel veteran who has triumphed in many a spiritual battle. If God shines brightly enough on the inside, outward imperfections are of little consequence.

When people see me, I want them to see real beauty—beauty that is apparent in any culture—the beauty of Jesus. — *From a Higher Way article by Lori Arechy*



## For Personal Study

**1.** In 2 Corinthians 6:17, Paul challenged believers in the Early Church to "come out from among them [those of the world], and be ye separate." How should a Christian differ in appearance from a non-Christian?

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**2.** Whether we are aware of it or not, our appearance conveys messages to those around us. If our ultimate goal is to win souls, what can we do to make sure we are sending positive messages?

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**3.** In Proverbs 11:22, what does God say about being indiscreet—whether by words, actions, or dress?

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## Bible Background

We read in Deuteronomy 22:5, “The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman’s garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the LORD thy God.”

This verse commands men and women not to switch sexual roles. The practice of one gender wearing clothing peculiar to the other is forbidden, as it is a blurring of the distinction between male and female. In pagan practice, this led to gross moral improprieties.

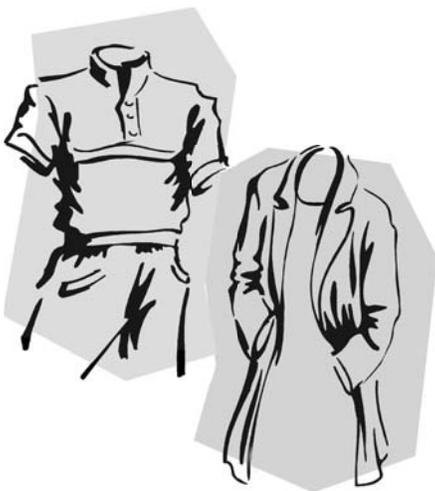
The Hebrew word *kaeliy* used for “that which pertaineth unto a man” specifically refers to armor, while the word *simplah* translated as “woman’s garment” refers to any type of women’s clothing. Distinctions in dress do more than reveal gender; they also indicate our God-ordained roles. So we must take care that our clothing is a correct portrayal of who we are—whether male or female.

Today, role reversals are common. There are men who want to become women and women who want to become men. However, the word *abomination* is unequivocal. It means “disgusting” or “abhorred.” In other words, God hates it when men and women use their mode of dress to act out a different sex role. He had a purpose in making us uniquely male and female, and we want to be sure our dress as Christians portrays our commitment to God’s values.



“Above all, desire to please Christ; dread his disapproval above everything else.  
– Rowland Croucher, Australian pastor, counselor, and author

## The Clothing of a Christian



The clothing of a Christian is beautifully described for us in Isaiah 61:10. “I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness.” In the New Testament, we find this admonition: “Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility” (1 Peter 5:5). The main clothing of the Christian is the clothing of the heart and the soul. And it relates strongly to the rest of the clothing of a Christian.

Individuals with the right “clothing” on their hearts and souls will want to make sure that the clothing of their physical bodies is pleasing to God. If the heart is pure, teachable, and dedicated to God—clothed in humility and righteousness—that person is going to be concerned about what God thinks.

Disposition relates to dress. Attitude is key in relation to attire. Character has everything to do with clothing. Modesty relates to morality. People who are resistant to truth in the area of clothing for the body not only have a problem with outward attire, but they also have a problem with the clothing of the heart and soul. If a person has his heart right, he wants to know what God has to say. He has a sweet attitude; he is humble, teachable, and eager to do what God wants. — Adapted from “*The Clothing of a Christian*” by S.M. Davis

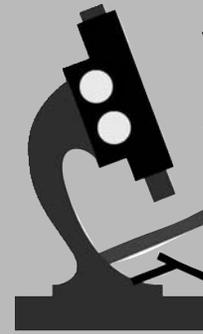
# A Matter of Modesty

There is no question about it: the decision to live your life as a pure, holy follower of God will bring critical choices into your life. Some of those choices will revolve around your attire. You cannot separate what is on the inside from what is on the outside. The external is a reflection of the heart.

Do you want your appearance to reveal a modest, godly heart? If so, here are some guidelines that will help you.

- Recognize that your body belongs to God—you have dedicated yourself to Him. It is His right to determine what you should wear.
- Resolve that you want to be modest, discreet, and unpretentious in your attire, because you know that will please God. Ask Him to help you choose clothing that honors Him.
- Realize that maintaining purity, inwardly and outwardly, will involve ongoing and consistent care about what you wear.
- Determine never to dress in a way that will attract improper attention to your body.
- Be willing to stand out in the matter of dress, rather than to fit in. That will be necessary in the ungodly, sexually permissive society in which we live.
- Ask God to give you a humble, teachable, receptive heart when it comes to matters of appropriate clothing.

*Concepts taken from "The Look" by Nancy Leigh Demoss*



## Word Search

Philippians 4:5 gives the instruction to "let your moderation be known unto all men." The word *moderation* not only means "temperate," but also "appropriate." The same thought is expressed in 1 Corinthians 9:25, "Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible." The admonition to be "temperate in all things" would include being temperate in our external appearance and attire. Based on these verses, it is clear that extreme, ostentatious, or gaudy clothing, hairstyles, accessories, and body markings are not appropriate.

**4.** In what way is beauty an attitude? 1 Peter 3:3-4

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**5.** How does dressing modestly show concern for the spiritual well-being of our brothers and sisters in the Lord? See Romans 14:13 and Philippians 2:4.

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**6.** In 1 Timothy 2:9-10, Paul said that women were to "adorn themselves in modest apparel." How would you define "modest dress"? How would you define "immodest dress"?

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