



July 14, 2022

Hair, Jewelry, and Dresses

Warm hellos friends, brethren, co-workers, spiritual family, and scattered children of God from here in Omaha, Nebraska. My wife and I pray and hope this finds you doing well, and that again your week has been blessed.

We're leaving here shortly to head several hours north to Minnesota. It has been a very busy couple of days! Our drive from Alabama to Nebraska started out earlier in the week with two approximately 10 hour days and since arrival we've been blessed to visit several brethren as well as spend some time with a long time faithful servant of God, my Mother. We are looking forward to this Sabbath and being with family and brethren in Minnesota for our next leg of this trip.

Years ago I was part of a Correspondence Team to answer questions sent to the fellowship I was part of, primarily from their main website. It was interesting to review various questions from readers of their literature. Some of the questions asked about "specific instructions found in the Bible and whether they are still applicable for us today".

Jesus made a powerful statement concerning the importance of *all* of the Word of God - *all* Scripture. "*It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God'*" (Matthew 4:4). He quoted from the law - Deuteronomy 8:3. The apostle Paul also stated, "*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness*" (2 Timothy 3:16). So we can glean that all Scripture, (not just the parts we might like), is important to examine, understand, learn from, and then live by.

Sometimes there are instructions that can be puzzling such as the following: "*Then the LORD commanded them, 'Now therefore, take off your ornaments, that I may know what to do to you.'*" (Exodus 33:5) Does this instruction forbid the use

of jewelry and other ornamentation? This question became more relevant after hearing my mom's story.

My mother told us a story while we were here of the neighbor's young child recently telling her "Our church does not believe in wearing jewelry, because it disrespects God", as she had noticed a necklace my mom was wearing.

So then, what about Peter's instruction to wives in 1 Peter 3:1-3? "*Yours should be, not the external adornment of the arrangement of the hair, the wearing of jewelry, or the putting on of dresses*" (v.3 TCNT) Is Peter condemning all hairdos and permanents at the beauty parlor, and wearing of any kind of jewelry? Is Peter condemning wearing dresses? This doesn't make sense! Notice how the MKJV translates the verse. "*Of whom let not be the adorning of garments, or outward braiding of hair and wearing of gold, or of putting on clothing*" (v.3 MKJV). Some also ask "Is it wrong to braid the hair?"

To understand what is being addressed, we need to procure the context of the statements and principles that are underlying the instructions. Let's go back to Exodus 33.

In the previous chapter we have the incident of the golden calf described. When Moses delayed coming down from the mountain, the people demanded that Aaron fashion a god for them. Aaron told them to bring their golden earrings to him and he melted them down and then molded a calf for them to worship. The people danced around it in an orgy of impure and idolatrous behavior.

Moses came down and witnessed what had happened and then directed the golden calf to be ground to powder and thrown into their drinking water. Moses commanded the people who desired to follow the LORD to come and stand with him. The Levites stood with Moses and Moses commanded them to slaughter those who had rebelled. 3,000 people were killed! Moses then pleaded with the LORD to forgive their great sin. In Exodus 33:3 the LORD told Moses "*Go up to a land flowing with milk and honey; for I will not go up in your midst.*" Then in verse 4 we are told, "*And when the people heard this bad news, they mourned, and no*

one put on his ornaments." God had already warned them. "For the LORD had said to Moses, *"Say to the children of Israel, 'You are a stiff-necked people. I could come up into your midst in one moment and consume you. Now therefore, take off your ornaments, that I may know what to do to you.'"*" (v.5) The people responded and did as they were told. This was a gesture of remorse and sorrow for their evil actions. It is interesting that the LORD tells them to remove their ornaments such as earrings, etc. which some of them had previously taken off to contribute materials for making the golden calf.

Notice the following comments from the Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Commentary: "v 5. put off thy ornaments--In seasons of mourning, it is customary with Eastern people to lay aside all gewgaws and divest themselves of their jewels, their gold, and everything rich and splendid in their dress. This token of their sorrow the Lord required of His offending people."

The custom of putting aside one's ordinary or finer clothing and wearing a rough garment such as sackcloth during a time of mourning and remorse is found a number of places in the Scriptures. (Genesis 37:34; 1 Kings 21:27; 2 Kings 19:1; Daniel 9:3) The LORD was not issuing a blanket command to put off any ornaments and never wear them again. He was however addressing the need to humbly repent and show remorse for the serious sin that the people had engaged in. It was appropriate to appear in a humble, lowly and plain state in expressing sincere remorse and sorrow.

Here's other questions I addressed. What about further instructions in 1 Peter 3? Is he condemning *ever* the wearing of gold and jewelry? Is he condemning the use of braids in arranging one's hair? Does it make logical sense that Peter is condemning the putting on of clothing or apparel?

Again, we must examine more of the context and the whole discussion. We'll do that next time and also look at several more instructions that have puzzled some.

Arms up friends! Our prayers and thoughts are with you daily. Please do pray for us as well.



Scott Hoefker
Pastor, CGM

Church of God Ministries (CGM)
(Ministerios de la Iglesia de Dios)
tshoefker@cogministries.org
www.cogministries.org
P.O. Box 983
Daphne, AL 36526-0983
251-930-1797 Office