



July 22, 2022

Does it Matter what We Wear?

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

We've just returned to Mankato Minnesota after a couple days of visiting longtime faithful friends and fellow pastor and his family in South Dakota. We'll be here in Mankato over the Sabbath again and headed back toward Alabama on Monday. While on this multi-stop visit I've still been busily preparing things needing to be done, as we move closer to the Feasts of Trumpets, Atonement, Feast of Tabernacles and Eighth Day. I'll have to add having knee surgery into the mix upon return, so I won't be bored these weeks prior to the fall Feasts!

Last time we touched on comments made by the apostle Peter in 1 Peter 3. *"Do not let your adornment be merely outward--arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel"* (v.3 NKJV) The MKJV translates this verse as *"Of whom let not be the adorning of garments, or outward braiding of hair and wearing of gold, or of putting on clothing."*

Is Peter issuing some sort of ruling that women are neither to arrange nor braid their hair nor wear jewelry made of gold? I was even once asked "Could he be telling women to not put on clothing?" None of these of course make sense. After all the LORD describes Himself as figuratively adorning His bride Israel with clothing of fine linen, silk, and various ornaments and jewelry. (Ezekiel 16:10-12) *"Thus you were adorned with gold and silver, and your clothing was of fine linen, silk, and embroidered cloth."* (v.13)

It's pretty clear to me that Peter is contrasting the importance of the inner qualities of a wife with her outward appearance and adornments. Peter says that the unbelieving husband may be won and his favor gained by the conduct, chaste

behavior, and meek and quiet spirit of the believing wife. (1 Peter 3:1-4) Peter's not condemning hair styles or wearing jewelry, but is rather minimizing the importance of those things compared to a gentle, submissive and respectful demeanor and conduct. Peter goes on to comment on women (such as Sarah) whom he says "*also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands*" (v.5)

Let's take the time to examine another instruction that has caused some controversy over the years, usually with regards to what women wear to worship services, and for some even normal clothing during the week. "*A woman shall not wear anything that pertains to a man, nor shall a man put on a woman's garment, for all who do so are an abomination to the LORD your God.*" (Deuteronomy 22:5) So, does this instruction forbid women from wearing pants then?

No, it doesn't. In fact, even men in the Middle East through the history of the Old and New Testaments did not wear pants; they wore a robe like garment. However, there is an underlying important principle we should look at that applies to you and me today. Men should dress in an appropriately masculine manner, and women should dress in an appropriately feminine manner. For most of my life the majority of clothing manufacturers made pants designed for men and pants designed for women. There are also pants suits designed for women that are appropriate even for dressy occasions. No masculine Godly man would appear in public or anywhere else wearing a women's pants suit!

The instruction in Deuteronomy 22:5 is another example of God's warning His people to *not* adopt pagan customs. Notice the following comments from the Jamieson, Fausset and Brown Commentary: "Disguises were assumed at certain times in pagan temples. Maimonides . . . mentions that a man attired in a colored female dress, in honor of Venus, Ashtaroth, or Astarte, and a woman equipped in armor, worshipped at the shrine of the statue of Mars . . . Asiatics, when they engaged in the worship of Ashtaroth, were accustomed, according to Philocorus, quoted by Townley (in his edition of Maimonides, note 33), to exchange the male and female dresses. In fact, all idolators confounded the sexes of their deities-representing them sometimes as male, at other times as female; and hence, their

worshippers, male and female, fell gradually into the custom, which became extensively prevalent, of changing their attire in adaptation to the sex of a particular divinity."

Now, I know discussing these principles from God's Word won't be popular with many in our current cultural setting. However, you and I "if" we claim to be "Christians" (or followers of Christ) will sincerely examine His Word, live up to that, and will not be concerned with what the current "think" might be in society around us.

When we examine the instruction in the Pentateuch (such as Deuteronomy 22:5 above) concerning clothing, we see an emphasis on maintaining proper role and proper gender identities and purity. Purposely trying to look like and act like a member of the opposite sex is wrong in the eyes of God. Other instructions in this chapter focus on purity and quality and also respecting one's neighbor.

Here's the truth. The overall principle is that God intends for women to have a feminine appearance in dress, hair style, and adornment, and also intends for men to have a masculine appearance in dress, hair style, and adornment. There should be obvious and clear distinctions between the two genders.

I hope by examining some Biblical instructions that some have taken out of context and have purposely tried to apply in a way not intended in the original instruction, is helpful to you in your understanding of God's Word and in your Christian walk.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Scott Hoefker', with a stylized, scribbled end.

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