

## Fig Leaves Are Not Enough

Franklin Church of Christ  
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AM Worship

### Introduction:

One of the most amazing statements to me regarding the creation can be found in **Genesis 1:25**. "And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed." When the world and mankind existed in perfectness, nakedness presented no problem. However, in **Genesis 3:6-7**, all of this changed. I do not fully understand the metamorphosis Adam and Eve went through. I do not understand why it had the effect that it did. But the very first recorded change wrought in their lives was that their eyes were opened and they knew they were naked. Sin had entered the world and along with sin, shame entered. To protect them from their shame, Adam and Eve attempted to clothe themselves with fig leaves. Interestingly, in **Genesis 3:21**, "The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them." We find in **Genesis 3**, the first three-point sermon on clothing and modesty.

### Discussion:

- I. We need to have shame.
  - A. In the beginning, the Bible explained that Adam and Eve were naked and unashamed (**Genesis 2:25**). But when sin came, their eyes were opened and shame entered their hearts. Shame is the guilty feeling of doing something wrong, the embarrassment that comes when your body or your heart is laid bare for all to see. So strong was their shame that they did not have to wait for God to try to clothe them. They attempted to cover and hide themselves.
  - B. We need that sense of shame today. Like Adam and Eve, we are full of sin. Our eyes, therefore, ought to be opened. We ought to be able to look at our bodies and know when we are exposing ourselves and be properly ashamed. We ought to be driven by our own consciences to cover up and hide our flesh. But regrettably too many of us are unashamed. Too many of us have been dumbed down and demoralized by the extreme immodesties of our world that we no longer feel ashamed of our own immodesty.
  - C. Having said that, I am amazed at the inconsistency with which people today feel ashamed. Men and women who would be ashamed if we accidentally walked in on them while they were still in their underwear, will walk around before multitudes on beaches, at pool sides and while cutting their grass in bathing suits that expose just as much. If we were to walk into a room and accidentally happen upon someone who had just stepped out of the shower and wrapped themselves with a towel, we would find someone extremely ashamed and embarrassed. But, we find ladies in the mall with skirts that do not go much lower than the wrapped towel, unembarrassed and unashamed. Regrettably, sometimes we even find that in the church. Gratefully, at least the ladies here might be ashamed enough to cover up with a sweater. Why not make it easier and come already covered?
  - D. When Adam and Eve recognized sin, shame entered the world. It is no surprise then that as our society finds it harder and harder to recognize sin, shame is vanishing from the earth. It must not vanish from us. We must have a healthy sense of shame regarding exposing our bodies, no matter what the modern pop psychologists tell us.
- II. Clothing is intended to cover and hide.
  - A. Why did Adam and Eve stitch together fig leaves? They were trying to cover up. When God provided them with garments of animal skin, the intent was the same. If we are going to dress modestly and godly we need to remember God's purpose for clothing. Clothing, from the beginning, was for the purpose of covering up, not revealing or accentuating. This is Peter's point in **I Peter 3:1-4**. The way we dress is supposed to call attention to our chastity, purity and godliness, not our wealth, prestige or sexuality.
  - B. Consider the following quote: "Luxurious clothing that cannot conceal the shape of the body is no covering at all. Such clothing, clinging close to the body, takes the body's shape and adheres to the flesh. It outlines the woman's figure so that the whole shape of her body is visible to spectators, even though they cannot actually see the body itself...Such clothing is meant for looking, not for covering" (Clement, *The Instructor*, quoted from *Will The Real Heretics Please Stand Up*, David Bercot, Scroll Publishing, Tyler, TX, 1989, p. 29).

C. That second century quote still applies today. Form fitting clothes are the norm for men and women today. Even many Christian men and women are not dressing to conceal their bodies from others but to reveal them. Low cut blouses and high riding skirts are everywhere. Men cutting the grass shirtless and wearing skimpy shorts. We ought to be ashamed. Parents who allow their children to dress in the latest revealing fashions need to gain control and teach their sons and daughters some modesty. We need to remember why we are dressing—to cover up.

III. We must clothe ourselves using God's standards, not our own or the world's.

- A. One of the most interesting aspects of the Genesis text is that Adam and Eve, being ashamed attempted to cover themselves. They made loin coverings or girdles (**Genesis 3:7**). The garments that God gave are much more concealing. The term used to describe the garment, coat or robe (depending on translation) is the same one used to describe the coat of many colors given to Joseph and the tunics of the priests. In other words, man's standards for covering himself were not enough. God had higher standards. As we dress ourselves, we need to consider God's standards.
- B. I wish I could present to you actual measurements. But I cannot. Despite the attempts of some to find measurements for modest clothing in the Bible, there simply are none. God did not list His dress standards in inches but in intentions.
- C. We have already read **I Peter 3:1-4**. Also read **I Timothy 2:9-10**. When we dress what do we intend to draw attention to? Our wealth, our prestige or sexuality? Or do we intend to draw attention to our chastity, purity and godliness? Which are your intentions?
- D. We also find passages such as **Galatians 5:19-21** and **I Peter 4:3**. We must intend to avoid sensuality (lasciviousness, licentiousness or lewdness, depending on your translation). This term refers to that which indicates, expresses or arouses sexual interest or desire. No doubt, this is an issue for women more than men. Ladies, though you will probably never fully understand how men see and think, you must come to understand that blouses that are cut low, revealing part of your breasts; shirts that form tightly around your breasts and then fit close to the stomach; low-riding pants with short cut shirts that expose part of your stomach; skirts that stop above your knees and tight fitting dresses with slits up to the thighs are all designed for one reason—to indicate and express to men or arouse in men sexual interest and desire. Does your dress do that? By the way, somewhere along the line somebody came up with the increasingly popular but unbiblical definition of modesty as dressing in a way that does not attract attention to yourself. The definition then gets extrapolated to say that if a Christian finds themselves on a California beach with a bunch of people in thong bikinis, they would need to dress the same way so they don't stand out. First, a Christian has no business in some place where lasciviousness and immodesty abounds. Second, **I Peter 4:4** demonstrates that we will stand out and will attract attention to ourselves. But remember to what we should be attracting attention—not our bodies or sexuality but our godliness and purity (**I Peter 3:1-4**).
- E. With that in mind, we also have God's standard for dress revealed in passages such as **Matthew 18:6-7** and **Romans 15:1-2**. We must intend to build others up and intend to avoid casting stumbling blocks that will knock them down. Provocative clothing that arouses sexual desires and promotes lust, which is sinful (**Matthew 5:28**), is a stumbling block. No doubt, some will say that people should control their thoughts and minds. I absolutely agree. However, Paul said that we are supposed to bear with the weak and help build them up. We should not disregard their weaknesses and then cast stumbling blocks to make it hard for them to stay pure. We need to make it easy for them. We are to dress in ways that do not cast stumbling blocks but builds others up. In which way do you dress?

### Conclusion:

Regrettably, when it comes to dress, it seems that Satan is winning. All around me I see the world getting worse and worse. But what saddens me more is that too many Christians do not stick with God's standards. Instead, they simply stay a step or two behind the world. But what saddens me most is too many churches have given up the fight for modesty. We must not give up this fight. We must call one another to God's higher standards. We must stand out from the world, not be governed by it, even in our dress.