

Modesty: Wearing the Robes of Righteousness

It's a very special joy to be gathered here tonight to do this. As we were singing, I was looking around the room, seeing various fathers and their daughters. Often, I have this vision of some of these daughters as little girls and I look at them and I say "*No longer a little girl*". What a joy that is. My own daughters are in that category. It was such a joy to walk with them when they were little girls and it's an abounding joy to walk with them as young women now. I love it. I love this season but I also loved it when they were little.

So we have such a broad spectrum here: we have daughters who are truly women and then we have little girls as well. So this is a very precious moment to be able to be together. This is something that God has done by putting us together in this way. And then to have us grow up together and to encourage one another to walk beside one another, to speak the truth, be patient with one another. All the different things that the church of the Lord Jesus is meant for.

I'd like for us to begin with something that I hope will help fathers and daughters center their thinking on a very, very important topic. It is a topic that comes up every day. Every single day of your life this topic will arise up at the very beginning of the day. It's the topic of apparel and modesty. It is something that is unavoidable and something that, because of its nature, must have Christian thinking behind it.

What I want to do tonight is try to center all of the thinking of a daughter and of her father around six biblical texts on modesty that every father and daughter ought to know.

So fathers, I have some questions for you: *Can you find six biblical texts in order to instruct your daughter on the matters of modesty and apparel? Do you have them in your mind? Have you been speaking them to them because this is something they'll do every day?* They're going to make a decision about this every single day. *Do you have it in your mind and have you communicated it to them?* That's the question. Or daughters, how about you? I have some questions for you: *Can you defend the way that you dress from Scripture alone? Do you have in your mind explicitly biblical thoughts and a characteristically biblical position upon which you stand? And can you explain it to yourself? And can you explain it to others? And do you have confidence in it?* So, my goal tonight is to give you those texts.

My goal tonight really is to unify fathers and daughters on this matter. We are unified by Scripture. That's what brings us together. It's not a man's opinion -- it's the word of God that ought to form what we are unified on. Of course, we all understand that we see through a glass darkly and so perfect unification among men is difficult because of that. But, at the same time, we have to at least agree on this one factor. That is that Scripture is the place that we go to be unified. That's sort of the premise.

I want to give you these texts. I hope that you have something to write with and are taking good notes for this. I'm going to just name these six texts and the categories that they address. Then I'll move on and explain some other things about it.

1. *A profession of godliness* (1 Timothy 2:9-10)
2. *The hidden person of the heart* (1 Peter 3:3-6)
3. *Androgyny* (Deuteronomy 22:5)
4. *Nakedness* (Genesis 3:21)
5. *Allurement* (Proverbs 7:4-27)
6. *Purpose* (Romans 12:1)

These are the texts and broad categories that I'm going to address here in order to attempt to unify and clarify these matters between fathers and daughters. Now, I want to identify a number of issues on the table before we enter into these texts.

1. *Should there be a dress code in your family?*
2. *Should there be a dress code in your church?*
3. *What is your dress code?*

(Everyone has a dress code. Either that code is personally created, defined by the culture, developed out of our own fallen conscience, or governed by Scripture. Everyone has a dress code. And that dress code is usually the cause of many tensions between fathers and daughters, husbands and wives, daughters and their friends. Do you understand? I think you can relate with what I'm saying. This is a cause of enormous tension.)

4. *The sufficiency of Scripture.*

(Is Scripture really sufficient for the clothing of daughters and wives? And, of course, our answer to that question is *absolutely yes*. Scripture is the only reliable place that you can go. Scripture may offend your personal tastes. It may run crosswise with your desires. It might create conflict between a father and a daughter. It might cause an argument between a husband and a wife. It may run roughshod over a parent's values or friends or people in the church. But let's just agree that Scripture stands in authority over all families and friends and fathers and daughters and institutions in this matter.)

And we'll consider tensions that may be seen in the family.

1. Fathers who are not biblically informed and are, therefore, ill equipped to think biblically and, therefore, are unable to act appropriately on the matter. That's a tension. This condition creates a tension.
2. Passive fathers who have delegated the matter to the crowd.
3. Wives who do not understand what men struggle with.
4. Wives who are rebellious and do not have submissive hearts towards their husbands.

5. Fathers who are afraid of conflict and, therefore, won't take responsibility.
6. Friends who do not agree.
7. Onlookers who do not like it when people dress modestly. Even when they see you in a group, they say "*Here comes the dress brigade*" (That happens to my daughters all the time).

All of these tensions and problems and questions bring out a whole slew of other questions. How about this one: *What is Christian liberty anyway?* I thought that we were free in Christ. *What does that mean?* We just have to recognize that in today's Christian world Christian liberty includes taking almost all of your clothes off and walking about nearly naked in underwear. That's Christian liberty in today's environment. We have to understand that there is a certain thinking about Christian liberty that actually might be off course. Christian liberty today is defined by thinking that it legitimate for girls to dress like boys and boys to dress like girls. Is this a proper application of Christian liberty? That's a question that has to be asked.

That question brings up the questions of legalism. *How do you define legalism? What is legalism?* I'll just answer that question very briefly.

1. Legalism is creating laws that are foreign to Scripture.
2. Legalism is pretending that keeping laws can save you.

That's legalism. Maintaining clear biblical standards is *not* legalism. Having a standard based on Scripture on clothing is *not* legalism. We can debate that (I would be very happy to debate that). But that's my perspective.

How you apply all these things can be very difficult because of many things going on in our own hearts. Here is my suggestion to all of us here: *When you think about applying what is written in Scripture regarding modesty, make sure that you understand that God desires you to apply it in your own life and not someone else's.* This is the great danger -- that your mind is actually dwelling in the wrong place. It was actually meant for you and not someone else. There are great dangers in missing that point.

So, I'd like to turn to a definition of modesty. I'm going to take it from Jeff Pollard. "*The inner self-government rooted in an understanding of one's self before God which is outwardly displayed in humility, in purity, from a genuine love for Jesus Christ.*" So, for this whole matter of modesty, I think that's a good definition. It makes it clear that modesty is not just isolated to clothing. It's a far, far bigger issue than clothing alone, because it begins in the heart. Actually, the real subject is the heart and what is happening in the heart.

Modesty of the heart is like a fruitful womb; it gives birth to many children. Modesty in the heart gives birth to a quality of speech. It gives birth to the way that you act. It gives birth to the manner of one's demeanor. The way you talk, the way you walk, the way you stand, the way you move your facial muscles when you respond -- all of these things have to do with modesty and they all begin in the heart. This whole subject of modesty

is about more than clothing. It is about the hidden person of the heart. So this message, I pray, will result in greater unfading beauty in the daughters of Zion. That God would use it in that way and that it would cause the meditations of our hearts to give birth to things that are modest outside of our hearts.

I want to give you a general principle of these texts before we move into them. First of all, I want to say that from these texts we really learn that Christ has no intention to diminish the beauty of the daughters of Zion. He beautifies them by, first of all, bringing them to repentance -- by giving them a new name and then clothing them in the robes of righteousness.

So when we talk about this subject of modesty, we need to understand that something greater is here. What is here is the gospel. I want to suggest that what the Bible says about modesty is typological; it's a type of something greater. When we talk about modesty, we're speaking of something earthly that points to something spiritual. A type is a picture or a condition or a person or something smaller that points to something greater. That's true of many things in Scripture, but modesty is one of those things that points to greater things. It points to the gospel. It really does point to the whole subject of being clothed in robes of righteousness. That is the heart of the matter of what's said about clothing and this matter of modesty. It's really the heart of Isaiah 61: *"My soul shall be joyful in my God for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation. He has covered me with the robe of righteousness."*

So that's the introduction. I just wanted to try to set a few things in order before we went into these six texts of Scripture to help unify fathers and daughters.

The first text is 1 Timothy 2:9-10. Can open your Bibles there? This text speaks of the heart of modesty. What we read there is, *"In like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works."*

What we recognize right away is that God speaks about a woman's appearance in His Word; He *does* speak about this subject. Most American Christians do not want anyone to talk to them about how they dress, but here, in this passage, God is telling the people of the church of Ephesus how to dress. Timothy was a pastor in Ephesus. So what we learn here is that Paul wants to motivate the women in Ephesus to re-examine their dress, most likely because they grew up in a pagan city. Ephesus was a pagan city and in the city the body was glorified -- the exposure of the human body was glorified. So here the Apostle Paul comes to speak to this pastor about this matter.

This passage has some connection with public worship. In the same way that men lift up holy hands and pray, so women ought to present themselves and even dress themselves appropriately. Clothing is an expression of worship; it's part of public worship. When we gather together as a church in public worship, we have to understand that even our apparel has meaning in that setting. As Paul is speaking to

Timothy, we have to understand that Timothy is equipping this church in order to worship God, even in their corporate setting. So 1 Timothy 2:9-10 makes it clear that God has something to say about how women dress.

Paul uses a number of words here that describe the kind of apparel that ought to be worn. First of all, there is orderly clothing; *kosmeo* is the word that's used here in the passage and it has to do with orderliness. "To adorn" -- it signifies action; it's a verb. What Paul's saying is that women should do something -- they should take action -- to adorn themselves in a particular way -- that is, an orderly way. There is a beauty in the orderliness of the *kosmos*. So he uses this word that breathes that whole idea of beauty and orderliness; taking disorderliness, taking chaos, and arranging it. So, it implies an orderly and beautiful arrangement instead of a rumpled and uncoordinated chaos. So you have functionality, beauty, and order all mixed into the first words in this passage.

Then Paul uses another term, *aidos* (or shamefacedness) when he speaks of modest clothing. This describes the state of mind. He talks first about the orderliness and the functionality of it, and then what state of mind ought to govern it. He's speaking about this state of mind of a woman. What that means for fathers is that they need to help their daughters understand this state of mind. Every day, when they stand in front of the mirror, they should have this state of mind about them. There is a way to think when they dress themselves. In other words, there are certain kinds of thoughts that ought to happen when your daughter is dressing herself. They are rolled up in this word: *shamefacedness*. It means reverence. Actually, almost sort of a bashfulness. Downcast eyes. It's the total opposite of "*If you've got it, flaunt it.*" It's the polar opposite of that whole kind of mentality. It backs off from exposure. It covers rather than reveals. It understates rather than promotes. It's reserved.

Let me read to you a Greek lexicon on this word shamefacedness: shamefacedness is the idea of a sense of shame and modesty in regard to the clothing worn. It communicates a feminine reserve in matters of sex; the word involves an innate moral repugnance of doing the dishonorable. It is shamefacedness which "*shrinks from passing over the limits of womanly reserve and modesty as well as from dishonor which would justly attach thereto*". The commentator George Night says this regarding shamefacedness: "*Reverence, awe, respect for the feeling or opinion of others or for one's own conscience and to shame, self-respect, sense of honor. That habitual self-government with its constant rein on all its passions and desires which would hinder the temptation from arising.*" So, it has to do with shrinking back from pushing the limits, pushing the boundaries. This is a mentality that we need to somehow nourish in our daughters so that they think that way when they consider dressing themselves.

Then there is the term "*moderation*" that's used here. This also carries thoughts of understatement, soundness of mind, self-control, and keeping a rein in on exposure. So, it implies humility an self-control and actually even a whole mentality of hating sin. This sets modesty in opposition to elaborate, gaudy kind of apparel. So there is a soundness and a sanity, a lack of silliness, a lack of flirtatiousness that's implied in this word.

Then Paul says that this all has to do with professing godliness. So apparel is one of the subsets of making a profession of godliness. God has given us all a great responsibility in the world to profess godliness. I asked a man before we started what he wanted to do and he said, *"I want to tell people about Jesus"*. And I thought, *"He wants to profess godliness. He wants to use his life to profess what is godly."* The clothes, the hair, the jewelry -- they all have a purpose and that is to profess godliness. So when a girl stands in front of the mirror and she thinks about what she puts on, she needs to think, *"How do I profess godliness in what I'm going to put on now because I have a calling from God to make a profession of something and that profession is a profession of godliness?"*

Often we, in our natural state -- in our flesh -- we want to dress for identification. This is very relevant today. Fashion designers are deliberately trying to build their brand by connecting their brand to the customers' identity. Clothing designers want people who will identify with the brand and be walking advertisements of that style and that culture, whatever it is. That's why there is such an emphasis today on branded clothing. You're familiar with names like Calvin Klein and Abercrombie & Fitch. If you wear these brands, you can identify with sort of the epistemological content of the company that's selling them. That's what you're doing. So styles make identity connections. When, on the one hand, God talks about apparel, it includes making a profession of godliness. The fashion world says you are actually making a profession of some brand, some style, some angle on the world, and so you have to always ask, *"What signal does this send?"*

I read a really neat book I want to recommend called *The Beauty of Modesty* (I have a copy here, I believe). I will quote from the book. *"What signal does my clothing send? When you wear Abercrombie & Fitch? Well, if she isn't aware of the Abercrombie & Fitch propaganda, she's telling you she is clueless. And if she is aware, then she is telling us that she is loose. She is sending sensual signals by association."* Another company is Calvin Klein. Their clothing and their basically explicit commercials are for teenage promiscuity. This is just a recognition that there is a profession that's made in clothing. As fathers and daughters and husbands and wives relate to one another, they need to establish a principle that they can agree upon. Their clothing is actually a profession of some kind of faith. It's faith in something. It's an identification with something. So they have to understand that and agree together that, *"Yes, this is true. My clothing is a profession, and it ought to be a profession of faith."*

Also, of good works. If you see that in the text, this is also connected with good works. So all women's clothing, whether it's worn in the home, the church, the grocery store, or the beach, it should cry out the good works of godliness and a profession of faith, humility, and shamefacedness. This is why God has designed clothing for us to wear. He intends that our clothing is making a profession of faith. Is our clothing causing others to stumble? And I just want to suggest when clothing is too tight or exposing your figure, you draw attention to that area. Women are much less sensitive to this than men are, so they need their fathers to help them understand what kind of clothing draws the eyes, misleads, and causes men to stumble. Because they will stumble if you dress

wrongly. Of course, we would be very careful to say it takes eyes who are looking, but it also takes clothing that is shamefaced enough so that it doesn't draw the eyes. Every man here knows how difficult it is to even speak to women who are immodestly dressed. It's very, very difficult.

In this sense, fathers and daughters need to be speaking about these things. A father needs to explain to his daughter what the things are that cause men to stumble. The daughter will not understand because she doesn't think that way -- she doesn't see that way -- this is why daughters need fathers. This is why daughters need fathers to actually talk to them carefully and even explicitly about these matters. They should explain it with enough detail so that they really understand. God has given fathers for this reason. So, it's appropriate for fathers to have these kinds of discussions with their daughters. It's appropriate for daughters to say, "*Daddy, what do you think? Is this okay?*" That should be normal. A daughter should be able to ask that question with humility and joy and a heart of submission. When it's not there, we have to understand what is happening in the heart of that daughter.

These things are connected with good works. Good works. So there are a number of words that are used here. What we learn from this passage also is that God is interested in both the heart and the appearance. It would be wrong to say, "*It only matters what's in your heart*". And it would be equally wrong to say, "*It only matters what's on the outside*". Both of those things are extreme statements that really lead in the wrong direction. Actually, the Bible isn't so binary in that way. The Bible actually holds both intentions. Both the outward appearance and the heart matter. So that's what we find in this text here. John Angell James said this in the 19th century: "*Study your profession and thoroughly understand what it implies and enjoins. Consider well what sanctity and conduct, what spirituality of mind, what separation from the world in spirit and taste, what devotional feelings, what faith, hope, love and humility are communicated in your dress.*"

Let me just come down to some statements that I think are implied in what we've just read in this first text. I'm going to talk about what immodesty is. I'm going to talk about what modesty is. First of all, immodesty is an expression of self. Immodesty is drawing attention to yourself. Immodesty is identification and association with sinful cultures and their appearances. Immodesty is an obsession with legitimizing one's self through hair, jewelry or apparel. Immodesty is insecurity, arrogance and worldliness externalized. Immodesty is insensitivity to the temptations of men. Immodesty is lack of love for your brother. Immodesty makes you less of a person and more of an object. Immodesty destroys love and inflames lust. So, clothing is not a neutral area. It's given by God to declare his glory like everything else. You might ask: *Why the stars? Why the oceans? Why the deserts? Why cars? Why airplanes? Why the internet? Why anything? Why clothing?* It's for a profession of faith. It's for the glory of God.

Clothing is no different than the big ticket items that we think about normally when we consider our Christian profession. Modesty is a public profession of faith. Modesty is an external expression of affections. Modesty is a reflection of holiness expressed in

appearance. Modesty is a proclamation of the gospel. Modesty is a demonstration of humility. Modesty is a display of self-control. It is an acknowledgment of the sin of Adam and Eve and their need to cover their nakedness. Modesty is a means to declare that God single-handedly covers the nakedness of fallen sinners. *In short, modesty is the gospel externalized.* So, that's the first text, 1 Timothy 2:9-10. Every father and daughter needs to understand this text.

Second text -- 1 Peter 3:3-6. The focus here is the hidden person of the heart. *"Do not let your adornment be merely outward - arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel - rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God. For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him 'lord', whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror."*

Peter starts with a prohibition: *Do not.* *"Do not let not your adornment be merely outward"*. So, he's saying that there is a right and a wrong -- a black and a white -- regarding apparel; there is a good and evil. He mentions three categories of outward adornment. Do you see them? Hair, jewelry and clothes. Now, because of what is said about hair and jewelry and clothes in other places in Scripture, we know that he is not objecting (for example) to jewelry, because we see godly practices of the wearing of jewelry. So he can't mean that he's prohibiting all jewelry or the prohibiting of arranging of hair of any kind. But he's objecting to an excessive focus on the outward appearance.

What we learn here is that modesty is not achieved by just simply wearing a dress. There is far more at stake here. It's more than understanding clothing as well. You can wear a dress and still be arrogant and self-righteous and proud and explicitly immodest. Even though, on the outside, you may receive a comment that you are dressed modestly, when, in fact, there is no modesty at all because of the inner person of the heart. The heart is the heart of the matter. And what is happening in the heart expresses itself in the way that you handle your hair, what you put on your wrists, around your neck, and on your head. It includes perfume and anything else that might be detectable. So a genuinely modest heart always precedes genuinely modest dress.

In this passage, what we learn is that everything is an expression of something in this life. Clothing is inescapably an expression of something that has already gone on in the heart. You could say clothing is inescapably religious in that sense that it reflects the heart and the moral compass of the person who is wearing it. The outward always exposes the inward. The inward always plays itself out in real life -- in real culture, in real words. So, if your heart is craving the applause and the approval of the world, then your clothing will find itself as a reflection of it. If your heart desires to glorify Christ, then this will be your self-conscious pattern.

So, he's speaking of extravagant clothing here. Isaiah actually captures the nature of this problem and what he says is that the very manner in which the Israelite women

walked was an expression of something inward. Their outward walk was just consistent with what was going on in their hearts. So starting in Isaiah 3:16, we read this:

“Moreover the Lord says: ‘Because the daughters of Zion are haughty”

[That’s something inside the heart. Haughtiness is something that is inside.]

Because they are haughty
*“And walk with outstretched necks
And wanton eyes,
Walking and mincing as they go,
Making a jingling with their feet,
Therefore the Lord will strike with a scab
The crown of the head of the daughters of Zion,
And the Lord will uncover their secret parts.
In that day the Lord will take away the finery:
The jingling anklets, the scarves, and the crescents;
The pendants, the bracelets, and the veils;
The headdresses, the leg ornaments, and the headbands;
The perfume boxes, the charms, and the rings;
The nose jewels, the festal apparel, and the mantles;
The outer garments, the purses, and the mirrors;
The fine linen, the turbans, and the robes.
And so it shall be: Instead of a sweet smell there will be a stench;
Instead of a sash, a rope; Instead of well-set hair, baldness;
Instead of a rich robe, a girding of sackcloth;
And branding instead of beauty.
Your men shall fall by the sword,
And your mighty in the war.
Her gates shall lament and mourn,
And she being desolate shall sit on the ground.”*

So Isaiah is speaking about the haughty women of his time and all the expressions of that haughtiness that work their way out in real life. So let’s lay this principle down very, very clearly: *Modesty is not achieved by wearing a dress.* Anyone can do that. You can wear a dress and still be arrogant, self-righteous, proud, and wanting to promote yourself. Then there is an example given of women who did live modestly. Again, this is not a categorical prohibition against jewelry. The Proverbs 31 woman dressed beautifully. The bride in the Song of Songs wore jewelry. Isaac gave a nose ring to his betrothed. So, there are godly uses of jewelry, clothing, and arrangements of hair. So God is not actually saying that you should look like a rumpled mess and care nothing about what you look like. The Bible actually says the opposite. You *should* care what you look like. But you should care in a right way.

The examples of women who fulfilled this are in verses five and six, *“For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being*

submissive to their own husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror.”

He's saying "in this manner". *In what manner?* In the manner of modest clothing. They adorned themselves with submissiveness and obedience. There was an inner spirit of their hearts that was the core of it. And there are a lot of things that happened in their outward life because of their inward humility. Not only did they not dress excessively or wear their hair ostentatiously or dress promiscuously. They didn't do any of that. But they also were not rebellious to their husbands. They had a shamefacedness about their hearts. They had humble hearts. Their submissiveness found its beginning in their hearts as wives. What this means is that if you are a daughter and you cannot in your heart find humility and shamefacedness and a desire for understatement in your dress, you will have a hard time with submissiveness because that's another problem. You might dress wrongly, but there is another very, very big problem. You will not be able to love your husband and submit to him the way that God wants you to. If you struggle with this now, understand you will struggle with the same category of problem in a different realm.

I hope you understand what I'm saying here: *When there is inner humility in the heart, it means that the way you walk, the way you talk, the way your face looks, the way you dress, the way you relate to your husband -- it affects everything.* This modesty is enormously influential in your life. Though you might be a little girl today and you're struggling with it now, win the war now. That way you're not harming your family because you never learned how to have this kind of humility and submissiveness that these women adorned themselves with.

Let's get to the third text, Deuteronomy 22:5 - *androgyny*. "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." That's a terrifying verse of Scripture because it places those who reject it as being an abomination to the Lord. So, it has enormous significance. Now, the language is so plain here: *Woman are not to wear anything that pertains to a man.* Notice that it says something different to women than it does to men. What does it mean to not wear anything that pertains to a man? The Hebrew word translated "*pertains*" really means "*the apparatus of a man; the things that a man uses and wears*". It's actually way beyond clothing. When he's talking to women, he's talking about something far beyond clothing. When he's talking to men, he's talking about clothing explicitly. Do you see the difference? So, it includes whatever a man needs to be a man and to fulfill a man's role. It means for a woman to wear a soldier's uniform is a violation -- that's what that means.

Some years ago (over a decade ago), my family was reading through this section in Deuteronomy and we came to this passage about clothing and when we read this it was like there was a big gigantic light that started to flicker in our living room. My girls were young at that time but they understood what this meant. I mean, isn't it pretty plain? It's not very complex language; it's extremely clear. It doesn't take a rocket theologian to figure it out. This text really shook up the wardrobes of my girls. They clearly understood

the truth that God made men and women different and he wants men to dress like men and women to dress like women. When this passage crashed and interrupted our whole family life, we realized (and we even have the pictures to prove it) we misunderstood matters of clothing.

When discussing pants, considerations of culture are also important. Honestly, I'm not sure how to process all of this in terms of historical perspective. Because, for example, it's not just so simple as to say, "*Pants are manly*," because clothing has a cultural element. For example, there have been times in history when robes were the apparel of men. But they are not today. Long robes were kind of like long dresses. In fact, consider this: *In the dark age of Scotland, men were wearing dresses and they were calling them kilts*. They still do. It is expressly womanly to wear a kilt? I just think you have to grapple with that. I will say this, when my friends wear kilts, I *always* tease them. That's as far as I'll go. I'm not ready to say that they are explicitly womanly. But I do know guys who have worn kilts. It's kind of awkward for them. And they're not quite sure what to do -- how to sit and things like that -- because it's just very strange. It's rough to do a lot of things that men do when you're wearing a kilt. You can make an argument that culture has to be considered. But we need to be very clear on this matter: *It matters how women dress -- there is no neutrality in it and one has to consider Scripture*.

The fourth text -- allurements -- Proverbs 7:4-27. This text has a lot to do with the power of the visual in women's dress. It helps us understand temptation. "*And there a woman met him with the attire of a harlot*." Women need to understand how they are responsible to protect men's eyes. The eyes have played a major role in the long history of man's lust. Just a couple of days ago, our family was reading 2 Samuel 11. Here, David saw a woman washing herself and she was very beautiful to look upon. This has to do with the eyes. Allurement. I'm talking now about how apparel is alluring. You have to consider that. The Apostle Paul describes our existence in this world and the sinfulness of it as "*the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes*". This is the issue here. Job said, "*I've made a covenant with my eyes why then should I look upon a maid?*" Here there is a woman with the attire of a harlot. In other words, she is drawing him with her attire. That's what's happening. It's allurements and so it brings us to that subject. A woman is responsible for what she incites in a man and there should be a sense of shame for distracting someone from purity. There should be a reluctance to have distracting apparel that causes men to stumble.

Fathers, you just need to work with your daughters on this matter to help them figure it out. Matthew 18:6 says, "*Whoever causes one of the least of these little ones who believe in me to stumble, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he be drowned in the depths of the sea*." You know, I have a number of millstones around here for that purpose -- to tell that story. It matters if you make people stumble and you can make people stumble by your apparel. Jesus said, "*If your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you*." This is very extreme language. It's very much like the language of Deuteronomy 22:5. It's an abomination. God thinks differently about these things than we do. We understate them and He places them in their proper context. Here's what Jeff Pollard wrote: "*Dear woman, for a man of any age*

to stand behind you when you're giving an anatomy lesson with your pants or your tight top... you're not displaying the holiness and purity of heart. Consider what Jesus said, 'It is impossible but that offenses will come but woe to him through whom they come.'"

Then the fifth text is regarding nakedness -- Genesis 3:21. Understanding the purpose of clothing and the covering of nakedness is critical when you think about apparel because clothing was first given to cover nakedness and shame. It was given because of sin. God clothed Adam and Eve in the Garden in order to cover their shame. This was a vision of the gospel. This was the beginning of the gospel when God covered the nakedness of his people. Clothing is meant to express this miracle of the love of God -- that He would actually clothe us in our nakedness and in our shame.

Then the sixth text -- purpose -- Romans 12:1-2. There are several that we could mention. *"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."*

This passage indicates that God owns your body. That He meant it to glorify Him. So it includes ownership and lordship and citizenship. All these principles are here in Romans 12:1. It's so important that we understand the purpose of our bodies and that is to give glory to God.

I want to leave you with two things.

1. I wish I had time to develop this earlier but this is not an argument against beauty. Maybe someday we can speak about beauty because God promotes beauty and encourages it. So it's not an argument against beauty.
2. The way of modesty is the way of the gospel. For a daughter, the heart of it is the fruit of a transformed mind that desires to please her Master. Putting on the mind of Christ -- setting her affections on things above. And it's exemplified by godly women who glory in the fact that their nakedness has been covered by Christ and that even their apparel reflects that wonderful reality.

For her father, the heart of all of this is to collaborate with his daughter in such a way that she understands the gospel, she understands adultery, she understands the lust of the eyes, she understands that her clothing is not a matter of personal expression but it's a matter of the gospel. It's that important. A girl can dress modestly and still have an unconverted heart. She can clothe her body with robes that seem like righteousness but be unclothed with the wedding garments of the Lord Jesus Christ. That would be the greatest sorrow for a daughter.

Daughters, if you're resisting the Lord in the area of modesty, beware of what's lurking in your heart. If you're resisting your father, it's an indication that you're resisting your heavenly Father. So, as a daughter of Zion, if you have repented and believed in the gospel, you have been clothed with righteousness -- you have received a new name

and a crown of life and your Savior has given you new robes. That is your identity. You have a whole lifetime to publicly declare and explicitly demonstrate that you have a Savior who has clothed you. Every morning when you awaken, you'll have such a wonderful opportunity to stand in front of your wardrobe and ask the gospel question: *How can I express how thankful I am that he covered my nakedness? How can my apparel reflect these robes of righteousness that God has clothed me with? How can my blouse and my skirt be like the wedding garments of my King and my Savior and my Shepherd? And how can I represent that my sin and my shame has been covered by the precious blood of a Lamb?*

And you fathers: it's your job to bring the word of God to your daughter, not your own thoughts. He has given to you a daughter to be her teacher and her protector. It is for you to look at her and know these things. To help her to feel them in her heart so that she understands them there. It's also your duty before God to shepherd her and to help her from man's perspective to avoid immodesty. To help her to know when she's missed the mark. She will miss the mark. I guarantee you, she'll miss the mark. But, after a while, she won't. After a while, she won't.

Finally, the practical effect of all of this on the hearts and the emotions of daughters. What is this supposed to do to you? Isaiah 61:10 says it:

*"I will greatly rejoice in the Lord.
My soul shall be joyful in my God
For he has clothed me with the
Garments of salvation.
He has covered me with the robe of righteousness
As a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments
And as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.
For as the earth brings forth its bud
And the garden causes the things that are sown in it to spring forth,
So the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise
To spring forth before all nations."*

This is the purpose of your apparel. Will you pray with me?

O Lord, this is a very difficult subject. One that we are not well schooled in because of the inexperience and rejection in our current time of history. We pray that You would help us understand it, be patient with one another, be merciful to our daughters, and helpful to them. O Lord, that You would unify us at least around the words of these six texts so that we might know how to please You in this world. Amen.