

MODESTY





# MODESTY

More Than a Change of Clothes

MARTHA PEACE & KENT KELLER

**R&R**  
P U B L I S H I N G  
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*This book is dedicated to my dear friend,  
Marilyn Sherman, who lives in Anchorage, Alaska.  
Her life is an amazing testimony of God's grace  
as He has used her greatly in other people's lives for His glory!*  
—Martha

*I would like to dedicate this book to my wife, Alana,  
who is modest and beautiful inside and out,  
and is my most precious gift on earth  
next to salvation in Christ Jesus.*  
—Pastor Kent

**Modesty:** An inner attitude of the heart motivated by a love for God that seeks His glory through purity and humility; it often reveals itself in words, actions, expressions, and clothes.

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Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think . . . to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.  
(Ephesians 3:20–21)

—MARTHA PEACE

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Ultimately, everything that is good is from God (James 1:17), and He deserves all praise for any good that might come from this book (Psalm 115:1)!

—KENT KELLER

# Modesty Really /s More Than a Change of Clothes

## A Word from Martha

The Lord saved me when I was thirty-three years old. At that time, I was a wife and a mother of an eleven-year-old daughter and a seven-year-old son. Before my salvation, I would have been characterized as a flirt who partied and drank too much. The Lord changed me a lot when he saved me. He gave me a new heart that desired to please Him above all else, but since I was a new Christian, there was a lot that I did not know. It took time for me to grow in my understanding of how to live the Christian life.

One area that I eventually became convicted of was the matter of the clothing styles of that day—*skintight jeans*. Not only did I wear them, but our daughter, Anna, wore them too. It was not difficult for me to give up wearing skintight jeans, but for Anna it was a different story. I explained why both of us had to change how we dressed, but she did not agree. Several times, we went shopping and both of us came home in tears with her vehemently hating every pair of jeans in the store that I thought were appropriate.

My husband, Sanford, and I talked about the problem, and he suggested that *he* would go shopping with us and *he* would make the final decision. One evening at supper, we explained to Anna that both her daddy and I were going to take her shopping the next morning, and that he would make the final decision about the jeans. Anna's little brother, David, was also at the supper table quietly listening to our conversation.

Anna was not pleased with the idea, burst into tears, got up from the table, and proceeded to walk out of the kitchen. Sanford and I were a little stunned at her reaction, but David was thrilled and called out to her as she headed toward the door: "Bye bye, Baggy Britches!"

It was quite the scene—Anna cried even louder, and Sanford and I doubled over laughing. We tried to contain ourselves, but absolutely could not. I doubt that Anna has yet forgiven David for that comment! It has been so many years that I do not remember exactly what happened the next day, but I think we did go shopping, and Anna abided by her daddy's wishes.

Fast-forward to the present and the issue of *skintight jeans* is almost nothing compared to the styles of today. The lower the cut of the blouse, the shorter the skirt, and, of course, the tighter the skinny jeans, the better. The challenges are greater and the styles even more immodest, but there is one thing that never changes:

The LORD looks from heaven;  
 He sees all the sons of men;  
 From His dwelling place He looks out  
 On all the inhabitants of the earth. (Psalm 33:13–14)

Before you read any further, stop and pray and ask the Lord this question: what does He see when He looks at you?

## A Word from Pastor Kent

Picture with me a beautiful set of precious earrings: 24-karat gold, big, expensive, heavy—the perfect accessory for any outfit. You wouldn't want to wear these earrings doing outdoor activities because they are so valuable. These earrings would be reserved for special occasions.

Melt these two earrings into one earring, making it that much more precious. Now change the earring into a nose ring and put it in the nose of a sloppy, fat pig whose greatest delight is sticking its nose in the deepest part of the muddy puddle it calls home. When it's feeding time, the pig slurps up every last drop of hog slop it can find! Unfortunately, it has problems grabbing that last piece of food that has lodged itself in the nose ring. Finally, the food becomes rotten enough, and it falls off the nose ring. The pig squeals in happy delight just before licking up the tasty morsel! To make matters worse, while he is rooting around in his mud pit, the nose ring falls off. The continued trampling under the pig's feet plants the nose ring deep in the mud, never to see the light of day again. What a colossal waste!

OK, perhaps pigs aren't *that* sloppy, and farmers aren't that crazy to dress their pigs with gold nose rings. To be honest, this is quite an absurd picture. That is probably why Solomon used this picture to teach his children to be wise. In Proverbs 11:22 he writes, "As a ring of gold in a swine's snout, so is a beautiful woman who lacks discretion."

Solomon shows how shocking and inappropriate it is for a beautiful woman to act without discernment. One who "lacks discretion" is not able to make wise choices in life and can't discern what is right and what is wrong. When we're deciding what we should wear and how we should act, we need to exercise discernment. A beautiful woman who dresses and acts immodestly is uglier to God than a pig wearing a gold nose ring is to you.

This book was written to help you gain discernment in the area of modesty, because of the challenge it is to deal with the issue of immodesty. Modesty is more than just a change of clothes. It is an attitude of the heart. As a father of two girls, I deeply desire for my daughters to understand God's will for them regarding modesty in order that they might please Him in this area. As a youth pastor for many years, I found immodesty to be a growing, difficult issue to address with teens and their parents.

In Psalm 19:14, the psalmist humbly pleads,

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart  
Be acceptable in Your sight,  
O LORD, my rock and my Redeemer.

What about you? What are your desires? Is God working in *your* heart? Is the prayer of the psalmist your prayer also?

### **Review Questions**

1. According to Psalm 33:13–14, where is the LORD and what does He see?
2. Did you pray and ask God what He sees when He looks at you? If not, would you ask Him now?
3. Write out Proverbs 11:22.
4. What does it mean to “lack discretion”?
5. According to Psalm 19:14, what two areas in his life did the psalmist want to be acceptable to God?

# 1

## What Is Immodesty, Anyway?

### A Word from Martha

Have you ever heard the story of the frog that was placed in a pot full of cool water? The frog liked water and he was very happy. But then, very gradually, the heat was turned up under the bottom of the pan. So, gradually, the frog got used to the heat. After a while, the water was close to boiling, and the frog was in great danger, although he did not realize it.

Well, that is how clothing styles are today. Back in my great-grandmother Alice's day, in Victorian times, the women wore long dresses with high necks and bustles.

Thankfully fashions have changed, and I, for one, am glad! I bet you are, too! Clothing today is so much more comfortable and easy to care for than it used to be. The problem, though, is the extremes—the Victorian women covered up almost everything, but the fashions of our day cover up almost nothing! Like the frog in the water, we have gradually gotten used to the clothing styles of *our* day.

I am confident, though, that most of you want to figure out how to fit in with the styles of today. Certainly you do not want to look like Laura Ingalls Wilder in the *Little House on the Prairie* television series, much less like my great-grandmother Alice! Even though I am probably the age of most of your grandmothers, I don't want to look like either one of those either.

Frogs are stupid and they do not have a soul. Before they

know it, they are stuck in boiling water. We do not have to be like that. God has given us intelligence and created us in His image. Not only that, He can give us a new heart that loves Him and wants to please Him. We *can* glorify God in the way we dress, even while buying clothes in our day and age.

Modesty is shown by how we dress, but it is a much bigger issue than just our outward clothing. In the next section, Pastor Kent is going to tell you why.

### **A Word from Pastor Kent**

In some Christian circles, it is considered immodest for adults to wear shorts of any kind. Other well-meaning Christians provide measurements, like saying that shorts and skirts should be no shorter than three inches above the knee when a person is seated. At the beach or a swimming pool, which swimsuits are modest and which are immodest?

Other cultures define the standard of modesty differently. For example, Islamic cultures often require that women wear a *hijab* or a *burkha* that covers a woman from head to toe with only the hands and skin around the eyes showing. The purpose for this is to prevent immodesty and lust, but is a hijab the best solution? While it is a sin to make others stumble by wearing too little clothing, is being covered from head to toe the answer? Figuring out exactly what it looks like to be modest or immodest can be difficult.

By now you may be asking, “When do my clothes cross the line into being ‘out-of-bounds’? When is an outfit considered sinful?” But these aren’t the best questions to ask. When your desire is to please God, you won’t be interested in getting as close to the line of sin as possible without crossing over that line. Instead, you will want to stay as far away from this line of sin as is wise! Therefore, a better question should be, “What does God say it means to be modest and immodest, so that I will know how to please Him?”



## **What Is the Biblical Standard of Modesty?**

A picture book would have been quite handy, but God chose in His infinitely perfect wisdom to give us words to answer this question. After all, the Scriptures were written “for our instruction” (Romans 15:4). The Bible tells us what we are doing wrong, teaches us how to correct it, *and* trains us to be godly (see 2 Timothy 3:16).

Based upon the Bible as revealed in the chapters that follow, this is our definition of modesty:

Modesty is an inner attitude of the heart motivated by a love for God that seeks His glory through purity and humility; it often reveals itself in words, actions, expressions, and clothes.

If you have a heart<sup>1</sup> that loves God, you will want to please God. According to the Bible, the heart is the part of you that thinks your thoughts, makes the choices of your will, feels your emotions, and lives on after your death.

A heart that is concerned about pleasing God will express itself modestly by what you think, say, do, and wear. True modesty can come only from someone who is more concerned about showing the world how great God is than how great she is. True modesty doesn't come from changing one's wardrobe. It comes from having one's heart changed. If you want to be modest, your heart must follow after God. When you choose to be immodest (or commit any sin), then you are choosing your own sinful desires over God's desires, showing that He is not first in your life—at least not at that moment.

God can again be first in your heart when you repent from your sin and believe in His Son Jesus Christ (Mark 1:15). Repenting from sin means that you change your view of sin so that you live as God desires. What used to seem fun or desirable is now seen

as something that God hates, so you want to turn from that sin. God is first in your heart when you believe that Jesus is the only one who can save you from your sin. He is the Lord and Master of your heart. When He is most important to you, you want to please Him by doing what He commands, because you love Him! When God is first in your heart, you *will* be modest!

On the other hand,

Immodesty is an attitude of the heart that expresses itself with inappropriate words, actions, expressions and/or clothes that are flirtatious, manipulative, revealing, or suggestive of sensuality or pride.

Just as with modesty, the immodesty we can see comes from an immodest heart, which we can't see. You can, however, measure the heart by the fruit that your life produces (Matthew 7:20). If you want to act or dress immodestly so that you catch the attention of all the guys, or at least that cute one who you wish would pay more attention to you, God is not first in your heart.

If you haven't found out already, some guys can be manipulated pretty easily. This desire to get them to do what you want by flirting, behaving, or dressing immodestly does not honor God. This does not come from a pure heart, but from a sinful desire for attention that dishonors God.

### **A Diagnosis of Immodesty**

Just as doctors are able to diagnose diseases by looking at a person's symptoms, sinful immodesty can be diagnosed by various symptoms.

If you find yourself making some of the following symptomatic statements, you may be dressing immodestly. This isn't always the case, but each of these statements finds its source

in a lack of knowledge about Scripture, at best, or a rebellious heart, at worst. If you simply have never seen these things from the Bible's point of view, then this book should help you make some changes that might even be easy for you to make. So, have you ever said or thought any of the following? (Be honest with yourself if you want an accurate diagnosis of your heart.)

- “I *do* dress modestly compared to *most* girls. Since I'm more modest than most, I must be dressing modestly.”
- “I don't want to dress like my grandma! No one will want to hang around with someone dressed in some 'old-fashioned' way. I want to dress fashionably, *not* frumpily.” (OK, you may not say “frumpily,” but you get the picture.)
- “Some guy's problem with lust is not *my* problem. Quit blaming me for his problems. We already have too much of that 'victim' mentality that wants to pass the blame to others in our culture today.”
- “If I dress modestly, then that guy will just lust after someone else. What difference does it make?”
- “I *want* to get that guy's attention. I'm tired of sitting home on Friday nights all by myself. I like the attention I get when I show off a bit.”
- “This is all just legalism. I can dress any way I want to since this is a 'gray area.’”
- “My mother does not have a clue about how to dress!”
- “Who *cares* what the Bible says! I'll dress like I want!”

These statements do not by any means represent all that it means to be immodest, but if you find yourself thinking these thoughts, you need to understand and follow what the Bible says about modesty.

Has anyone ever come to you, out of love and care for you, and pointed out that you may be immodest? How did you respond? Did you listen to what that person said and ask God to evaluate your heart? Proverbs is clear that those who are wise listen to the rebuke of others, while fools don't. For example, Proverbs 12:15 tells us, "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man is he who listens to counsel" (see also Proverbs 15:31; 19:20).

Maybe the person rebuking you for immodesty was wrong. She may have been inappropriately legalistic in her understanding of Scripture. But did you at least consider what she had to say?

As you read more, you will understand what is at stake and what the Bible says about the need for modesty. Before we dive into what the Bible teaches about modesty, though, I believe it would be helpful for you to understand what makes guys so different, especially in the way they think.

## Review Questions

1. Fill in the blanks from the definition of modesty in this chapter. "An inner \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ motivated by \_\_\_\_\_ for God that seeks His \_\_\_\_\_ through \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ that often reveals itself in words, actions, expressions, and clothes."
2. Restate the definition of immodesty in your own words.
3. What does the Bible mean when it talks about your heart?
4. What does it mean to "repent from sin"?
5. According to Proverbs 15:31 and 19:20, what should you think if someone tells you that you dress immodestly?
6. If you really think that person is wrong (and it may well be the case), then what should you do?

## How Are Guys So Different?

### A Word from Martha

Can you think of someone who was cruel to you? Perhaps another kid at school made fun of you in front of others, and everyone laughed. Perhaps he pushed you or tried to trip you up. Maybe he grabbed your books, ran down the hall with them, and threw them in a trashcan. As a result, you dreaded going to school because that bully of a kid would not leave you alone.

You tried everything you could think of to stop him—yelling back in anger, telling the teacher, telling your parents, crying, and begging him to stop. One day you even tried praying for him. On the days when The Bully did not make fun of you, you were nonetheless well aware that he was lurking near you, ready to burst forth with seemingly endless cruelty at any moment. You *always* had to be on guard and try, very hard, to avoid him.

In a similar way, that is how boys usually are when they see an immodestly dressed woman. Even if they try to be godly, they are well aware of the sexual temptation. Think about it: you can be perfectly happy at school, talking and laughing with your friends, and then you see The Bully coming straight at you. Panic and despair immediately grip your heart. You have an instantaneous emotional reaction. Then you have a physical reaction—your heart rate increases, your cheeks turn red, and perhaps tears well up in your eyes.

Well, typically when men see an immodestly dressed woman,

they have an instantaneous physical reaction: sexual temptation. It can happen to them out of the blue. It is like someone hit them “upside the head” with a baseball bat that they didn’t see coming. It is just as difficult, if not more difficult, for men to avoid sexual temptation as it is for you to avoid reacting to *The Bully*.

Since “our ambition . . . [is] to be pleasing to Him” (2 Corinthians 5:9), let’s analyze this situation biblically. We will begin with the big, overall picture.

### **The Two Greatest Commands**

The Pharisees, the religious leaders of Jesus’ day, were jealous of the Lord, and they were often trying to trick Him into doing or saying something wrong. They believed that doing good works and staying away from anything or anyone who, in their thinking, was unclean made you acceptable to God. They were so zealous in their pursuit that they made up additional rules that were not in the Scriptures. In fact, they made up hundreds of them! That was called the Talmud, and the Pharisees believed that their Talmud-rules were almost as important as the Scriptures.

If making up their own rules in order to be holy was not strange enough, the Pharisees also divided God’s Law (including their Talmud) into what they determined to be the “greater laws” and the “lesser laws.” The “greater laws” were what they believed they needed to keep, and the “lesser laws” were *optional*. How convenient for them!

So it was not illogical, in their way of thinking, to ask Jesus which one He thought was the greatest law. They got a really smart man, who was trained to interrogate people, to ask the question. Jesus answered, “‘You shall *love the Lord your God* with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the great and foremost commandment” (Matthew 22:37–38).

It is interesting, though, that Jesus did not stop there. He

added the second most important commandment and explained that it was similar to the first one. “The second is like it, ‘You shall *love your neighbor* as yourself’” (Matthew 22:39). The Pharisees had lost sight of what it *meant* to love God with all your heart. The Lord Jesus made it clear when He told us *how* to show our love to God: “If you love Me, you will keep My commandments” (John 14:15).

So, what does this mean for us? Particularly regarding the topic of immodesty? Plainly put, we should not dress or act in any way that would cause another person to be tempted to sin. The Bible tells us we are not to be a “stumbling block to the weak” (1 Corinthians 8:9). Since men are weaker in this area, we females should try to make it as easy as possible for them to remain pure. Because we should love God, we should *desire* to please Him in these ways.

Think about 1 Corinthians 13:4-7.

Love is patient, love is kind, *and* is not jealous; love does not brag *and* is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong *suffered*, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

This is the famous passage that describes how love behaves. One of the facets of love shows us that it “does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth” (1 Corinthians 13:6). A woman could show love to the men in her life, whether she personally knows them or not, by not dressing in a way that would entice them to think of her in an unrighteous manner.

Now that you know The Bully of sexual temptation that men undergo due to what they see and feel, I want you to think about

this and analyze it in two ways: Am I showing love to God? And am I showing love to others?

### **A Word from Pastor Kent**

Besides some obvious physical differences, God has designed guys to think and respond differently than girls do. There are many ways this shows itself. One example is that, when an attractive woman walks into a room, guys are typically tempted to lust after *her*, while women are typically tempted to act like it is a secret beauty pageant and envy her appearance or lust after the *attention* she is getting. So, in the same situation, guys and girls tend to respond completely differently.

Usually guys are more drawn by what they see in real life or in pictures, while women are more drawn by emotional relationships. That's why 40 percent of all paperback book sales are romance novels.<sup>1</sup> Just in case you were wondering, guys are not the ones buying all those! If you keep that distinction in mind—typically, women daydream about romance and men daydream about sex—you'll be well on your way to understanding how different men are, at least in how they respond to what they see.

### **The Biblical View of the Sin of Lust**

The original word for lust, as it is used in the New Testament, really only means “a strong desire.” Normally, though, this word is used to refer to sinful desires and often sinful sexual desires. These sinful desires can be wanting something that God has said is not good for us or wanting something that *is* good for us but in ways that are not healthy. For example, God created food to be good for us. But if I eat only chocolate cookies all day long, so much so that I even become sick from this unhealthy diet, a good desire for food has been twisted into a sinful desire that makes me sick.



Lust is always dangerous! This is how the apostle John explained it.

Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God abides forever.  
(1 John 2:15-17)

Obviously lust is not unique to men only. Both men and women struggle with sinful desires.

### **The Man's Struggle**

As I write about men's struggle with lust, remember that I'm talking about men *generally*. Not all men wrestle with sexual lust to the same extent. As you interact with specific guys in your life, remember that only God knows what they are thinking. You are called not to be a mind reader or judge, but rather to give others the benefit of the doubt (see 1 Corinthians 13:7). This doesn't mean that you should be naive—pay attention and act wisely, especially when you feel uncomfortable—but be careful not to focus on what someone *might* be thinking.

When a woman learns how common an issue sexual lust is for men, she can be tempted to think the worst of them. In contrast, when a man learns this, he can be tempted to rationalize his sinful, lustful thoughts as being normal and acceptable. In other words, he might think that it's no big deal because it seems that every other guy has the same struggle. It is *not* a sin to be tempted or to feel attracted to someone. It is sin, though, to linger on that attraction and allow yourself to desire what God

says is not good for you. Guys have supernatural power through Christ to renew their minds and not be affected by immodesty.

The sinful, natural response to immodesty, though, is lust. Jesus warned men about sexual lust in the heart when He said,

You have heard that it was said, “You shall not commit adultery”; but I say to you that everyone who looks on a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. (Matthew 5:27–28)

Your heart is simply who you are on the inside, the realm of your thoughts, feelings, and decisions. Only God truly knows what is in your heart (Jeremiah 17:9–10).

Job understood this principle before Jesus taught this. He said he had made a covenant with his eyes to avoid temptations to lust (Job 31:1). A covenant is an agreement between two parties. Job’s covenant was between himself and God. Because Job loved God, he decided *not* to allow his eyes to linger but to immediately turn his eyes and mind away from lust.

Guys do have problems with sinful lust. But men are not the only ones with this problem. Women do too, and they have ways of luring guys.

### **How Women Fish**

It seems like fishing is more of a guy thing than something for girls. This is true, however, only with those slimy swimming things called fish. Girls do a lot of fishing as well—for those cute walking things called guys. One obvious way that girls fish is by the way they dress.

Unfortunately, guys don’t typically respond to a girl’s fishing techniques the way she wants them to respond. She may simply be trying to catch some cute guy’s attention, but she may end up

catching the *lustful* attention of a guy who sees her immodesty as an invitation to think sexually about her and possibly act sexually toward her. Remember, sinful lust's only desire is to gratify itself. It does not care about God or about anyone else.

The following conversation between a Christian author and the father of a college-aged daughter vividly reveals what can be going on in a guy's heart.

One father asked me why his normally cautious college-aged daughter dressed in a tight little top and skirt around a particular guy she found attractive. "Surely," this father said, "surely she knows what she's doing!"

"Yes," I agreed, "she knows she looks good. But she doesn't realize what is actually going on in that guy's head. What she's smugly thinking is, *He thinks I'm cute.*"

"Cute has nothing to do with it!" the shocked father replied. "He's picturing her *naked!*"<sup>2</sup>

Not only is it a little confusing to understand what kind of "fish" you are catching with the lure of immodesty, but it is also important to understand how quickly immodesty works. A guy needs little time for his desires to develop. And if he allows this to happen, the temptation can be all-consuming. It can almost feel like a blow to the stomach in its sudden domination of the heart.

I've noticed that guys have a hard time focusing on what they are saying when they are tempted to lust after a woman. If a guy is unprepared mentally to respond biblically to lust, his mouth goes on autopilot the second that temptation walks by, and he spouts useless words or just stops mid-sentence while lust consumes the mind. The conversation is no longer fluid but halts until he remembers that he was talking before he allowed himself to be interrupted. Some guys can cover their lustful thoughts better

than others can, but it normally takes practice to master such levels of hypocrisy.

In order for a guy to satisfy his lust, he may act how you want him to act for a while, but you should understand that he has a different goal in mind. Once his lust is aroused, he may act in ways that you don't like. You may be fishing for a colorful rainbow trout, but you may catch a great white shark!

### **Is It Really That Difficult for Guys?**

Girls, it is important for you to understand that this struggle is very difficult for guys. Part of the problem could be that you don't truly comprehend the man's struggle. When John Crotts, the pastor-teacher of the church I attend, preached on modesty, he used the illustration of an iceberg. You can see only about 10 percent of an iceberg, and the rest is removed from sight. This illustrates the effect of lust upon the typical guy who doesn't resist this temptation to sin. You can see only a small fraction of what is going on in his heart. When his lusts are inflamed, he'll give you what you want in order to get what he wants! So don't manipulate or be manipulated! The attention that comes from sinful lust is never, ever satisfying. It is not one of love, gentleness, and care. It can, however, look like that satisfying type of attention—at least for a while, on the surface.

Another vivid picture of how difficult it is for a man not to lust after an immodestly dressed woman comes to us from one of the sermons of a seventeenth-century pastor, Richard Baxter.<sup>3</sup> This part of the sermon was to help women understand the man's struggle. Baxter suggested that you think of yourself as a candle in a room that is filled with gunpowder. Gunpowder is harmless until it is exposed to a flame. When exposed to a flame, it immediately blows the entire building to bits. You cannot take it back once the explosion happens. Therefore, protect your flame

(be modest) so that you do not ignite explosive, sinful passion in guys who are quickly and easily inflamed by immodesty.

I may seem a little old-fashioned, somewhat out of touch with the here and now. Perhaps I sound a little bit like your dad—but, like your dad and like God, I want you to have a blessed life and, if the Lord wills, to marry the godly “man of your dreams.” So, I do want to tell you about . . .

### **The Godly Perspective of Modesty in Marriage**

There is one context in which a woman can reveal and even celebrate her beauty in full. I believe God made a man to be visually stimulated to enjoy the beauty of his wife in the God-designed context called marriage!

When God made Eve and presented her to Adam, Adam’s words conveyed a sense of excitement upon seeing her. The translation, “This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh,” doesn’t really carry out this idea very well. One of my seminary professors translated these words from Genesis 2:23 to say, “Wow!”

After looking at and naming all the animals all day long, Adam must have been absolutely stunned by this gorgeous, perfectly made, God-designed woman who was to be his wife. Maybe Adam was so stunned that all he could come up with was “This is now bone of *my* bones, and flesh of *my* flesh.” He may have reverted back to giving her a name (2:23) simply because he was too overwhelmed for any romantic lines, especially since he had no prior romantic experience. Being visually stimulated is God’s design for men as a gift to be enjoyed in the context of marriage!

Solomon pictures this enjoyment in Proverbs 5:19. A husband is to be satisfied with and intoxicated in his physical relationship with his wife. You are to enjoy the sensual nature of the physical relationship in marriage. A wife is to show off the beauty of her form to her husband in the context of marriage as God’s

delightful gift to him, and the husband likewise gives his body to his wife for her enjoyment (1 Corinthians 7:3–4).

Until marriage, the charms of your physical beauty and femininity need to be wrapped carefully in modesty so that you will have the gift of purity to give to your husband once you are married. For now and in the future, whether you marry or not, guard your heart from those romantic thoughts and feelings that create discontent and a desire for things that do not please the Lord.

What is your heart's desire? Is it to be pure before the Lord and to help the men (who are everywhere!) not to struggle with sinful lust when they see you? Take some time now and ask the Lord to help you be the godly woman that He wants you to become.

## Review Questions

1. What are the two greatest commands? Where are they found in the Bible?
2. In John 14:15, how did Jesus say we can show love to God?
3. According to 1 Corinthians 8:9; 1 Timothy 2:9; and 1 Corinthians 13:6, why should we not dress or act in a way that would tempt guys to lust in their hearts?
4. Explain the difference between acceptable desires and sinful desires.
5. Pastor Kent wrote about a “fishing” illustration. How does he describe some guys' reactions to seeing an immodest woman? How long does it take for them to react?
6. What is the one circumstance in which a woman can fully reveal her beauty to another?
7. How did Adam react when he saw Eve for the first time?