

CLOTHED

IN DIGNITY

DANNAH
GRESH

WHOSE IDEA WAS IT TO
WEAR CLOTHES ANYWAY?

DOES GOD
REALLY CARE
WHAT I WEAR?

14 MUST-HAVE
STYLES FROM
GOD'S WORD

*WHAT DOES
DIGNITY LOOK
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WHY DO WE FIGHT
OVER WHAT WE WEAR?

DO WE NEED MORE THAN A
CHANGE OF CLOTHES?

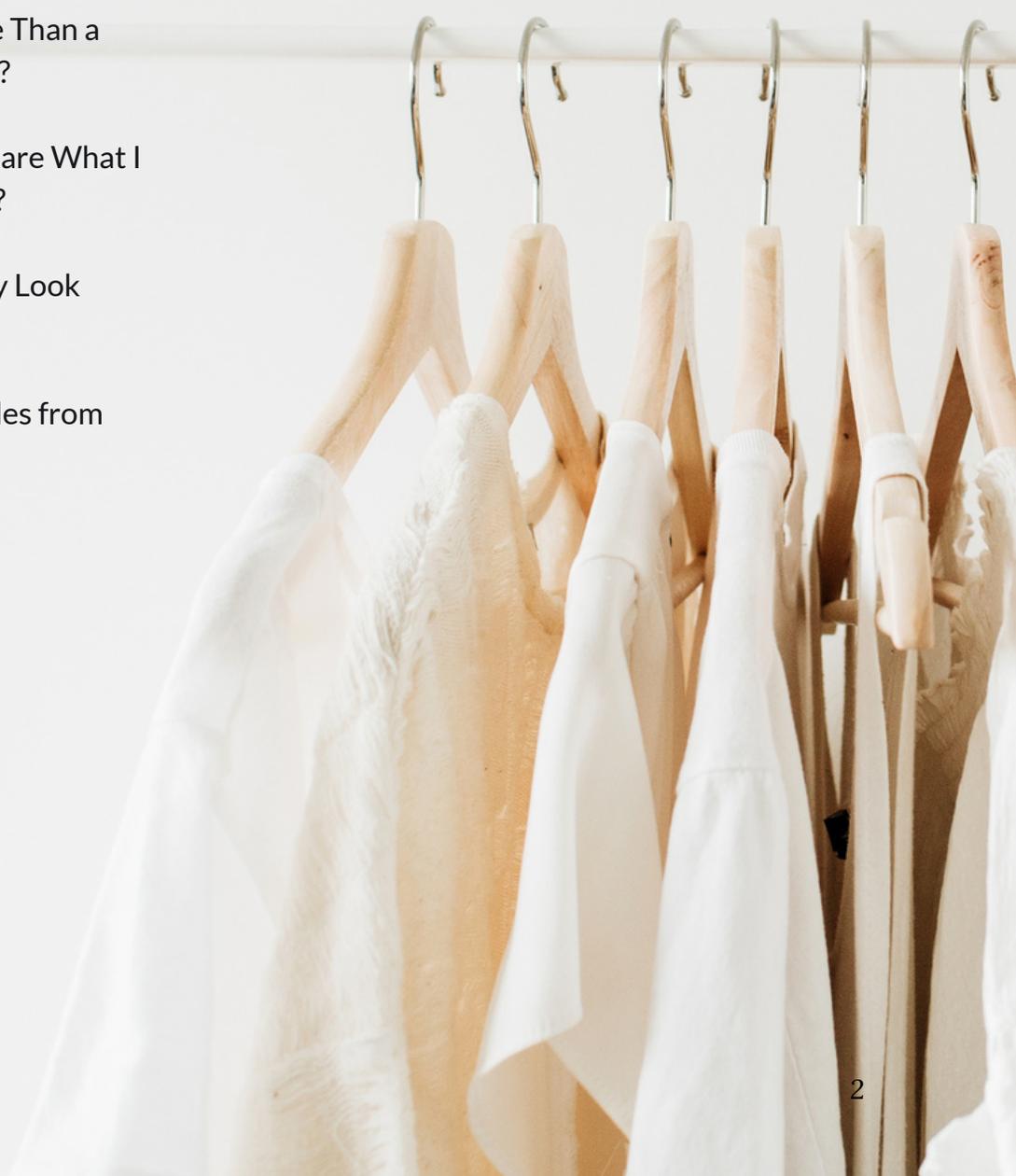


CLOTHED IN DIGNITY

by Dannah Gresh

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Letter to the Editor

Dear Dannah,

I love your ministry and what you do for tween girls. Where I find myself getting stuck, however, is your teaching on modesty. You see, I grew up in a conservative area where it felt like there was a hyper-fixation on what girls could and couldn't wear. (Mostly what they couldn't!) I have a daughter now, and I'm so scared to expose her to the same experiences that I went through. I'd rather just let her wear whatever she wants. But is there a better way?

Signed,
Maybe Modest Isn't Hottest?

Dear Maybe:

I always disliked the phrase "Modest is Hottest." It seemed so counterintuitive to the message itself. In fact, I entered the conversation about modesty and purity because I thought we were getting so much of it wrong.

I do think there's a better way. Rather than conforming our clothing to standards based on our culture, we need to transform our minds to God's Word. That's why I wrote this little booklet. Give me about thirty minutes and I think you'll feel more certain of where you land on what you believe about clothing.

In His Great Love,
Dannah Gresh

A THEOLOGY OF CLOTHING

a note from
DANNAH GRESH



"There's not a square inch in the whole domain of human existence over which Christ, who is Lord over all, does not exclaim, 'Mine!'" - Abraham Kuyper, Dutch Theologian¹

I detest legalism, and I often hear obsessive conformity to rules when some people within the Christian community talk about the way women present themselves. That's not to say God doesn't have guidelines for us, but we're awfully good at adding to them. That's part of what gave me pause when it came to surrendering my wardrobe to Jesus.

I also like fashion! And I think that our desire to express our beauty comes from God. Look at a rainbow or sunset, and you will see His passion for expressing Himself with beauty. We women got a big dose of that, and I think we should celebrate the Truth that we are masterpieces created by God (Eph. 2:10).

My resistance to letting God have authority in the way I dress ended many years ago when my publisher asked me to write about modesty. This opportunity made

me wonder: What do I believe about clothing and how we're meant to wear it?

At the time I was a mother of a young girl who I felt was being pressured to grow up too fast. (Why did she need name brand clothing and eyeliner before she was even a teenager?) I was just beginning to walk a tightrope of questions like:

- How do I help her experience body confidence and avoid body image issues?
- Does the way my daughters dress matter?
- Can I teach modesty without body shaming?

I dug into social science first, to see what the data could tell me. The research revealed that some types of fashion and beauty products—and the marketing associated with them—did, in fact, put girls on a conveyor belt

to body image issues and eating disorders. That was not something I wanted for my girls.

I decided to examine the Scriptures but only found a few verses that directly addressed the topic of modesty. However, I noticed the Bible had a whole lot to say about clothing starting in Genesis. When Adam and Eve sinned, they became aware of their nakedness and experienced shame. God “clothed them” with the skin of an animal (Gen. 3:21). This occurs in proximity to a Bible verse theologians call the protoevangelium, which means “the first gospel” (Gen. 3:15). I have come to believe that God’s gift of clothing represents the way God meets us in our shameful, sinful condition and covers us through a sacrificial death. Our wardrobe has the potential to display the presence of the saving work of Jesus Christ.

Clothing has the potential to declare “the gospel is here.”

For that reason, it is essential to consider what we believe about clothing. This is especially true if you are a mother or influencer because you are certainly embedding your belief—either intentionally or unwittingly—into those who look to you for understanding about their faith. Both our example and our conversation have to represent God’s heart accurately.

If our lives—and those of our girls — are going to please God, they have to be adjusted to His authority in *everything*. That

includes what we wear. Even our clothing must be submitted to the ownership of the One who paid a blood price for us.

So here is my theology of clothing. I hope it makes you want to clothe your heart in a way that honors Jesus. He sure deserves it.

Dannah
Gresh



Whose Idea was Clothing?

Read Genesis 3:1-24

Have you ever wondered why we wear clothes? I mean, when God made the first man and woman, He made them without clothes: “The man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed” (Gen. 2:25 ESV). There was no clothing . . . and there was no shame or guilt. That’s because Adam and Eve were sinless. There were no barriers in their relationship with God or with each other. But then, the devil shape-shifted as a serpent and convinced them to sin.

And after Adam and Eve ate that piece of forbidden fruit, they began to experience shame. “Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked” (Gen. 3:7a ESV). Their awareness of their nudity is a symptom of something more significant. Sin had stripped them of their innocence and right standing before God. Biblically nakedness often symbolizes man’s ongoing agony and battle with shame.

Adam and Eve’s solution to their shame was itty, bitty aprons. They “sewed fig leaves



together, and made themselves loincloths” (Gen. 3:7b ESV).

As far as leaves go, fig leaves are big. But they still don’t cover much! And they were insufficient to cover the separation the first couple felt. When they heard God’s voice, they hid. But God sought them out. After an appropriate conversation about their situation, God “clothed them” with the skin of an animal (Gen. 3:21). Much better than those fig leaves!

But I don’t believe the sole purpose of God’s clothing was to cover Adam and Eve. If that were so, why will we be clothed in heaven where there will be no shame? (Rev. 3:4; 6:11). It’s my opinion that the clothing mentioned here is meant to symbolize our status. For example, our robes will be white, which represents our clean standing before God (Rev. 7:9).

Through Christ, we will be worthy, honored, and esteemed. And I think the clothing God gave Adam and Eve was also symbolic.

The Hebrew language communicates that the garments God made were tunics that covered them from their shoulders to their knees. (I'd prefer that to the loincloth, personally!) **Some theologians suggest the fact that it was a tunic was to restore their dignity as co-regents of the planet since that piece of clothing is used in other places in Scripture to signify worth.** (For example, Joseph's coat of many colors sets him apart from his brothers.) God dressed Adam and Eve in honor befitting their intended position in the world. Perhaps the true comfort for their shame was the restoration of their status to be stewards of the earth.

God exchanged garments of shame to clothe humanity in dignity.

Like most everything else in the physical world, clothing contains a spiritual lesson. When God replaced fig leaves with comforting garments of skin, He was accomplishing something in the spiritual realm. He was reminding mankind to walk in their dignity.

Dignity • the quality or state of being worthy, honored, or esteemed.²

God cares about what we wear, but it goes way beyond covering our naked bodies. He desires for us to live out our position in Christ through the way we present ourselves. When it comes to clothes, God seems fairly focused on the spiritual aspect of how we dress.

Are we?

Let's try to be mothers and leaders who follow the lead of Scripture when we teach the next generation about how to dress. And may it be first and foremost with dignity, not longer hemlines. Yes, the physical matters but not nearly as much as the clothing we wear on our hearts.

▷ **Talking to your daughter about being clothed with dignity:** Read Genesis 3 with your daughter and talk to her about the symbolism of clothing. Here are a few things to talk about:

- What is dignity?
- Why did God need to restore dignity to Adam and Eve after they sinned?
- How did He do this?
- Do you and I have dignity in God's eyes? Why or why not?
- Do you think the way we dress can symbolize our dignity?

² Merriam-webster.com, s.v. "dignity"



WHY DO WE FIGHT OVER WHAT WE WEAR?

READ ROMANS 10:9–10; 13:11–14

Remember back to some of the disagreements you had with your own mom about what you wanted to wear.

Why is that?

Well, I think the rumble about wardrobes is a small piece of an ongoing war that was waged in antiquity. Tucked in the midst of Genesis 3 is a Bible verse from which everything else in the Scriptures flows. It's a battle cry that God issued after Satan lied to Adam and Eve. Here is what God said to the snake:

I will cause hostility between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring. He will strike your head, and you will strike his heel.” (Gen. 3:15 NLT)

This is the verse I mentioned that theologians refer to as the protoevangelium, which means “the first gospel.” This piece of biblical poetry wields a promise. War has been declared, and there is hostility in the world. But the outcome of the fight between good and evil has already been determined. These words in Genesis are the first promise of redemption that we see in the Bible.

Let’s think about this. Satan sleuths in. Adam and Eve succumb. God declares a victory that is yet to come. There’s a bit about the consequence of the sin. And then: clothing!

Of course, dressing Adam and Eve was not what God dealt with first and foremost. The garments of skin were not of the utmost importance to Him when He entered this catastrophic scene. But they’re not unimportant. God does include covering Adam and Eve’s nakedness in His plan to mitigate the damage of sin.

Let me say this again: the gift of clothing has the potential to declare “the gospel is here.”

You and I have the benefit of looking back on the victory Genesis 3:15 foretold: Jesus’ death and resurrection. And the way we are clothed still matters to God.

Our dress can still declare “the gospel is here.” In fact, we have these instructions to execute:

Clothe yourself with the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ.
(Rom. 13:14 NLT)

This verse is preceded by Romans 1–10, Paul’s fullest explanation of the good news about Jesus’ death and resurrection. First, we understand our sin and spiritual nakedness and get right with God through what Christ has done on the cross. We experience the life-transforming power of the gospel. Then, we dress like someone whose life has been changed.

Being properly clothed begins for us in the same way it did for Adam and Eve. Shame helps us understand our spiritual nakedness. After we begin to bravely face the destruction sin has caused in our lives, then we can come before the Lord to be clothed in the life-saving presence of Jesus Christ.



Okay, let's talk about how shame in Scripture often differs from what you'll hear on popular secular podcasts. Yes, shame feels bad and needs to be dealt with. But, according to the Bible, it serves a useful purpose. When we allow our shame to illuminate our sin and our need for the gospel, it can be helpful. We have experienced the first step in being clothed in Christ. It invites us to bring the rags of our sin to Jesus Christ and exchange it for the covering of the gospel.

Sadly, not everyone wants to clothe themselves in Christ.

Some people have hearts that have become quite hardened to shame. They experience an inability to be aware of their sin and the need to receive Christ's rescue. They are shameless.

Rather than being drawn to God in humility and need, they press against Him in rebellion. In Romans 1, Paul writes about these kinds of people and describes how they're dressed in "dark deeds" (Rom. 13:12 NLT). He claims that "they invent new ways of sinning, and they disobey their parents" (Rom. 1:30 NLT). They are shameless.

Shamelessness has become so normal in society, that dignity is odd when we see it. This causes us to feel so strange when we choose to dress differently than our unbelieving friends. I often find myself bummed out when something that looks lovely on my less curvy friends doesn't work on my body. It would just be so simple if I didn't have to care about presenting myself with dignity and care!

Of course, our daughters aren't thinking about shamelessness when we want to wear whatever they want. They're just trying to express themselves.

and now, we're back at the beginning because this is the very thing—our desire — that led Eve to take a bite of a piece of fruit God had told her not to eat. And to experience shame.

Satan's solution to shame is to numb us until we are shameless.

This is no solution at all. It draws us further into a life of sin and its consequences.

God's solution to shame is the gospel—to clothe us in Jesus Christ. “For the Scripture says, ‘Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame’” (Rom. 10:11 ESV).

And now you see why we fight about what we wear.

▷ **Talking to your daughter about being clothed in the gospel:** Your number one priority in discipling your daughter is not to conform her outward appearance to standards of modesty, but to bring her heart to the cross of Jesus in truly authentic surrender. Only the Holy Spirit can do this work in her life, but you can support it.

In a survey I conducted when I was writing *Lies Girls Believe and the Truth that Sets Them Free*, I discovered something alarming. Many of our church-going tween girls believe they are Christians, but cannot verbalize how to become one. They think they are Christians because they were born that way, or they go to church, or their mom is a Christian. But the only way to become a Christian is to confess your own sin to Jesus and declare with your mouth that He is the Lord of your life (Rom. 10:9–10). Again, only God's Spirit can bring us to such a surrender but we can set the stage through understanding the pathway to a relationship with Jesus Christ.

Take some time to have a conversation with your daughter about that today. Find out where she is in her understanding. Do you see the Holy Spirit at work convicting her of her need for Christ? Teach her to properly respond to her shame by turning to Jesus.

If your daughter has already surrendered her life to Christ, take some time today to celebrate it and remember key points in her spiritual journey. Help her grow in her understanding of the gospel.



DO I NEED MORE THAN A CHANGE OF CLOTHES?

Read Colossians 3:1-16

When I first examined the Scriptures to develop a personal theology about what I wear, I discovered that I needed more than a change of clothes.

I needed a change of heart. Maybe you do, too.

It's easy to get caught up in conforming our clothing to a reasonable standard without really understanding the point

of the Bible verses that encourage care and consideration in our wardrobe. We tend to focus on what the Bible says we should *not* wear rather than accepting the invitation to proactively dress with dignity through Christ.

Consider these frequently quoted verses about how a woman should present herself. Grab a pen and double underline what these verses specifically encourage a woman to "wear":



Do not let your adorning be external—the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear—but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God’s sight is very precious. (1 Peter 3:3-4 ESV)

Hmmm. The last I checked, you won’t find a gentle and quiet spirit for sale at your favorite online retail site. The point of these two verses is to adequately adorn our hearts, not our bodies. In fact, the vast majority of Bible verses instructing us to clothe ourselves appropriately don’t even mention the garments we put on our bodies.

Let’s use that pen again. Circle the kinds of things God wants in your wardrobe.

Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Make allowance for each other’s faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony. And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. For as members of one body you are called to live in peace. And always be thankful. Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives. Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom he gives. Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts. And whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father. (Col. 3:12-17 NLT)

Mercy. Kindness. Humility. Gentleness. Patience. Forgiveness. (Did you get that one?) Love. Peace. These are the clothing of the believer. Once you are in a relationship with Jesus Christ, you need



to put on the character that best reflects your new identity.

I think it's important to mention baptism here. It's an external act of what happens by faith when we initially surrender our hearts to Christ. Submerging ourselves under the water signifies that last moment any vestiges of our former "dark deeds" clothed us. We rise from the dark in new life and new clothes.

All who have been united with Christ in baptism have put on Christ, like putting on new clothes. (Gal. 3:27 NLT)

Now, let me ask you a question about the few moments it takes you to be submerged: Are you able to do anything of significance to change yourself? No! You're barely able to hold your breath. And yet, you have put on Christ.

Being baptized is a radical way to declare, "I'm going to be showing up differently—not because I can do that in and of myself, but because God has done and is doing something new in me."

As with everything in our walk with Jesus Christ, we're incapable of being well-dressed without Him. At the same time, we can and must cooperate with Him. Baptism is an early act of participating in the work He is doing.

Now, don't for one second think of it as having your own personal internal wardrobe stylist! He's not just advising you what to wear. This is more like raiding your mom's closet back when you were a teenager and wearing her wardrobe. When you come to Christ, you put on His righteousness, His holiness, His nature.

Of course, this happens *positionally*, when you surrender to Christ and then follow obediently in baptism.

follow obediently in baptism. But I find that I have to let it happen practically every day. Because, hey, I'm still sinful! So I come to Jesus daily to borrow from His wardrobe, and He clothes me again—in everything. Not just mercy. Not just kindness. Not just humility. Not just gentleness. Not just patience. Not just forgiveness. Not just love. Nothing is left behind. The closet is emptied, and I am clothed.

Do you see how this would be impossible without the work of God's Spirit in your life? You could probably muster up a day of kindness. Or a moment of humility. But could you live every moment cloaked in His character unless He was and is doing the work of it? I surely could not. I am incapable of living the character of my identity in Christ without consistently turning to Him for help. And I do that every morning, with few exceptions.

Each morning when I wake up, I shuffle over to my closet and choose what I will wear that day. The Scriptures tell me over and over again that I can do the same thing with my mind and heart. I choose to do that when I spend time in the Word and prayer each morning—a discipline my mother helped me learn beginning when I was eight years old!

Did you invite the Lord to dress your spirit this morning?

Here's one reason I have made this my lifetime practice: It's so easy to get caught up in this physical world—caring for my family, doing my job, grocery shopping, the laundry—and forget that I'm a spiritual being. The things I can

see, taste, and touch clamor for me to believe they matter more than the things I cannot. I think we all struggle with this. And that's why we turn verses like 1 Peter 3:3–4 into "modesty verses" as opposed to an invitation to be clothed in the dignity of Jesus Christ.

So, I ask you again: Did you spend time asking God's Spirit to clothe you today?

▷ **Talking to your daughter about being clothed in Christ:**

Take the True Girl True Beauty Challenge with your daughter. I developed it almost two decades ago as a way of reminding ourselves to be clothed in Christ. It's very simple. You set apart a period of time—a week or month, for example—to spend more time each day with God grooming your heart than you do in front of the mirror grooming your body. In this way, you place yourself in the presence of Jesus to be clothed. And you override the temptation to obsess about your external appearance. Each day of the True Girl True Beauty Challenge, you ask yourself:

"Did I spend more time in God's Word than I did in front of the mirror?"

Your daughter is not too young to begin to learn the beautiful discipline of dressing herself with dignity.

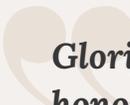
Learn more about the True Beauty Challenge in *True Girl: Discover the Secrets of True Beauty*. It's a boxed two-book set. The challenge is clearly explained, and mom+daughter devos with coloring meditation activities make it easy to execute with your daughter.



Does God Really Care What I Wear?

Read 1 Corinthians 6:12-20

Let's imagine you and I meet for coffee and tea to discuss the highest purpose for our lives. (Yes, a big topic to cover at a coffee shop!) We might eventually arrive at the idea that we exist to glorify and enjoy God.



Glorify • to make glorious by bestowing honor, praise, and admiration.³

We exist to make God's glorious name and character more knowable to a lost world. Hopefully, we do this in such a way that others also want to honor, praise, and admire Him as we do.

Now, as we sip hot drinks and nibble on scones, I picture us having a fairly robust and eager conversation about how we can glorify God and enjoy Him. I tell you how I experience that, including the ritual of having time with the Lord each morning as I watch the woodpeckers visit my bird feeder. I tell you how God teaches me about His power and character through the menagerie of animals on this little farm He's entrusted to me. And I share about the many mission trips I've enjoyed to Zambia, Peru, Ecuador, South Africa, and the Dominican Republic.



Then, I listen as you tell me of your adventures in glorifying and enjoying God with your life. In fact, take a moment and write a few of the things you would share with me in the lines below.

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This would all go swimmingly until we begin to consider that every moment of our lives is to glorify and enjoy God. Each decision must point to His ownership of our lives. After all, His blood has purchased us.

At this point, the conversation would become more difficult. One reason for this is that we'd realize how far we have to go in order to fully glorify God! But the other reason is that we'd most likely begin to have some differences. It's bound to happen. I'll interpret some Bible verses in a way that you do not. And vice versa.

I hope that the conversation could remain engaged and robust as we learn from one another. But I'm finding that when I share how God has allowed me to glorify Him and enjoy Him in how I dress, I have some critics.

I hope you aren't one of them. But if you are, I invite you to hear what I have to say and then write to me with your thoughts! After twenty years of writing about beauty and bodies, I'm still learning and willing to grow.

Let me show you how I've arrived comfortably at allowing the Lord to direct the way that I shop and dress. We'll start with the writing of the Apostle Paul.



... women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire, but with what is proper for women who profess godliness—with good works.
-1 Timothy 2:9–10 ESV)

Modesty. Self-control. Good works. Again, can't buy those online, right?

But these two verses do mention our physical adornment. Why? It seems there is a specific reason we should dress in respectable apparel—avoiding obsession with our hairstyle, excessive jewelry, and expensive clothing. It is so that we don't distract people from seeing Christ in us. We are instructed not to dress so extravagantly that our appearance is more noticeable than the good works our Savior produces in our lives.

Think carefully about that. It puts a whole new spin on why immodesty is missing the mark of God's best for our lives. It has nothing to do with how long our skirt is or how tight our shirt may be.

The great sin of immodesty is that we're saying, "look at me" instead of "look at God."

God's Word instructs us to dress modestly, in part, so that what we're wearing on our hearts remains visible because it is of greater worth than those awesome new flared jeans!

So, yes. God does care what you wear on your body.

In 1 Timothy 2, the Greek for word modesty is kosmios. It means "well ordered" or "of good behavior." It speaks of being dressed in an intentional and appropriate manner.



For example, you might wear a swimsuit for a day at the pool, but you would not wear it to perform in a piano recital! There's an element of respect for yourself and others in what is culturally appropriate. It's not so much a matter of skin but of the heart.

- ▷ **Talking to your daughter about dressing with dignity:** Read 1 Corinthians 6:12–20 with your daughter. Then, talk about what it means to glorify God “with your body.” You might take her on a walk in moonlight to talk about how the moon “glorifies” the sun. It has no light of its own, but reflects the magnificence of the sun happily!





What Does Dignity Look Like?



Read Proverbs 31:10–31

Nakedness is not always bad. Some Christian circles or legalistic groups make it seem as if it is, but I disagree.

Nudity is to be mutually explored and celebrated within the marriage bed. A husband should be satisfied by his wife's breasts. (Prov. 5:18–19). And a woman has ample right to ask for her husband's body to fulfill her desires. She can and should invite him to "kiss me" (Song of Songs 1:2 ESV) and to lay together enjoying one another's bodies (Song of Songs 1). The Scriptures speak of faithfully meeting one another's sexual desires within marriage, except for a short time by mutual consent (1 Cor. 7:1–5). A healthy message of dignity can allow—and in fact, encourage—us to celebrate our naked bodies in the proper setting.

Infants, too, are not to be ashamed of their nakedness. As they mature, we have to gently point out that though their bodies are beautiful, some parts of it are private. They do not learn it all at once, but they slowly begin to treat the magnificent reproductive organs God has created with honor (1 Cor. 12:23).

Dressing appropriately is a sign of maturity.

But I have discovered that some whose hearts are eager to obey the Lord don't always have an understanding of what is and is not appropriate. I have no intention of pulling out my yardstick to measure skirts and find the practice reprehensible and legalistic. But we do need something by which to direct our intentions, so let's lay down three guidelines to help us dress with dignity in a practical way.

Clothe your heart well. We've already covered this, but dress yourself daily in the presence of Christ. The immutable Proverbs 31 woman shows us the outcome of that discipline. Now, don't forget: she wasn't a real woman but a picture of what a godly woman can be.

She is clothed with strength and dignity, and she laughs without fear of the future. (Prov. 31:25 NLT)

Imagine laughing at the future rather than having anxiety about it. That's the outcome of clothing yourself in Christ. Here's what Matthew Henry writes in his commentary about that verse:

*'Strength and honour are her clothing, in which she wraps herself. . . and in which she appears to the world. . . . She enjoys a firmness and constancy of mind, has spirit to bear up under the many crosses and disappointments which even the wise and virtuous must expect to meet with in this world; and this is her clothing.'*⁴

No matter what is going on around you, you can walk through life strong—if you are properly clothed in Christ.

Fashion clothes or assemble styles for your body that accurately represent your inner worth. You won't see Kate Middleton wearing her swimwear and a cover-up to make a Starbucks run. She's the Duchess of Cambridge! As such, she takes care to

dress in a way that communicates her status. You can read about this same mindset in Proverbs 31.

She makes her own bedspreads. She dresses in fine linen and purple gowns. (Prov. 31:22 NLT)

The Hebrew word for "makes" in that verse is "fashion." Do you know what that means? It's okay to love the idea of adorning yourself in a way that expresses your style and taste. But keep in mind that it should be a reflection of your inner worth. The Proverbs 31 woman wore linen, the garment God's children will be clothed in at the wedding supper of the lamb, and purple, the color of royalty. These were intentionally chosen to display what was already going on inside of her heart.

I'm all about jeans and a t-shirt. And a matching set comes in handy at times, but when I want to present myself consistently, orderly, and with intention. I am a daughter of the God of the Universe. A princess, to be precise. So, I dress differently.

As a curvy girl, this often means I shop differently, too. I can't wear some of the things other women with different body types can. No strapless formal gowns for me. It just doesn't work for my body type. And I'm okay with that. I'd rather err on the side of caution and show up with the worth God has died to restore!

⁴ Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible (Complete)*, Proverbs 31

Are the clothes in your closet capable of representing you as a daughter of the King?

Clothe others. A princess isn't all about ball gowns and tiaras. A good one knows her work is to care for the King's people. To that end, don't just be concerned with your own clothing but the wardrobe of others. The Proverbs 31 woman was providing garments for the needy and her own home.

*Her hands are busy spinning
thread,
Her fingers twisting fiber.
She extends a helping hand to
the poor
And opens her arms to the
needy.
She has no fear of winter for
her household,
for everyone has warm clothes.
(Prov. 31:19–21 NLT)*

This care and concern for others can be figurative as you collect clothing for at-risk children or assemble a wardrobe for your children. Perhaps it's helping your color-blind husband organize his closet, so he doesn't clash needlessly.

I have two Barbies in my office. The American Barbie wears a mini-skirt and a low-cut tight bodice that pushes her breasts upward.

The other, a Muslim Barbie named Fulla, is dressed in a burqa. The only flesh you can see surrounds her eyes.

These dolls create the same end result: a hyper-focused obsession with female sexuality. Both raise awareness of a woman's sexual nature and reduce her to being a mere body.

In some Christian settings, women might as well wear burqas. In those settings, the female body is hidden in shame. Since the very purpose of clothing was to rectify shame and restore dignity, you can be confident that either of these extremes is not God's best for us. Even so, proverbial stones are thrown at those who fall below the standard in our own minds.

What if we responded to the problem the way that God responded to Adam and Eve? What if our conversations were flavored with humility, compassion, and kindness? Well, I think the lost world would begin to see an army of women clothed in dignity and strength.



▷ **Talking to your daughter about dressing with strength and dignity:**

Read Proverbs 31:10-31 with your daughter. If the Proverbs 31 woman were alive today, she'd probably live on a hobby farm, have a budding Etsy store, and have more followers on Pinterest than I'll ever have. She can make us feel subpar if we don't remind ourselves that she is fictional and meant to inspire godly living.

Discuss what it means to be clothed with "strength and dignity." We must teach our daughters to celebrate their beauty while we teach them the self-control of modesty, enabling them to embrace self-respect free of hyper-focus on their bodies.

If you'd like some super practical help with this topic, be sure to come to a live True Girl event. We always host a fun fashion show featuring girls from the audience, and we share our famous Truth or Bare fashion tests. They're just some practical ways to take inventory of any outfit you wear so you can be sure your dignity is showing. Learn more at mytruegirl.com/events.



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MUST-HAVE STYLES FROM GOD'S WORD

The Scriptures are full of references to clothing ourselves in invisible garments that reflect God's character. Here are a few of them.

Clothed with Humility	Colossians 3:12; 1 Peter 5:5
Clothed with Compassion	Colossians 3:12
Clothed with Kindness	Colossians 3:12
Clothed with Gentleness	Colossians 3:12
Clothed with Patience	Colossians 3:12
Clothed with Forgiveness	Colossians 3:5
Clothed with Love	Colossians 3:14
Clothed with the New Self	Ephesians 4:24; Colossians 3:10
Clothed with the Armor of Light	Romans 12:12,14
Clothed with the Armor of God/Christ	Ephesians 6:11-17
Clothed with the Imperishable	1 Corinthians 15:53-54
Clothed in Righteousness	Ephesians 4:25-5:2
Clothed with Power from on High	Luke 24
Clothed with Strength and Dignity	Proverbs 31:25





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