

The 21st Century Woman of Grace:

Chaste: Pursuing Biblical & Godly Modesty In an Un-Biblical & Un-Godly World Titus 2:5b

As we open to hear God speak from His Word this morning, turn with me to the words written to every man, woman, and young person in Christ's church. Those words are located in Titus 2:1-8. Before we go through this passage, let me ask you a question.

Salvation is described as being clothed with Christ's righteousness; and the Christian life is portrayed as putting on Christ each day. So each of us here today are literally, as believers:

Clothed with Christ

With that in mind, would any of these descriptions portray Christ's appearance as presented in God's Word, if He were here ministering in this 21st Century culture?

Do you think Christ ever chose to dress in a way that was provocative, sensual, or revealing of the areas of His Body that God's Word says need to be covered?

Do you think He would ever choose to appear "skimpily-attired", short skirts, short shorts, or with sexually arousing outfits?

Do you think Jesus could ever be described as: hot, immodest, alluring, edgy?

When you think of being clothed with Christ does that fit with wearing clingy form fitted outfits, wearing sheer or nearly see through materials, wearing plunging necklines, or tops that are unbuttoned way too far?

If none of those descriptions would ever describe Christ's choices in His clothing, then NONE of those words should ever describe you!

Paul told Titus that godly and mature women of grace were to come alongside every younger woman, and beg her in Christ's Name to be pure in her desires, and modest in her dress.

Those Titus 2 mentors were to show and remind her that she is Christ's Temple, His representative, and a living model of what it means to be clothed in righteousness.

For two thousand years¹ God has looked in each generation of Christ's Church for women who will devote themselves to His plan for their lives, presented in Titus 2 as:

Grace-Prompted Lives of Purity

That description of what Jesus wants in His church is the next character quality of a grace-energized woman in Titus 2:5. God asks for grace-energized purity to be modeled, mentored, and sought by every younger and older woman of Christ's Church.

Today, just as then, when women of grace offer themselves as willing servants to follow God's plan, His grace energizes them to live a life that magnifies Christ at every level, and glorifies the Lord with eternal rewards.

The 12 virtues that God desires in the lives of these grace-energized women are what we are studying in Titus 2:3-5, please stand and follow along as we read

Titus 2:3-5 (NKJV) the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things— 4 that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, 5 to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.

Pray

This morning God declares in v. 5 that His plan for your life, if yielded to Him, is purity. He asks, "Will you follow my plan, surrender your life and let Me make you a grace-energized woman of purity?"

The word "chaste" (KJV/NKJV) or "pure" (ESV/NIV/NAS) that Paul wrote to Titus in this verse is one of the key words of the Bible. This character choice is so important to God that He guided the Apostles to speak of this purity and holiness over 300 times (using 11 closely related Greek words)² in the New Testament that encompass every New Testament reference to holiness, purity, and sanctification.

Purity in the moral realm has always marked genuine believers throughout the centuries of the church. Paul was clearly telling Titus that God's expectations in an immoral and lust-filled Roman world was absolute purity. That is the meaning of **hagnos**. In the first New Testament letter James said the very same thing in no uncertain terms, that believers must keep themselves "unspotted by the world" (James 1:27).

¹ 070812AM EBG-15

² **Hagiazo** (37) verb 'sanctify' 29x *key verses*: John 17:17, Acts 26:18; Eph. 5:26; I Thes. 5:23; II Tim. 2:21; **hagiasmos** (38) noun/masc. 'sanctification' 10x *key verses*: Romans 6:19, 22; I Cor. 1:3; I Thess. 4:3, 4, 7; II Thess. 2:13; I Timothy 2:15; Hebrews 12:14; I Peter 1:2; **hagion** (39) adjective 'holy place' 11x only in Hebrews; **hagios** (40) adjective 'holiness' 229x ["holy" 161x, "saints" 61x, and "Holy One" 4x]; **hagiotēs** (41) noun/fem 'holiness' 1x *key verses*: Hebrews 12:10; **hagiosune** (42) noun/fem 'holiness' 3x *key verses*: Romans 1:4; II Cor. 7:1; I Thess. 3:13; **hagneia** (47) noun/fem 'purity' 2x *key verses*: I Tim. 4:12; I Tim. 5:2; **hagnizo** (48) verb 'purify' 7x *key verses*: James 4:8, I Peter 1:22, I John 3:3; **hagnismos** (49) noun/masc 'purification' 1x; **hagnos** (53) adjective 8x *key verses*: II Cor. 11:2; Phil. 4:8; I Tim. 5:22; Titus 2:5; James 3:17; I Peter 3:2; I John 3:3; **hagnotes** (54) noun/fem 'purity' 1x *key verse*: II Cor. 6:6.

God is very serious about purity and holiness; and He uses these words interchangeably throughout the New Testament to describe the sanctified lives he demands from His children. Purity is the description (adjective **hagnos**) of the believers who are allowing God to sanctify (verb **hagiazō**) them.

Paul uses this word to describe the constant choices believers make to be Christ-like in **what we think** (Phil. 4:8); **what we do** (II Cor. 7:11, I Tim. 5:22); and **who we are** in Christ (II Cor. 11:2).

It is the same word John used when he said a believer, "**purifies** himself, just as He is **pure**" (I John 3:3, NKJV); and that James describes the first manifestation of the wisdom of the Holy Spirit as, "wisdom that is from above is first **pure**" (James 3:17, NKJV); and that Peter uses to describe our choices to be different from the godless culture as our testimony to them of the power of salvation, "even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, when they observe your **chaste** conduct accompanied by fear" (I Peter 3:1-2, NKJV).

In fact, God's Word says that all believers are either being sanctified, or they are not genuinely saved.

Hebrews 12:14 Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: NKJV

As believers, we are reminded by our Holy God that He dwells in unapproachable light (I Timothy 6:16), and that we are His very dwelling place (I Cor. 6:19-20). What is the only request that the One who lives within us, using our body as His temple asks of us? Purity, He asks us to keep our body, as His Temple where He lives, reserved for Him in purity.

The power of God's Word, calling us to walk in purity has been:

Proven on The Battlefield of Life

The sheer level of sexual temptation assaulting believers at every level in Paul's day, rivals our own times. Men fed upon lust, and found sexual gratification everywhere they could; and women obliged giving them much to lust after and became willing participants in all types of sinful behavior.

That is why the sin that Paul mentions most often in every letter is sexual sin. The early church was immersed in a flagrantly sexual culture. The believers of Paul's day were being squeezed by the culture all around them: to not resist sensuality, but to just float along with the immoral culture of self-expression, self-gratification.

Christ's church has been called to this high standard and empowered by the Holy Spirit to stay morally pure. Believers have faced sexual temptation at every intensity level—and by God's grace have found strength to resist.

From Joseph fleeing from Potiphar's wife (Genesis 39:6-13) to Paul's charging Timothy to do the same thing "flee also youthful lusts" (II Timothy 2:22) God's desire for His children is clear. Jesus explains that it is impurity of thought that leads to impurity of action (Mt. 15:19) so moral purity starts with a sanctified mind.

Paul says: women be chaste, conduct yourself like the holy servants of Christ Himself. Don't give in to the culture, don't reflect the sexual license of the day—stand for purity and keep yourself pure for Christ's sake; and to be a role model He can use in His church.

As we look at Titus 2:5 and consider Biblical purity and modesty, one clear question we need to answer would be:

Does God Even Care About What a Woman Wears?

Recently there was an article³ written as an appeal to women, on the Christian website called OnePlace. In that piece the author Nancy DeMoss challenged all who would listen that God really does care about what we wear. Here are her opening words, relating what a college student shared as a letter to the editor in a college newspaper:

The other day I was going to the business office to take care of some financial matters and I could not believe some of the things I was seeing. The landscaping around campus looked exceptionally great. There were new dorms, new faces and unfortunately, scantily clad females were everywhere as well.

This is . . . particularly hard for males because they are stimulated by sight. Now guys, we are not off the hook just because females are dressed inappropriately. We are called in 2 Timothy 2:22 to "flee from youthful lust and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace." However, girls, help us brothers out Please consider your clothing and what the Bible says concerning the way you dress.⁴

To walk through modern day gatherings of young people, it would appear that no one has let them know that God invented clothing for the sole purpose of covering His creations after the Fall, in a modest way. That is why Titus 2 is a call for older women to mentor younger women in God's desire for them to choose a:

³ Nancy Leigh DeMoss, Does God Really Care What I Wear, <http://www.oneplace.com/ministries/revive-our-hearts/read/articles/does-god-really-care-what-i-wear-11819.html> The ideas from that article are reflected in this section.

⁴ Phillip (Freaky) Howle, Letters to the Editor: "Women's choice in dress leads men to stumble," The Skyliner (North Greenville College, Tigerville, SC. September 4, 2002).

Grace-energized Appearance

Both Paul and Peter explain that a godly woman ought to attract attention by her godly character, not her physical beauty.

Paul wrote a simple charge to Timothy with the specifics of purity for the largest collection of godly women ever assembled in the First Century. Turn back with me to I Timothy 2 and see what the godly women of Ephesus were to look and act like:

1 Timothy 2:9-10 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.

The word “adorn” is ***kosmeo*** that has entered our English language in the word ‘cosmetics’. The basic idea of this Greek verb was “to arrange,” “to put in order,” or “to make ready.”

Paul actually explained to Timothy that a godly woman should get ready for a worship service by wearing “proper clothing.” The word behind “proper” is just the adjective form of ***kosmeo*** and meant “well-ordered.” The Greek word translated “clothing” goes beyond just the clothing, but also the way it was worn.

Many applications of this verse can be seen. Paul says that Timothy was to teach his congregation that the ladies were to come to worship services already prepared, not in disarray of demeanor or wardrobe. Paul does emphasize clothing in this passage, but a woman’s attitude and motivation are the real issues. Paul says external adornment reflects a woman’s heart.

Paul is saying that it is possible to discern whether what you were as a woman is right or wrong by discovering your personal motivation and goals for how you appear to others. In your heart Paul says, look honestly and ask:

- Do my clothes reflect the grace and beauty of womanhood?
- Do my clothes show my love and devotion to my husband?
- Do my clothes reveal a humble heart devoted to worshipping God?
- Or do my clothes call attention to myself—to flaunt my wealth and beauty?
- Or worse, do my clothes attempt to allure men sexually?

“If you are focused on worshipping God, you won’t have to worry about how you dress because your commitment will dictate your wardrobe.”⁵

So a grace-energized appearance flows from—

⁵ John MacArthur’s *Different By Design*, (Wheaton,; Victor Books).

Grace-energized Attitudes

Paul distills down a godly woman's attitude about the way she dresses to two words: "modestly and discreetly" in v. 9. The word translated in your Bible for "modestly" means modesty mixed with humility. The base word connotes a sense of shame—not to be ashamed at being a woman, *but ashamed to ever dress in a way that incites a man to lust or that distracts others from their worship of God.*

A grace-energized woman will seek to avoid being a cause of temptation. Secondly the word connotes rejecting everything displeasing to God. Some commentators note it means a "grief over a sense of sin." The essence of a grace-energized woman's attitude is that she hates sin so much that she will avoid anything that can produce sin in others.⁶

- **OUR CLOTHING IS TO REFLECT CHRIST:** Romans 13:13-14 Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. 14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.
- **OUR CLOTHING IS TO REFLECT GOD'S OWNERSHIP OF OUR BODIES:** 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? 20 For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

It appears that many young ladies do not even understand what their clothing choices can do to a young man. One of the differences between the way men and women are wired mentally is that men respond rapidly to what they see, while women are more responsive to what they feel. As one man put it, "What a man's touch is to a woman, the sight of a woman is to a man."⁷

God designed men to be stimulated sexually by what they see, and that is part of His wonderful design when His rules are followed. But when a woman ignores the impact her clothing choices can have on a man, she is placing an intentional stumbling block before men. What we wear is almost always a personal choice. What women wear can deeply and widely affect the men who see her. So for any redeemed woman, bought at a price by Jesus Christ, what she wears is of eternal importance.

Time after time we hear of married men who fall for the flirtatious, immodest, seductress at work. Is that man at fault for committing adultery with a sensual, immoral woman? Absolutely he is at fault; but so is she EQUALLY at fault for luring him onward by her clothing choices.

⁶ Drawn from the Marriage and Divorce section of the electronic version of John MacArthur's *Different By Design*, (Wheaton,: Victor Books).

⁷ "The Sin of Bathsheba" is an article published anonymously as "Address to Christian Women" in Patriarch, an online magazine for men. See www.patriarch.com/worldview.html

Don't Cause Others to Stumble

A pastor who ministered 350 years ago named Richard Baxter (12 November 1615 – 8 December 1691) who was an English Puritan church leader, poet, hymn-writer, and theologian: taught way back then that the clothing choices of women, even in Puritan times, could ensnare men's eyes and desires. Listen to his pointed sermon illustration:

[Godly women] though it be their sin and vanity that is the cause, it is nevertheless your sin to be the unnecessary occasion . . . You must not lay a stumbling-block in their way, nor blow up the fire of their lust . . . You must walk among sinful persons, as you would do with a candle among straw or gunpowder; or else you may see the flame which you did not foresee, when it is too late to quench it."⁸

When God's Spirit inspired Paul to call every woman of grace to modest purity it was because for all the generations of the Church they were walking through life as a woman, just like we were carrying "a candle among straw or gunpowder." Once a fire starts burning or an explosive charge is set off, the potential for damages, injuries, and destruction is huge.

Women who are the temple of God, saved by His grace each have the responsibility placed upon them by God to make clothing choices that do not lead them to mental or physical immorality. God is never pleased if what you choose to wear that is immodest, revealing, or provocative—incites a man to sin.

Melody Green, the widow of Christian singer Keith Green, best known for his song "There is a Redeemer", wrote an article to all born-again women, on her website called Last day Ministries. This article challenges the wrong message that clothing choices can give: a message that is exactly opposite what God desires women of grace to project:

Unfortunately, it seems that many Christians are lost in their own selfish little world—either oblivious or uncaring about the effect they have on others. They may even appear to have a real excitement and love for the Lord—however, their body is sending out a totally different message. I know, because . . . I have done it—partly in ignorance, but mostly in rebellion.

I can remember thinking, "Well, it's not my fault if they can't keep their eyes off of me and on the Lord. They just aren't spiritual enough. Why should I have to change just because they are weak?"

But the Lord showed me that it was my fault. I was responsible for causing my brother to stumble and it had to change. Once I really saw the damage my

⁸ Richard Baxter, A Christian Directory in Baxter's Practical Works Vol. I, (London: George Virtue; reprint ed., Ligonier, Pennsylvania: Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 1990), 392.

selfishness was doing to others and to the Lord, I was really ashamed of myself and embarrassed that I had been representing Jesus in such an unbecoming way.⁹

Paul's words in Titus 2:5 are a challenge from God to every woman. That challenge is: choose clothing that reflects the Glory of God (His weight that is felt on each choice we make). Make clothing choices that do not reflect immodesty to a man. What does not seem provocative to woman can be absolutely defeating to a man.

Dress in Biblical Purity With Modesty

No woman of grace would want to become a lustful image in a man's mind. No godly woman would want to make a struggling man seeking to walk in the Spirit, to stumble and fall back into temptations, lusts, and sin.

Whether therefore ye eat, or drink—and whatever you choose to wear: do all for the Glory of God.

Clothing choices are actually a reflection of my heart attitude about God's ownership of my body. If I am humbly seeking first that He rule in my life, then I want what pleases Him, not what pleases me.

OUR CLOTHING SHOULD ALWAYS REFLECT WHAT IS WORN IN HEAVEN. The look of Heaven is the look of purity, modesty, holiness, and a priest-like reverence. Whenever we see someone in heaven or coming from the presence of God what do they look like? What characterizes them?

- ***What do all those who come from Heaven, representing God always wear?:*** Mark 16:5 And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, **clothed in a long white garment**; and they were affrighted. (KJV)
- ***When we see Jesus glorified and speaking to us from Heaven what does He wear?:*** Revelation 1:13 And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, **clothed with a garment down to the foot**, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. (KJV)
- ***When we see the redeemed saints in Heaven serving God what do they wear?:*** Revelation 7:9 After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, **clothed with white robes**, and palms in their hands; (KJV)

To reflect God's glory by not conforming to the immodest world in which we all live is hard. Paul told the early believers that it was agonizingly hard to struggle against the current of the world, and the current only gets stronger the closer to the end we get.

⁹ Green, Melody; Uncovering The Truth About Modesty, <http://www.melodygreen.com/Publisher/Article.aspx?ID=1000008635>

By the End of Days as Revelation 9:20-21 says, the whole godless world will be addicted to taking medicines and drugs (**pharmakon** Strong's number 5331) and **porneias** (immorality, fornication, and pornography; Strong's word number 4202). We are seeing in our generation, the complete saturation of the minds of humans by non-stop media that is according to God's Word occultic, murderous, and pornographic.

The last time that God saw that every imagination of humanity was only evil continuously (Genesis 6:5), He destroyed the world with water by the Flood. The next time He sees that mankind is completely given over to evil (Rev. 9:20-21) He will destroy the world with fiery plagues and pestilences. We are sadly seeing the beginning of the universal pornification and demonization of the world.

In this time of growing spiritual darkness, Christ calls every believer to purity, and every godly woman to intentional modesty.

Appendix

The Biblical standard for believers is to be un-entangled in, un-conformed to, and un-in-love with the world that is not worshipping its Creator. That sums up the will of God in the Old Testament. Remember how often God said that?

- Leviticus 18:3 'You shall **not do what is done** in the land of Egypt where you lived, **nor are you to do what is done** in the land of Canaan where I am bringing you; you **shall not walk** in their statutes. (NASB)
- Psalm 106:35 But **they mingled with the nations**, And **learned their practices**, (NASB)

The New Testament has The Same Standard!

- Romans 12:1-2 I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. (NASB)
- 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1 Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? 15 Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? 16 Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, "I will dwell in them and walk among them; And I will be their God, and they shall be My people. 17 "Therefore, come out from their midst and be separate," says the Lord. "And do not touch what is unclean; And I will welcome you. 18 "And I will be a father to you, And you shall be sons and daughters to Me," Says the Lord Almighty. 1 Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. (NASB)

Summary

Women who are highly useful to God have these characteristics. The long-term goal of their lives is geared towards being useful to God. Parents who want their children be useful for the Lord begin early on to point their children towards the high calling and great joy of being a Titus 2 woman and the Titus 2 man.

The whole goal of a Titus 2 woman is to train younger women in Biblical, simple-to-measure, Spirit-empowered, love-based living.

Godly, mature Titus 2 women are to take up God's request that they each train younger women in the ***holiness and purity that pleases God and unleashes the power of***

the Spirit. The training that a Titus 2 older woman gives is a seven-part package, that is immensely practical not theoretical.

Modesty, purity, chaste behavior must be learned, modeled, and practiced. The power of a godly, Spirit-filled woman of Biblical maturity sitting over a cup of tea discussing what pleases God in dress, in behavior, conduct, and so on. Modesty is understood through Bible study that applies God's Word to daily life.

Purity of heart is usually reflected by modesty of life. Modesty of life is most often reflected in our clothing. The latter is perhaps the most difficult of all areas to pray about. What do the Scriptures present as the wardrobe we should wear? In the Bible, we see clothes that reflect three timeless principles:

OUR CLOTHING WAS INVENTED BY GOD TO COVER OUR BODIES. *"Also for Adam and his wife the LORD God made tunics of skin, and clothed them"* (Gen. 3:21).

In the Garden of Eden God introduced clothing as a covering for His creatures. Before the Fall, Adam and Eve felt no shame in their nakedness (Gen. 2:25). However, after the Fall, they were embarrassed and desired that their bodies be covered, so they sewed fig leaves together to clothe themselves (Gen. 3:7). Because of the fallen, lustful human heart, God says, "Don't allow yourself by a lack of modesty to become a wicked picture in an evil person's heart." Beware: *"With eyes full of adultery, they never stop sinning; they seduce the unstable; they are experts in greed—an accursed brood!"* (2 Pet. 2:14, NIV).

OUR CLOTHING IS TO PREVENT CONFUSION. *"A woman must not wear men's clothing, nor a man wear women's clothing, for the LORD your God detests anyone who does this"* (Deut. 22:5, NIV).

OUR CLOTHING MUST NOT BE OSTENTATIOUS. *"Beware of the teachers of the law. They like to walk around in flowing robes and love to be greeted in the marketplaces and have the most important seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at banquets"* (Luke 20:46, NIV).

OUR CLOTHING IS TO SHOW SEPARATION FROM THE WORLD. Romans 12:2 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.

- Deuteronomy 18:9 "When you come into the land which the Lord your God is giving you, **you shall not learn to follow the abominations of those nations.**
- Jeremiah 10:2 Thus says the Lord: **"Do not learn the way of the Gentiles;** Do not be dismayed at the signs of heaven, For the Gentiles are dismayed at them.
- 2 Corinthians 6:17-7:1 Therefore "Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you." 18 "I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the Lord Almighty." 1 Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.