

SUNDAY SCHOOL MATERIALS FOR ADULTS

LESSON 3

THE CONDUCT OF WOMEN

Scripture Text: 1 Timothy 2:9-15

In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel... 1Tim 2:9

When either women or men spend much time, cost, and attention on decorating themselves, they reveal that they have a lack within and that they are trying to supply that lack by the aids of dress and adornment.

What effect does the dress of women have upon their spirituality? How does it affect others? What is the best adornment? In what ways are the positions of men and women in the church equal? In what ways are they different?

Paul, in today's lesson, gives answers to these questions and teaches that God is no respecter of persons—male or female.

MEMORY VERSE: *Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel.—1 Peter 3:3*

DAILY READINGS:

Mon.—**2 Kings 22** Huldah the prophetess.

Tue.—**Luke 2:36-38; Acts 2:14-18; Acts 21:9** Women prophesied.

Wed.—**1 Corinthians 14:1-6** Prophesying described.

Thu.—**Galatians 3:26-29** All are one in Christ.

Fri.—**1 Peter 3:1-9** Instructions to wives.

Devotional Reading: Proverbs 31:10-31 The virtuous woman.

Dress and Adornment

1 Timothy 2:9-10 **In like manner also**—like men were instructed in the preceding verse. They were instructed to pray in holiness, love, and faith. Out of the same kind of saintly lives, women are to **adorn themselves**. God loves beauty. Witness the exquisite and varied beauty He has lavished upon nature. To please Him, it must be true beauty, must be spiritual beauty of the heart and soul, not outer veneer or artificial decoration. See **Isaiah 60:13** and **2 Chronicles 20:21**. Paul speaks of the negative first. The adornment must not be that of **broided hair**—hair braided and entwined with gold, silver, etc. **Gold ...pearls...costly array**. These are outward, material, perishable things. Instead, Paul turns to the positive side. Women must dress in **modest apparel**—decent, chaste, reserved, not bold, inconspicuous dress that covers the body without calling undue attention to either the person or the apparel. **With shamefacedness**—a desire to avoid anything alluring, extreme, flashy, or immodest. Without pride. Modest women dislike calling attention to themselves. **Sobriety**—with moderation, serious-mindedness, and simplicity. Clothing should not be extravagant either in expense or in style. It should be becoming, neither slovenly nor showy. It should be worn as a covering, not as a means of exciting admiration.

God desires His children to be adorned **with good works**. These add beauty to men and **women professing godliness**. Good works outside are produced by a good spirit inside. God sees as an ornament of **great price**, a **meek and quiet spirit** (**1 Peter 3:3-4**). To His church, God says, **Put on thy beautiful garments** (**Isaiah 52:1**). God not only tells us what adornment to leave off, but He tells us what to put on to please Him.

The Bible does not prescribe details of styles and materials of dress, but it does set standards by which we can regulate our dress. It does not hold us to uniform attire. Dress can have much to do with feeding sinful pride. Saints should not dress and allow their children to dress as the world in shorts, halters, bathing suits, etc. God has but one standard for both.

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Woman's Place of Service

1 Timothy 2:11-12 Silence with all subjection. In what respect is this enjoined upon women? Paul makes it more clearly in **1 Corinthians 14:34-35**. Brethren are to take the lead; sisters are to follow. Both Jewish and civil Roman law forbade women from doing what belonged especially to men. That women were acting in a disrespectful manner seems evident—they were to be in **subjection**, not to **usurp authority** (to boss), **to be under obedience**. *Usurp* means to take possession of without right or by force. Their speaking seems to have been asking questions, disputing, and disrupting in public assemblies—**if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home**. Women had been held back and deprived of assembly gatherings; they did not know how to conduct themselves. Paul was not saying that women could not preach or teach God's message. We read in both the Old and New Testaments of women who prophesied. (See Daily Readings.) The Holy Spirit was poured out upon both men and women. Read **Acts 2:16-18; Joel 2:28-29**. Prophesying by women appears to have been common. Paul deals with it in **1 Corinthians 11:5**. In **Philippians 4:3** Paul speaks of **those women which labored with me in the gospel**.

Would God have given to women the gift of prophecy or of teaching and the burden of using it and led them into places of service if He did not will that they use it? What does it signify that all of the twelve Apostles and authors of the Bible Books were men? In times past, most leadership was given to men, but women have been called by God to preach too. The brethren in places of leadership will not impose unjust or painful restrictions upon the sisters in Christ. Nor will the sisters, in exercising the gifts God has given them, depart from the womanly character of modesty, meekness, and gentleness. A woman filling the place to which God has called her is not usurping authority; that authority has been given to her rightfully. Neither men nor women should attempt to choose their work without the call of God, but having been placed by Him (**1 Corinthians 12:18**), each should fill that place as He leads.

The Influence of Eve

1 Timothy 2:13-15 Adam was first formed . . . was not deceived— was not the one misled by Satan into sin. Eve was deceived into eating the forbidden fruit and first to sin (**Genesis 2:18, 22; Genesis 3:6**). These two facts are given as the reason for the subjection of women to men. Does this subjection extend to the point where women are denied salvation? No. **She shall be saved in child-bearing**. Does motherhood save one? No. Only faith in Christ saves. "Saved in childbearing." Salvation came through a Child that was born because Jesus was the **seed** of Eve (**Genesis 3:15**) and was born of a woman, Mary (**Galatians 4:4-5**). Jesus became the Savior by Whom all must be saved, if at all, both men and women, for **there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:28)**. Women as well as men are saved **if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety**. Jesus gave women freedom they had never known before.

JUST A THOUGHT

God is in the cleansing business not the white-washing business.

This lesson is adapted from a lesson by Mary Lehmann.
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