

# Modeling Modesty in an Immodest World

Where else could I begin a study of modest maidens but at the beloved passage of I Timothy 2:9? “In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel...” I say that this is a beloved passage because a maid need only go back to I Timothy 2:9 to realize that it is God’s desire that women remain modest.

Well, what is modesty? I believe most women think of modesty as a skirt or dress. Modesty, though, goes deeper than just apparel. According to *Webster’s American Family Dictionary*, modesty is a “regard for decency of behavior, speech, dress, etc.” The word *decency* sums it up quite well. A maiden must be decent in all areas of her life in order to be truly modest. However, we don’t need the dictionary to tell us how to be modest. We have the Bible to give us standards and examples of modesty, and the Bible was written long before the dictionary (see John 1:1).

First, let us look for modest behavior. The Proverbs 31 woman is a wonderful example. She is praised by her husband, blessed by her children, and identified by God in His Word as virtuous. This woman is wise (v. 26), trustworthy (v. 11), and a willing worker (v. 13-22), but best of all, she fears the Lord (v. 30). There is no better behavior than the fear of God.

Now, let us examine modest speech. Again, we turn to Proverbs 31. “In her tongue is the law of kindness” (v. 26). So we see that the modest maiden must be kind. Also, she must be quiet, meek, and truthful (I Timothy 2:11, I Peter 3:5, and Titus 2:3, respectively).

We come now to the last part of *Webster’s* definition: “decency of dress”. I must admit, this is my favorite topic concerning modesty. In the world we live in, immodesty is so abundant. We must continue to remember that it pleases God when we cover ourselves.

Recently, I heard a preacher address the issue of modesty. He directed the following statement to those girls who dress immodestly: “If *my* shirt was as tight as yours, and my pants as short as yours, would you listen to me?” The answer is no. We wouldn’t have any respect for him, and therefore we wouldn’t listen to him. The same is true for women: men have no respect for girls who reveal things that should be covered. Other girls have no respect for them either.

There are two reasons why we should dress modestly. The first and most important reason is that modesty brings glory to God. I turn again to I Timothy 2. Verses eight and nine read, “I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting. In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with braided

hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array.” In verse eight, Paul beseeches the men to lift “up holy hands” in worship to God. Then he says, “In like manner also”. He is saying that in verse eight, the men are worshipping God, but then, in verse nine, the women are worshipping God. How are they doing that? By adorning themselves in modest apparel.

What is modest apparel? First, it is not that which pertaineth to (or is prepared for) a man (Deuteronomy 22:5). Secondly, modest apparel is a covering (Proverbs 31:22). In Proverbs 7, Solomon describes the “strange woman”. He describes her clothes in verse ten as “the attire of an harlot”. That tells me that there should be a difference between the strange woman’s clothing and the clothing of the children of God. Unfortunately, the world’s clothes have crept into the church.

There is another reason to be modest in dress. We, as maidens of the Lord, should try to protect the thoughts of God’s men, young and old. Men do think differently than women. Therefore, a bared knee, which might mean nothing to a girl, can cause a man’s thoughts to stray where he doesn’t want them to go. The old argument is, “He should know better than to think that.” Maybe, but we can help him. With immodesty so prevalent all around him, let us be a breath of fresh air for him. Then he will have respect for us. In this way, we, as modest maidens, can let our light “shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”

Remember, dear maidens, modesty is decency of behavior, speech, and dress. Modest behavior is empty without modest speech, and modest dress is vain without modest behavior. In order to be a modest maiden, you must behave, speak, and dress modestly, or decently. Your modesty pleases God. He smiles with delight as you clothe yourself decently. He is honored when you act modestly. Be modest in this immodest world that you may glorify the Lord.