

Don't be weird, be different

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Having looked into the tearful eyes of parents whose children have abandoned the Faith, I have learned there are a million miles between our children “going through the motions” in reference to their spiritual lives versus our children possessing hearts that dictate their actions. In this column, I plan to share with you what I hope to instill in the hearts of my own children and those whom I love.

It's an epidemic that affects almost every congregation in the United States—immodesty. Clothing that was once reserved for immoral individuals is now considered “in style.” Simply put—skin is in. Any clothing that isn't revealing skin is often so tight-fitting that one can easily spot moles or scars beneath the clothes. Sadly, many Christians have embraced this pagan practice and can see nothing wrong with imitating the world. In all of my years of teaching, this topic elicits more emotion from youth and their parents, as individuals seek to justify their clothing because they “can't find anything in the stores” or “my child has a weird body type.” And so week after week our children march into worship looking no different from the world, and looking as though they were streetwalkers from the 1970s. It would be easy to get upset at these young people—however, it is the parents who most often purchase the clothes. And a quick scan around the auditorium reveals that some parents are trying their best to mimic the latest styles as well.

Imagine the scenario of watching a man serving the Lord's Supper, only to see him return to the front and place the bread plate on the table after only serving half of the auditorium. How would it feel to know the man stopped serving the Lord's Supper because he could not, in good conscience, continue looking up and down the aisle at people who were sitting in immodest clothing revealing far too much as he stood at the end of the row. There is no excuse for what is happening in our worship assemblies, and there is no excuse for elders and preachers not rebuking parents (and teens) for immodesty.

Here's what I intend on teaching my children about immodesty.

Styles come and go. You may never experience wide collars or bell-bottom pants, but rest assured certain things will be “in style” in your life that the media wants you to embrace. There

will be strong pressure to conform to the latest fads. But remember, it's just a fad. Sadly, many of your friends will find their self-worth in their clothes (brand name or style). I pray that we rear you to be more confident than that. Your self-worth is in the knowledge that you were bought with the blood of Jesus Christ!

Clothing began in the Garden of Eden. After eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, Adam and Eve covered themselves with fig leaves (Genesis 3:7). It is noteworthy to notice that after God pronounced His punishment on their sin, He further clothed them with tunics of skin (Genesis 3:21). From that point on, man has covered himself in the sight of others and in the sight of God. Clothing has been a part of life since those days in the Garden.

Jesus reminded us not to worry about clothes (Matthew 6:28-30), and as such, your mom and I don't put a huge emphasis on clothing. Yes, we want them to be clean. And yes, we'd prefer they fit—even though that is getting harder as growth spurts outpace your clothing sizes. But in your closet you will find some “outdated” outfits that still have lots of wear in them—and even some hand-me-downs that a sibling or friend once wore. That doesn't change who you are.

Modern styles change every season. The primary reason for these frequent changes is to drive sales up in the clothing market. Christians should recognize a problem with this constantly changing industry. God does not change (Malachi 3:6), and neither does His view on modesty. **Tight, low-cut, or revealing clothing is never “in style” in the sight of God.** Furthermore, just because you see another Christian wearing something does not necessarily mean it is appropriate. Christians are admonished to adorn themselves modestly (1 Timothy 2:9-10) and that beauty should not come from outward adornment (1 Peter 3:3-4). When selecting clothes I hope that you will select something that is glorifying to God and that does not draw undue attention. Our clothing should not cause anyone to lust (see Matthew 5:27-28).

Your mom and I will not always be around to select or purchase (thankfully!) your clothes. It is my prayer that when you select something, you will remember Whose you are and Who you represent. Sure, you can dress like the world and blend in, but you are called to be different (Romans 12:1-2). That doesn't mean weird—but different. In a world determined to reveal skin, it shouldn't be hard to adopt a modest style that help demonstrates your Christian character. I assure you that wise clothing choices will earn you respect in the eyes of faithful men

and women. Don't worry about the look and label on the outside. **Worry about your look and label on the inside!**

Love, Dad