

8.17.20 - Clothing Dangers

We recently discovered some new insights about the biblical naturist discussion from some YouTube videos that had been recommended to us. This is going to be an attempt to pass those insights along to you, our readers. As always when we talk about clothing or the absence of it, we are assuming you understand that if the body needs protection from cold or thorns or the environment that the following does not apply. We are only talking about times when clothing is not needed.

We will start with Jesus' very own words on the subject. **Mat 23:5 But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments,** We are not sure why a large border would get attention, but we can assume that the Pharisees were the only ones who had garments like that and that it was a show of wealth and power because of the extra cloth needed (remember that cloth was very expensive in this day). Jesus was speaking about the Pharisees being hypocrites and He was obviously not pleased with their arrogance. The statement by John the Baptist, **Jhn 3:30 He must increase, but I must decrease.** was a little beyond the comprehension of the Pharisees.

As you can see, this is misplaced attention. Your clothing should not be used for the purpose of getting attention. When your clothing attracts attention, the credit or glory goes to the wearer. Yes, you need to look appropriate when clothed. The contrast would be a naked person...God gets the credit or glory for that, not the person. Yes, the person needs to do the stewardship part with grooming, exercise, diet and care, but when looking at a clothed person you are looking mostly at a man-made construct. When viewing a person in the naked and unashamed condition that they were intended to be in, you are looking at what God crafted.

Clothing always makes a statement as we pointed out in a previous article. What does clothing, in a setting where it is not needed say? It

may say, "I need to wear this to fit in." It may say, "I feel that my body is too ugly to be seen." This is best illustrated by a statement my Mother made about some women wearing shorts: "If I had legs like that, I would keep them covered." Could this be translated as telling God that "I am trying to keep your mistakes hidden?" We believe that this attitude of insecurity can have an effect on every body type. Everyone has body features that they think could be better and hiding them seems like a good solution. The interesting fact is that being naked amongst other naked people is typically the cure for body insecurity. Only then do we see that every body is beautiful and that every body has flaws.

Another statement that unneeded clothing may make to God is "Look how much better your creation looks now that I helped." Basically, telling God that it was flawed, but now I made it better. I either hid the flaws or accentuated the good parts...most likely both. In my opinion, that's not a statement that would gain God's favor!

As our verse in Matthew 23 illustrates...another danger of clothing is dividing us. Religious attire like Muslim, Amish, Mennonite or even Fundamental Baptist / Pentecostal sends a loud message that we are different i.e. better. That is not a small problem as it is rooted in pride and since pride is on the list of things that God hates it's not a starting point that I'd recommend. God does not make two snowflakes or two flowers alike, so why should we expect people to dress the same. The division between genders caused by clothing requirements is an equal if not much bigger danger. We tell young girls that they need to cover up what ever the culture requires so that little boys don't lust for them or even worse attack them. As a result, boys are always viewed as either villains or perverts. Pride might enter their heart since they are so beautiful boys and men can not control themselves if she is not covered. This leads to thinking boys and men need someone to control them so they do not get in trouble with their animal instincts. Pride added here makes rebellious women...I know better than he does since I am superior to him. I have to cover so that he can control himself. As we've also mentioned before that the opposite is true. Lust is a condition of the

heart and therefore an inside job with the Holy Spirit, however the commonplace of non-sexual nudity can make it so that the naked body does not evoke sexual desire.

When you tell little boys or little girls to not look at each other naked you take the innocence away from their little minds and instantly begin sexualizing them. Where once there was not evil thought, you have now implanted one. This is typically done with the best of motives, but the law of unintended consequences can mean that you may have just done some extremely long-term damage. You may have just inadvertently created a view of the opposite sex that can make associating with them awkward or difficult in any setting i.e. work, fellowship and marriage for the rest of their lives. It might even cause them to seek sexual gratification in unbiblical ways as a result of the early damage done by sexualizing a pure innocent mind.

We are going to give the benefit of the doubt here and assume that the intent of this training was to prevent fornication. We find however that the opposite is usually what happens. We will look at some unintended consequences.

The woman thinks she can tame men so they will not sin, by covering her body. This is almost like telling Jesus, you do not need to go to the cross, we can control men and save them by covering our bodies.

Another unintended consequence is giving sex offenders an alibi. We inadvertently blame the crime on the victim. "It is all your fault you did not cover enough up. ...you are too pretty. ...you enticed me." This habit goes back to Adam talking to God about the forbidden fruit. "It is Eve's fault and Your fault for creating her." Only part of the concern is giving the criminal an excuse for his crime. All criminals have an excuse for their bad behavior, but the sad part is when the victim accepts the blame and carries the guilt usually for the rest of her life. This is unconditionally

WRONG! Unless she gets help through some really good counseling, she may not ever be able to properly relate with men. This is a big price to pay for using man's wisdom to solve the fornication problem. As a side note...for proof that this is incorrect thinking you need look no further than the Muslim community where rape is a common occurrence and the women are covered from the tip of their head to the tip of their toes with barely an eye slit. Covering does not work!!! Satan has so successfully flipped this coin on its head...what does work is making the image of God a non-sexual thing through the commonplace of viewing His image in us. Seeing naked bodies regularly in a non-sexual setting has a way of desexualizing the human form. The other benefit is that intimacy between mates is more meaningful because it now becomes about more than just animal attraction. It's now about a spiritual and emotional attraction as well as the physical.

Another danger of clothing, is judging a person by their clothing. The cliché is, "Don't judge a book by its cover." The problem is that since we cannot read hearts and minds, we are conditioned to judge by appearances. We think that we can make a quicker and more accurate judgement by only looking at the clothing a person is wearing rather than observing their behavior. The problem is that we are wrong so often using this method that you'd think we would stop trying. Just as in **Mat 23** Jesus is pointing out that the Pharisees were not as righteous as they appeared. The most righteous looking group in Jesus' time were actually the most corrupt and certainly the most arrogant and prideful. Think about that for a minute and then move that to modern times. I attest to you that the more things change the more they stay the same. Today's religious (the people who would put pressure on you to dress a certain way and certainly would call you evil for living as God intended) are the very ones who Jesus specifically calls out as the one's not to listen to. Be careful who you are allowing to influence you...whether through their direct teaching or through the more pervasive method of peer pressure. Instead trust God's Word...it will never fail!