

Wanted: Women who are Modest, Gentle and Quiet

Sermon 25 in I Peter Series

I Peter 3:2-6

Last week we looked at God's directives to Christian women who are married to lost men. We noted that Peter did not condemn these women or look down on them in any way. As first generation Christians, in God's providence, He had saved these women FIRST – and the goal and hope was that He would also save their husbands. We also dealt with the fact that Christian girls should NEVER under ANY circumstances get themselves involved with a lost man – and gave many reasons why.

We continue in the same context regarding Christian women with unsaved husbands, but the exhortations and applications are not just to them, although they are made primarily to them. These things apply to ALL Christian women.

2-6

I. Grammatical Construct

v. 2b – **accompanied by fear** – links with 4b “**in the sight of God**”.

It contrasts with “**the fear not**” in v. 6b.

We need to know what to fear and what not to fear.

We are not to have the slavish fear of men.

We are to FEAR GOD and then we will have nothing else to fear!

v. 2b -- **chaste conduct** – this is “modest behavior”. Our sermon is Wanted: Women who are Modest, Gentle and Quiet.

v. 3 – **Do not let your adornment** -- Present active imperative – a **strong** command (oux) **Let it not be**

Verse 3 he tells us what our adornment SHOULD NOT BE

Verse 4 he tells us what it should be

v. 4 – **rather** – then in italics you have *let it be* – it's implied by the “**rather**” – we find our verb in Present active indicative – and it is the simple word “**IS**” Peter tells us what IS precious in the sight of God and reminds us that we continually **live before Him** – *continuously, always before His face.*

- v. 5 – **trusting** is usually translated **hoping** = a present active participle
The women lived in former times, but they spent their lifetimes HOPING IN GOD and TRUSTING Him. They are our examples and “*have joined that so great a cloud of witnesses that have run the race before us.*”

adorned themselves = Imperfect active indicative = continuously in the past
this is how they adorned themselves.

Being submissive -- subjecting themselves = probably the most interesting verb of all -- *present middle participle*

- They adorned themselves by submitting **themselves**.
- They willingly submitted **themselves**
- Because it is a middle voice – the emphasis is on the THEMSELVES aspect and the emphasis is on their willingness to be submissive.

- v. 6 – the example of SARAH = **obeyed** – aorist active indicative

Because it is an aorist, which usually refers to a one time event -- many commentators have tried to pinpoint exactly what one incident Peter is referring to.

The key word is USUALLY.

That’s not the ONLY way an aorist can be used.

I think Grudem is correct in believing that Peter is not referring to any one incident in Sarah’s life, but linking this aorist to the present continuous participle **calling** in calling him Lord to show that this is the way Sarah lived her life.

Whose daughters you are

literally **you became** children = aorist passive indicative

It was something that happened, and it was not of themselves – it was the work of God in them.

The characteristics that prove they are daughters of Sarah

You **ACTIVELY** -- **do good**.

And **PASSIVELY** – **you are not afraid**.

Doing good is your **activity**.

Not being afraid is your state of mind – because you trust God and your hope is in Him.

II. What a Christian Woman ought NOT to Wear v. 3

Dress is just about the most controversial subject in conservative Christian circles.
What standard are we to follow?
Who decides what is modest and immodest?

Does the Bible tell us that a woman's dress must be at her knee,
Or at the most 2 inches above her knee
Or at her ankle?

A. Is Jewelry, etc. Prohibited by the Scriptures?

Adornment = kosmos – usually translated “the world” and where we get words like cosmetics and cosmetology.

Now, here is where a little knowledge of Greek can be a dangerous thing.

AHA – Peter is saying jewelry is **WORLDLY!**
BRAIDED HAIR IS WORLDLY!
It's worldly so it's evil!

That is not what *kosmos* means in this passage.
Kosmos can have a whole range of meanings.

Peter is saying these things are of the world – but he is not saying they are “**worldly**” in the negative sense that we as Christians use the term “worldly”.

Peter is not saying these things are **EVIL**.
These verses must not be used to show that it is wrong to wear a necklace – or that women **MUST** wear their hair a certain way.

He is contrasting outward adornment with good deeds.

NKJV makes, what I think is a mistake, and a common one.

FINE apparel.

Fine is in italics – because it is not in the original.

I note this, because some Christians think this verse makes a total ban on gold jewelry, or makeup or nice hair styles.

It does not.

It says we should not emphasize our hair styles.

We should not emphasize our jewelry.

We should not emphasize our clothing.

But, grammatically, if you want to use this verse to BAN all jewelry, you would also have to ban all clothing!

I think the idea conveyed is *fine* clothing – but inserting *fine* does damage to the overall sense, and opens up the verse for misinterpretation, in my opinion, which is why I don't like to see words inserted, but if they are, they should be italicized.

B. Factors To Consider in How to Dress Modestly

We will never get all Christians to agree on what is modest and what is appropriate, we probably will never even accomplish that in our local church, but there are some general guidelines we can all agree upon.

1. Consider the Culture in which she lives.

Different ages see things differently.

Not only that, but different cultures see things differently.

What might be scandalous in one country is perfectly acceptable in another country.

2. The appropriateness of the occasion.

I remember, when I was in High School.

Late 60's – early 70's.

The students had a "sit in".

They wanted to get rid of the dress code.

And it worked.

The administration abolished the dress code.

That very first day – a girl came to school in a bathing suit.

THAT was SURPRISING.

You don't expect to see a girl in a two piece bathing suit walking down the halls of your school.

She was taken into the office and sent home.

BUT THERE'S NO DRESS CODE.

Yes, but EVERYONE knew she was simply being provocative.

Everyone had to admit it was inappropriate.

3. It's not only what you wear, but HOW you wear it.

Talking about bathing suits again – you see a lot of them on TV.

It's not an unusual thing at all.

New commercial with Paris Hilton for Carl's Jr.

I was absolutely shocked the first time I saw it.

If you really think about it, it's not what she's wearing – and admittedly, she's not wearing much. But HOW she's not wearing it.

Flirtatious and Suggestive.

Don't be like that!

Girls – you are advertising yourself by the way you dress.

Think about it.

Don't just dress like everyone else.

Have high standards.

Be a respectable person that others CAN respect.

Can I give you a **Practical – Common Sense Guideline for modesty**

A way to look at this subjective area more objectively.

A way to avoid being controversial or possibly even immodest.

If you will follow my advice on this, you will rarely get into trouble with issues of modesty.

Ladies – girls – you have a built in best friend that can help you in this area of dress.

Do you want to know if you are modestly dressed?

Ask your husband – ask your father – ask a man that you can trust.

Ask them and LISTEN to them.

Now, let's admit -- the natural reaction is to get mad when someone tells us our clothes are inappropriate or immodest.

But humble yourself and LISTEN.

Dress above reproach.

Dress in such a way that reasonable people could not think you were immodest.

Be stylish – as much as you can without being faddish.

Be discrete – but don't be afraid to have some fun with your clothes or hair.

Peter doesn't call us to PRUDISHNESS.

He calls us to holiness.

C. A Surprising Fact Concerning Modesty

There can be NO DOUBT that women should dress modestly.

Note: Peter does not come right out and say that.

His point is INWARD BEAUTY is what God is looking for, while men are concerned with OUTWARD BEAUTY.

In fact, Peter lumps 3 examples together of the outward.

Jewelry

Braided hair

Clothing

Pagan writers of Peter's day waxed LONG and HARD on modesty.

Directives on modesty are not exclusively Christian – they are found in practically every religion and almost every culture.

Here are 7 directives for modesty – listen to them carefully, and then I'll tell you where they are from:

1. Clothing must cover the entire body.
2. The material must not be so thin you can see through it.
3. The clothing must hang loose so that the shape of the body is not apparent.
4. Female clothing must not resemble men's clothing.
5. The design of the clothing must not resemble the clothing of the non-believing woman.
6. The design must not consist of bold designs which attract attention.
7. Clothing must not be worn for the sole purpose of gaining reputation or increasing one's status in society.

The commentary on these rules is:

“The reason for this strictness is so that the woman is protected from the lustful gaze of men. She should not attract attention to herself in any way.
THE NEXT SENTENCE GIVES IT AWAY

ISLAM PROTECTS WOMEN.

Those 7 principles come from the Koran – and are the foundation for how a Muslim woman is to dress.

Those 7 principles are without dispute in Islam.

They have endless debates on other issues such as:

whether or not a woman must cover her face with a veil.

In fact, as I searched the internet for sources on modesty – I found the most common writings on the subject were by:

Muslims

Roman Catholics

Jewish Rabbis

& Mormons

Just do a google search on modest dress for women and see what you get.

My point is not to defend immodesty in any way.

My point is, we need to dress ourselves IN THE SIGHT OF GOD and not just to follow a set of rules made by men.

III. What a Christian Woman OUGHT to Wear v. 4

How do you SEE the hidden person of the heart?

She becomes VISIBLE by her ACTIONS.

Everything we “put on” is perishable.

This body is perishable.

But all Christians have things that are IMPERISHABLE.

Heavenly realities which will not fade away, even when this world is no more.

Only one life,

Twill soon be past,

Only what’s done for Christ will last.

The beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit will last for all eternity, in contrast to the fleeting beauty of jewelry or clothing.

A. Gentle – only appears 3 times in the NT as an adjective (like here) but is fairly common as a noun.

It's not just a feminine virtue – it is for ALL Christians.

3:16 – meekness

Matt. 5:5 – Blessed are **the meek** – for they shall inherit the earth.

Christ says of himself in Matt. 11:29 – “Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am **meek** and lowly in heart and you shall find rest for your souls.”

B. Quiet – it's the same, it's for ALL Christians.

1 Tim. 2:2 – **quiet** and peaceable life (v. 9-10 – same as Peter)

1 Thess. 4:11

2 Thess. 3:12

Practical – Common Sense Guideline for quietness

Quietness comes from an INNER PEACE.

It expresses itself outwardly.

Ask your husband, or father, or even your children

How do I sound when:

I want something done around the house?

When a meal is ready to be served?

When I am frustrated, tired, or angry?

Most of us wouldn't want to hear ourselves on tape in those situations.

But—we forget -- the people we love hear us.

Quietness.

IV. The Adornment of the Saints Who've Gone Before v. 5-6

Christians are called children of Abraham.

Women can look specifically to Sarah as an example.

We can have role models as long as we remember --
There is only ONE PERFECT role model.

She is an example and role model of doing good by submission.

For instance, when God told Abram to leave Ur of the Chaldees, Abram told Sarah, and together, they left. She was submissive to him, even though he could not tell her exactly where he was going, because he did not know. That is just one example of submission, and we could go to Genesis and find many more.

Be not afraid – in that same incident – who could blame Sarah if she was afraid.
Put yourself in Sarah's sandals.

She was asked to leave her family and her home.
She didn't know where they were going.
If she asked her husband – it didn't help, because he didn't know either.

Yet, she obeyed.
Yet, she went.
She didn't let fear stop her.
She became an example of faith and a faithful woman.

ON THIS ASPECT OF BE NOT AFRAID

The whole epistle of Peter is directed to Christians living in a hostile world.
We are strangers and pilgrims.
We are sojourners in a land that is not our own.
We live in HOSTILE territory.

These Christian women with lost husbands can live as Christians too.
Even as Christians can live in a WORLD that is hostile to Christ and still be Christian.....

These Christian women can live in a HOME that is hostile to Christ and still be Christian!

- Modest, Gentle, and Quiet.
- Living our lives under the conscious awareness of the presence of God.
- Doing good and not living in fear – but living a life of TRUST in God!

PRAY -- HYMN -- 491 --- Benediction -- v. 5-6