The Woman of Christ Faces Daily Living

Modesty in Speech, Behavior, and Clothing

Lesson #9

There was a time when men who were inclined to curse would either avoid doing so or would apologize profusely for their profanity when ladies were present. Now, likely as not, women join the men in “cursing like sailors.”

Jesus said not what goes into the mouth defiles a man, but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man (Matthew 15:11).

We frequently hear words expressing a coarseness or a lack of respect for the human body and its God-designed functions? This talk is usually presented in loud tones. Where is refinement? Where is respect for God's Word? (Ephesians 5:4).

Sadly, the use of God’s name in vain is frequently expressed. Are we using substitutes such as “OMG” for words we really wouldn't want to say? Honestly, when you see it used, what comes to mind? The first choice that is given in most definition lists is “Oh, my God” or “Oh, my gosh.” Parents especially need to check the meanings of cyber abbreviations. Children may be unwittingly transmitting profanity or expletives.

Matthew. 12:36 comments on idle words. Although cell phones are truly useful, texting can provide a quick way to spread negative words. Gossiping and fault finding are evil. Yet we hear so much of that activity. It's occasionally excused by, “Well, it's the truth!” When we hear bad reports, let's stop the transmission. Don't pass it along. There is much talk about things we know very little about. Details can make a big difference. Don't dial 1-800-Assume.

Our family has a fond memory of my grandmother relating something seemingly as innocent as a toddler soiling his diapers. She would lower her entire account of the story to a soft whisper. We knew things had improved considerably when the volume of Granny's voice returned.

Are we influenced by a world which tells us on Oprah to go ahead and talk about our marital relationships before God, man and ABC? As some might ask, “Is nothing sacred?” (Ephesians 5:12). Current sex education encourages students to speak freely and openly of their sexuality. Proverbs 7:11 describes a loud, brazen woman. She sets no boundaries of propriety. Any man is free game to her, and her game is dangerous. In her clothing, as well as in her speech and behavior, she invites an intimacy that should be reserved only for her husband.

We are witnessing an aggressive spread of immorality, and sadly much of that is from women. How should Christian women confront this environment?

Ruth 3:11 defines Ruth as a virtuous woman. She was of noble character, a woman of excellence. Does our community recognize us as women of excellence? Do we demonstrate thoughtfulness and goodness to others? Those qualities, along with discretion, propriety, and modesty, define a lady even to neighbors who may be unbelievers (1 Timothy 2:9 and 1 Peter 3:2).

Skew is a word which means lopsided -- not symmetric, out of balance. It can be the result of feeding a document into a scanner at an angle and, thereby, producing an image that is not square with the page. We can present a skewed character when our actions, our examples, and our influence don't square with our spiritual profession.

A word: This lesson occasionally draws opposition from those who deny that their behavior and clothing might have a bearing on the thoughts and behavior of the opposite sex. A defensive remark has been, “I can’t help what he’s thinking. He should clean up his dirty mind.” Ladies, please let’s be discerning. The physiology of men and women dictates that certain sights will cause sexual arousal. Body processes respond to these as well as to physical stimulation and prepares humans for the intimacy that should be experienced only by married people (Hebrews 13:4).

A Simple Test for Spiritual Consistency

A sincere woman can help keep her spiritual life in balance by asking whether her daily choices reflect her devotion to Christ. Practice standing and sitting in front of a full-length mirror before leaving home. What do you see when you cross your legs? What happens to your blouse when you lean over as if to help a small child? Let's not provide a visual route for those who can be sexually stimulated by a look at our bodies.

These questions provide a practical guide for aligning behavior and clothing with a sincere Christian profession. Proverb 7:10 and Proverbs 30:20 refer to the attire and behavior of a harlot. Let's consider a few points and think about some verses that seem to tell us God’s thoughts about carelessness in our choice of clothing. Let’s consider some verses. Genesis 2:25; Genesis 3:7-10; Genesis 9:20-23; Exodus 20:26; Exodus 28:40-43; Isaiah 20:1-6; Jeremiah, 13:26; Nahum 3:5; John 21:7; Revelation 3:18.

Jeremiah 6:15 and Jeremiah 8:12 describe people who had become so hardened to lives of sinful choices that they could no longer blush. We can become desensitized too. Clothing styles, which reveal much of the area that we've just discussed, are promoted almost everywhere we look. If clothes make the person, as has been suggested for many years, what do our clothes say about us? We are cautious about privacy and security on other levels. Are we careful to keep our money out of sight? What about the areas of our body that are known to be sexually stimulating to others? Many follow the crowds, regrettably (Exodus 23:2) in clothes choices, and they play “Simon Says” in doing just whatever the current style dictates.

A Christian wife who enters the workplace needs to recognize that she is very likely going to be working shoulder to shoulder with male workers. She will see these men at their very best, well-groomed and smelling of English leather. She would be abnormal if she were not attracted to such pleasing attributes. God made male and female to complement one another, to be attracted to one another. Probably most affairs are not planned. The prudent Christian will avoid circumstances which lead to immorality.

We have become too accustomed to the current movies, books, magazines, music, fashions and recreation. Many Christians are no longer shocked at what comes down the Pike. Frequently we are lulled into apathy over conditions, and we might be participating in sin without giving it a second thought.

Dann Walker writes in “Fornication Begins in the Mind,” “… correct thinking is the home front on which all battles must be fought.” (Proverb 4:23 and Matthew 15:19-20). Replace the pictures in your mind. Make a covenant with your eyes. Decide that there are some things that you're not going to allow yourself to look at. Proverbs 6:25. Remove provisions for defeat. The scriptural warning is “make no provision for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof” (Romans 13:14). This may mean canceling a bad magazine, turning off the TV, or unplugging the cable or whatever it takes to remove the provision. Burn the books! (Acts 19:19).

Is it so difficult for us to remember that we are to be different from the world? When we become Christians, we are to change ourselves (Romans 12:2). As Christians, let's recommit ourselves daily to the task of leading pure lives and encouraging others to do likewise. Pray that the 21st century will be a time in which men and women will respect and obey God's will.

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