

WHAT GOD WANTS HIS WOMEN TO BE LIKE

BY Paula and Nate Wilson

Week 4 – Femininity - Leader's Notes

Note: Unless otherwise indicated, my quotes from various commentators come from E-Sword (excellent freeware available at www.e-sword.net) and Greek and Hebrew word definitions are from Strong's concordance.

Genesis 1:27

Genesis 2:18

Deuteronomy 22:5

Why should we dress differently from men?

- God made male & female to be different from one another and wants us to maintain that difference in the way we dress.
- Our culture is increasingly an androgynous culture. Women are told that they can be just like men and are encouraged to dress like men as well. Why do we buy such a flagrant lie? Even in high school, I was against “women’s lib.” I liked to say, “We’re superior in the first place. Why would I want to be EQUAL?” ☺.

How many of our women’s fashions are really just made-over men’s fashions?

- Clothing fashions vary from country to country and age to age. Dresses were men’s clothes in Bible times, and Scottish men still wear kilts as formal wear! George Washington wore a wig of long hair and ruffles & lace at his collar! However, there were still distinguishing marks between a man’s dress and a woman’s dress. In North American culture, there are types of clothing that are distinctly feminine and types of clothing that are distinctly masculine. Women’s restrooms are identified with a picture of a girl. How do we know it’s a girl? She’s wearing a dress! Even the unsaved realize that picture is unmistakably feminine.
- Yes, there is a “gray area” of clothing that can be worn without crossing over our culture’s line between male & female clothing. This would include items such as shorts, jeans, dress pants, sweats, t-shirts and sneakers. There are often distinguishing marks that designate such an item of clothing as masculine or feminine. That could be the color, the cut, absence or presence of pleats, which the side the buttons are on, etc. Identical t-shirts might be worn by either sex. Some styles of clothing become feminine by becoming immodest. For example, it is next to impossible to find a pair of girl’s shorts that are not very short, but it is equally impossible to find a pair of boy’s shorts that ARE short. The distinguishing mark for shorts these days is the length. The same goes for jeans. Women’s jeans are almost all “low-rise.” These styles should be off-limits. We shouldn’t opt for the longest short shorts or the highest low-rise jeans we can find but rather avoid these styles altogether.
- Better yet, err on the side of femininity and wear clothing that is not androgynous but distinctly feminine – skirts and blouses, or t-shirts that are clearly feminine, with tucks in the sleeve caps or flowers around the neckline, for example.
- Here’s an interesting side note. In Deuteronomy 22:5, the word translated “man’s clothing” is *kelee* - any *apparatus* (as an implement, utensil, dress, vessel or weapon): - armour, artillery, bag, carriage, furniture, instrument, jewel, pot, psaltery, sack, stuff, thing, tool, vessel, ware,

weapon, whatsoever. It is probably more accurately translated as “anything that pertains to a man,” as it is in the KJV. The word translated “woman’s clothing” is *simplah* – dress, mantle, apparel, cloth, garment, raiment.

Proverbs 31:22

Philippians 4:8

Romans 12:1-2

Must the Christian woman dress frumpily?

- The Proverbs 31 woman dressed in fine linen and purple. She was obviously a classy dresser.
- Many of the qualities listed in Philippians 4:8 apply easily to our clothing. Frumpy clothing isn’t “excellent,” and it doesn’t proclaim the fact that our father is the King of Kings! We may not be wealthy, but we can strive to wear clothes that are neat and clean. Being unkempt and greasy causes people to focus on us, just as being overdone and ostentatious in our dress does the same. We should attempt with our appearance to draw people’s eyes and thoughts to the Lord.
- We Christians are so prone to imitate the world! Why do we choose the kinds of clothing that we do? Most likely it is because we want to fit into the world’s mold. I used to think it was my mission to show people that “you can be a Christian and still be cool!” In my mind, that applied largely to dress. I was a very fashionable and fairly immodest dresser. As Christians, however, WE should be STANDARD-SETTERS. Yes, my daughters look very cute in their shorts & t-shirts. But they look demure and beautiful, sometimes even stunning, in a well-chosen dress or skirt and blouse. We should not be flattered when an unbeliever or worldly Christian comments, “Oh, I’m so glad you look just like me.” No one ever started the road to salvation thinking, “Oh, that person looks just like everyone else in the world. I wonder what they have that I should know about.”

I Corinthians 7:34b

What is the chief concern of a married woman?

- A married woman should be concerned with pleasing her husband.
- This includes the way she dresses. If your husband WANTS you to dress in a flaunting manner, you should respectfully discuss the principles of modesty and femininity with him. Pray hard and look for styles that please your husband but still honor the Lord.

Song of Solomon 4:1, 6:5, 7:5

Revelation 9:8

I Corinthians 11:15

What about a woman’s hair?

- Some translations, like the KJV, say, “doves’ eyes within thy locks,” but commentators seem to agree that it is more accurately translated “doves’ eyes behind your veil,” as the ESV translates it.
- JFB (Jamieson, Fausset and Brown) says, “the hair of goats in the East is fine like silk,” and “**appear from**--literally, "that lie down from"; lying along the hillside, they seem to hang from it: a picture of the bride's hanging tresses.”
- Keil & Delitzsch say, “we must know that sheep in Syria and Palestine are for the most part white; but goats, for the most part, black, or at least dark coloured,” and also, “a flock of

goats encamped on a mountain (rising up, to one looking from a distance, as in a steep slope, and almost perpendicularly), and as if hanging down lengthwise on its sides, presents a lovely view adorning the landscape. Solomon likens to this the appearance of the locks of his beloved, which hang down over her shoulders.”

- John Gill says, “The women in Homer, are described by their beautiful hair; nor is it unusual to compare the hair of women, and represent it as superior to a fleece of the choicest flock. And here the church's hair is said to be like the hair of goats, for that is the sense of the expression; and which is thought to be most like to human hair, 1 Sam. 19:13; and it is compared to that, not so much for its length and sleekness, as for its colour, being yellowish; which, with women formerly, was in esteem, and reckoned graceful; this being the colour of the hair of some of the greatest beauties, as Helena, Philoxena, and others, whose hair was flaxen and yellow; hence great care was taken to make it look so, even as yellow as gold: the Jewish women used to have their perukes, or false hair, of goats' hair, and still have in some places to this day; and it should seem the Roman women also had, to which the poet refers. And the church's hair here is said to be like the hair of a flock of goats, **that appear from Mount Gilead**; or rather "on Mount Gilead", as Noldius: Gilead was a mountain in the land of Israel, beyond Jordan, famous for pasturage for cattle, where flocks of goats were fed, as was usual on mountains; and, being well fed, their hair was long, smooth, neat, and glistening; and so to spectators, at a distance, looked very beautiful and lovely; especially in the morning at sun rising, and, glancing on them with its bright and glittering rays, were delightful...”
- Clarke says, **as a flock of goats** - Because it was black and sleek, as the hair of the goats of Arabia and Palestine is known to be; which, with its fine undulation, is supposed to bear some resemblance to the curls or plaits of a woman's tresses. The mountains of Gilead were beyond Jordan, on the frontiers of Arabia Deserta.
- Here are a couple of articles defending the idea that Jesus actually had short hair, contrary to the popular drawings and movies of today!
http://www.ucg.org/booklets/JC/humanbeing_longhair.htm &
http://www.albatrus.org/english/living/modesty/jesus_wore_long_hair_beard.htm
- What about black women? We've all heard that it is practically impossible for African and African-American women to grow their hair long. A quick web search for “African women ‘long hair’” will yield several articles by black women disputing such a claim.

Conclusion:

When I buy clothing for myself, I ask several questions: Is it modest? Is it feminine? Does it suit my lifestyle? Does it look attractive on me, without being flashy or drawing attention to my body? Will my husband like it? Any one of these questions could disqualify a piece of clothing, especially if there are alternatives that fit everything. I have occasionally had to purchase something that is less feminine than I prefer in order to satisfy the more important standard of modesty. In those cases, I try to improve the femininity aspect in other ways. For example, I once found a “perfect” denim jumper – except that the cut was very square and masculine. There were no other options for a dress. Thankfully, I was able to find a very pretty floral shirt with a decidedly feminine cut, and it matched the jumper perfectly. It was a favorite outfit for years!

God wants His women to delight in their femininity, because that is the way He created them! If your husband is like most men, he will not state a preference for the way you dress, even if you

ask him directly. My challenge to you this week is to change something about the way you dress to make your appearance more feminine. (For me, that would mean taking special care to fix my hair nicely each morning.) Don't mention your efforts to your husband, but notice any unsolicited comments he makes.

Next week – headcoverings! Read I Corinthians 11:3-16 to prepare.