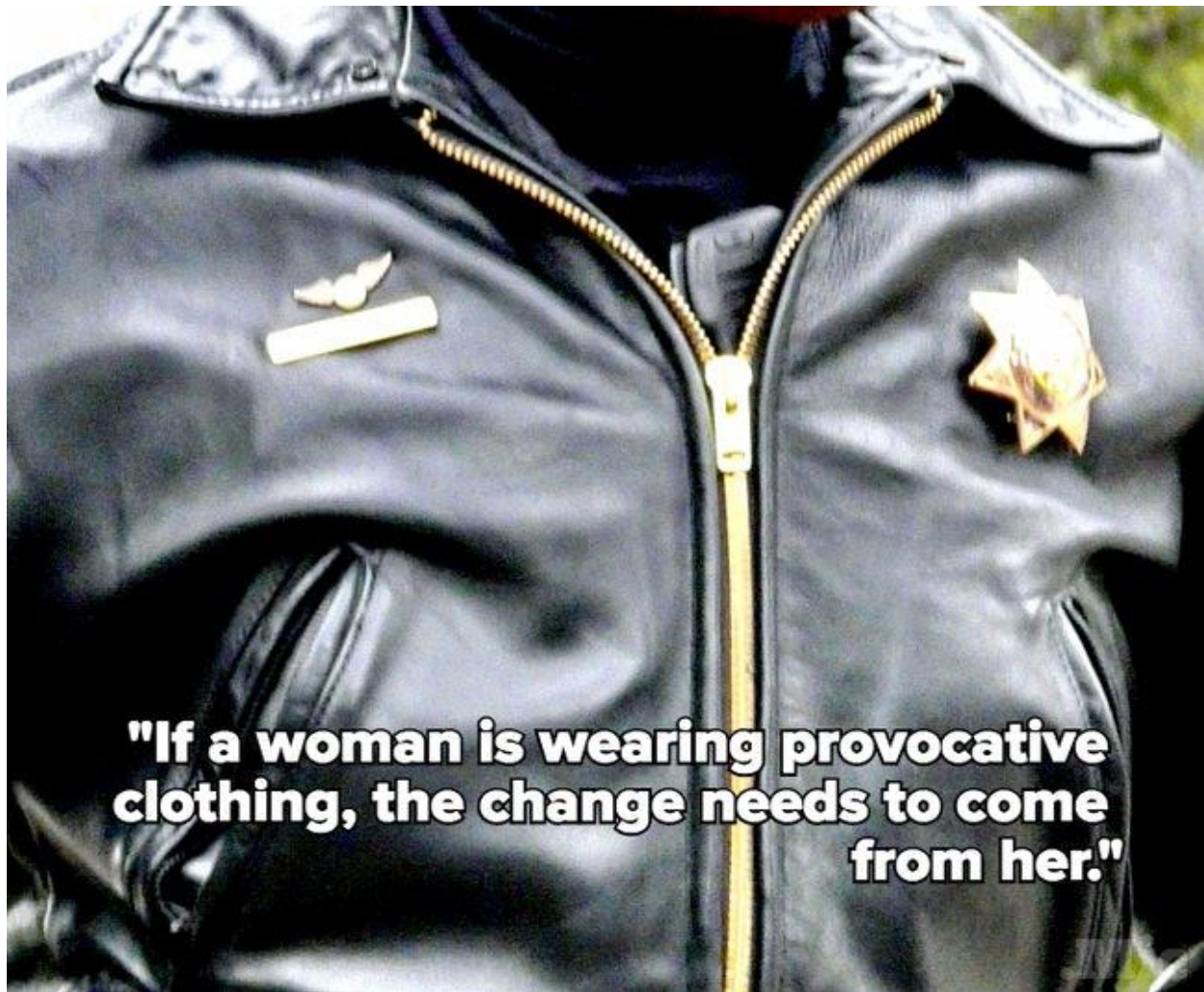


THE SIN OF CAUSING OTHERS TO SIN!

IMMODESTY – **LASCIVIOUSNESS** – **SENSUALITY**

by David Lee Burris



"If a woman is wearing provocative clothing, the change needs to come from her."

A cop in 2014: "If a woman is wearing provocative clothing, the change needs to come from her."

"A woman's clothing has nothing to do with whether she is sexually available & saying that clothing carries this intent is not only wrong, it is offensive & unacceptable. Clothes cannot talk!"

- Huffington Post

SAYING "SHE WAS
ASKING FOR IT" IN
THE COURTS OF MAN
DOES NOT CONVICT
THE PROVOCATEUR;

GOD'S COURT
THEY SHARE
IN GUILT &
PUNISHMENT!

Presumption of Innocence

by Dave Miller, Ph.D.



Modern American politics has become increasingly characterized by “dirty tricks” and smear tactics that are intended to torpedo a candidate’s election potential. These days the usual accusation pertains to sexual matters—“unwanted sexual advances” and the like. One cannot help but be skeptical of such allegations since the accusers fixate on **sexual** matters—not other criminal behaviors. On the one hand, there are politicians whose checkered pasts deserve to be brought to light due to relevant reflection on suitability for office. On the other hand, political opponents seek to discredit an otherwise innocent and qualified candidate—not merely digging up legitimate concerns from his past, but fabricating charges and “evidence” for no other reason than they disagree with his views (e.g., on abortion). Regardless of one’s political affiliation, such circumstances ought to be distasteful.

More troubling than even these tactics is the seemingly widespread acceptance of the idea that a mere accusation constitutes adequate proof of guilt. The longstanding, bedrock adage of “innocent until proven guilty” has fallen by the wayside in the minds of many. Many individuals appear so deluded by their political and moral ideology that they have literally come to redefine the meaning and nature of “justice,” “fairness,” and “impartiality.” They have jettisoned any sense of what it means to be dispassionate, emotionless, and evenhanded in assessing truth. Indeed, if an accusation is accompanied by the presence of tears, the accusation becomes more credible and the likelihood of its veracity becomes certain. Tears carry more weight than truth. “Due process” is defined as giving a hearing to the accusation and then accepting it at face value as true.

The concept of “presumed innocent until proven guilty”¹ is inherent in just law and self-evidently true. The accuser has the obligation to prove the accusation beyond a reasonable doubt. In the 1895 U.S. Supreme Court case *Coffin vs. United States*, writing the opinion of the Court, Justice White included the following observation:

Ammianus Marcellinus relates an anecdote of the Emperor Julian which illustrates the enforcement of this principle in the Roman law. Numerius, the Governor of Narbonensis, was on trial before the emperor, and, contrary to the usage in criminal cases, the trial was public. Numerius contented himself with denying his guilt, and there was not sufficient proof against him. His adversary, Delphidius, “a passionate man,” seeing that the failure of the accusation was inevitable, could not restrain himself, and exclaimed, “Oh, illustrious Caesar, if it is sufficient to deny, what hereafter will become of the guilty?” to which Julian replied, “If it suffices to accuse, **what will become of the innocent?**”²

The American Founders agreed with this assessment of the presumption of innocence and often quoted the highly respected English jurist William Blackstone on the matter: “all presumptive evidence of felony should be admitted cautiously, for the law holds that it is better that ten guilty persons escape than that one innocent suffer.”³

Apart from the legal system that has characterized American civilization from the beginning, the Bible speaks definitively regarding presumption of innocence. Indeed, the notion of “innocent until proven guilty” is inherent in the nature of God. Giving credence to an accusation without proof is evidence of blind prejudice and irrational human emotion rather than logic and reason. One wonders if those women who are quick to believe an unsubstantiated accusation made against a public official would react the same way if their own teenage sons were the recipients of similar allegations.

The bedrock truth that undergirded God’s law for Israel regarding criminal behavior centered on the presence of **multiple** witnesses:

Whoever kills a person, the murderer shall be put to death on the testimony of witnesses; but **one witness is not sufficient testimony** against a person for the death penalty (Numbers 35:30).

Whoever is deserving of death shall be put to death on the testimony of two or three witnesses; he shall not be put to death on the testimony of **one witness** (Deuteronomy 17:6).

These verses are adamant in their insistence that no one should be convicted on the basis of a single witness. This principle is carried over into church law in the New Testament (Matthew 18:16; 2 Corinthians 13:1; 1 Timothy 5:19; Hebrews 10:28; Revelation 11:3; Cf. Matthew 26:60; John 5:31; 10:37).

It is important to understand that the minimum two witnesses did not refer to a single witness who passes along his observations to another individual who then acts as a second witness. Rather, these verses require two or more **independent** witnesses, i.e., they were personal eye-witnesses to the alleged event. Nor do these verses justify bringing forward multiple witnesses to separate incidents (“me too”). The fact that a bank robber robs three separate banks on different occasions does not qualify a single witness from each bank robbery to serve as the “two or more witnesses.” There must be two or more eyewitnesses to the **same** event. God was so adamant on this point that He prescribed harsh penalties for violations of it:

One witness shall not rise against a man concerning any iniquity or any sin that he commits; by the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter shall be established. If a false witness rises against any man to testify against him of wrongdoing, then both men in the controversy shall stand before the LORD, before the priests and the judges who serve in those days. And the judges shall make careful inquiry, and indeed, **if the witness is a false witness, who has testified falsely against his brother, then you shall do to him as he thought to have done to his brother**; so you shall put away the evil from among you. And those who remain shall hear and fear, and hereafter they shall not again commit such evil among you (Deuteronomy 19:15-20).

One wonders if this legislation were in effect in America today, would we have so many accusers speaking out without adequate evidence. Indeed, God declared: “Keep far from a false charge, and do not kill the innocent and righteous, for I will not acquit the wicked” (Exodus 23:7).

Under the Law of Moses, a woman subjected to sexual assault was under obligation to scream so that she could be rescued by those nearby. Otherwise, she was a consensual participant. The only exception to this requirement was if the sexual assault occurred in a secluded place (outside of town) where no witnesses or rescuers were available or able to come to her aid (Deuteronomy 22:22-27).

Also under the Old Law, Cities of Refuge were established to facilitate a person's avoiding vengeance implemented by the kinfolk of the person he may have killed. He was permitted to flee to the city where he would be protected until guilt or innocence could be established. Hence, he was innocent until proven guilty. If he was assumed guilty at the outset, there would have been no reason to provide a city of refuge to determine otherwise.

Observe that with the advancement of scientific criminology, specifically the discoveries pertaining to DNA evidence, many convicted individuals have been exonerated. Oftentimes, they were originally convicted solely on the testimony of a single witness—a circumstance that violates God's directives for ascertaining guilt. If God's thinking had been employed, the innocent individual never would have been convicted in the first place.

But these principles imply that those guilty of heinous crimes will occasionally, perhaps even often, be allowed to go free. Nevertheless, in God's sight, accusing and convicting an innocent person is a great miscarriage of justice. Recall the words of Blackstone and Emperor Caesar Julian: "It is better that ten guilty persons escape than that one innocent suffer"; "If it suffices to accuse, what will become of the innocent?"

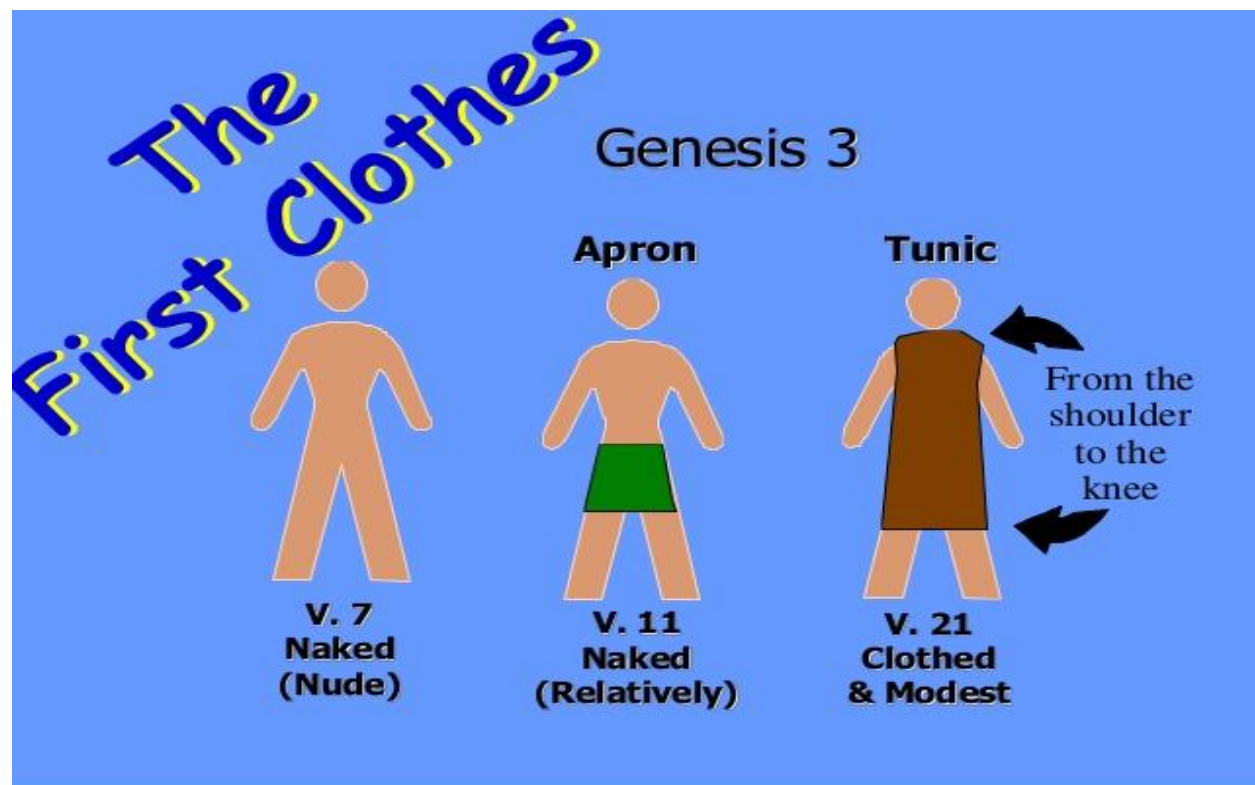
ENDNOTES

¹ A phrase attributed to English barrister, politician, and judge William Garrow. See Kenneth Pennington (2003), "Innocent Until Proven Guilty: The Origins of a Legal Maxim," *The Jurist: Studies in Church Law and Ministry*, 106[63]; Richard Braby and John Hostettler (2010), *Sir William Garrow: His Life, His Times and Fight for Justice* (Loddon, England: Waterside Press); *Coffin v. United States*, 156 U.S. 432 (1895), <https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/156/432/>. The court stated: "A charge that there cannot be a conviction unless the proof shows guilt beyond a reasonable doubt does not so entirely embody the statement of presumption of innocence as to justify the court in refusing, when requested, to instruct the jury concerning such presumption, which is a conclusion drawn by the law in favor of the citizen by virtue whereof, when brought to trial upon a criminal charge, he must be acquitted unless he is proven to be guilty."

² *Ibid.*, emp. added.

³ Sir William Blackstone (1893), *Commentaries on the Laws of England in Four Books* (Philadelphia, PA: J.B. Lippincott), IV.XXVII.V.

IN GOD'S COURT CLOTHES DO SPEAK



Nakedness

Exposing the **thigh** = exposing one's **Nakedness**



**Gen. 3:7, 10-11
Exo. 28:42
Isa. 47:2-3**

Does my private, personal sin affect others?

Many believe that their personal sin is okay as long as it doesn't harm anyone else. "It doesn't affect anyone else, so what's the problem?" But how do we *know* that our sins don't hurt someone else? Who measures the effect of one's sin on others? The excuse that "I'm the only one affected" is often an attempt to justify private practices that cause immeasurable harm to other people.

No man is an island, and sin is never a strictly personal act. It always has an impact on the lives of others. When a parent sins, it affects a spouse, children, extended family, and each of the relationships connected to these people.

Of course, God sees everything we do. We cannot hide from Him. When we sin, even privately, it causes a breach in our relationship with Him. The first sin recorded in the Bible is a powerful example. After Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit, they hid from God ([Genesis 3:8](#)). The first couple's fellowship with Him was broken. Once God had confronted them, they chose to blame each other rather than confess their sin ([Genesis 3:11-13](#)). There were both spiritual and physical consequences for their actions, and those consequences continue today.

The way to deal with private sin is not to hide or deny it, but to end it. God is faithful and just to forgive our sins ([1 John 1:9](#)) and will not allow us to be tempted beyond what we can stand ([1 Corinthians 10:13](#)). We are called to resist temptation as Jesus did, by relying on the power of God's Word ([Matthew 4:1-11](#)). – C.A.R.M. Resources

The Instructions of Romans 14

By Mike Willis

The instructions given in Romans 14 demonstrate that this chapter cannot be applied to matters inherently sinful.

The Instructions of Romans 14

1. **Receive one another just like Christ has received you** (14:1; 15:7).

The word “receive” is translated from *proslambano* which Thayer defines in the use of Romans 14:1 and 15:7 to mean “to receive, i.e., grant one access to one’s heart; to take into friendship and intercourse.” He continues, “God and Christ are said to *proslabesthai* (to have received) those whom, formerly estranged from them, they have reunited to themselves by the blessings of the gospel, Rom. xiv.3; xv.7”. The sense of the word is given in the modifying clause “as Christ also received us” (15:7). Christians are to receive one another just like Christ has received us (15:7). Whatever limitation one imposes on the meaning of “receive” with reference to brethren receiving one another (to make it mean less than to “receive into one’s fellowship”) destroys itself on the phrase “as Christ has received us.” We are to receive one another just like Christ has received us.

Does Christ receive us so long as we are continuing the practice of our sin, defending it as an act of righteousness, and encouraging others to join us in the practice of our sin? If not, then we should not receive others who are doing those things. Does Christ “receive” us in the sense of treating us like a brother but less than “fellowshipping” us? If not, then this is not the sense of “receive” under discussion in Romans 14.

If Romans 14 “tolerates contradictory teachings and practices on important moral and doctrinal questions” (as taught by Ed Harrell in Christianity Magazine [May 1990]), then our obligation according to Romans 14 is to receive those who are so teaching and practicing. That would apply to those who are involved in adulterous marriages as well as those who defend people in adulterous marriages by teaching these marriages are scriptural. In this event those congregations that refuse fellowship to the brother who divorces his mate for any cause & marries another stand condemned as guilty of violating Romans 14:1, for not receiving one’s brother. However, Romans 14 cannot be limited to this sin alone. Those who have constructed a list to limit which sins Romans 14 includes have not logically sustained their position. Hence, logically the application of Romans 14 to any sinful practice leads to the conclusion that we receive those who continue in the practice of every sin. If this instruction cannot be applied to such sinful conduct, then sinful conduct must not be under discussion in the chapter.

2. Do not engage in doubtful disputations (14:1). The Amplified Bible reads, “but not to criticize his opinion or pass judgment on his scruples or perplex him with discussions.” The instructions of Romans 14 therefore teach one (a) not to criticize the conduct of the other and (b) not to become involved in discussions trying to prove one is right and the other is wrong. When we apply these instructions to matters inherently sinful, we have the ridiculous position that a Christian cannot criticize the conduct of the sinner and cannot enter a discussion with him to show him wherein his sin lies. If this is the case, Paul violated his own principles when he rebuked the Corinthian fornicator (1 Cor. 5) and entered into disputations with the false teachers at Galatia (Gal. 1-4). If this instruction cannot be applied to such sinful conduct, then sinful conduct must not be under discussion in the chapter.

3. **Do not condemn** (14:10,13). Paul asks, “But why dost thou judge (krino) thy brother? . . . Let us not therefore judge (krino) one another anymore.” Thayer defines krino in this usage to mean “to pronounce judgment; to subject to censure.” Can these instructions be applied to matters inherently sinful? If so, a person who condemns his brother for drunkenness is acting in violation of Romans 14. He is “judging” (“pronouncing judgment; to subject to censure”) his brother and Romans 14 says, “Let us not therefore judge one another.” However, Paul would stand condemned as a hypocrite for violating his own principle in his “judging” those who went to law with one another before unbelievers (1 Cor. 6:1-8). If this instruction cannot be applied to those practicing such sin, then Romans 14 does not pertain to sinful conduct.

4. **Do not set at nought your brother** (14:3, 10). These verses read as follows: “Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him. . . But why dost thou judge thy brother? Or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.” The word exoutheneo is translated “despise” (14:3) and “set at nought” (14:10). The word is defined by Thayer to mean “to make of no account, to despise utterly.” There are some who are to be treated like “a heathen man and a publican” (Matthew 18:17); there are some concerning whom Paul wrote, “with such a one no not to eat” (1st Corinthians 5:11). These are brethren who persist in the practice of their sin. Did Paul violate his own teaching in Romans 14:3,10 when he commanded brethren not to receive brethren involved in sin? If Romans chapter 14 applies to things inherently sinful, he did. If the instructions of Romans 14:3, 10 do not apply to those continuing in their practice of those things inherently sinful, then Romans 14 does not include sinful conduct.

5. Do not put a stumbling block in front of another (14:13). Romans 14:13 says, “Let us not therefore judge one another anymore: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brother’s way.” This makes perfectly good sense when applied to authorized liberties. Romans 14:13 is instructing the man who can eat meats without violating his conscience not to conduct himself in the exercise of his liberty in such a way as to encourage a man who cannot eat meats without violating his conscience to sin against his conscience. Try applying that to sinful conduct. On the one hand, let us assume that the “strong man” is the man who cannot commit fornication and the “weak man” is the one who commits fornication from clear conscience. Then Paul is telling the man who abstains from fornication not to practice his abstinence in such a manner as to cause his brother to abstain from fornication. On the other hand, let’s assume the “strong man” is the man who commits fornication without violating his conscience (Does anyone believe that Paul could call such a person a “strong” Christian?), and the “weak man” is the man who abstains (Is the man who abstains from fornication the weak man?). Then we have the absurd position that Paul is saying that one can commit his fornication so long as he does it in such a manner as not to cause his brother to stumble. If the instructions of Romans 14 do not fit such sinful conduct, then the context is not discussing sinful conduct and is limited to matters of authorized liberties.

6. Bear the infirmities of the weak and not to please ourselves (15:1). In Romans 15:1, Paul wrote, “We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.” I can understand these instructions when they are applied to matters of authorized liberties. Paul is instructing the man who thinks he can eat meats to forego the exercise of his liberty for the sake of his weaker brother. He should not be so selfish in pleasing himself that he destroys his brother for whom Christ died for the sake of doing something that is a matter of indifference.

Let us see if this instruction will fit sinful conduct. On the one hand, what is the result if we assume that the “stronger brother” is the one who doesn’t believe that he should commit fornication and the “weaker brother” is the one who commits fornication without violating his conscience? In that case, Paul is instructing the stronger brother not to press his abstinence views to the point that he censures and condemns his weaker brother; he should bear with the infirmities of his weaker brother, accepting him in his practice of sin. On the other hand, we must consider the result if we assume that the “stronger brother” is the one who can commit fornication without violating his conscience (does anyone believe that Paul could call such a person a “strong” Christian?) and the “weak man” is the man who abstains (is the man who abstains from fornication the weak man?). In that case, we have the absurd position of Paul instructing that the strong man can commit fornication so long as he does not cause a brother to violate his conscience by following this example. If the instructions of Romans 14 do not fit such sinful conduct, then the context is not discussing sinful conduct and is limited to matters of authorized liberties.

7. Please one’s neighbor (15:2). In Romans 15:2, Paul instructs, “Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification.” That makes sense if one is applying this to matters of authorized liberty. In that case, Paul is teaching the principles by which he lived in First Corinthians 9. He relinquished his liberties in order to win more people for Christ. When we apply this to sinful conduct, we have the absurd position that one can practice his sin so long as he does it in such a way as not to destroy his brother. Hence, if he can practice his sin without enticing his brother to sin, he has God’s approval in continuing his sin. If the instructions of Romans 14 do not fit such sinful conduct, then the context is not discussing sinful conduct and is limited to matters of authorized liberties.

8. **Keep it to yourself** (14:22). In Romans 14:22, Paul wrote, “Hast thou faith? Have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth.” This passage is teaching the obligations one has in connection with his personal liberties. If a person chooses to eat meat, he should quietly practice what he wishes to do. He shouldn’t start a campaign to teach every person in the congregation to act as he acts. The same is true for the one who chooses to abstain from meats. When we apply this to sinful conduct, we reach some absurd conclusions. The man who believes he can commit fornication is then instructed to practice his fornication in such a manner as to keep his brother from being encouraged to violate his conscience by committing fornication. So long as he can commit his fornication without causing others to sin, Paul is saying, “Happy is he that condemneth not himself in the fornication which he alloweth.” On the other hand, if we assume the stronger brother is the one who abstains from fornication, Paul is saying, “Keep your belief that fornication is sinful to yourself. Do not preach it and condemn your brother who practices fornication.” If the instructions of Romans 14 don’t fit such sinful conduct, then the context is not discussing sinful conduct and is limited to matters of authorized liberties.

Conclusion. Those who apply Romans 14 to include sinful conduct gut the chapter of any relevant application. After teaching that Romans chapter 14 includes sinful conduct, they are unwilling to abide by the instructions given in the chapter about how we’re to treat those practicing the sinful conduct they say is under discussion. By their unwillingness to apply the principles of Romans 14, they in turn give silent testimony that Romans 14 does not apply to sinful conduct. **The instructions of Romans 14 make good sense only when they are applied to matters of authorized liberties (things God allows but doesn’t demand). These are the only matters under discussion in Romans 14.**

THE STANDARD OF MODESTY

Wearing Gold and Braided Hair?

by Kyle Butt, M.Div.

Most people who have read the Bible have at least been mildly perplexed after reading 1 Timothy 2:9-10 and 1 Peter 3:3-4. These two portions of Scripture read as follows:

...in like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works (1 Timothy 2:9-10).

Do not let your adornment be that outward adorning of arranging the hair, of wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel; but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God (1 Peter 3:3-4).

At first glance, these two passages seem to set down strict commandments that women should wear no gold jewelry, and should never braid their hair. However, when these verses are taken in their proper context & are compared with other verses in the Bible, their seemingly strict prohibitions of gold and braids become more lenient in one sense, and ironically, more strict in another.

When the apostle Paul wrote to the young preacher Timothy, he gave the young man several instructions about how certain groups of people ought to conduct themselves in public worship assemblies. In 1 Timothy chapter 2:9, Paul offered some guidelines for how women ought to dress. Paul said that women should wear “modest” apparel. The Greek word for modest is *kosmioi*, which means “respectable, honorable, or modest” (Arndt, 1958, p. 445). This word basically entails all apparel that does not call undue attention to the wearer through show of flesh or through gaudiness.

The type of apparel is defined by the phrase, “with propriety & moderation.” Then, Paul described the converse of “modest” by mentioning three things many first-century women were using to draw undue attention to themselves: braided hair, gold, and costly clothing. In the first century, many women were plaiting elaborate hair designs that would take hours to “construct” and weave. One writer, in describing such first-century hair designs, wrote:

Talk about high maintenance! During the late first century, the Flavian style of Julia, daughter of Titus fashioned the court with curls arranged on crescent-shaped wire frames. The back hair was divided into sections, braided, then curled. Sometimes the hair was coiled without braiding (see *Roman...*, 2002).

Apparently, some women were turning the worship assemblies into fashion shows, attempting to “one-up” their contemporaries with flashy, expensive clothes and costly gold jewelry. Instead of this gaudiness, Paul instructed the women to adorn themselves in that “which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works.” In this passage, we see a literary construction that is common in the Bible—the comparison and substitution of one less desirable thing for another more profitable thing. In this particular case, the gaudy clothes were to be rejected in favor of good works and modest clothes. Jesus used a similar construction in John 6:27, when He stated, “Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you...” At first glance, this statement from Jesus seems to be saying that a person should not work for physical food. However, we know that is not the intended meaning, because 2 Thess. 3:10 plainly says, “if anyone will not work, neither shall he eat.” What, then, was Jesus’ point? He simply was saying that spiritual food is more important than physical food, and as such, should be given a **higher** priority.

Another instance of a similar situation is found in 1 Corinthians 11:34. In this chapter, the apostle Paul had been reprimanding the Christians in Corinth for abusing the Lord’s Supper. The rich brethren were bringing lots of food and drink, and were eating their fill, while the poor brethren were not getting enough to eat. Paul explained to the Christians that the Lord’s Supper was not designed to be a feast to fill the belly, but a memorial to commemorate the death of the Lord. In verse 34, he wrote: “But if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, lest you come together for judgment.” Once again, taken in its most literal sense, this verse would demand that every person who is hungry should eat at home—not in a restaurant, at a friend’s house, or outside. Of course, that was not Paul’s intention at all. He simply wanted the Christians to eat to fill their stomachs at some other time than during the memorial feast of the Lord’s Supper.

After considering these examples, let us now look back to Paul's instruction to Timothy concerning women's apparel. If we were to take the passage in its most literal reading, then women should not wear braided hair, any gold, or any costly clothing. However, how much would an article of clothing have to cost in order to be "costly?" Many of the clothes we wear in the United States would cost a person in a third world country an entire year's salary (Jackson, 2000). Should our women come to worship in burlap sacks and cardboard flip-flops? To ask is to answer. In fact, in 1 Peter 3:3-4, the parallel passage to 1 Timothy 2:9-10, the actual Greek text omits the word "fine" before "apparel" so that it actually says that a woman's beauty should not come from "putting on apparel." Yet, taken in its most literal sense, this particular sentence would delight those of the nudist persuasion, and confound the most astute Christians.

Summing up the meaning of these two passages, we see that Paul and Peter were not forbidding a woman from wearing a golden wedding band or having her hair modestly braided. They were, however, instructing the women to concentrate on good works and a right attitude instead of trying to impress others with immodest clothes that were inappropriate or excessively gaudy.

Therefore, these verses are more lenient than their strictly literal sound, in the sense that they do not forbid **all** wearing of gold, clothes, or braiding of the hair. They are more stringent, however, in the fact that some things not specifically mentioned by the writers would be prohibited. For instance, a woman could not wear thousands of dollars worth of platinum jewelry, and then contend that the verses never mention platinum. Nor could a Christian woman strut into an assembly wearing multiple carats of diamonds worth tens of thousands of dollars, and argue that diamonds are not mentioned in the text. The verses echo the sentiment of Christ, when He scolded the Pharisees for cleansing "the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence" (Matthew 23:25).

[As an endnote, the modest-apparel criteria were not specifically addressed to the first-century men, because they apparently did not have a problem with this. However, in any situation where men might have a problem with such, the same rules certainly would apply to them as well.]

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Christians and Modesty



The apostle Paul wrote to a young preacher-friend named Timothy to remind him that his example was very important. Here is some of the good advice that Paul gave Timothy: “Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity” (1 Timothy 4:12). Paul also told Timothy, “Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; continue in these things, for in doing this you will save both yourself and your hearers” (1 Timothy 4:16, ESV). In other words, Timothy was to work hard at being the best example he could be, so that he could influence others for Christ. This is good advice for all people to follow.

But that wasn’t all that Paul told Timothy. He also said: “I desire...that women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control” (1 Timothy 2:8-9, ESV). Paul, as an apostle of Christ, commanded women to dress modestly. Many women in Paul’s day who were immoral often “dressed the part” (just as women today sometimes do). Paul did not want Christian women to dress in such a way as to suggest that they, too, were immoral. Skirts that are too short, pants that are too tight, or tops that are too revealing are not appropriate for the Christian woman. After all, Christ “gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works” (Titus 2:14). Christians are to be “peculiar”—not in the sense of being “weird,” but in the sense of being “set apart.” As the psalmist said: “the Lord has set apart for Himself him who is godly” (4:3). Above all things, Christians should be godly!



That same principle applies to men, too. In whatever aspects that Paul commanded women to be godly, he wanted men to be just as godly. If women must dress modestly, then so must men. When it comes to being a faithful Christian, we must remember that we are in the world, but we are not of the world (John 17:13-14; 1 John 2:15-17). As James wrote: “Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God” (4:4). Paul said: “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God” (Romans 12:2). Modest apparel is always “good, and acceptable, and perfect.” As Christians, we should be, too! - AP Staff

MODESTY: What Does the Bible Teach?

By Harry R. Osborne

Is there any thought of modesty in this day and age? A few years ago, you could stay away from the beach and avoid exhibitionism. Now it seems like you cannot go around the block without being confronted by someone in an outfit which used to be associated more with a porno-graphic movie than public attire. What in the world has happened to the concept of decency?

Like most movements towards shamelessness, the mass media has aided in the degeneracy. On the covers of a few recent magazines at the check-out stand in the grocery store, I have seen the following bold printed leads:

“Is it lingerie or clothes? You decide!”

“Clothing or lingerie, who cares? Its pretty!”

“Summer’s Sexiest Clothes”

“The good, the bad, and the see-through”

Is it any wonder we are surrounded by a bunch of Madonna clones in our time? An article by John Leo in U.S. News & World Report entitled “Haute porn, hard-core couture” chronicled the growing influence of pornography upon the fashion world. It is disgusting!

On magazine covers and television shows about the latest fashions in swimwear, the leads are all similar. They speak of “sexy,” “revealing,” “eye-catching,” “hot,” and “provocative” styles. A recent survey showed that the average span of fabric between the armhole and leg hole on a one-piece bathing suit is between four and six inches. It is clear they were not designed that way to facilitate swimming.

Some interesting poll results were reported in the December 1982 issue of Psychology Today. They asked people, “What is your primary reason for going to the beach?” Of the men, 69% said it was “to watch the opposite sex.” Of the women, 40% said it was “to be seen.” That which was being shown and watched is very obvious, given the attire typical of the beach.

The Bible clearly condemns such lustful displays. It instructs “that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shame fastness and sobriety; not with braided hair, and gold or pearls or costly raiment” (1 Tim. 2:9).

Let us examine a few of the things said about that which characterizes “modest apparel” & that which conflicts with it.

Shame fastness

The Bible says the modest clothing that should be worn is associated with “shame fastness.” What does that mean? The original word from the Greek referred to a sense of shame or modesty which is rooted in the character. In other words, it is that inner decency which recognizes the lack of clothing to be shameful.

The word of God speaks of the lack of full clothing or “nakedness” as being shameful (Rev. 3:19; Isa. 47:3; 2 Sam. 6:20; Jer. 13:26). However, the Bible term “naked” does not refer to nudity, but a lack of needed clothing to protect one (Jas. 2:15-16). The book of Job speaks of one who “stripped the naked of their clothing” (Job 22:6). How could one strip the clothes off of a person who was already nude? Thus, the “nakedness” which is shameful is not just total nudity.

Isaiah spoke of the uncovering of the thigh as resulting in nakedness being uncovered (Isa. 47:2-3). Since many modern fashions totally expose the thigh, how do you think God views them? “Shame fastness” is that which would cause one to blush if seen without being fully covered. It is a rare quality in our time! However, it is a quality demanded of those who would please God.

Sobriety

The Bible also says that modest clothing is associated with “sobriety.” The sobriety under consideration is not solely speaking of being free from intoxication due to alcohol, although that may be involved, but is describing a state of sound judgment. W.E. Vine makes these comments (Expository Dictionary of N.T. Words, IV:44-45):

It is that habitual inner self-government, with its constant rein on all the passions and desires, which would hinder the temptation to these from arising, or at all events from arising in such strength as would overbear the checks and barriers which “shame fastness” opposed to it.

“Sobriety” would keep one from wearing that which is designed to be the “sexy,” “revealing,” “eye-catching,” “hot,” and “provocative” styles currently in fashion. It would see such as the “attire of a harlot” (Prov. 7:10). It is a needed characteristic today!

Clothing of the Rich

While “shame fastness and sobriety” are the allies of modesty, the New Testament depicts the clothing characteristic of wealth as that which opposes modesty. Paul cautions against being clothed in “gold or pearls or costly raiment” (1 Tim. 2:9). Peter warns “of wearing gold, or of putting on fine apparel” (1 Pet. 3:3). Were these writers merely prejudiced against the wealthy or is something else involved?

To answer that question, we need to find out what kind of clothing was the “costly raiment” or “fine apparel” of the New Testament time. This is not difficult since a great number of historical sources clearly and unanimously tell us about the fashions of the day. The following is an extended quote from Robert Collen’s book, *East to Cathay: The Silk Road* (pp. 44-46), dealing with the introduction of silk clothing into the first century Roman kingdom:

Silk in its natural state clung to the female form in a way that was infinitely more pleasing to the eye than Parthian banners. But Roman ladies did not stop at that. For one thing, there was not enough pure silk to go around at first. And, anyway, it was not sexy enough for those freewheeling days. So, they unraveled the close-woven Chinese fabric and rewove it into a flimsy gauze which left little to the imagination. So unlike Chinese silk was this Roman adaptation that the Chinese, when they eventually saw it, named it “ling,” assuming that Rome was growing a special product of its own. For the average Roman girl-watcher those were golden years, but the moralists raised a fearful outcry. “I see clothes of silk, if clothes they can be called,” wrote the philosopher Seneca (4 B.C. – A.D. 64), “affording protection neither to the body nor to the modesty of the wearer, and which are purchased for enormous sums, from unknown people.” Pliny told of garments that “render women naked.” Other writers waggishly referred to clothes “made of glass.”

Thus, the expensive clothes of New Testament times were the revealing clothes that lacked modesty. It was not a prejudice against wealthy people and the luxuries they could afford which caused the Bible writers to condemn “costly raiment.” It was the indecency associated with such clothing that caused it to be condemned.

Late in the first century, Clement of Alexandria spoke of the same silk fashions as “fabrics foolishly thin, and of curious texture in weaving.” He went on to speak of such as follows (The Instructor, II, XI):

For these superfluous and diaphanous (transparent – HRO) materials are proof of a weak mind, covering as they do the shame of the body with a slender veil. For luxurious clothing, which cannot conceal the shape of the body, is no more a covering. For such clothing, falling close to the body, takes its form more easily, and adhering as it were to the flesh, receives its shape, and marks out the woman’s figure, so that the whole body is visible.

Clement goes on to say that such clothing was associated with “vice” and not with “modesty.” The second century Tertullian described such as “garments which, light and thin, were to be heavy in price alone.” He referred to them as “prostitutionary garbs” appealing to “the provocative charms of apparel.” Tertullian also noted that such clothing was the polar opposite of “modesty.”

In our time, the same is true. Modest clothing which covers the body is relatively inexpensive when contrasted with the price of the provocative styles in vogue among the fashion world. One could buy several decent changes of clothes for the price of one fashionable swimsuit. The centuries have changed, but the principles have not! Such fashions are no more tolerable to God today than they were when he condemned them through the New Testament writers. Let us not take our direction from the sinful fashions of our day, but from God. - *Guardian of Truth*

Lasciviousness

3

- **What Is Lasciviousness?**
 - The Greek word is variously translated in the KJV as “lasciviousness” (Galatians 5:19), “wantonness” (Romans 13:13) and “filthy” (II Peter 2:7).
 - The NASV prefers the word “sensuality” and the RSV uses “licentiousness” consistently.
 - Lasciviousness signifies someone preoccupied with the arousal and gratification of the sexual appetites; they are lewd and unchaste (*Dictionary.com*).

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY LASCIVIOUS?

While writing his second letter to the church in Corinth, the apostle Paul expresses great concern over the fact that some of the Christians there had given themselves over to sin. Paul specifically points out that some of the Corinthian brethren were involved in the sin of “lasciviousness.” Paul writes, “For I fear, lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I would, and that I shall be found unto you such as ye would not: lest there be debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults; and lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and that I shall bewail many which have sinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness which they have committed” (2 Cor. 12:20-21).

The very fact that some Christians in Corinth stood guilty of lascivious behavior ought to alert us to the fact that we too may be guilty of such. We know for certain that lasciviousness is a deplorable sin, since Paul classes it with such sins as backbiting and fornication, however, we may not have any idea as to what specifically the apostle is condemning when he renounces “lasciviousness.” As a result of our ignorance, we may be committing this sin without even realizing it.

What is Lasciviousness?

The term “lasciviousness” is derived from the Greek word, aselgeia, and is also translated as “lewdness,” “licentiousness,” and “wantonness” in various passages of our English Bibles. The word literally means, “excess, absence of restraint, or indecency” (Vine’s Expository). The sin of lasciviousness is one of shameless conduct. The lascivious person casts off all of the restraint & self-control that is necessary in order to live a godly life, and behaves according to his selfish and indecent desires.

Let's examine some areas of our lives in which we may be committing lasciviousness.

Our Conduct

1. Christians are expected to behave differently than the world. In marking out this difference, Peter says, "For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries; wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you" (1 Peter 4:3-4). While the sinful world around us is a constant picture of lascivious behavior, we are to rise above such conduct.

2. How do we know if we are behaving in a lascivious manner? The apostle Peter obviously includes lascivious behavior in **the context of drinking alcohol, and being driven by one's own lusts**. If we allow ourselves to be guided by our lustful desires, rather than the instruction of God's word, then we will behave in a lascivious manner. This may manifest itself in a variety of ways. We may tell and listen to "dirty" jokes, we may drink alcohol in social settings, we may be driven by our desire to accumulate material wealth, or we may always desire to be where there is sin and debauchery. We will want to be where the "action" is, and we will "follow a multitude to do evil" (Exod. 23:2). **In short, we will talk, look, and act very much like the world. Such is lascivious conduct in a general sense.**

Our Choices of Entertainment

1. We will be affected by the things we see and hear. Jesus said, "That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications,

murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness; all these evil things come from within, and defile the man” (Mark 7:20-23). When we fill our minds full of that which is evil and indecent, the warning of the Lord is that it will not be long before we begin to act in a way that is evil and indecent.

2. What are you filling your mind with? The lascivious man watches movies full of foul language and illicit content, and says, “It won’t affect me.” The lascivious man entertains himself with pornography, foolishly thinking he is in control of the situation. The Lord tells us that those things that occupy our minds will soon be the things that occupy our time (Matt. 5:27-30; Mark 7:20-23).

Our Choice of Clothing

1. Is it “immodest,” or is it “lascivious”? As he begins to list some of the sinful works of the flesh, Paul writes, “Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness” (Gal. 5:19). I have often heard the wearing of short, tight, or revealing clothing referred to as “immodest,” however, such clothing is probably more accurately classed as lascivious. Speaking of lasciviousness and the rest of the works of the flesh, Paul says, “Those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God” (Gal. 5:21).

2. Are you dressing in a lascivious manner? Remember, if your choice of clothing does manifest lasciviousness, the apostle says it will keep you out of heaven. Any clothing that is indecent, intended to incite lust in the hearts of the opposite sex, or displaying a lack of restraint and self-control would be considered lascivious. Parading around in public wearing clothing that is revealing or tight-fitting would be classified as lascivious behavior, along with the wearing of [indecent] swim-suits in public. None of this has place in the life of a Christian. — *David Dann*

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Lasciviousness

Kent Harrell

"Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness....they who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." (Gal. 5:19-21)

From the above passages, we can readily see that lasciviousness will condemn one's soul to an eternity in Hell. It thus behooves us to learn what constitutes lasciviousness and to determine what things or manner of things are lascivious that we might not be guilty of this great sin.

From Thayer's Lexicon, we find that the definition of "lascivious" is: "unbridled lust, excess, licentiousness, lasciviousness, wantonness, outrageousness, shamelessness, insolence....wanton (acts or) manners, as filthy words, indecent bodily movements, unchaste handling of males or females." (Joseph Henry Thayer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, p. 81) We find that Vine defines the word: "denotes excess, licentiousness, absence or restraint, indecency, wantonness.... the prominent idea is shameless conduct." (W. E. Vine, An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, Vol. II, p. 310) "1. Wanton; lewd; lustful. 2. Tending to produce lewd emotions." (Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary). The above definitions may be summed up thusly: **anything that tends to produce a lewd emotion in us or in someone else is lasciviousness.**

Dancing is lasciviousness. The wearing of immodest apparel (short shorts, halters, indecent bathing suits, any other lust-producing clothing) is lasciviousness. Mixed swimming [can be] lasciviousness. The reading of lustful literature is lasciviousness. **Why are such lasciviousness? Because of the effect they produce on you or on someone else.**

Dancing Is Lasciviousness

Dancing involves: close bodily contact, wild gyrations, explicit sexual movements, focusing on the body, sex appeal, sexual stimulation, etc.

A.G Hobbs (tract on Dancing): states that an audience of 1500 men were asked the question, "How many can dance and not have evil thoughts," and not one hand was raised!

Let us see what some authorities have to say about this matter of dancing. J. Edgar Hoover, head of the F.B.I.: "Most juvenile crime has its inception in the dance hall, either public or private." Dr. Phelps, New York City Police: "It is estimated that in New York City. 4,000 women are living the life of infamy, and that three-fourths of these are started on their life of infamy through the dance." Chicago Vice Commission: "Of 300 prostitute girls asked, 'What led you to do wrong, what led you to become a sinner, what led you to become what you are today?' 85% of them said, 'My first step wrong was caused by the modern dance'."

Dr. E. S. Senners, eminent nerve specialist of Chicago and Los Angeles: "I attack the modern dance as a reversion toward savagery. The basic spell of the dance is the spell of illicit physical contact. [It is not safe.] A trail of broken homes proves this." Dr. Thomas C. Whitefield: "The modern dance is condemned precisely at this point. It is not wrong solely because it might lead one to the physical act of fornication, but it is sinful to the degree that it arouses unrestrained desires that cannot be fulfilled under present relations and conditions. When such desires are aroused, the dancing is within itself sinful because it is then a lascivious act."

Christian Dior, designer of women's clothes in Paris Presse, an afternoon newspaper said: "For the first time I have done away with corsets even for dance dresses. I have often heard men complain that in dancing they couldn't feel a living form under women's corsets." T. A. Vogner, former supervisor of the Dancing Academy of Los Angeles and also former president of the Dancing Masters' Association of the Pacific Coast: "No woman can waltz well and waltz virtuously." Arthur Murray, the noted dancing teacher, is quoted by Reader's Digest as saying: "The difference between wrestling and dancing is that, in wrestling, some holds are barred." **In an audience of 1500 men the question was asked: "How many can dance and not have evil thoughts?" Not one hand was raised.**

Dancing is also classed under the items of "revelings" (Gal. 5:21). "A feast with noisy jollity; carouse; spectacular dance performed in procession and pageant" (The Twentieth Century Dictionary). "Inclusive of drinking, feasting, dancing, etc." (Whedon's Commentary). Dr. A. C. Dixon said: "The modern dance is the fine art of covering with music, indelicate, immodest and oftentimes indecent attitudes and postures between men and women."

Next, let us turn our attention to immodest apparel and [some] mixed swimming. These items are condemned by the Scriptures: "In like manner, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel...." (1 Tim. 2:9). Modest means "seemly, orderly, decent." Bathing suits, halters, shorts, and all like clothing are designed so as to accent the physical appeal of the body (and what woman would deny this?).

Such as these tend to arouse inordinate desire (lust) within those who see women so dressed. It is sinful to violate God's will even when we can see no reason for His having commanded a particular thing; but in this matter the reasons for the command are most obvious, for the wearer not only creates and magnifies lust, but becomes, in at least some cases, responsible for a sin or crime on the part of someone else.

The story the newspaper told about the behavior of the American women on board the Santa Maria when Portuguese rebels took over the ship, was very interesting. According to the paper, these women left off wearing "enticing" clothing. The paper said they stopped appearing in shorts and halters and quit going swimming for fear that the rebels might "have designs on them." They had enough sense to know that such lack of clothing would arouse lust in these men. It seems that the world recognizes what many "Christians" do not. "If a bathing suit is not immodest, what would it take?"

Thus, practically any garment can be designed or worn in such a way that it will cause the perversion (in word, thought, and/or deed) of someone. Always dress and always act in the utmost modesty and decency.

"Pornography is big business, and an old one, and the fight to suppress it never ends. Currently the smut trade runs to \$2 billion dollars a year in this country, and the arguments over its effects on the nation's youth are hotter than ever." (Nashville Tennessean, March 15, 1964). The income from the sale of this literature is more than is taken in by the movie box office, or sports entertainment, or the radio and T. V. industry combined! Since it is so big, we have a real threat confronting us. The great danger of exposure to such material is demonstrated in the fact that it is so accessible.

The effects of obscene and licentious publications are clearly evidenced in a statement by J. Edgar Hoover: "I believe pornography is a major cause of sex violence. I am convinced that if we can eliminate the distribution of obscene material among impressionable school-age children we can reduce the current sex crime rate." As parents, we should ever be on guard against all such trash! The Kefauver committee in 1956 found that about 75% of such material is read by college-age students and younger. We cannot afford to think "our children" are not in danger.

Internet Exhibitionism

Lascivious communications are common on social media websites. Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat ... the list is endless. Young women and men are encouraged by the perception of fame and admiration to tease the world and promote the vilest forms of language and salacious photographs.

Amazingly, many who identify themselves as Christians, although they obviously have no understanding of the significance of that term participate in this form of lasciviousness and without hardly a blush. Some teens use these sites innocently, but they are in a minefield of danger and evil influence.

Christian parents should supervise carefully what their youngsters are viewing, as they spend hours of their leisure time on the internet.

It is incomprehensible that many parents will allow their sons and daughters to engage in various forms of lascivious conduct, be it how they dress, their chosen forms of visual entertainment, or profane language. Such actions are sweeping their youngsters down a road to destruction.

Those who take the Scriptures seriously will personally abstain from such practices and train their children in morally pure, respectable behavior. – *Wayne Jackson*

Lasciviousness: A Work of the Flesh

By Richard Boone

Now the works of the flesh are manifest which are these: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God (Gal. 5:19-21).

The churches of Galatia, to whom Paul wrote this epistle, were once under the yoke of Moses' Law, but were made free through Christ (5:1). As they were free, they were not to use their freedom "for an occasion to the flesh" (5:13). He shows in the next verses that the works of the flesh are contrary to those of the Spirit (5:17). He also shows that the works of the flesh are destructive – "they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (5:21; emphasis mine – rb). Because these things are so, we need to be eminently concerned about all of the works of the flesh, and anything "such like." I want to deal with one of these specific: lasciviousness. Please follow carefully and consider it.

To know what we are talking about, we must first understand what lasciviousness means. W.E. Vine, in his Expository Dictionary of N. T. Words, says that lasciviousness "denotes excess, licentiousness, absence of restraint, indecency, wantonness" (Vol. 2, p. 310). J.H. Thayer defines "lasciviousness" as "unbridled lust, excess, licentiousness, wantonness, outrageousness, shamelessness, insolence" (Greek-English Lexicon of the N. T., entry #766). The NKJV says "licentiousness" which means "lacking legal & moral restraints; especially disregarding sexual restraints" (Webster's 9th New Collegiate Dictionary, 1984, p. 688; emphasis mine – rb).

Reader, do you see what is involved in lasciviousness? Do you see that it is a work of the flesh? If we are practicing such, we will have no hope if we do not repent and receive forgiveness of it. While there are many things which promote lasciviousness (songs, TV programs, movies, pornography, dancing, etc.), I want to turn our attention now to one specific thing – **our clothing**.

There are principles in the New Testament which are to govern the apparel which Christians are to wear. They are found in 1 Timothy 2:9-10, “In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety, not with braided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works.” Each of the italicized words are principles by which we are to dress. (Also, while I am here, I realize that Paul is speaking specifically to women. But, I believe and teach that the **same principles apply to men**. God didn’t regulate women’s clothing and then allow men to go nearly naked. Fellows, these guidelines apply to us, too!) What does Paul mean by modest, shame facedness, and sobriety? Consider the following definitions as they are used in 1 Timothy 2:9-10:

Modest: “(kosmios) orderly, well-arranged, decent, . . . is used in 1 Tim. 2:9 of the apparel with which Christian women are to adorn themselves . . .” (Expository Dictionary of N. T. Words, Vine, Vol. 3, p. 79).

Shamefacedness: “(didids) a sense of shame, modesty, is used regarding the demeanor of women in the church, 1 Tim. 2-9” (Ibid., Vol. 4, p. 17).

Sobriety: “(sophrosune) denotes soundness of mind, . . . 1 Tim. 2:9; sound judgment practically expresses the meaning; ‘it is that habitual inner self-government, with its constant rein on all the passions and desires, which would hinder the temptation to these from arising, or at all events from arising in such strength as would overbear the checks and barriers which aidos (shamefacedness) opposes to it’ [Trench]” (Ibid., Vol. 4, pp. 44-45).

Now we understand what is meant by modest, shamefacedness, and sobriety. They refer to sound judgment, a sense of shame, and the self-discipline which we are to have in regards to what we wear.

Let us consider some of the clothing that is “fashionable” and see if it fits the principles of modesty found in 1 Timothy 2:9-10. What about the low-neck and low-back dresses that are worn? Tight jeans (men’s and women’s)? Tight shirts or blouses? Shorts? Swim wear? Can we wear these kinds of clothing which often reveal or accentuate more than they cover, and still be modest, shamefaced, or sober? I think not. Yet many today parade around everywhere (at malls, at, public swimming pools, in the yard, at home, and sometimes in the assemblies, etc.) apparel that would promote lasciviousness. That does not even come close to sound judgment, sober thinking, or having a sense of shame.

Let me ask a question: whether you are a man or woman, would you be embarrassed for people to walk in your bedroom and see you in your underclothes? I hope that you would answer “Yes!” to that question. If you would be embarrassed by that, then why would you publicly wear clothes that cover less than underclothing and sometimes are more suggestive than underclothes? If you would be embarrassed by one, you ought to be embarrassed by the other.

Finally, if we are desiring to please God, then our attitude toward anything that promotes a work of the flesh, should be that which is found in the Scriptures. Since lasciviousness is sin, it is contrary to godly things and is destructive. What should our attitude toward it be? Look at the following verses and we can find out: Rom. 12:1-2,9,21; 1 Cor. 8:13; 10: 32-33; Gal. 6:78; Eph. 5:8-11; Col. 3:5; 1 Thess. 5:22; 2 Tim.2:22; 1 Pet. 1:13-16; 2:11; 3:10-11; 4:1-4; and many others. When we take what these passages say about avoiding evil, they do not tell us to take part, or hang around and see what it is like. They say “Be not conformed . . . Abhor . . . Reprove . . . Mortify . . . Abstain . . . Flee . . . etc.” That is what we will do – if we want to please God.

IS SENSUALITY IN ITSELF SINFUL?

Works of the Flesh: Lasciviousness--Sensuality

Introduction

In this lesson, let us consider the Greek word *aselgeia*, translated “lasciviousness” (KJV) and “sensuality” (NASB), identified by Paul as a soul-condemning work of the flesh (Gal.5:19-21). Principles derived from such a study will help us make proper decisions regarding our conduct, communication, dress, and demeanor, etc.

Definitions

Thomas defines ἀσελγεια [*aselgeia*] as of uncertain origin, meaning “licentiousness, wantonness” [766].

BDAG say it refers to “a lack of self-constraint which involves one in conduct that violates all bounds of what is socially acceptable, self-abandonment.”

According to **Thayer**, *aselgeia* describes “unbridled lust, excess, licentiousness, lasciviousness, wantonness, outrageousness, shamelessness, insolence... wanton (acts or manners, as filthy words, indecent bodily movements, unchaste handling of males and females, etc.”

Louw and Nida say it refers to “behavior completely lacking in moral restraint, usually with the implication of sexual licentiousness. In some languages equivalent of ‘licentious behavior’ would be ‘to live like a dog’ or ‘to act like a goat’ or ‘to be a rooster,’ in each instance pertaining to promiscuous sexual behavior.”

Kittel says that *aselgeia* [licentiousness] is defined as “‘license,’ mostly physical, figuratively spiritual. ‘Debauchery’ or ‘licentiousness’ is the sense in 2 Pet. 2:7 (Sodom and Gomorrah) and Eph.4:19 (the pagan world). Sexual excess is probably meant in Gal.5:19 and certainly so in Rom.13:13; 2 Cor.12:21; 2 Pet. 2:2, 18).”

Vine says that it denotes “excess, licentiousness, absence of restraint, indecency, wantonness.”

The Revel Bible Dictionary defines “lasciviousness” as “wanton, licentious. The Greek word means unrestrained greed, or an animal-like indulgence in any passionate desire. Lasciviousness appears in several lists of immoral behavior (Mark7:22; Gal.5:19). Paul describes its nature well: ‘Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality [lasciviousness, KJV] so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more’ (Eph.4:19).”

Nelson’s Illustrated Bible Dictionary defines “lasciviousness” as the “KJV word for licentiousness.” In turn, it defines “licentiousness” as “undisciplined and unrestrained behavior, especially a flagrant disregard of sexual restraints (Mark7:22; 2 Cor.12:21); (lasciviousness, KJV). The Greek word translated as licentiousness means ‘outrageous conduct,’ showing that licentious behavior goes beyond sin to include a disregard for what is right.”

Occurrences

The Greek word **aselgeia** occurs 10 times in 10 Bible verses (Mark 7:22; Rom. 13:13; 2 Cor. 12:21; Gal. 5:19; Eph. 4:19; 1 Pet. 4:3; 2 Pet. 2:2, 7, 18; Jude 4). In the KJV, it is translated as “filthy,” “lasciviousness,” and “wantonness.” In the NASB, it is translated “licentiousness” (1x), “sensual”(1x), and “sensuality” (8x). Let us examine each of these occurrences in succession.

Relevant Verses

Mark 7:22

To begin with, Jesus reminds us that moral defilement occurs because of evil that lies within the heart. Included within this list, relevant to the topic under discussion, are adultery, fornication, and sensuality (Mk 7:20-23). In this context, **aselgeia** is translated as lasciviousness (KJV, ASV), licentiousness (RSV), sensuality (NASB), and lewdness (NIV, NKJ).

Romans 13:13

Children of light must disavow deeds of darkness, including carousing, drunkenness, sexual promiscuity and sensuality. Those who have put on the Lord Jesus Christ must make no provision for the flesh to fulfill the lust thereof (Romans 13:12-14). Here **aselgeia** is translated as wantonness (KJV, ASV), licentiousness (RSV), sensuality (NASB), debauchery (NIV), and lust (NKJ).

2 Corinthians 12:21

Writing a second time to the Corinthians, Paul remained fearful that many who had sinned would not have repented of their impurity, immorality and sensuality (2 Cor. 12:19-21). Christians must not seek to blend in with the mores and manners of a decadent culture. Conversion is predicated upon repentance, a radical transformation of attitude and action. In this context, **aselgeia** is translated as lasciviousness (KJV, ASV), licentiousness (RSV), sensuality (NASB), debauchery (NIV), lewdness (NKJ).

Galatians 5:19

In listing the works of the flesh, Paul first addresses sins of sexual immorality: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, and lasciviousness. His warning is straightforward: those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God (Galatians 5:19-21). Here **aselgeia** is translated as lasciviousness, (KJV, ASV), licentiousness, (RSV), sensuality, (NASB), debauchery, (NIV), and lewdness, (NKJ).

Ephesians 4:19

Followers of an unregenerate lifestyle face an inescapable paradox: Sensuality and callousness operate in concert (Eph. 4:17-19). An overemphasis on feeling inexorably leads to a loss of the same. Excessive consumption diminishes the pleasure derived from satisfying the appetite. Gluttons devour and savor not. Addicts of sensual pleasure no longer cherish the warmth of hearth & home; nor do they relish the wholesome pleasure of the marriage bed. Instead of rejoicing with the wife of their youth, they seek after forbidden fruit, strange flesh, and exotic pleasures. In the process, their capacity for fulfillment is diminished. In this context, **aselgeia** is translated as lasciviousness (KJV, ASV), licentiousness (RSV), sensuality (NAS, NIV), and lewdness (NKJ).

1 Peter 4:3

Willingness to suffer for the cause of Christ is a true gauge of discipleship. So, also is a reorientation of desire. Affections must be set on things above, not on things of this world. Conversion to Christ means cessation from sin. Accordingly, let us realize that the time already past is sufficient for us to have pursued a course of sensuality. It did not bring lasting pleasure in the past; nor does it do so in the present. Let us, therefore, not waste any more time in such futile pursuits (1 Pet. 4:1-6). Here **aselgeia** is translated as lasciviousness (KJV, ASV), licentiousness (RSV), sensuality (NASB), debauchery (NIV), and lewdness (NKJ).

2 Peter 2:2

In the worst of cases, false prophets are given over to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. Their appeal is rooted in carnality, and many will follow their sensual ways (2nd Peter 2:1-3). In this context, **aselgeia** is translated as pernicious ways (KJV), lascivious doings (ASV), licentiousness (RSV), sensuality (NASB), shameful ways (NIV), and destructive ways (NKJ).

2 Peter 2:7

Sodom and Gomorrah stand as eternal examples of God's judgment upon what is euphemistically called "alternative lifestyles" (2 Pet. 2:4-9). Lot was oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men. In a dramatic display of divine power, God delivered righteous Lot & destroyed the wicked inhabitants of Sodom. Here **aselgeia** is translated as filthy conversation (KJV), lascivious life (ASV), licentiousness (RSV), sensual conduct (NASB), filthy lives (NIV), and filthy conduct (NKJ). Can one who is honest and Biblically-literate question God's critical assessment of homosexuality?

2 Peter 2:18

False teachers are again addressed: Superficially, they may seem impressive. Yet, being devoid of wisdom, they speak great swelling words of vanity. Their followers are weak, ignorant & easily manipulated. Enticing others through appeal to the flesh, proponents of error promise freedom but produce slaves of corruption (2 Peter 2:18-22). In this context, **aselgeia** is translated as wantonness (KJV), lasciviousness (ASV), licentious passions (RSV), sensuality (NASB), lustful desires (NIV), and lewdness (NKJ). For all involved, the latter end is worse than the first.

Jude vs. 4

Sanctification results in preservation if we remain faithful to our calling and earnestly contend for the faith that was once delivered to the saints. Those who would fulfill this charge must beware of those who would turn the grace of God into licentiousness and deny their Lord and Master (Jude 1-4). Here **aselgeia** is translated as lasciviousness (KJV, ASV), licentiousness (RSV, NAS), a license for immorality (NIV), and lewdness (NKJ). Unbelief and immorality go hand in hand.

Relevant Application

As evident in the aforementioned passages, lasciviousness involves the sins of debauchery, excess, indecent conduct, insolence, license, licentiousness, outrageousness, sensuality, shamelessness, unbridled lust, undisciplined behavior, unrestrained, animal-like indulgence in any passionate desire, wanton acts or manners, filthy words, indecent bodily movements, unchaste handling of males and females, etc.

Within the relationship of marriage, sex is wholesome, meaningful, and good, the most intimate expression of a life-long commitment between a man and a woman (Genesis 2:24; 1 Cor. 7:1-4; Hebrews 13:4). Outside of a sanctified marital relationship, sex is dirty, cheap, and sinful, a superficial debasement of God's plan and pattern (1 Cor. 6:9-11; Ephesians 5:3-5). Unfortunately, in today's society, that which is meant to be shared privately between husbands & wives is openly flaunted in public. – Mark Mayberry

Paul manifested great concern for the Galatian Christians who were in danger of seeking to be perfected by the flesh after having begun in the Spirit ([Galatians 3:3](#)). For most of the letter that concern centers on following after the Law of Moses and falling from the grace of Christ in the process ([Galatians 1:6-5:15](#)). Yet Paul maintains the same concern in terms of behavior, warning the Galatian Christians against pursuing the works of the flesh in [Galatians 5:19-21](#):

Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are: fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousies, wraths, factions, divisions, parties, envyings, drunkenness, revellings, and such like; of which I forewarn you, even as I did forewarn you, that they who practise such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

The temptation to practice [sexually deviant behavior](#) was strong among the pagan Gentiles; even though [uncleanness](#) can refer to any sin which would render a person impure, specifically Paul applied the concern to areas of sexual uncleanness. Paul then completed his triad of sexual concerns with lasciviousness.

Jesus spoke of lasciviousness as one of the evil thoughts within a man which defile him in [Mark 7:21-23](#). Paul considered lasciviousness as being inconsistent with walking in the light of day in [Romans 13:13](#).

Paul yearned for many among the Corinthians to repent of their participation in sexually deviant behavior, uncleanness, and lasciviousness in [2 Corinthians 12:21](#). Paul would further condemn lasciviousness as the behavior to which Gentiles gave themselves up in their alienation from God & the depravity of their minds in [Ephesians 4:17-19](#); Peter pronounced a similar condemnation in [1st Peter 4:3-5](#). Peter expressed how Lot was sorely distressed by the lasciviousness of his neighbors in [2nd Peter 2:7](#). Jude warned Christians about those false teachers, likely of a Gnostic variety, who turn the grace of God into lasciviousness & deny Jesus our only Master & Lord in the process ([Jude 1:4](#)); Peter explained how similar false teachers would seek to persuade recent pagan converts to participate in lascivious conduct in [2 Peter 2:18](#).

The New Testament supplies many witnesses who strongly condemn lasciviousness; the Apostles also associated the practice with pagan Gentiles or false teachers living in debased and depraved ways. Yet what is involved in lasciviousness?

“Lasciviousness” is not a term you normally encounter. Sensuality, lustfulness, wantonness, filthiness, depravity, licentiousness, promiscuity, debauchery, lewdness, even luxury represent other terms used to translate the term used by Paul in Greek, *aselgeia*, defined by Thayer as the following:

Unbridled lust, excess, licentiousness, lasciviousness, wantonness, outrageousness, shamelessness, insolence.

Whenever we come upon a Greek term which may be expressed in such a wide range of translations, we must recognize the core concept can't be fully expressed by way of any English idea. *Aselgeia*, like *akatharsia* (uncleanness), features an alpha privative, expressing a negation of a term, most likely "not seemingly" or "not becomingly": the core idea, therefore, involves loss of shame in an individual, who has no problems freely engaging in sexual activity, excessive consumption of food and drink, and fully committing his or her life to the pursuit of pleasures. Gentiles of the Roman world were known for these things, frequently engaging in drinking parties, orgies, and many other shameful deeds. These were done without even a hint of a conscience; in fact, it could be said for the men in the Roman world that you were strange if you did *not* engage in adulterous relationships. The prevalence of erotic imagery painted on the walls of many houses at Pompeii & in the drinking vessels of the Greeks and Romans attests to the widespread nature of such lustful, wanton behavior. Paul most likely did not intend to provide a strict, specific delineation among all the various sins which he condemned as "works of the flesh" in [Galatians 5:19-21](#); we can find a many points of redundancy and overlap among them, and participation in many of them took place in concert.

For our purposes we can highlight at least three specific domains of concern manifested in Paul's triad of sexual works of the flesh in [Galatians 5:19](#): *porneia* (sexually deviant behavior) was focused on the sexually transgressive behaviors being prevalent in the Gentile world; *akatharsia* (uncleanness) focused on spiritually (sometimes even physically) defiling consequences of sexual transgression; *aselgeia*, lasciviousness, focuses on the mentality and the desire which fueled the sexually transgressive behavior and consequences.

In Christ it is not enough to repent of sinful sexual behaviors; just the giving of space to sinful sexual desires, whether acted upon physically or not, is considered committing adultery in the heart ([Matt. 5:27-30](#)). Such is why we maintain the use of the now antiquated term "lasciviousness" for *aselgeia*: lasciviousness involves being inclined to lustful desire and sexual arousal for anyone to whom God has not joined a person in marriage([Hebrews 13:4](#))

The modern Western world proves as saturated with lasciviousness and sensuality as did ancient Rome. We live in an age with easy access to all sorts of pornographic imagery. Sensual, lascivious dancing and cavorting is prominently featured in music videos, teenage dances & collegiate parties. Clothing is tailored to cheekily reveal parts of the body so as to stimulate the sensual imagination of others. While some shame comes on those who participate in pornography, those who participate in sensual dancing or who wear revealing clothing feel little to no shame anymore.

[Furthermore], in society no shame comes upon those who consume pornographic or sensual forms of entertainment. People in society do not think these things to be a big deal and part of the natural order of things. Our society has truly been given over to a debased mind in these matters!

What Paul says about sexually deviant behavior in [1 Cor. 6:18-20](#) has application to lasciviousness. While some aspects of lascivious behavior may lead others to sin, the person who wantonly indulges in lascivious and sensual entertainment or behavior is primarily sinning against himself or herself. Truly, what has been seen can't be unseen: pornography especially has become the predominant means by which most young people in the Western world learn about sex & sexuality, and their desires and expectations are shaped by what they see in porn. The core concept of *porneia*, that which one does with a *porne* or prostitute, is morally abominable. Those who consume pornography must forget how the pixels on the screen most often represent a living human being who has hopes, dreams, her own thoughts and feelings, family members, etc.

Maintaining purity in sexual desire can prove challenging for those who would serve God in Christ, and especially in the midst of such a decadent, depraved culture as our own.

- Ethan R. Longhenry

W.W.J.D. DEFAULT POSITION

Would Jesus Do That?

By David McClister

In the previous article by this same title it was shown that Jesus never did anything that was even morally questionable in the eyes of rational people. And if that is the example which Jesus has left for us, we must live that way also. We also said that we wish to consider three types of behavior in the light of Christ's example. The first type was morally questionable behavior. Let us now consider the second type of behavior, again in the form of a question.

Would Jesus Ever Act So As To Lead Another Person To Sin, Whether In Word, Thought, Or Deed?

We know that Jesus kept His personal behavior above reproach at all times, but His concern for morality did not end with Himself. Jesus was always mindful of His influence upon others, and He never willfully did anything which caused others to stumble (sin). Here again the subject of morally neutral activities is important.

There are many things which are permitted to the Christian which are neither right nor wrong in themselves. But if engaging in these things will influence a weaker person to practice them in excess and thus sin, or if our practice of them will lead another to do them and violate his conscience concerning them, then the Christian ought to have no part in them. We must be conscious of the influence and example we are setting before others, that we not allow it to cause another to sin.

A very good example of this attitude in action in the life of Christ is found in Matthew 17:24-27. It was asked whether Jesus would pay the temple tax which was collected from all Jews. Jesus, as the Son of God, was rightfully exempt from this temple support tax, and thus really was not obligated to pay it. However, lest His example of not paying should cause others to stumble (by refusing to pay the tax they owed), He told Peter to go to the sea and cast a hook. The fish he would catch would have a coin in its mouth sufficient to pay the tax for both Himself and Peter. It is important to notice that *Jesus sacrificed His privilege so that others would not be led astray*. This very same attitude is seen in the life of the apostle Paul. In 1st Corinthians chapter 9 Paul shows us what privileges he gave up for the sake of preaching the gospel of Christ, and he exhorts the Corinthians (and us) to make similar sacrifices if they will help prevent some weaker one from sinning against his conscience or running into excess.

Some may object, however, on the ground of passages such as 1st Peter 2:8. There we are told that Christ is a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense to some, particularly the Jews. Paul makes a similar claim about the Jews and the gospel in 1 Corinthians 2:23. Do not these passages teach us that Jesus is in a very real sense the reason why the Jews rejected the kingdom? We must realize that the Jews did indeed stumble at Christ and His gospel, but not because Jesus willfully wished it. Jesus focused the greater part of His ministry on earth upon the Jews, and the apostles were commissioned to preach to the Jews first. Jesus was a rock of offense to the Jews because they were stubborn and proud, unwilling to humble themselves to obey Him. Only in this sense did Jesus cause the Jews to sin; but, even so, it wasn't a deliberate or intentional result planned by the Lord. It was rather a sad consequence which the Jews brought upon themselves. See Matthew 23:37-39 and Romans 10:1-3. *The fact remains that Jesus never intentionally or deliberately acted so as to cause another to sin.*

Jesus was constantly aware of the kind of influence He should be leaving before others, and He never left a bad influence or example for anyone. He never did or said anything that might encourage someone to act recklessly or against his conscience. And so, must His disciples be. Jesus described us, the citizens of His kingdom, as the light of the world and the salt of the earth (Matt. 5:13-16). Both of these metaphors convey the idea of influence. We are to be influences for good in this world. It is our job to make this world a better place by our influence (which is molded by the gospel).

Now let us again examine some specific applications taken from the activities which some try to justify as harmless or morally neutral. We could mention dancing again in this connection. Jesus would never have done it even if it were morally indifferent, simply because it would have left the wrong kind of influence: it would have led others to lust. We could also mention the wearing of immodest clothes again in this connection, and for the same reason. But let us look at two more activities which some defend, and ask, “Would Jesus do this?”

Drinking (Even Socially): Would Jesus Do That?

Is the picture we have of Jesus one of Him going up into the mountain to pray and carrying along a six-pack of beer? Can we picture Jesus talking to Nicodemus about the new birth while both are seated at the local bar sipping on martinis? Certainly not. Jesus would have refused to allow anyone to think that He in any way condoned the image that the world has of alcohol. The world equates drinking (and the world is not always so quick to make or acknowledge the difference between social drinking and drunkenness which some press) with carousing, reveling, rebellion, and lawlessness (and it is naive to think otherwise). Everyone – even the alcoholic – will admit that drinking kills thousands of people every year in one way or another, Certainly Jesus would never have let anyone suppose that He approved of it in any way. And if Jesus would not, neither should we.

“Stretching The Truth” or Hiding Part Of It: Would Jesus Do That?

There is a common saying, “What you do not know will not hurt you.” It is often used to justify the practice of keeping back part of the truth when that truth may make one look bad in the eyes of others. Equally problematic is the practice of exaggerating or overemphasizing some parts of the truth in order to change the impression the truth may have upon others. Again, we ask, would Jesus ever have done that? The answer is a flat “no.” Jesus always instructed me to speak honestly and truthfully with others. He denounced the Pharisaic system which allowed a man to make an oath and break it (Matt. 23:16-22). He and His apostles always stressed that whatever we say must be the honest truth (Matt. 5:37; Jas. 5:12). Thus, as we live to copy Jesus’ example which never misled anyone, we must always speak and practice the truth. Anything else may cause others to sin.

Jesus was above reproach not only personally, but also in His contacts with & influence upon others. Not once do we ever observe Him doing or saying anything which was willfully designed to harm another spiritually. Moreover, He even sacrificed some privileges He had the right to enjoy out of a concern for how others would be influenced by His engaging in them. His influence was nothing but good.

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SUDDENNESS PREPARED

THREE LEVEL MORTIFY

- **Molecular Level:**
- Death-In-Life by Daily Starvation
- {Lord's Supper}
- **Cellular Level:**
- Death-In-Life Program Apoptosis
- {Buried in Baptism}
- **Tissue Level:**
- Death-In-Life by Healing Process
- {Life of Continual Prayer}

SUDDENNESS PREPARED **FIVE STATES FIVE STEPS**

Five States of the Soul:

- **EXEMPTION:**
- Ezekiel 18: 20; Matthew 18: 1 – 3
- **CONDEMNATION:**
- Galatians 3: 22
- **JUSTIFICATION:**
- Romans 5: 1, 2; 8: 1, 2
- **DAMNATION:**
- Matthew 23: 3; Mark 16: 16
- **GLORIFICATION:**
- Romans 8: 17, 30; II Thess. 1: 7 - 12

SUDDENNESS PREPARED **FIVE STATES FIVE STEPS**

Five Steps For Saving:

- **HEARING:**
- Romans 10: 17; Matthew 7: 24 - 27
- **BELIEVING:**
- Hebrews 11: 6; Mark 16: 15, 16
- **REPENTING:**
- Acts 2: 38; 17: 30; Luke 13: 3
- **CONFESSING:**
- Matthew 10: 32, 33; Acts 8: 36, 37
- **BAPTISM:**
- Romans 6: 3 – 5; Acts 8: 36 - 38