

Moral Living In An Immoral World

By Jimmy Stevens

INTRODUCTION: Godly faith is designed for facing adversity and sinful challenges. The strength of our faith can be observed in how we handle these challenges. By being well informed about these challenges as well as God's word, we can learn how to strengthen our faith to defeat the temptations we encounter.

I. Marriage between a “real biological” man and a “real biological” woman is a wonderful relationship designed and ordained by God.

- A. Since the creation of man and woman, God intended for them to have a sexual relationship to reproduce people like themselves on the earth.
 - 1. Gen 2:19-25, 1:27-28, God created the sexual union so humans could “*multiply*” to fill the earth. This is implied by, “*father and mother*”, V 24. This sexual union was ordained by God for the good of mankind only in the context of marriage. God designed the beauty of human nakedness and sexual desire to be an important part of what continually draws a husband and wife together binding them with a life-long bond and establishing a home and family. Only in marriage should human nakedness and sexual desire be enjoyed without sin and shame. This special, secret treasure is nobody else's business on earth but theirs.
 - 2. Gen 3:16, 1 Cor 7:1-5, God wants husbands and wives to share nakedness and sexual desire only with each other and not with anyone else.
- B. Nakedness and sexual desire are a natural part of every normal human being, but they must always be controlled so that they are not shared with anyone except their marriage partner.

II. God's law of marriage for life is specifically designed to protect and preserve these special, secret treasures of the sexual relationship between husband and wife. (Matt 19:1-9, Mark 10:1-9, Rom 7:2).

- A. Remarriage after the death of a spouse, continues to respect those treasures.
- B. God's prohibition of divorce also seeks to preserve those treasures.
 - 1. Adultery shares these treasures with the wrong person, therefore the adulterer forfeits the right to enjoy future marriage—while at the same time God grants the innocent victim of adultery the right to divorce the adulterer and share these treasures with another, eligible mate in marriage.
 - 2. Divorce for just any cause except fornication or adultery threatens to share those special treasures with someone who has no right to them.
- C. Throughout the history of mankind, people have diluted the importance of preserving for marriage this unique, intimate sexual relationship. Adultery weakens the determination to protect and preserve the marriage. So, the adulterer will often choose to separate or divorce. His former relationship no longer has that special bonding power because he/she has been drawn to someone else's secret treasures. The innocent victim no longer feels comfortable with the mate who has betrayed their privately shared treasures. Reconciliation, if it is accomplished, is long and very difficult, because a sacred trust is broken. ***“Trust is easier maintained than regained.”***
- D. In the last 75 years or so, a correlation can be clearly seen between the rise of divorce among married people and the increased relaxed attitude toward preserving the personal, sexual treasures that help strengthen the relationship in marriage.
- E. One of the most aggressive attacks that has weakened this sacred bond between married couples is society's loose attitude toward preserving the power of the attractiveness of the human body that should be shared only in the unique sexual relationship in marriage.
 - 1. The importance of preserving sexual treasures is either overlooked or intentionally flaunted, especially in raising children. This failure is not just an issue among married adults but is cultivated early in childhood in many families. It is a blatant disregard that surrounds us in nearly every activity in what may be considered normal in our society.
 - 2. It is the problem of immodestly exposing and displaying the nakedness of the human body outside of the special, private relationship of marriage, and it is condoned and promoted by our society.

III. The focus of our study is summed up in Heb 13:4, “*Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.*”

- A. This text declares two things:

1. In marriage there is the God-given natural desire to embrace the beauty of the human body in the sexual relationship called “the marriage bed”.
 2. To share that same beauty of the human body outside of marriage is a sin worthy of eternal condemnation.
- B. **“Marriage is honorable”** God honors this timeless relationship. Mark 10:6-9. The primary point of the expression “*the two shall become one flesh*” is that they have the God-given right to share their bodies in a way that no other relationship allows. It defines one of the greatest privileges of marriage.
- C. **“among all”** God requires every human to honor this institution of marriage at all times.
1. The **unmarried** are to respect and preserve themselves in a way that honors the marriage law of God whether they chose to marry or not.
 2. The **married** are to respect and preserve themselves for each other and not share that special privilege with anyone else on earth as long as they live.
- D. **“and the bed undefiled”**
1. **“bed”** identifies the sexual relationship. Deut 27:20, “*father's bed*”. An **“undefiled”** bed describes God’s approved sexual relationship in a marriage.
 2. Anything associated with human nakedness and the arousal of sexual desires, whether mentally—thoughts; verbally—words; physically—touch, or visually—including apparel or suggestive bodily movements, are all part of the special secret treasures to be enjoyed **ONLY IN MARRIAGE**.
- E. **“but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.”**
1. It is implied from the context of Heb 13:4, that fornication and adultery are dishonorable because it involves engaging in the same kind of sexual activity outside the marriage “bed”.
 2. While **Honorable** marriage and **Dishonorable** fornication or adultery are as far apart as God is from Satan, both are defined by the same association with sexual fulfillment.
 3. Anything associated with human nakedness and the arousal of sexual desires, whether mentally—thoughts; verbally—words; physically—touch, or visually—including apparel or suggestive bodily movements, are all part of the sins of fornication and adultery and are **NEVER HONORABLE** outside of or before marriage.

IV. What promotes sexually immoral thoughts and conduct in our world today?

- A. Mental portrayal of the nakedness of those outside of marriage. **WITHOUT MENTAL IMAGES ASSOCIATED WITH HUMAN NAKEDNESS—NO ISSUE.**
1. Therefore, preventing images of nakedness is a major part of keeping hearts pure. This requires an understanding of what is appropriate (sometimes called “modest”) **apparel** and **conduct**.
 2. **2-Way Relationship**. We are all responsible for controlling our own eyes and thoughts to keep them pure. We are also responsible for how we appear in the presence of others to respect their efforts in controlling their eyes and thoughts.
- B. Two keys to understanding what God teaches on appropriate apparel and conduct.
1. **First**. Nakedness is to be shared, mentally and physically, only in marriage.
 2. **Second**. Determine what is shameful nakedness outside of marriage and cover it.
 3. Therefore, the subject of modest apparel and conduct is **DIRECTLY RELATED TO THE MARRIAGE BED, WHETHER OR NOT ONE IS MARRIED**. It revolves around the God-given, special, secret treasure of the sexual relationship in marriage. Experienced outside of that relationship, God calls it sin.

IV. Can we know what God calls modest?

- A. **“No set line for modesty.”** (Some say)
1. **“God did not draw a line for modest apparel.”** ARE THEY SURE ABOUT THAT?
 2. **“Cannot use the Old Testament because we are not under the Old Law”** ARE WE DEALING WITH AN OLD LAW—NEW LAW MATTER?
 3. **“Godly men and women will just know what is modest.”** IF THEY KNOW THEN THEY CAN DRAW THE LINE. BUT IF THERE IS NO LINE HOW CAN THEY KNOW.

4. **Would God give mankind such a powerful and potentially dangerous human desire without clearly defining the guidelines for using it properly?**
5. **How would God's laws on shameful nakedness be enforced if He did not clearly define shameful nakedness?** Consider the violations related to this. Lev 18, 20

B. We **can** know what is **modest** by first understanding what is **shameful nakedness**.

C. Both OT and NT can be used since nakedness is a natural human trait.

1. *Patriarchal, Mosaic, and Christian* human anatomy and psychology have not changed. (Entire Bible. Ex: Judah & Tamar, David & Bathsheba, Amnon & Tamar, Jesus—Matt 5:28, 1 Cor 5, many more)
2. 1 Cor 10:6, *Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted.*

V. Where is God's line between shameful nakedness and modest apparel and conduct?

- A. **Adam & Eve**, Gen 3:6-10, 21, Their choice of clothing still left them shamefully naked before God. V 7, "coverings", "apron, girdle coverings of the waist and hip area." God made proper garments. "a tunic, worn next to the skin...generally with sleeves, to the knees, but seldom to the ankles." "from to cover, coat, garment, robe." He made this a permanent design for **both** men and women. V 21, "them". "Lines" of covering *shoulders* and *knees* in Genesis 3 are consistent with what the rest of the Bible describes as the proper covering of the body.
- B. God uses the same standard of shameful nakedness both **literally** or **figuratively**.
 1. **THIGHS:** Exo 28:42-43, 20:26, Isa 47:1-3. The knee is a natural, visual, and psychological break in that section of the body. The more the thigh is exposed the greater the anticipation of viewing something higher with sinful thoughts. Ask any normal man for further confirmation.
 2. **HIPS:** (midsection). 2 Sam 10:4, Isa 20:2-4
 3. **BREASTS:** (chest). A woman's breasts are to give pleasure to her husband and **not other men**. **The exposed cleavage of breasts** is a major part of that attraction. Prov 5:15-20, Ezek 23:3, 8, 10, 18, 21, Hos 2:2-5
- C. When clothing or bodily movements draw visual attention to the **thighs, hips, and chest areas**, they can excite sexual desires whether for **good** in marriage or **evil** and **shame** associated with fornication. It is foolish to argue that God has not drawn a "line".
 1. Speaking for men, God intentionally designed the male mind to be drawn to the attractiveness of the exposed female in the honorable relationship of the marriage bed. He established these "lines" to help all of us fight the battle against causing others to sin with their eyes and hearts.
 2. Wives, daughters, and sisters in Christ, the battle against immorality in this world is strong against husbands, sons, and brothers in Christ. Following God's lines in appearance can go a long way to help prevent lust and sin. All males and females should be on guard.

VI. Shameful nakedness—apparel and body language can cultivate shameful images.

- A. **Bodily movements.** Even fully clothed, body language can suggest nakedness. Dancing, cheerleading, provocative walking, movements, or poses. Godly people turn away their eyes and thoughts, while ungodly people stare and lust. Hand and facial gestures, suggestive words, lips, and eyes, can stimulate sensual thoughts. Prov 5-7
- B. **Tight fitting.** Fully covered yet still exposing shameful nakedness. (ex: skinny jeans, leggings or tights with short skirts, or no skirts).
- C. **Special occasions.** Do not change sexual desire. Men don't think occasion and ungodly men will ignore the occasion and lust. Thin strap, strapless or low-cut formal "**prom**" or "**wedding gowns**". Athletics, drama, swimming, or outdoor recreational attire both male and female. **Don't let anyone talk you into surrendering your marriage treasures by insisting you wear immodest clothing for the occasion.**
- D. **Short and revealing.** Obviously. The exposed human body alone stirs thoughts, even without provocative gestures.
- E. **Exposing the special treasure of marital nakedness IS THE ISSUE.**

VII. "Godliness" and "good works" promote modest apparel and conduct.

- A. **1 Tim 2:9-10**, “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, 10 but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works.”
1. **“Moderation”, “modest”**, avoids drawing attention to oneself for the wrong reason. Includes extravagant attire, scant attire, or even descent attire badly displayed. The kind of person we are is the kind of person we will attract. When people are immodest, decent people turn their heads away. Who’s left looking?
 2. **“Godliness with good works”** (context), “in like manner” both men and women. Too often, style is more important than **“godliness and good works”**. Can we attract people with shameful nakedness, **then ask them to study the Bible?**
 3. **“Propriety”, “proper”** proper for pleasing God. Godly minds ask first “What would please God?”, then dress and act accordingly. Phil 1:9-10. A person with this kind of mind has no problem with proper dress and conduct.
 4. Godly minds understand that immodest apparel and conduct are the **bait used in fornication**. (whether fornication is committed or not). Therefore... 1 Cor 6:18, “Flee sexual immorality”. 2 Tim 2:22, “Flee also youthful lusts;”. 1 Th 5:22, “Abstain from every form of evil.”
- C. **Teach children early**. The home is God’s sex education environment.
1. The age of a child’s understanding of sexual matters is unknown. Establish in early childhood the habit of modesty before they mature with questions about sexual matters and it will make explaining modesty to them easier.
 2. **“Isn’t that teaching that their bodies are shameful?”** NO! That is propaganda from immoral minds. It is teaching that the body is a powerful, wonderful, special treasure worth preserving. Teach that God has given them a powerfully special treasure that belongs to no one else on earth except their husband or wife. Teach that modest apparel and conduct are how God wants them to respect themselves and their marriage. **INDOCTRINATE THEM!**
 3. **Husbands** and **fathers** are the best advisors for wives and daughters on how men look at women, and what is proper dress. **Husbands can help their wives cheat on them by not encouraging them to preserve their nakedness from other men while wives may not even be aware of it.** Care enough to protect your wives’ and daughters’ treasures.
 4. **Wives** and **mothers** help preserve decency in their husbands and sons. **All be humble enough to listen.**
 5. Sadly, parents teach children to dress and act like fornicators (**costumes, uniforms, etc.**), then fear for their morality as they get older.
 6. Sadly, society promotes the things it abhors. (**registered sex offenders, child molesters, sexual assaults, etc., while promoting dancing, immodesty, etc.**).
- D. **Professional advice for the workplace**, (Ginny Ervin, music education teacher, Sam Houston State University), “Sit or bend over in front of a mirror to see what your students see.” **SEE WHAT OTHERS WILL SEE!** Look at yourself in a mirror or ask someone to help you.

CONCLUSION: The gift of human sexuality is beautifully designed by God to be expressed and enjoyed as a special treasure only in the marriage relationship. Proper attire and conduct are necessary for preserving that treasure. Use your godly character to attract others. 1 Pet 3:3-4