

Basic Training 9.4 Godliness and Modesty

2 Cor 6:16-7:1

16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,

18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

7:1 Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

I. Review

A. Holiness and Mercy

1. The last lesson in the Basic Training series was May 17, and we considered the question: Did Jesus Cancel Out the Moral Law?
2. We considered two opposites in God's character: his extreme holiness and his capacity to give mercy to sinners.
3. As an example of where God's holiness and His mercy meet, we considered the Ark of the Covenant.
4. Once, an Israelite man died after touching it.
5. Another time when the Philistines stole the Ark, all the people of Ashdod were struck with horrible tumors in sensitive body areas until they returned the Ark to Israel.
6. And then after the Philistines returned it to Israel, some residents of Beth-shemesh looked into the Ark out of curiosity, and God smote 50,070 of the residents for that disrespectful act.

7. Survivors said:
1 Sam 6:20 And the men of Beth-shemesh said, Who is able to stand before this holy LORD God? and to whom shall he go up from us?
8. The point is, the Ark of the Covenant contained the stone commandments that God Himself had engraved with His finger. That represented not only His presence in Israel, but also his unapproachable holiness and His untouchable high moral standards.
9. Yet even given that, the lid that topped the Ark was called the Mercy Seat, and it was exactly from that spot that God manifest His presence and on the Day of Atonement when God forgave Israel's sins.
10. How amazing it is that God's holiness and God's mercy met at that spot where He manifest His presence.
11. And since Jesus is God, that exact thing was true in Jesus' conduct when God manifest in the flesh.

12. The Holy God hung out with sinners needing mercy with the purpose of developing relationships and even friendships with them so that He could redeem them and transform them according to His Word.
 - B. Transformed lives
 1. When those sinners were in Jesus' presence and had received forgiveness and healing, Jesus sent them away on a new path with a new command:
*John 8:11 She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: **go, and sin no more.***
 2. Or in another case:
*John 5:14 Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, **thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.***
 3. Or like when the former swindling tax collector gave half of his wealth to the poor

and restored those he swindled four times what he had taken.

4. The point is, Jesus did not cancel the moral standards of the law. In fact, He took the commandments they were familiar with, and anchored them to a stricter standard than they were observing.
5. Don't murder became don't express unjust anger.
6. Don't commit adultery became, don't lust in your heart.
7. He also tightened the standards for when divorce was permitted to only when their spouse had broken the 7th commandment regarding adultery.
8. There were other familiar laws that people had reinterpreted to justify their bad behavior, but Jesus tightened up the law by returning it to its original intent of prioritizing righteous and moral behavior among God's people.

9. So, no, Jesus did not do away with or compromise God's moral standards, He reiterated their importance and associated them with how we live out and demonstrate our love for God: "If ye love me, keep my commandments." (John 14:15)
10. And in the New Testament letters, we find many examples of the apostles also reinforcing our call to the righteous lifestyle.

1 Thess 4:7 For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.

- c. End of what law?
 1. Let us quickly address the statement that we often make concerning the law, that the law is not for us to follow in the church age. What does that mean?
 2. Paul wrote to new Christians in Galatia, many of them Gentiles, who had been approached by some Jewish believers who requiring Gentiles to first convert to

Judaism before becoming followers of Jesus. Here is how Paul introduced the problem:

Gal 2:4 And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage:

3. In 14-16 he asked, Why try to compel Gentiles to live as do the Jews? Works of the law won't justify a person. And in chapter 3:11 he added that no man is justified by the law before God.
4. So what laws was Paul referring to that some were trying to enforce on the new Gentile believers?
 - a. Circumcision (Gal 5:2) (Acts 15:1 reports that this group even said a person cannot be saved unless they were circumcised).
 - b. The observation of annual festivals (Gal 4:10)

- c. Dietary laws (Colossians 2:16)
5. These were the issues that caused such great dissension in the church, Paul said those that believed this were fallen from grace:
Gal 5:4 Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.
 6. To put this in proper perspective, Paul was not trying to do away with the all requirements of the law, for in Galatians 5, Paul went on to list several laws that were still to be enforced.
 7. He listed laws identified by works of the flesh, including prohibitions against such things as adultery, fornication, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, envy, murder, drunkenness, etc. All of these were covered in the law.
 8. And the warning is, they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.
Gal 5:21 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.***

9. The laws that should not be enforced on Gentiles (according to Paul and Jesus) were those that related to Jewish cultural identity.
10. **Circumcision** identified a male as a Jew. But Colossians 2:11-12 tell us we are circumcised in our hearts when we are buried with Him in baptism which cut part of us away—our sins.
11. The **annual festivals**. Passover, Pentecost, and Day of Atonement, were shadows of things to come that pointed to what Jesus accomplished.
12. And with the **dietary laws**, they led to many additional practices about washing and other prohibitions that Jesus said do nothing to defile a person's soul.

13. Jesus said what we eat does not defile us, but what comes out of our heart does. And He mentioned some things that do defile that are addressed in the law: adultery, fornication, murder, theft, covetousness, blasphemy, and others. (Mark 7:14-23)
 14. And of course, those laws that **regulated burnt offerings for sin**, Jesus fulfilled those so they were not to be continued. (Heb 10:8-10)
- D. Called unto holiness: be set apart
1. That leads us to our lesson for tonight. God called us out of uncleanness and into holiness.
 2. Holiness, whether it is discussed in the Old testament or New, is part of our calling. The word “old” is in front of it does not mean expired or irrelevant.
 3. The New Testament contains hundreds of references to the Old Testament so if we were to incorrectly decide we must

disregard the Old Testament, the New Testament would be nothing but a very thin pamphlet.

4. So let us look at what it means to be set apart to God from God whole story in His Book, the Bible.
5. Holiness actually means “set apart” or “separate” (2 Cor 6:16-7:1), so in a practical way, we are separated from some things and also separated to other things.
6. The church has the responsibility to learn and teach how to apply the scripture to how we live our lives so we can accomplish being set apart.
7. While we can never hope to attain to God’s level of holiness, yet we are to strive to make Jesus and the principles of the His commands and the writings of the apostles, our standard.

II. The principle of modesty

A. Introduction

1. As we pursue a lifestyle of holiness, we begin to feel the need to put as much distance between us and our old sinful lifestyle as possible as a safety margin.
2. Some of the things to separate from that we discussed in recent lessons were: sexual immorality, idol worship, stealing, getting drunk, wild parties, cheating, sorcery, hatred, jealousy, causing division, murder.
3. Moving on to principles of godliness and modesty.

B. Holy apparel

1. God cares about how we present our bodies
The apostle Paul asked the church in Rome to give their bodies to God in holiness.

Romans 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

2. God takes interest in how we present our bodies, and the scriptures provide guidelines for modesty.
- c. Holy garments are for Glory and Beauty
 1. We find the phrase “holy garments” in eleven different passages in scripture to describe the clothing that the priests wore in their service to God.
 2. We are not called to copy the fashions that were popular in 1500 BC, but by a careful study of those requirements, we can discover principles of modesty that God set in place for that which He calls “holy garments”
 3. To start with:
*Ex 28:2 And thou shalt make holy garments for Aaron thy brother for **glory** and for **beauty**.*
 4. First, holy garments have two basic requirements: they are to provide glory and beauty.

5. That phrase is repeated in v. 40 as some specific garments are noted:
*Ex 28:40 And for Aaron's sons thou shalt make coats [tunics], and thou shalt make for them girdles [waste sash], and bonnets [a headband or linen wrap] shalt thou make for them, for **glory** and for **beauty**.*
6. “Glory” means something that reflects reverent dignity, or is pleasing to God.
7. “Beauty” means something that reflects stylishness, or is pleasing to the sight.
8. Following the two principles in that verse, our garments can be holy garments when they are pleasing to God and also pleasing to the sight.
9. Dressing holy does NOT mean putting on a burlap sack that covers you from head to toe with holes cut for the eyes and nose.
10. Our clothing should be beautiful according to what we can afford. 1 Timothy adds the balance that we should not adorn ourselves with ornaments and costly array.

*1 Timothy 2:9 In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in **modest apparel**, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array;*

11. Holy garments are for glory and beauty but also reasonable in cost and not with embellished adornment. Next, they are modest.

D. Holy Garments are Modest

1. As we just read, our apparel must be modest. We will look at several verses to learn the meaning of biblical modesty as it pertains to our clothing.

1 Timothy 2:9 In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel...

2. **Definitions:** Modest comes from the Greek word, kosmio, which means respectable, proper, suitable, well-arranged, seemly, modest.

- a. The definition of modest from Webster's Unabridged Dictionary is: Restraining within due limits of propriety; not forward, bold, boastful, or presumptuous; rather retiring than pushing one's self forward; not obstructive; as, a modest youth; a modest man.
- b. Observing the proprieties of the sex; not unwomanly in act or bearing; free from undue familiarity, indecency, or lewdness; decent in speech and demeanor.
3. A holy garment is decent and properly covers what should be covered. So what exactly should be covered? In case common sense doesn't tell you, the scriptures provide some practical guidance.

III. Biblical modesty

A. The high priest's holy garment

1. Leviticus 8 and 16 provide details about what Aaron, the high priest, wore in his service for God, and calls them, “holy garments.”

*Lev 8:7 And he put upon him the **coat** [undergarment shirt-like tunic], and girded him with the **girdle** [waste sash to hold the tunic in place], and clothed him with the **robe** [outer shirt-like garment reaching below the knees], and put the **ephod** [strapped to shoulders reaching over chest and to the thighs] upon him, and he girded him with the curious girdle of the ephod, and bound it unto him therewith.*

2. *Lev 16:4 He shall put on the holy linen coat [shirt-like tunic], and he shall have the linen breeches [leggings/pants] upon his flesh, and shall be girded with a linen girdle [sash/belt] , and with the linen mitre [turban] shall he be attired: these are **holy garments**; therefore shall he wash his flesh in water, and so put them on.*

3. Practically speaking, the holy garments provided covering in this way (based on translation notes of these verses in the NET):
 - a. The coat or tunic was like a shirt worn against the skin that covered the upper body
 - b. The breeches, or leggings, covered his hips and legs
 - c. The girdle was a sash that served as a belt that covered the waist
 - d. The robe was an outer shirt-like garment that reached below the knees
 - e. The miter was a head wrap that covered his head.
4. We find head coverings were also addressed in the New Testament, where we learn that our hair is given for our covering.
5. We have instructions provided there for both males and females (long hair for women and short hair for men).

6. Exodus 28 also describes Aaron's garments, and in doing so, uses the phrase, "covering our nakedness" to tell what body parts must be covered for modesty:

Exodus 28:42 And thou shalt make them linen breeches [trousers] to cover their nakedness; from the loins [middle of back] even unto the thighs [legs down to the knee] they shall reach:

7. They even avoided steps in front of the altar that would allow someone to see under these garments.
8. The scriptural principles reveal that holy garments served to modestly cover God's people.

B. Judgment of shame

1. Some scriptures speak of shame associated with immodestly uncovering body parts that happened during a time of captivity.

Isaiah 47:2-3

2 Take the millstones, and grind meal:

*uncover thy locks, make bare the leg,
uncover the thigh, pass over the rivers.
3 Thy nakedness shall be uncovered, yea,
thy shame shall be seen: I will take
vengeance, and I will not meet thee as a
man.*

2. These prisoners were shamed by working under hard labor at the mill, removing the proper head covering, and showing their leg and thigh.
3. Notice that what is called “nakedness” are areas of the body that should be modestly covered, in this case, the upper portion of the leg.
4. Other body parts that are to be covered are a woman’s breasts (Ezekiel 16:7-8), our buttocks (Isaiah 20:4), our groin area or “secret parts” (1 Samuel 5:9)
5. And in the first judgment of sin, we find that man’s first attempt to clothe themselves was with leaves, but God

provided something more modest, made of animal skins.

- c. What is modest covering?
 - 1. When we compile these verses, we get a good set of biblical principles of modesty. Keep these body parts and skin covered when in public:
 - a. Your upper body—avoid sleeveless and low-cut tops
 - b. Your waist—avoid tops and shirts that reveal any part of the belly or back
 - c. Your hips—avoid drooping or short garments that reveal skin in this area
 - d. Your legs to the knee—avoid garments that reveal the knees
 - 2. When we select garments for ourselves and our children, keep these principles of modesty in mind when in public places.
 - 3. Wearing modest clothing reflects that we honor and respect our bodies that God gave us.

4. Jesus said a man can commit adultery by merely looking at a woman lustfully, so to avoid that, God gave standards of modest dress, and also directs men to look away and not behold a woman lustfully.
5. Men must keep themselves modest for the sake of women and women must be modest for the sake of men.
6. *Ex 28:2 And thou shalt make holy garments for Aaron thy brother for **glory** and for **beauty**.*