

**PURPOSE OF STUDY:** To show that our dress is a reflection of our character and commitment to God, and that He expects His followers to dress in a way that reveals to others that they find their personal value and sense of belonging in Him rather than the customs of the world.

**TEXTS:**

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| 1. 1PE 2:9-12              | 8. EX 32:3; 33:5-6             |
| 2. RO 13:14 (GA 3:27)      | 9. JDG 8:24                    |
| 3. LK 8:26-7, 35           | 10. IS 3:16-21                 |
| 4. GE 3:6-7, 21 (REV 3:18) | 11. HO 2:13 (EZE 23:39-40, 44) |
| 5. 1TM 2:8-10; 1PE 3:3-4   | 12. REV 12, 17 (PS 19:1)       |
| 6. EZE 28:13, 17           | 13. 2KI 9:30 (JE 4:30)         |
| 7. GE 35:1-4               | 14. RO 12:2                    |

**THE STUDY:**

1. **Does the way we live have an effect our witness? 1PE 2:9-12**  
*Most definitely. The Bible says we are God's "own special people," and as such, we are called to have our conduct "honorable among the Gentiles" so they may give glory to God for what He has done for us. First appearances can mean everything. "You never get a second chance to make a first impression."*
2. **What does the Bible have to say about our outward appearance? RO 13:14 (GA 3:27)**  
*When we accept Christ, we are said to "put on" Christ, as we would put on an article of clothing. This means that when people look at us, they should see Christ.*
3. **Will our own personal belief system affect the way we dress? LK 8:26-7, 35**  
*Absolutely! While the man was controlled by the devil, he was naked; when cleansed of the evil spirit, He was "clothed and in his right mind." In the same way, genuine conversion will produce a marked change in a person's dress.*
4. **Why did Adam and Eve try to cover themselves with fig leaves? GE 3:6-7, 21 (REV 3:18)**  
*When Adam and Eve sinned, they realized they were naked, and they tried to cover themselves, but the covering was insufficient. When God saw their nakedness, he clothed them "in tunics of skin" – a complete covering as opposed to the scant fig leaf covering. These skins were not only to provide protection from the elements, but also to cover the shame of their nakedness.*

*Shame is the painful feeling of doing something disgraceful or dishonorable that exposes you in the most personal and private areas of life. If clothing is protection from shame, then we can conclude that our self-image is profoundly affected by our clothing. This means that clothing, rather than being an unimportant "external," is actually very much a part of who we are, and is by nature quite personal and important to us (just think of how much time we spend thinking about it).*
5. **How does the Bible say the Christian should clothe himself or herself? 1TM 2:8-10; 1PE 3:3-4**  
*Holy, modestly, respectably and discretely, with good works, which is to be expected from a person professing godliness. It is explicitly stated that the Christian's dress should not consist of that which only draws attention to oneself, especially those things worn for status or "fitting in". Specifically mentioned are high-priced fashions, hairstyles and jewelry.*

**6. How was Lucifer adorned in heaven? EZE 28:13, 17**

*Lucifer was adorned with jewels, and his heart was lifted up because of His splendor and magnificence. While we don't want to put the blame on the jewels or their maker, it would seem that God saw clearly that if a perfect being was drawn to his own beauty, how much of a snare might this be to the fallen human race? If we study through the Bible, we find a pattern of jewelry being associated with worldliness, pride and idolatry.*

**7. When Jacob and his family decided to make a recommitment of their lives to God, what did they do? GE 35:1-4**

*They disposed of their idols and jewelry. Note that they were one and the same.*

**8. What did the Israelites make the golden calf out of, and how did God respond? EX 32:3; 33:5-6**

*The calf was fashioned out of the people's jewelry. God commanded that they put off their ornaments so He would know what to do with them. The Bible says that they stripped themselves of their jewelry from that point forward ("from Mt. Horeb onward" – ESV, NASB).*

**9. What distinction do we later find between Israel and the surrounding nations? JDG 8:24**

*The Bible explains that they had earrings because they were Ishmaelites. The reader would naturally question because the Bible says they stripped themselves of their jewelry back at Mt. Horeb.*

**10. How does God portray His people in apostasy? IS 3:16-21**

*He likens them to a seductive woman adorned with fancy clothing and jewelry.*

**11. What was the tendency of God's people when they began to adorn themselves? HO 2:13 (EZE 23:39-40, 44)**

*They are dressing to impress the world and not the Lord. It is evidence that the desire for their lovers (the world) has become greater than their love for their husband (God). When people become worldly in their dress, it is a telltale sign that they are not coming closer to God, but growing apart.*

**12. How does Jesus differentiate between His faithful and the unfaithful at the end of time? REV 12, 17 (PS 19:1)**

*There are two women in the book of Revelation, representing God's people. One is a harlot, who lives to please the world. One is a pure woman, who lives to please God. The harlot woman is adorned fancy clothes and jewelry. The pure woman wears no jewelry; only the sun, moon and stars, which give glory to God. We hear no speeches from these woman; we can only tell them apart by their dress.*

**13. What is the ultimate effect of trying to fit in with the world to gain its approval? 2KI 9:30 (JE 4:30)**

*Queen Jezebel was so wrapped up in herself that, even when judgment was on its way, all she could focus on was her outward appearance instead of her readiness to face eternity. So it is today with many even of those who profess to be God's people. They love the things of the world more than the things of God. They idolize the world, and want to look like the world, dress like the world and live like the world. But the world will never be satisfied. It will always ask for more and more compromise, and hate them in the end anyway, and they will lose eternal life.*

**14. What does God urge us to do? RO 12:2**

*Christians should be careful not to take the shape of the world. Jesus came to free us from the customs and practices of this world. He wants us to recognize our value, our worth, in Him. At the end of time, there will be two groups clearly identified – those who are faithful and those who are not.*

**APPEAL:**

*When people look at your dress, what do you want them to see? Do you even want to risk them seeing something other than Christ? Don't you want to choose now to take your stand on God's side, and be identified and identifiable as one of God's own special people by choosing to dress according to God's word?*

## DIFFICULT TEXTS/OBJECTIONS:

**“Didn’t the Israelites wear jewelry?”** Yes, some of them did. They also had multiple wives, worshipped Baal, and burned their children in the fire. The Israelites were sinners just like we are sinners, and their practices are no better examples sometimes than our practices. Our guide for Christian living should not be what the Israelites did or did not do, but what Jesus did and how He lived. Incidentally, Jesus wore no jewelry. When the soldiers went through His belongings, they cast lots for His robe because it was evidently the most valuable thing He owned. Note that they did not cast lots for His jewelry (Jn. 19:23-4; Mt. 27:35; Mk. 15:24; Lk. 23:34).

**GN 24:22: “Abraham sent his servant with jewelry as a dowry for Rebekah. Abraham was the father of the faithful, so the wearing of jewelry must be okay with God.”** This is similar to the reasoning in the last objection. Yes, Abraham was faithful, but Abraham also had multiple wives, slept with his servant girl, and lied about his wife being his sister. Another important thing to realize is that jewelry was not only used in Bible times as adornment, but also as currency. If you read the passage, the Bible tells the weight of the jewelry. This was because it was being used as a dowry, not as adornment.

**LK 15:22: “The Father, who represents God, put a ring on the prodigal’s finger.”** This ring was a signet ring, symbolizing that the son was accepted back into the family with full authority. Note that no other piece of jewelry is mentioned. The Father was not adorning son, but re-instating him. There are some similarities to this passage and the “chain of gold” put around Daniel’s neck in Da. 5:29; it wasn’t a chain of mere adornment, but it was linked to his authority as “third ruler in the kingdom.”

**Consider the following quotes from some of the great evangelists of the past –**

### ***John Wesley – Co-founder, Methodist Church***

“I exhort you to wear no gold, no pearls, no precious stones... I do not advise women to wear rings, earrings, necklaces... It is true these things are little, very little things; therefore, they are not worth defending; therefore give them up, let them drop, throw them away, without another word; else a little needle may cause much pain in the flesh, a little self-indulgence much hurt to your soul.”

### ***Charles Finney, Presbyterian Revivalist***

“When a young lady begins to backslide, she will begin to put on ornaments, jewelry, and costly attire. These things are natural indications of the state of the heart.” – *Charles Finney, Sermon Collection, Vol. 2, p. 838.*

### ***C.H. Spurgeon, Baptist “Prince of Preachers”***

“The best ear-rings that a woman can wear, are the ear-rings of hearing the Word with attention. . . . the very best dress we can ever wear, is a garment wrought by the Holy Spirit, the garment of a consistent conduct... It would be a good thing, perhaps, if we went back to Wesley’s rule, to come out from the world in our apparel... If you want ornaments here they are. Here are jewels, rings, dresses, and all kinds of ornament; men and women, ye may dress yourselves up till ye shine like angels. How can you do it? By dressing yourselves out in benevolence, in love to the saints, in honesty and integrity, in uprightness, in godliness, in brotherly-kindness, in charity. These are the ornaments which angels themselves admire... - *C.H.Spurgeon, Sermon Collection, Vol. 1, pp. 516-17.*

### ***Laurence Tureaud, “Mr. T”, formerly overadorned celebrity turned Christian, commenting on his decision not to wear his jewelry anymore after experiencing the poverty in the wake of Hurricane Katrina***

“As a spiritual man, I felt it would be a sin against my God for me to wear all that gold again, because I spent a lot of time with the less fortunate.” - *Associated Press, July 14, 2006*