

## **Modest Apparel: for Men and Women**

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Unless otherwise noted, Scripture quotations are taken from the World English Bible. All *emphases* in Scripture quotations are added by the author.

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“True Christian consistency does not consist in stereotyping our opinions and views, and in refusing to make any improvement lest we should be guilty of change, but it consists in holding our minds open to receive the rays of truth from every quarter, and in changing our views, language, and practice as often and as fast as we can obtain further information. I call this Christian consistency, because this course alone accords with the Christian profession. A Christian profession implies the profession of candor and of a disposition to know and obey all truth. It must follow that Christian consistency implies continued investigation and change of views and practice corresponding with increasing knowledge. No Christian, therefore, and no theologian should be afraid to change his views, his language, or his practice in conformity with increasing light.” ~Charles Finney



## Introduction

Does modesty in dress make a difference? I don't believe there's many Christians today who think much about it. I've seen people cringe at the mention of modesty. Once I was discussing the subject with a group of people, and one of them piped up quickly and said, "Well, I think you should judge not lest you be judged." I didn't throw any more pearls out that day.

It is easier to believe it's just the heart that counts. The problem with this is that our hearts are made known by our outward life. Proverbs 27:19 says, "Like water reflects a face, so a man's heart reflects a man." The ERV catches the meaning here by saying, "Just as you can see your own face reflected in water, so your heart reflects the kind of person you are." Who you are on the inside will be shown by how you conduct yourself on the outside, and this includes the clothes you wear.

Sermons on modesty aren't preached much from the pulpits of Churches today, but when they are, they aren't taught in the proper way. Women leave feeling like they are more of a sex object than a person created in the image of the Almighty, and they end up wondering if all that's permissible is a burlap sack. They are constantly told to cover up so that their brothers in Christ won't be tempted to lust. One thinks, "Can a Christian man show a little self-control here?" I've heard preachers say that a woman's sleeves need to be to the wrists and her dress to the ankles. Listen y'all, if a man has a problem lusting after a woman's wrists or ankles, he's the one with the problem, not her. A woman can look beautiful and still be modestly clothed, and if a man lusts after her just because she is pretty, it's not her fault. There's nothing wrong with a woman looking pretty for herself, or if she's married, for her husband. It's not a sin to be beautiful or even stylish, as long as everything is done with decency and modesty.

Men are generally left out of the modesty teaching altogether. This next part may sound harsh but it needs to be said: I've seen overweight preachers with tight pants stand up in front of a church and basically scream at the women to dress modest. It's a wonder that churches with preachers like this have any congregants left in them. I tend to think that a preacher who is constantly stressing about women needing to be modest is probably a preacher who has a problem gawking at women in the first place.

Some people reading this book will find what I've just said refreshing, because this is a subject that is often approached in a wrong way. What a lot of people do though is leave a church like I've mentioned above and veer off into the other extreme of not worrying much at all about what they wear. Do you ask yourself when you clothes shop, "Is this modest?" Have you really thought much about it in your Christian walk?

Women should dress modest, but there's a right way and a wrong way to teach it. Sermons about modesty shouldn't be solely directed towards women, and they shouldn't place the fault of lust solely upon the women. It's true that a woman can purposefully dress to entice a man, but it's more often the case that a woman is dressed the way she is because it makes her feel pretty in an

innocent way. Lust is the problem of the one doing the lusting. That doesn't mean we are free to wear a thong and holler, "It's not my fault if you lust!" It just means that some people will find a way to lust after a modestly dressed woman, yet still try to place the blame on them. At the same time both men and women should realize that some things worn call attention to them in ways that are inappropriate.

Proper teaching on modesty should begin with a call for Yahweh's people, both men and women, to be set-apart according to the Scriptures. We live in this world but we do not belong to this world. We belong to the Almighty; He purchased us with the blood of His own Son. We are servants to Him, and we are to reflect His character. People should be able to look at us and tell that we are different, in a good way, before we ever open our mouth. They might also think we are a bit strange because we aren't "going with the flow" of modern society, but it's okay to be different, so long as we aren't trying to do so in a haughty way. We are supposed to live to be seen by other people, but it's because we are shining for the glory of our Father (Mt. 5:16).

In light of what Yeshua says in Matthew 23, we should see that both the inside and outside of our bodies need to be clean. "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and unrighteousness. You blind Pharisee, first clean the inside of the cup and of the platter, that its outside may become clean also." (Matthew 23:25-26)

Yeshua does not say the outside of "the cup" (our body) is unimportant, but that our emphasis should be on having both the inside and outside clean, beginning with the inside. This is because holiness on the inside will eventually manifest on the outside. However, the opposite is true as well. A wicked heart will eventually manifest itself on the outside. A wicked heart might be masked for a while (as with some Pharisees), but it will sooner or later show itself.

Many professing Christians allow for just about anything. Their liberal attitude has "declared clean" a host of sins that Scripture condemns, and obedience is no longer believed to be a necessary fruit of salvation. Bible verses which teach that Christians must obey their Lord are discarded (1 Jon. 2:3-4; Heb. 5:9). It is taught today that all a person needs to do is accept Jesus Christ into their heart, say a small prayer, and they have absolutely nothing to fret about. This modern, progressive teaching has led many outsiders to believe that the Christian faith is nothing short of complacency, and in some instances a copycat of paganism.

Some Christians will read statements like mine and shout out, "Legalism!" They say that such teaching is bondage and they need some liberation. "There is freedom in Christ," you might hear. But is freedom in Christ a freedom to sin? Are we really free to live any way or dress any way we desire? What this mindset teaches is that we need liberation from Yahweh, because as we will soon see, it is Yahweh which teaches that our clothing should be modest.

I remember a time years' ago, riding down the road and listening to the radio, and I heard a Pastor say that he would not give a dime to a church that teaches to observe God's laws, but

would give everything he had to a church that teaches grace. I rolled my eyes so hard I think they almost stuck to the back of my head. This same Pastor stated that to be under rules or regulations was nothing less than bondage, and was not the desire of God for Christians under the New Covenant. In his mind the "Old Covenant God" was one of bondage, but under the New Covenant this same God has freed us from all those old, worn-out ways of grievous living. This man would have a hard time explaining to the Psalmist David how the commandments of Yahweh were harsh laws we need to be freed from. David stated that he loved Yahweh's law (Ps. 119:97), and that liberty was found by walking in Yahweh's precepts (Ps. 119:45); this squares with the Apostle James' view of the law as one of liberty (Jam. 1:25).

Turning back to the aforementioned preacher, grace in his mind is more of a license to sin than a merciful act upon someone who has done wrong. What he's done, and what so many do, is turned the grace of God into licentiousness, and in doing so have denied the very Son of Yahweh (Jude 1:4). It is the grace of Yahweh that teaches us to live soberly and righteously in this present, evil world (Titus 2:11-14). Do not let this buzz word (legalism) frighten you. It's become a word that progressive "Christians" love to pin on faithful Christians. There is nothing wrong with being legal or lawful according to the Scriptures. Would you rather be legal or illegal? If a cop shows up behind you, are you cheerful if you've been speeding and your plate is out of date? Does it make you feel special when he writes you a ticket for breaking the law?

I choose being legal or better yet lawful, seeing it is obedience to Yahweh's law that brings freedom and liberation. Yahweh has given us instructions in His word on clothing our bodies properly. For us to reveal or show our nakedness amidst society is shameful. Here are just a handful of passages to prove this point.

And when Moses saw that the people were naked; (for Aaron had made them naked unto their shame among their enemies:) (Exodus 32:25, KJV)

So Hanun took David's servants, shaved off one half of their beards, and cut off their garments in the middle, even to their buttocks, and sent them away. When they told David this, he sent to meet them, for the men were greatly ashamed. The king said, "Wait at Jericho until your beards have grown, and then return." (2 Samuel 10:4-5)

Come down, and sit in the dust, virgin daughter of Babylon. Sit on the ground without a throne, daughter of the Chaldeans. For you will no longer be called tender and delicate. Take the millstones, and grind flour. Remove your veil, lift up your skirt, uncover your legs, and wade through the rivers. Your nakedness will be uncovered. Yes, your shame will be seen. I will take vengeance, and will spare no one." (Isaiah 47:1-3)

Now they came to Yeshua and saw the madman who had had the legion. He was sitting there, dressed in clothes and in his right mind. The people were scared. (Mark 5:15, TLV)

I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, that you may become rich; and white garments, that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes, that you may see. (Revelation 3:18)

I began writing this book (2003-04) when I started studying on the proper, Scriptural apparel for women. I grew up in a household that believed pants were an acceptable outward garment on both men and women. In my late teenage years I began to examine a few passages in Scripture and came to the conclusion that a woman should not wear pants for any reason. I now see (beginning in 2004 and currently in 2022) that my early conclusion was based on a surface deep interpretation of Deuteronomy 22:5. Anyone reading this passage with a modern, western 20th century mindset will probably come away thinking it prohibits a woman from wearing pants and a man from wearing a dress or skirt. This is because we grew up watching shows like Leave it to Beaver and Andy Griffith, and seeing pants as primarily a man's garment and a dress as primarily a woman's garment. But why are we taking our lead from mid-20th century TV shows? What about the Bible? Have you really studied the Scriptures on this subject?

## Genesis 3 and the Ketoneth

In the beginning man and woman were without and apart from sin, naked and unashamed in a holy way (Gen. 2:21-25). After sin entered (Gen. 3:1-6), Adam and Eve became aware of their nakedness and sewed fig leaves together, making themselves loincloths (Genesis 3:7, ESV, TLV, TS2009). The word “aprons” used in the KJV doesn’t carry the meaning of an apron that you’d use for cooking in the kitchen. The Hebrew word (*chagor*) has to do with the waist (belt); the use of the English word apron here is more akin to our modern nail apron.

After their fall into sin Yahweh reprimanded Adam, Eve, and the serpent. We find that the loincloths they made must have been insufficient in the eyes of Yahweh, for Yahweh replaced them with coats of skin which He made (Hebrew = *asah*: appointed or instituted; Genesis 3:21). What exactly was this coat that Yahweh placed upon the two? Was it a generic covering, or was it a specific garment that Yahweh prescribed to adequately cover their nakedness? The IVP Bible Background Commentary on Genesis 3:21 helps us here by saying: “The long, outer tunic is still the basic garment for many people in the Middle East. This replaces the inadequate fig-leaf covering made by Adam and Eve. God provides them with these garments as the type of gift given by a patron to a client.”

The Hebrew word for coat is *ketoneth* (used 29x in the OT), and is defined by various lexicons as a tunic, robe, or long shirt-like garment. Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance gives “to cover, a shirt” as the definition, while Brown, Drivers, and Briggs states: “tunic, under-garment, a long shirt-like garment usually of linen.” The NKJV says “tunics” at Genesis 3:21, as does the Amplified Bible, Tree of Life Version, New English Translation of the Septuagint, and Lexham English Septuagint. You’ve probably seen this type garment worn by people in Eastern culture or by Muslims. It’s basically a long shirt-like garment which hangs down from the shoulders to just above or below the knees, and sometimes to the ankles, draping loosely over the mid-section of the body.

Digging into the definition of the Hebrew word *ketoneth* shows us that it is not a garment divided in the middle like modern day pants. Adam was not given a set of trousers or a three-piece suit in Genesis 3:21. This is clear from the English words tunic and long, shirt-like garment. Consider Webster’s 1828 Dictionary, and the modern online Merriam-Webster Dictionary.

(1828) TUNIC... 1. A kind of waistcoat or under garment worn by men in ancient Rome and the east. In the later ages of the republic, the tunic was a long garment with sleeves... 2. Among the religious, a woolen shirt or under garment...

(Online) Old English tunice, from Latin tunica, of Semitic origin; akin to Hebrew *kuttōneth* coat. 1a: a simple slip-on garment made with or without sleeves and usually knee-length or longer, belted at the waist, and worn as an under or outer garment by men and women of ancient Greece and Rome.

We get pretty much this same definition from the Eerdmans Bible Dictionary:

The basic unit of clothing for both men and women was a shirtlike tunic (Heb. Ketonet; Gk. Chiton), an undergarment with long or medium sleeves which reached to the ankles. (EBD, 1987, pg. 224)

Eerdmans gives the definition of *chiton* (somewhat of a Greek transliteration of the Hebrew *ketoneth*) as follows: “[Gk. chiton tunic, of Semitic origin: akin to Hebrew kuttoneth coat, Syriac kettana linen, Assyrian-Babylonian kitu, kitinnu linen]... [Gk. chiton]: the basic garment of ancient Greece worn usually knee-length by men and full-length by women and made in two styles...”

The Holman Bible Dictionary has this to add on the basic clothing for men and women in ancient Biblical times.

Clothing styles: The Bible gives only general descriptions of the types of garments worn in biblical times. Egyptian, Assyrian, Roman, and Hittite monuments provide extensive pictorial evidence of dress in the ancient world. The need for clothing derives its origin from the shame of nakedness experienced by Adam and Eve in the garden (Gen. 3:7-8). God’s provision for His people is reflected in the animal skin garments given in response to human need. Men and women wore tunics made of linen or wool hanging from the neck to the knees or ankles. The Beni Hasan Tableau from the tomb of Khnum-hotep in Egypt depicts tunics worn by Semitic peoples as having diverse patterns and colors. (HBD, CD Rom, Under “Cloth, Clothing”)

The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia has some to offer as well.

The three normal body garments, the ones most mentioned in the Scriptures, are sadhin, a rather long “under garment” provided with sleeves; ketoneth (Greek chiton), a long-sleeved tunic worn over the simlah... We may well begin here with the familiar saying of Jesus for a basal distinction: “If any man would go to law with thee, and take away thy coat (Greek chiton), let him have thy cloak (himation) also” (Mt 5:40). Here the “coat” (Hebrew kethoneth) was the ordinary “inner garment” worn by the Jew of the day, in which he did the work of the day (see Mt 24:18; Mk 13:16). It resembled the Roman “tunic,” corresponding most nearly to our “long shirt,” reaching below the knees always, and, in case it was designed for dress occasions, reaching almost to the ground... The well-known piece of Assyrian sculpture, representing the siege and capture of Lachish by Sennacherib, shows the Jewish captives, male and female, dressed in a moderately tight garment, fitting close to the neck (compare Job 30:18) and reaching almost to the ankles; which must represent the kethoðneth, or kuttoðneth of the period, as worn in towns at least. (ISB, “Dress,” sections 3.1 and 4.2)

Further insight on the common garment for both sexes is found in the book entitled Manners and Customs in the Bible.

The basic dress for both men and women was the ketoneth, a shirtlike garment which is depicted in ancient art in a variety of styles. Usually made of wool, it could reach as far as the ankles or just



to the knees; it might have either long or short sleeves. This garment is mentioned in the “Black Obelisk” inscription of the Assyrian king Shalmaneser III (842 B.C.). In a series of sculpted, captioned registers, Jehu, king of Israel, is depicted bowing down before the king; his servants are shown carrying gifts as tribute payments. Jehu is wearing a fringed *ketoneth* tied with a girdle which also has tassels hanging from it. His head is covered by a pointed cap, and his beard like those of the Israelite porters carved on this monument, is trimmed to a point. (MCB, by Victor H. Matthews, Hendrickson Publishers, 2003, pgs. 117-119)

Some Bible Encyclopedia’s make the assertion that someone clothed only in the *ketoneth* was considered as naked. Easton’s Bible Dictionary (under the heading “Dress”) states the following: “The “coat” (*ketoneth*), of wool, cotton, or linen, was worn by both sexes. It was a closely-fitting garment, resembling in use and form our shirt (John 19:23). It was kept close to the body by a girdle (John 21:7). A person wearing this “coat” alone was described as naked (1 Sam. 19:24; Isa. 20:2; 2 Kings 6:30; John 21:7); deprived of it he would be absolutely naked.” In looking up each passage cited as proof of this by Eastons we find that it’s not exactly correct. The word naked in the passages can have the meaning of partially or totally naked, but remember that Adam and Eve’s general nakedness was covered adequately by Yahweh with the *ketoneth*, therefore a person wearing this garment alone was considered modestly clothed, not naked.

The tunic was given to both Adam and Eve (after their fall into sin) as appropriate, modest apparel. The question arises: if that is what was considered modest by Yahweh then, has Yahweh changed His mind now?

I should note that the mentioning of the *material* of the covering in Genesis 3:21 does not carry the meaning that animal skins would be the only appropriate covering. We see this as we continue to read Scripture. Remember, *all* of Scripture should be consulted on a subject in order to arrive at truth. Many other materials were worn in ancient, Biblical times (Genesis 41:42; Leviticus 13:47-49; Judges 14:12; 2 Samuel 6:14; Proverbs 31:22, 24; Ezekiel 16:10, 13; Mark 14:51-52; Luke 16:19), and these materials are just as modest on people in tunic form. From Adam until the time of the Messiah, it can be shown that animal skin was not the only material used for making clothes. What cannot be shown is that the basic structure of the garment appointed by Yahweh ever changed. The reason here lies in the fact of its modesty. Yahweh designed and appointed a particular garment for both sexes that would not only cover their bodies, but *modestly* cover their bodies. This issue then is one of decency. Adam and Eve tried to cover with fig leaves, but Yahweh saw the loin cloths to be insufficient, so He clothed male and female with the same clothing - a tunic - for modesty and privacy.

**END NOTES:** The Hebrew word *ketoneth* is used a total of twenty-nine times in the Older Testament. In fourteen of those times it is used in relation to one of the holy garments of the priests (Ex. 28:4, 39, 40; 29:5, 8; 39:27; 40:14; Lev. 8:7, 13; 10:5; 16:4; Ezra 2:69; Neh. 7:70, 72.). This garment would have a similar appearance to the garment Yahweh clothed Adam and Even with in the beginning. It would be the holy *ketoneth* the priest was commanded to wear

while performing priestly duties. The first century Jewish historian Flavius Josephus describes this particular garment of the priest in this fashion.

Over this he wore a linen vestment, made of fine flax doubled: it is called Chethone, and denotes linen, for we call linen by the name of Chethone. This vestment reaches down to the feet, and sits close to the body; and has sleeves that are tied fast to the arms... it is girded to the breast a little above the elbows, by a girdle often going around, four finger broad, but so loosely woven, that you would think it were the skin of a serpent. It is embroidered with flowers of scarlet, and purple, and blue, and fine twined linen, but the warp was nothing but fine linen... The beginning of its wrap around is at the breast; and when it has gone often around, it is there tied, and hangs loosely there down to the ankles: I mean this, all the time the priest works hard, for this position appears to be most agreeable to the spectators... (Antiquities 3.7.2)

I'd like to also briefly deal here with a strange, minority viewpoint that the skins Adam and Eve received in Genesis 3:21 was human skin to cover over their previous "light-bodies." The word skin in Genesis 3:21 often refers to animal skin in the Hebrew Bible, as it does elsewhere in the same book, Genesis 27:16. It's true that it can refer to human skin (Ex. 22:27), but we can know for certain that animal skin (leather) is intended in Genesis 3:21 for two reasons: (1) Ketoneths (Greek = *chitons*) of skin were made, which refers to a tunic or robe, not a human body with all its various parts (skin over fingers and toes, etc.) and (2) the Septuagint uses the Greek word *dermatinos* which is *only* used of animal skin in both the Greek OT and Greek NT.

## Breeches, Trousers, and Pants

Seeing that both male and female were clothed with the same style garment, who are we to say that pants are the apparel of a man? Does the Bible say this? Some people point out the five uses of the English word *breeches* in Scripture (KJV: Ex. 28:42; 39:28; Lev. 6:10; 16:4; Ezek. 44:18). Those who use these passages say that each proves breeches to be specifically for men, but I don't think that is letting the Bible interpret the Bible.

Each passage under consideration deals exclusively with garments that *Levite priests* were commanded to wear at *designated times*. Granted, priests were men and not women, but there is not one place in Scripture where breeches are said to be pertaining to men in general. The priests were likewise commanded to wear a girdle or belt (Lev. 16:4), but that does not automatically assign belts or girdles to the male gender. Exodus 28:4 says that one of the priestly garments was the brodered coat. The word coat there is *ketoneth*, the same word in Genesis 3:21 for the clothes of Adam and Eve. So if you say that the breeches are only for men because they're mentioned here for the priests, then what about the *ketoneth*? Should a woman not wear that because it's mentioned here for the priests? I think you get the picture.

Breeches are actually mentioned in the list of the *holy* garments which pertained to the priest.

He [Aaron] shall put on the holy linen coat, and he shall have the linen breeches upon his flesh, and shall be girded with a linen girdle, and with the linen mitre shall he be attired: these are the holy garments; therefore shall he wash his flesh in water, and so put them on. (Leviticus 16:4, KJV)

The breeches had a specific use for the priests just as the other garments mentioned. These breeches were to (1) cover their nakedness, and (2) prevent them from sweating (Ezek. 44:18). The breeches were hardly comparable to the common man's pants today. Yahweh describes them as extending from the waist to the thigh (Ex. 28:42) which is comparable to today's underwear or boxer shorts; at the furthest they would reach to the top of a man's knee. Some Bibles use the term underwear, underclothes, or undergarments in each place where the King James Version has the word breeches (NLT, CEV, ERV, ESV, LEB, TLV). The New English Translation (Lev. 16:4) says "linen leggings are to cover his body."

If we are going to say that these breeches are the apparel of a man, then we would also have to say that a woman can't wear underwear, undergarments, or even shorts or leggings under her dress according to the modern, traditional interpretation of Deuteronomy 22:5.

Let's look at Exodus 28:42 in more detail: "You shall make them linen breeches to cover the flesh of their nakedness; from the waist even to the thighs they shall reach."

I have encountered some, who in trying to maintain consistency in doctrine, tell me that the above passage shows what sufficiently covers the nakedness of males. The problem with this

view is that if you choose to believe that these breeches are sufficient to cover a man's nakedness in a general sense, you must also say that men are allowed to wear thigh length shorts by their self as acceptable modest apparel at all times. This is to be understood as without a shirt, because no shirt is mentioned here as covering the nakedness. You must also believe that it would be perfectly acceptable for a Pastor to preach in front of a congregation wearing nothing but thigh length shorts (basically underwear). I think that this consistency is absurd when carried out to its logical conclusion.

My initial understanding of the breeches was that they were worn by priests at certain times, but never without a robe over top. I reasoned that in limited cases the common people may have a chance to get a passing glimpse of what was under the priest's robe, but with a robe over top, people would not generally see underneath. Although the breeches were said to cover their nakedness, they were said to do so in the context of *underneath* the robe; so no one else would even see the breeches.

I have come to believe there is a better interpretation if we look closer. In Exodus 20:26 the Israelites had a general commandment telling them not to go up by steps unto an altar of Yahweh, that their nakedness not be seen. This means that the Levite priests would not have to offer sacrifices in such a way as to have a common person see up under their robe in the first place. If we look at the context of each of the passages mentioning breeches, we see that the issue was not one of another person looking at their nakedness, *it rather dealt with coming into the presence of Yahweh and ministering before Him*. Exodus 28:42-43 and Leviticus 16:4 are the most explicit passages to go to. These breeches were holy garments to be worn while the priests came near to the altar to minister in the holy place. Thus, the breeches were not to cover their nakedness in reference to other people looking upon them, but rather to cover their nakedness (their genital area) securely in the presence of Yahweh.

This shows us that there are different contexts of covering nakedness in Scripture. One deals specifically with the sexual area of a person, as is the case in uncovering the nakedness of your father (Lev. 18:8). Another deals with modest apparel in public (Gen. 3:21), and yet another deals with covering your mid-section securely while ministering in the holy things before the Almighty (Ex. 28:42-43; Lev. 16:4).

Someone may wish to present the case that pants were later but initially invented for the male gender. First of all, this is not found in Scripture. Did the Creator invent pants for men, or did man invent pants for men? Pants did not become the common, lower, outer apparel for a man until the 16th to 19th centuries A.D. A small amount of research on the history of pants for men will show the following:

1. We do not have any Scripture stating that pants or breeches were worn by men or women as appropriate modest apparel.
2. Sailors in the late 1500's wore a baggy "clown-type" pant which could be easily rolled up when wading to shore. These pants made it easy for sailors to climb the rigging on the ships.

3. Around the late 1700's men began to frequent breeches or pantaloons similar in style to the lower apparel worn by some modern, professional golfers. These "pants" connected to stockings at the knee, which reached to the ankles.
4. Pants as we have them today became predominant in the 1800's and took complete hold for men in the 1900's. (See *poloindia.com*, and *histclo.hispeed.com*)

One encyclopedia states the following concerning the history and origin of trousers or pants.

The Persians, based in what is now Iran, ruled an empire in the 6th century BC that included most of the Middle East and Egypt. They introduced two garments to the history of clothing: trousers and seamed fitted coats, both probably first made from animal skins. These tailored garments differed significantly from the woven rectangles of cloth generally worn in the Mediterranean region, and they served to protect people from cold weather. They were adopted for that purpose by peoples of Central Asia and northern Europe. People who rode horses valued trousers for use when astride, and in that capacity trousers spread to China and India, as well as to the Celtic peoples of northern Europe. It is worth noting that throughout most of history trousers have not been associated with men. In China, both men and women, especially those who worked the land, wore trousers. In the Ottoman Empire (based in what is now Turkey), women wore trousers. Only in European cultures did trousers become associated with men. ("Clothing" Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia, 2000)

Just because people think that pants are solely a man's garment does not mean that is how Yahweh considers the garment. We must not take modern day cultural or custom arguments and use them to judge the inspired Word. We should judge what we believe by the Scriptures, and the Scriptures do not define pants as a man's apparel.



## What About Deuteronomy 22:5?

When I first began my study in regards to modest apparel for women, I felt it would help if I took the time to read articles or booklets on both sides of the issue. I found a few articles teaching it was okay for women to wear pants (as an outward garment), as well as a few articles teaching it was a sin for women to wear pants. In one article on the “pro-pant” side there was an argument used which claimed inconsistency on the part of the “no-pant” side.

Many who argue that women must wear dresses and men must wear pants ask: “What about Deuteronomy 22:5? Doesn’t this plainly state that women cannot wear pants? After all, aren’t pants men’s clothing, while dresses are women’s clothing?” There are several things wrong with this argument... First of all, we are no longer bound to observe the Law of Moses, as the New Testament Scriptures plainly teach. Jesus came to fulfill the law of Moses. (That Women Arrange Themselves With Well-Arranged Clothing, by Bernie Parsons, 6.25.03, [www.christianuniverse.com](http://www.christianuniverse.com), pgs. 2-3)

The author goes on to quote Matthew 5:17, Colossians 2:14, and Romans 7:4. This is done so as to bolster his point concerning the Law of Moses. It is not my intention in this study to go in depth into the fallacy here, but I do believe it’s error. For instance, the Apostle Paul upheld the Law of Moses when he wrote in 1 Corinthians 9:8-9 (KJV) “Say I these things as a man? Or saith not the law the same also? For it is written in the law of Moses.” Also check out Romans 2:13; 3:31; James 2:24; 1 John 2:3-4; 1 John 3:7. I’d encourage you to read my book titled, “Learning to Love His Law: Training our Minds to Think Like the Creator.” It’s a detailed, systematic read which arrives at the conclusion that the Law of Yahweh through prophet Moses is to be read and applied to our lives even in modern day times.

In the first twelve chapters of Deuteronomy 22 there is no reason to believe that each law is not just as binding today as it was when it was first given. I agree that someone who attempts to only obey Deuteronomy 22:5 would be inconsistent in their position, however, I obey every law in Deuteronomy 22:1-12 because I do not believe any of them have been abolished.

The question at hand is this: what is the true interpretation of Deuteronomy 22:5? Seeing that both men and women wore the same basic apparel in Scripture, this passage could not be prohibiting a simple change in clothing, from pants to dresses or from dresses to pants.

It is interesting to note here in this passage the English word *pertaineth* in the KJV. This word is taken from the following Hebrew word *keliy* (H3627) and lexicons (BDB; Gesenius) define this word primarily as “article, vessel, implement, utensil, object, apparatus.” So the command here may not be limited to clothing.

We gain more insight by looking at the Hebrew word for man in this text (H1397): *geber*, used in reference to a man’s strength and ability to fight. Strong’s defines it as, “Properly a valiant man or warrior; generally a person simply,” and Brown, Drivers, Briggs states “1) man, strong man, warrior

(emphasizing strength or ability to fight).” Gesenius adds “a man... so called from strength... a husband... sometimes it denotes the strength of a man... a soldier.”

The English word man is used 81x in the book of Deuteronomy, but there are only 2x in Deuteronomy it’s based on the Hebrew word *geber*. Guess where those 2x are? Deuteronomy 22:5. All the other 79x use the words *iysh*, *adam*, *ebyon*, *ibriy*, *asher*, *chalal*, *naphal*, *ayin*, *bachur*, and *seybah*. Granted, some of these words describe actions associated with a man. For instance, the Hebrew word *naphal* means to fall down, so the translator will write “If a man falls” and *naphal* describes the man who falls. The point still stands though that in all of these cases, only 2x is the word *geber* used for a man, and both are in Deuteronomy 22:5. You think that’s significant?

In this very chapter the word man is used just a few verses later in Deuteronomy 22:13 where a man takes a wife, and there the word *iysh* is used, the same word used back in Genesis for Adam. But *iysh* isn’t used a few verses earlier in verse 5. This shows that Yahweh’s inspiration used two different Hebrew words in verses 5 and 13. We should be able to see that Yahweh could have specifically been prohibiting the woman from wearing the weapon, utensil, or dress of a warrior or a strong man. The old Methodist commentator, Adam Clarke, has this to say on Deuteronomy 22:5.

As the word גבר *geber* is here used, which properly signifies a strong man or man of war, it is very probable that armor is here intended; especially as we know that in the worship of Venus, to which that of Astarte or Ashtaroth among the Canaanites bore a striking resemblance, the women were accustomed to appear in armor before her. It certainly cannot mean a simple change in dress, whereby the men might pass for women, and vice versa. This would have been impossible in those countries where the dress of the sexes had but little to distinguish it, and where every man wore a long beard. It is, however, a very good general precept understood literally, and applies particularly to those countries where the dress alone distinguishes between the male and the female. The close-shaved gentleman may at any time appear like a woman in the female dress, and the woman appear as a man in the male’s attire. Were this to be tolerated in society, it would produce the greatest confusion. Clodius, who dressed himself like a woman that he might mingle with the Roman ladies in the feast of the Bona Dea, was universally execrated.

We should also note the Jewish historian Flavius Josephus on Deuteronomy 22:5. This can be found in his work entitled Jewish Antiquities 4.8.43 where he paraphrases the passage as “Take care, especially in your battles, that no woman use the habit of a man, nor man the garment of a woman.” He most likely represented the first century A.D. interpretation of this verse, or at least a first century interpretation.

While I agree that this precept in Deuteronomy is a good general one understood literally, I refuse to interpret it in such a way as to allow culture or custom to contradict the standard that Yahweh gave to man and woman in the beginning. Yahweh decided what was morally acceptable to cover the nakedness of man and woman, do we think we are more moral than the heavenly Father?



I believe the principle of Deuteronomy 22:5 is against transvestites, transgenderism, and sex changes; changes which do not allow a man to be differentiated from a woman. This in itself would not prohibit a woman from wearing pants, because you can differentiate a woman from a man even if she is only wearing pants. This is easily done by long hair on a woman, and a bearded face on a man (1 Cor. 11:1-16; Lev. 19:27; Rev. 9:7-8).

I think the CEV, though not a word-for-word translation, best captures the meaning of Deuteronomy 22:5 by saying, "Women must not pretend to be men, and men must not pretend to be women, the LORD your God is disgusted with people who do that."

For a man to try to look and act like a female is an abomination. For a woman to try to look and act like a male is an abomination. This doesn't mean a man can't wash dishes and a woman can't drive a tractor, I'm not saying that. I'm talking about a specific desire to take away what Yahweh has given you as male or female and try to be the opposite. Anytime a man tries to look feminine or a woman tries to look masculine it looks awkward. You know why? Because it is not natural.

So the command is a general one forbidding swapping gender distinctive and roles. Some of this (transgenderism) may not have been a "thing" back then in Hebrew culture, but then again maybe it all was? There's nothing new under the sun right? Regardless, the principle holds true, very similar to how a high deck needs a railing around it in the same way that an ancient Hebrew roof needed one (Deuteronomy 22:8). We learn in Deuteronomy 22:5 that men are not to try to be women and women are not to try to be men. Yahweh made us male and female in the beginning, and that is the way it should stay. All of this modern talk of blurring the sexes and gender fluidity is an abomination in the sight of Yahweh.

For a woman to wear something pertaining to a man means that she is taking the role of masculinity upon herself that she was not created to be. This understanding finds weight in the fact of the word *geber* being used in the passage. The word *geber* is used to emphasize a man's strength or ability to fight in contrast to the femininity of women (they are more delicate). Wives are not to take upon themselves the husbands role. The flip-side would be true as well; a husband is not permitted to take on the wife's more feminine role.

When this law was first given, Moshe and his wife Zipporah were standing there wearing tunics. Maybe Moshe's had stripes and Zipporah's had flowers; I don't know, we aren't told. The point is that whatever colors, patterns, or style, they had on the same basic garment, therefore this law does not prohibit a woman from wearing pants. It doesn't even address pants.

Many people have objected by pointing me to the pictures on the bathroom doors, attempting to prove the universal sign of pants on men and skirts on women. My objection is always, "Where are these pictures found in the Bible?" If we look to the Bible and lived in a holy society we would find the pictures on bathroom doors depicting a face with a beard and another smooth face with long hair on the head, so as to not be confused as to which door you should enter. These modern day pictures would be confusing to first century Jewish men, as they would likely walk

towards the bathroom where the picture depicted the dress or robe because this is what he would be wearing. The other side (that is supposed to depict men) looks like a naked stick-figure.

But we're not finished here yet. Just because Deuteronomy 22:5 does not forbid a woman from wearing pants does not mean she is automatically allowed to wear pants - that is - as an outward (modest) garment.

Does Deuteronomy 22:5 teach that a woman *can* wear pants? The passage does not deal with pants for either gender. I've just shown that the passage is one which speaks zero about pants, thus it cannot be used to show that either gender can or cannot wear pants. I do not know of a single Scripture that would authorize a woman to wear pants as an outward garment of modesty. This issue here is not that she's dressing like a man by putting pants on, but that she's immodest in only a pair of pants.

In Genesis 3:21 Yahweh did not give Eve pants to wear as a replacement for her loincloth made of fig leaves. Remember, Yahweh gave her a tunic or a robe to wear as an outward garment. If the woman wanted to wear another article of clothing (such as pants) under her modest garment, I see nothing in Scripture prohibiting such. The priests wore shorts under theirs, and shorts are just short-pants. So the women could do the same and it would be fine.

Pants are immodest *as an outer garment* and must be covered by a tunic or robe which does not enable anyone to see the shape of the body as clearly on a woman. Women have no right to remove the original garment Yahweh clothed her with for modesty.

Someone may be asking now "Can you show me a Scripture where it says a woman shall not wear pants?" My answer is Genesis 3:21. Every faithful Christian would use this text to show we shouldn't walk around naked. It teaches us to be clothed. What we've failed to see though is that it's teaching us specifically *how* to be clothed. A bikini doesn't fit the criteria of Genesis 3:21 (speedos or swimming trunks on men doesn't fit either). Of course I'm speaking of an outer garment. Genesis 3:21 isn't generic; it isn't saying any type of clothing or form-fitting garment is permissible. It's giving us a standard for modesty. The Hebrew word *ketoneth* (Greek, *chiton*) was placed in there for a reason.

There's also a verse in the Newer Testament which can be classified as either a direct command or a necessary inference, prohibiting a woman from wearing pants; 1 Timothy 2:9. This passage teaches that women should adorn themselves in modest apparel. The Greek word translated apparel is *katastole*, defined by Vines Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words as follows:

KATASTOLE... connected with *katastello*, to send or let down, to lower (*kata*, down, *stello*, send), was primarily a garment let down; hence, dress, attire, in general (cp. *stole*, a loose outer garment worn by kings and persons of rank, - Eng., *stole*; I Tim. 2:9, "apparel." See Clothing.

STOLE... (Eng., stole), denotes any stately robe, a long, garment reaching to the feet or with a train behind. It is used of the long clothing in which the scribes walked, making themselves conspicuous in the eyes of men, Mark 12:38; Luke 20:46; of the robe worn by the young man in the Lord's tomb, Mark 16:5; of the best or, rather, the chief robe, which was brought out for the returned prodigal, Luke 15:22; five times in the Apocalypse, as to glorified saints, 6:11; 7:9, 13, 14; 22:14. In the Sept. it is used of the holy garments of the priests, e.g., Ex. 28:2; 29:21; 31:10. (An Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1984, pgs. 55, 191)

With Genesis 3:21 and 1 Timothy 2:9 we can conclude that it is not authorized for a woman to wear pants as an outward garment. If they found them selves in a situation where an undergarment such as breeches or pants were needed this would be acceptable. Such situations could include climbing a ladder or tree, cold or windy weather, or even fashion and style. A woman may wear pants as long as her tunic is not removed. This modest tunic based upon Hebrew linguistics, ancient pictures, and scholarship in Bible dictionaries should be loose and cover from the shoulders to at least the thighs.

Now track with me here; normally the way Christians justify a woman wearing pants as an outer garment is by (1) pointing out the correct interpretation of Deuteronomy 22:5, and (2) recognizing that the Bible never defines pants as a man's apparel. They reason that if we find it acceptable for a man to wear pants then it would be acceptable for a woman to wear pants, and in this assertion they are correct and consistent. ***If*** we allow the man to unclothe him-self of the original garment made for him by Yahweh (Genesis 3:21), then the woman would be allowed to do the same, but here is the question not many think of: ***is a man allowed to wear pants as an outer garment?***

The answer to this question is simple if us men humble ourselves and stay with the Bible. We have an approved example of what Yahweh requires man to wear to cover his nakedness (Genesis 3:21), and everyone acknowledges that men wore tunics and robes throughout Scripture; it's so easy to prove, probably one of the most provable doctrines in all the Bible.

There is no reason why this appointed garment should change in the day in which we live. This garment is mentioned just after (1) the serpent's curse, (2) pain in childbearing, (3) the woman's role in marriage, (4) the curse of the ground, and (5) the sweating of man while working (Genesis 3:14-19). Everything here mentioned has not changed because it is a result of the fall of mankind's representative, Adam. Modest clothing is likewise a result of this very same fall into sin.

We also find that the same Greek word used in 1 Timothy 2:9 describing the proper apparel for women, is used throughout the Apostolic Scriptures to describe the proper apparel for men (see Strongs G4749 "*stole*" throughout the Greek NT). The fact is, we have no authorization in Scripture for men to wear pants only - that is - without a tunic over top as a modest garment. No Pastor has the right to preach to his congregation that women should not wear pants if he wears pants too. Consistency demands that both parties stay within the Biblical realm for their apparel,

and this yields tunics on both men and women. Are we willing to take a stand on what the inspired Scriptures teach on this issue?

“But men are never commanded to wear robes and not pants!” some will say. Please remember that this issue was dealt with previously. Yahweh shows in Genesis 3:21 the proper, modest apparel for men. Furthermore, Yahweh did not ever directly *command* the common man to wear anything, but we do not only learn from direct command, but from approved examples and necessary inferences. One author eloquently stated the following in summary of this issue.

A thorough study into the clothing norms of the Bible reveals that there was no distinction between men’s and women’s clothing in the Bible beyond stylistic differences such as trim, color and size. In fact God Himself made clothing for Adam and Eve that was so similar that one word (*ketoneth*) could describe the specific garment he made for each of them. This same word describes the clothing worn by Godly men and women throughout the Bible from the Old Testament to the New Testament. Yet today, many Christians demand much more than even the Bible did by requiring not only a difference in style but a difference in function and form as well. If God makes no such clothing demands on His people, then who are we to make them? Do we know better than God? (The Truth About Deuteronomy 22:5, by Jason Young, pg. 5, [www.actseighteen.com/Articles/women-pants.htm](http://www.actseighteen.com/Articles/women-pants.htm).)

The above words come from a man who believes pants are an acceptable, outer garment on both men and women. While he is being consistent, he fails to see that he actually proves that the *ketoneth* was and still is the only acceptable modest, outward garment for both male and female.

Some sisters have asked me if I think a woman should only wear tunics and not dresses or skirts. Many dresses are basically tunics, and some skirts cover the mid-section in the exact same way a tunic does. My wife was wearing a dress the other day with pants underneath and it looked similar to one of her (or my) tunics. The key here is to recognize that the *ketoneth* was meant to hang from the shoulders down, so that when the material falls to one’s mid-section, the loins of a person are draped over rather than form-fitted. Our clothes should compliment our bodies not reveal them. Even some pants cover better than others; take a man in “skinny-jeans” verses a man wearing baggy linen pants, but pants without a tunic over top still reveal one’s mid-shape in a way a tunic never would.

## Answering Objections and Summary

Some men and women will not want to wear tunics, and they will argue that times have changed, so it's now culturally acceptable to wear pants. I know they'll argue this way because for the last 18 years or so I've heard that exact excuse given by multiple people, usually men.

This reasoning would ultimately okay such practices as homosexuality. Homosexuality is becoming more and more accepted in society as a proper, normal practice, but this does not change Yahweh's divine ordinances. He set the standard for clothing nakedness in Genesis 3:21, and that standard is everlasting. We could change a host of Biblical precepts if we stick with the argument that times have changed. Morality is non-negotiable.

This isn't a doctrine demanding we go back to the primitive lifestyle, ridding ourselves of power tools, modern transportation, computers, or technology. If that was the issue then I would be preaching for everyone to take off their tennis shoes and start wearing sandals, and that *would be* ridiculous. The issue here is rather modesty and that does not change with time. Always remember, this is an issue of modesty, not changes in time and culture.

Someone may object by saying "Well, you'll have to do this too!" Over the last 25 years there have been several changes I've made in my walk of faith. These changes came from reading the Scriptures and discerning Yahweh's will for my life. Many times when I began to obey Yahweh in one area, someone would say to me, "Well, if you're going to do that then you have to do this!" But what does such an argument prove? Let's say I quit working on the Sabbath, and someone told me that if I'm not going to work on the Sabbath then I also can't buy and sell on the Sabbath. Are they wrong? No. Does their argument prove that I *can* work on the Sabbath? No. As a matter of fact they are correct; if you are going to keep the Sabbath then you must obey every statute, not just pick and choose which parts you want to keep and brush the others aside.

At times people with this argument make analogies which are erroneous. For example, I know a man who began to keep the Sabbath and was told by a preacher that if he was going to keep it properly he couldn't even eat on the Sabbath. This preacher was trying to make the "But you'll have to do this!" argument, but the preacher was incorrect. You do not have to fast on the Sabbath (see Exodus 16 where the Israelites are told to eat manna on the Sabbath).

I'm not saying that this teaching of both men and women wearing tunics will not eventually lead to other truths. I'm just saying that this argument people try to use does not prove that it's okay for either man or woman to wear pants as an outer garment.

Someone may also be wondering just how long a tunic must be to be sufficient. I think this question comes from two types of people. The first type I will describe as the "Excuse Type." These people will do everything in their power to justify their current clothing in spite of what Yahweh teaches in His inspired Word. They may even see someone beginning to dress Scripturally and comment, "Well, if I was going to dress in tunics, I wouldn't wear *that* kind of

tunic.” I’ve heard this very statement from many people ever since I began to wear tunics. Such people have no right to condemn those who are trying to pattern their lifestyle after Scripture. I’ve encountered the “Excuse Type” in many walks of faith. I can remember when I began to observe the dietary laws to the best of my knowledge. I was soon approached by an individual who wanted to “nail me to the floor” with Leviticus 11. “Well Matthew, if I was going to keep the dietary laws I would be more serious about it than you are.” This person did not have room, in my humble opinion, to make such a judgment. I was a “babe” when it came to the dietary laws then but have grown much since.

The second type of people I would like to term as the “Submissive Type.” This type will be humble enough to say, “Yes, this is what the Bible teaches, and I will begin to practice it, or at least work towards putting it to practice.” These people may not have all the particulars down to a tee from the very beginning, but because of their desire, motivated by nothing but the Spirit of a Holy Creator, they will grow in their knowledge, understanding, and practice of modest dress.

My mind goes back to the Summer of 2004 when I first began to dress this way. It was difficult at first because I looked quite odd in the eyes of just about every person in the general public that I would meet. I remember the first time I walked through a department store. I was so nervous, because people were pointing and whispering; as time went on I even received some remarks of sarcasm. I was once asked where I got my "hula skirt." Another fellow asked me why I started dressing like a woman. My father-in-law (who also wears tunics) told me to tell him that men are supposed to get dressed not “*pantsd*,” he said we are supposed to have a ward-robe, a ward where we keep our robes.

At one point in my early walk of this practice, I was riding down the highway and thought to myself, “Why in the world am I wearing this tunic? Everyone else dresses in pants, shorts, and t-shirts, what would be the harm in me dressing the same?” Shortly after that thought, I began to rebuke my own self and remember that the world’s standards are not Yahweh’s standards. It is Sovereign Yahweh that makes the rules, not me and you. I realized that I had to cast down any thought in my mind that would lead me away from Genesis 3:21 and the rest of Scripture, right on down to the book of Revelation where those redeemed by the Messiah’s blood are wearing tunics. Since then I have grown in this area of my walk, even to the point of being asked by force to leave a county courtroom because of the way I was dressed. I refused to tuck-in my tunic, and doing so caused me to not be able to have presence in a United States courtroom. The key is that my presence there *was* recognized by those watching the occurrence. People realized that I was taking a stand for modest apparel, or for a particular faith at least, and that had the possibility of making a righteous impact here on earth for the kingdom of heaven.

In asking ourselves how long our tunic should be I would say that based upon archaeology, history, and scholarship, it should be anywhere from above the knee to the ankle; the tunic should cover the entire thigh, and whether we like it or not, pants are *optional*. Granted, some of my work tunics are a bit shorter, and have slits up the side so that I’m able to move around better, but I always wear pants underneath my tunics so it’s really not a problem. If I bend over at work,

I don't have to worry about a "plumber's crack." I remember one time I realized I hadn't zipped my zipper up for most of the day, and I was so embarrassed. Then I remembered that no one ever even knew, because I was wearing a tunic which completely covered my mid-section.

Ultimately, the question of "how long?" is a question you have to answer for yourself. It's like asking me how much food does a person have to eat before he is considered a glutton? The fact remains that tunics were given for modesty and they are still to be worn today. My best answer would probably be to allow the indwelling measure of Yahweh's Holy Spirit to guide you in this area. Seek His Word and seek Him through prayer. Don't try to justify anything, but also don't burden yourself down with something not really necessary.

This topic is really so simple that even a child could understand the logic behind it. If both men and women throughout the whole of Scripture wore tunics for the sake of modesty in outward adornment, why not wear them now? "Knowledge has increased in the fashion arena," someone might say. Don't you think that someone would have figured that out before the 17 or 1800's? From the first man Adam to the last man Adam was approximately 4,000 years. The material for making tunics did change throughout Scripture, and thus is authorized, but the modest apparel placed upon man and woman did not change, and has not changed in Yahweh's eyes to this day.

I am in no way teaching that in certain cases as climbing a tree, riding a horse, or swimming, that pants are not more practical. I actually believe that in many instances pants are more compatible with human actions. I'm not teaching that anyone must throw away their pants, but rather that we should seek to be modest and wear a tunic over top of our pants: both men and women. We are to fully cover our nakedness and not show the shape of our bodies. Pants alone outline the shape of a person's mid-section. The issue at hand deals with covering our nakedness (Genesis 3:7, 21), as well as the prevention of lust. Granted, some people will lust regardless of what we wear, but that is their problem as long as we meet Yahweh's requirements in dress. If pants on a woman reveals her nakedness then pants on a man does as well. If pants on a woman breeds lust in men then pants on a man breeds lust in women. It's that simple.

We thus we have no Scripture whatsoever for the "pants-only" belief. We should speak where the Bible speaks and not wear anything strange to Scripture. Clothing mixed of wool and linen is strange (Lev. 19:19; Deut. 22:11), clothing without fringes is strange (Num. 15:37-41), and in this study we have found that pants as an outward garment, for both men and women, is strange (Gen. 3:21). Brothers and sisters, let us follow the Scriptural way.

Be silent before the Sovereign Yahweh, for Yahweh's day of judgment is almost here. Yahweh has prepared a sacrificial meal; he has ritually purified his guests. On the day of Yahweh's sacrificial meal, I will punish the princes and the king's sons, and all who wear foreign styles of clothing. (Zephaniah 1:7-8, NET)





## Practical Modesty

I'm currently (May, 2022 - in the congregation I pastor) teaching an expository series on Exodus 20:18 through Exodus 24:18. I've only just begun, and am about a dozen sermons into it. I came to Exodus 20:26 not long ago about making sure one's nakedness is not shown, so I decided to let that verse catapult me into a short series on modesty in dress.

I generally post on social media what I'm studying at any given time, and in posting about modesty I've gotten some good feedback from brothers and sisters in the Messiah. I've had many private message, text, and call me to ask practical questions about dress and nakedness. I've gotten questions from people in our local assembly as well, so I decided to address these questions, give practical advice, and add in some encouragement.

Everything asked doesn't have a "black-and-white" answer. There are some grey areas in Scripture. I'm one of the people who gets asked these type questions, sometimes it's because people want to weasel out of obedience, but other times it's because people are genuinely concerned with making sure they are walking in obedience.

It appears to me that in texts like 1 Corinthians 7:12, 25-26 the Apostle Paul sometimes gave his opinion on matters that weren't directly addressed in Scripture. He did this as a faithful student of Scripture, as one who had been entrusted with preaching the gospel, deriving principles from that which was written. I want to do the same here. I am not an Apostle, let it be made known that I'm fully aware of that. At the same time I put a lot of study and effort into learning Yahweh's will for my life as I shepherd a group of people. I take seriously that I'll receive a stricter judgment (Jam. 3:1), so I take time to comb through subjects that are difficult, trying to get down to minute details.

I'm not going to harp on any of this or try to force anything on anyone. My motto is pretty much to live by example and wait until someone asks me a question, because that's usually when a person has an ear to hear. I do want to encourage you though to let go of your modern thinking, and maybe let go of some of your pride; take an honest look at what I'm going to present.

Some sisters have asked me about dresses and skirts; are they similar to the tunic? Yes, some dresses are tunics, and some skirts cover the body in the same way a tunic does, draping loosely over the mid-section. That's really the goal here, to not reveal the shape of our body. Our clothes should compliment our body or beauty, not reveal everything to the outside world. Nakedness is something private to you, or private between you and your spouse if you're married. It's not for the whole world to see. Tight, form-fitting dresses or tight skirts aren't proper, but many dresses and skirts are loose, modest, and beautiful.

I have been asked more than once about "loose pants." Yes, some pants are more loose than others. I have some linen pants that don't hug my mid-section like a tight pair of blue jeans (or the modern "skinny jeans") would. I love my linen pants (they are very comfortable), but I don't

wear these pants without a tunic. If I did they would be more modest than a pair of blue jeans, but I'm not really interested in more modest, I'm interested in what Yahweh appointed in Genesis 3:21, so I keep a tunic on over my pants. I think all men and women in the Messiah should do the same.

For the men, I know this is a strange and difficult teaching. When I first started wearing a tunic (2004) I got stared at by so many people. I remember walking through Kohls with my wife back then and this was all brand new to me, so I was self-conscious and noticed all kinds of people do a double-take and point. It was hard back then; I had to get rid of a lot of my flesh. I've worked my way up to not really being bothered by the pointers anymore. Not too long ago I was standing in line at Chick-fil-a and I saw a couple of the young ladies behind the counter point at me, whisper, and laugh. It didn't bother me at all. I looked straight at them, waved and smiled, and they got red in the face and went back to working real quick-like, lol.

It's become a way of life to me, kind of like following the lunar reckoning of months and weeks. Things from the Bible that seem difficult or strange are only that way because we are unfamiliar with them at first. When you change to Yahweh's instructions, the longer you walk in them the less you want out. You start playing in tune with the old, Hebrew ways, and the modern ways start to become strange. I want the world's ways to become strange to me and the old paths to become the norm.

Men, you can begin with baby steps if it's too much to take in all at once. When you buy your shirts there are some shirts that have long tails in the front and back, and there are other shirts with an extra "T" on the tag standing for "tall" that hang down 2 to 4 inches longer than most shirts. I would definitely encourage you to at least wear your shirts untucked men, and then work your way up to a tunic eventually. They used to teach little boys to tuck in their shirt to be presentable, but that's not necessary; it's just a man-made "churchy" formality. No Hebrew man or boy wore a tucked in shirt to the local synagogue. I encourage you to untuck your shirt; If you don't start somewhere you'll gradually forget about this teaching. King David said, "I hurried, not hesitating to keep your commands." (Ps. 119:60, HCSB)

The same goes for the sisters here. It's kind-of become stylish now for the short tunics. I see them on the clothes rack some times in stores, and I think some of them are too short (like a mini tunic) but at least it's a start. The women can look for these type shirts if they are wearing pants, shirts that begin to cover or drape over the mid-section. If a woman is more comfortable with a dress or skirt she should look for the more loose ones.

Let me add here about the tops we wear. I understand that clothes will at times show some of our form, and that's unavoidable, but we shouldn't be wearing tops that are too tight or that reveal too much of our chest area. I've seen some fellas who strike their-self as a ladies man and unbutton a few of those buttons down their chest to let some of that hair show. That's not appropriate, and neither is it appropriate for a female to show off her chest area. According to Genesis 3:21 covering nakedness in general is from the shoulders to at least below the thigh. I

don't really like shorts, but I don't think the bottom of the leg is nakedness in Scripture. I think a tunic above the knee is fine by itself or with a pair of shorts.

One person asked me about sleeves. I can't find anything in Scripture that would absolutely speak against wearing a sleeveless tunic. Obviously some sleeveless shirts cover more than others; I'm not really fond of the whole "spaghetti strap" tops for women. To me it just seems like an attempt to keep as little clothing on as possible up top. Some men are vain, desiring to show off their muscles. Let's all remember that modesty is equally about humility. There are some people however who wear sleeveless shirts because it's comfortable. If someone is wearing a sleeveless tunic, I can't speak against that in general. I can see how that, especially in the peak summer time, Hebrew men and women would benefit from a sleeveless tunic as they worked out in the garden or doing farm chores.

What we are dealing with mainly is modesty in mixed, public company. If we had to be modestly dressed at all times then we could never take a bath or get into bed with our spouse. It's the same with changing in a men's locker room. Men around men can still be discreet (same with women around women) but modesty isn't as necessary in these circumstances. If I have to change my shirt in front of my sons at work I do that, but I would not take off my shirt in front of the sisters in our local assembly or a crowd of women.

Trauma healthcare is an exception as well. If a woman gets in a car wreck and is rushed to the emergency room and has to have her shirt cut off to get to her heart, the greater command of saving life takes precedent over the lesser command of modesty. Some have asked me about non-trauma cases, like a male OBGYN examining a woman, and I will have to say that I've never been comfortable with that. I'm not trying to make light of a professional job, I just think midwives are more suitable for these occasions.

I've had the question from a few sisters come up about breastfeeding, which is the natural way to feed your little baby. I think public breastfeeding is an exception and is fine; you can still be discreet about it, but I don't think it's necessary to smother a baby's head while he or she is eating off Mama. People need to realize that a baby needs to eat like the rest of us, and that's the way Yahweh designed for a baby to eat when they are little. People should give Mamas the courtesy of not staring directly at her breast when she's feeding. I've heard some men say it makes them feel uncomfortable, yet when a scantily clad woman walks into a restaurant they don't complain one bit. It's a ridiculous double standard, and the breast-feeding Mama isn't even trying to show off her breast, she's just giving her baby what he/she needs at the time.

If you put this into practice, and start becoming conscious about what you wear, you will start to notice how much more modest a tunic is than traditional, modern clothes. I'm a people-watcher and I'm sure I'm not the only one. You will see people at the grocery store in pants, and then you might see a person dressed in a long coat in the winter time. You will immediately notice how much more modest the long-coat is because it hangs over the mid-section.

For anyone reading this, please realize that I'm not interested in policing anyone, but I am interested in encouraging everyone in Scriptural holiness. I address these matters because people have asked me to address these matters, and I'm open to a deeper understanding on any of it.

I love everyone right where they are at. I have to, because Yahweh loves me right where I'm at, and I know that I'm not yet at the level I ought to be. When we share this message with others, let's do so in kindness and not in a judgmental way. We all have to make judgments everyday, but we shouldn't walk around with a stuck-up judgmental attitude, looking down our nose at everyone. Yahweh's people should be the kindest people on this earth. So let's not pounce on anyone with this modesty message. Let's mainly share it by example, and when someone asks, be as gentle and patient with them as Yahweh has been with you.