

Intro:

Well, last week I dared to talk about men and women and their roles in the public worship service of the church.

This week I may end up leaving preaching and “goin’ to meddlin’”, as they say.

This week we are going to talk about how women should dress in church.

Notice that I changed from “I” to “we”. (That was for personal safety!)

We are just kidding about that, I don’t think any of our ladies are contemplating violence about my preaching!

Let’s look at our passage and then I’d like to remind you of the context.

Read 1 Tim 2.8-10, text 9-10

We are in the context of Paul’s exhortation to the church concerning the ministry of prayer. We have been emphasizing evangelistic prayer because of three points Paul makes in verses 3-7.

As Paul concludes his reasons for praying that others would be saved, he comes back to the subject of prayer in our passage. He does two things in this passage:

1. He distinguishes roles between men and women
2. He mandates the adornment of Christian women

I also want you to see that our context is putting us in the setting of public worship.

- These prayers are formal prayers for the good of the assembly (1-2)
- These prayers are to be led by men (8-9)
- The apostle is going to expand on the role of women in a way that speaks to public instruction (11-12)

All of these facts are important to consider when we isolate 1 Tim 2.9-10 and work to come to an application of them to our lives.

Proposition: In public worship, the apostle calls on women to adorn themselves appropriately, both in body and in spirit.

I. The outward adornment (9)

A. The connection with the public prayer (‘in like manner’)

1. J. Vernon McGee says that the ‘likewise’ implies that women also pray in the public service

2. 1 Cor 11 speaks of women praying
3. However, our passage specifically seems to put the responsibility for public prayer in the hands of the men

I don't want to diminish this distinction. Our culture is constantly putting pressure on the church to conform to its standards rather than follow the Bible. We don't have that option.

One unbelieving commentator had this to say about the entire passage (vv. 9-15): "All the things in this chapter are mere temporary regulations to meet a given situation."¹

We don't accept that kind of unbelief.

We think it is unwise to make concessions to that kind of unbelief.

"Spiritual qualities should mark a Christian lady always, of course. However, Paul's concern was that they be outstanding in the church meetings. There the lady's character and conduct would contribute to the orderly and edifying activities rather than detracting from them."²

B. Quite clearly, clothing styles are an issue in public worship

One commentator: "The contrast is between works and wardrobe."³

1. The positive admonition
 - a. A certain kind of clothing
 - 1) The adjective describing the clothing means 'orderly'
 - 2) Translated 'modest' in KJV, 'proper' in NAU
 - 3) We could say: 'appropriate'

¹ William Barclay, *The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*, p. 76.

² Tom Constable, *Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible*, 1 Ti 2:9 (Galaxie Software, 2003; 2003).

³ Bailey, p. 356, cited in Tom Constable, *Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible*, 1 Ti 2:9 (Galaxie Software, 2003; 2003).

The first application to be made from this phrase is that there is an appropriate kind of clothing for worship.

The principles here are specifically addressed to women – but if it is appropriate for women to be dressed appropriately, it certainly is for men as well.

So how do we understand ‘appropriate’?

b. A specific kind of spirit

1) Shamefacedness / modestly

a) It is not ‘ashamed’ after having done something wrong

b) But it is ‘shamefaced’ – a humility of mind in consideration of others that prevents a shameful action

Trench said: “while [shamefacedness] would always restrain a good man from an unworthy act, [shame] would sometimes restrain a bad one”

2) Sobriety / discreetly

a) A soundness of mind [opposed to *mania*, so ‘sanity’]

b) A spirit, mind, judgement that controls self and selfish impulses

2. The negative admonition: not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array

“Why did the apostle pick these particular adornments? Do they have something to do with only his culture, or does this verse apply today?”⁴

a. Compare 1 Peter 3.1-6

b. The emphasis is on styles of adornment (including hair styles) that call for inappropriate attention

⁴ Charles Ray, *The books of First and Second Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*, p. 52.

John Chrysostom: “And what then is *modest apparel*? Such as covers them completely and decently, and not with superfluous ornaments; for the one is decent and the other is not. What? Do you approach God to pray with broidered hair and ornaments of gold? Are you come to a ball? a marriage-feast? a carnival? There such costly things might have been seasonable: here not one of them is wanted. You have come to pray, to ask pardon for your sins, to plead for your offences, beseeching the Lord. ... Away with such hypocrisy!”⁵

c. Especially in a worship service, quietness and modesty is the only appropriate style

What makes something modest?

- It should not call attention to itself – not flash, gaudy, ‘look at me’
- It should not call attention to sexuality – cut, style or stance
- It should not call attention away from the face, especially the eyes

It is often easier to define these things negatively than positively ... but let’s turn to positive adornment...

II. The inner adornment (10)

A. There is a proper adornment for professing Christian women

1. The word for godliness here is similar to the word in v. 2

a. Root word means “shrinking back”

b. V. 2 is the ‘good shrinking back’ – an appropriate humility and reverence before God

c. Here it is ‘shrinking back from God’ – the word ‘God’ is added to the root

2. There is a ‘fitting’ adornment for women who say they fear God – who ‘profess godliness’

⁵ John Chrysostom, quoted by Alfred Plummer in *The Pastoral Epistles*, p. 101, quoted again by William MacDonald and Arthur Farstad, *Believer's Bible Commentary : Old and New Testaments*, electronic ed., 1 Ti 2:9 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1995).

B. The fitting adornment is good works

“The idea of ‘good works’ as an adornment is suggestive, for a life of selfless devotion to others may well enhance the appearance. A woman’s adornment, in short, lies not in what she herself puts on, but in loving service she gives out.”⁶

1. Far better to be godly than gorgeous
2. Far better to be a servant than sultry

Conclusion:

The emphasis of this passage is on the inner person, not the outward adornment.

Proposition: In public worship, the apostle calls on women to adorn themselves appropriately, both in body and in spirit.

There is a kind of beauty that does not fade away, it only grows brighter and brighter the more it is exercised.

⁶ Donald Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles*, p. 75.