

Wearing Your Heart on Your Sleeve

What to wear or not to wear to Church, Worship Services? What is the proper attire for Church? Some of you may remember when the men wore slacks, nice shoes, collared shirt with a tie many times, except in the summer sometimes and had a sport coat on, if not a suit coat. Some of you may remember when women only in extreme case wore pants and certainly not blue jeans to Church. Some of you may remember even further back when it was to "dress your best" for church.

Here it is, some food for thought, not setting rules or telling you what to do. I actually dare you to think about what is being said here, go to scripture, and see if you are bearing the standard of scripture in your life and worship!

I am just going to present some facts, observations, scriptures and yes a little of my personal thoughts about it all, but as always, what you do with the information is your business. Just remember an old saying that "If you throw a rock into a pack of dogs, the ones that howl the loudest are the ones it hits". In addition, if you are thinking it, yes it definitely is between you and G-d.

Over the past years, I have observed that the manner of dress for coming to worship in the House of the Lord has diminished to being slovenly and almost vulgar at times. Yes, I am old enough to remember changing hairstyles, men's "leisure suits", and women's "pants suits" coming on the scene at church. I remember the emergence of blue jeans and tennis shoes or sneakers. Now it is, well G-d just does not care, come as you are, dress like you want. With that attitude, I have even seen those sleep pants and "house shoes"! Oh boy here he goes, I am sure many are saying, he is about to judge, blah, blah, blah, blah.

Wondering if G-d's Word has any thing to say about the proper attire for "Church", that is meeting for worship and teaching? Actually it does. No, it does not give a list of acceptable "items", but G-d certainly does make his view on the matter known:

- ❖ Malachi 3:6 (NKJV) ⁶ "For I *am* the LORD, I do not change; Therefore you are not consumed, O sons of Jacob. - Hebrews 13:8 (NKJV) ⁸ Jesus Christ *is* the same yesterday, today, and forever. - James 1:16-17 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. ¹⁷ Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.

When setting the standard for worship and setting up the tabernacle for His Chosen People (of which all are now due to being grafted in with the Sacrificial death of Jesus Christ) G-d set standards for the priests to come into His presence, representing the people. You can say that is the hallmark, the standard, the path, the example of what G-d thinks about how one dresses for coming to His house to worship Him!

A quick look at the standards in Exodus and Leviticus reveals the use of a word that many misapply and misunderstand. Look:

- ❖ Exodus 28:2 (TEV) ² Make priestly garments for your brother Aaron, to provide him with dignity and beauty. - Exodus 28:39-42 (TEV) ³⁹ "Weave Aaron's shirt of fine linen and make a turban of fine linen and also a sash decorated with embroidery. ⁴⁰ "Make shirts, sashes, and caps for Aaron's sons, to provide them with dignity and beauty. ⁴¹ Put these clothes on your brother Aaron and his sons. Then ordain them and dedicate them by anointing them with olive oil, so that they may serve me as priests. ⁴² Make linen shorts for them, reaching from the waist to the thighs, so that they will not expose themselves. - Leviticus 16:4 (NKJV) ⁴ He shall put the holy linen tunic and the linen

trousers on his body; he shall be girded with a linen sash, and with the linen turban he shall be attired. These are holy garments. Therefore, he shall wash his body in water, and put them on.

There are other scripture which describes the clothing to be worn in approaching the Lord for worship at His House or the representation of His house is HOLY.

Mind you, this does not mean a special spiritually cleaned and blessed article. Antonyms (the opposite) of HOLY are: common, worldly, secular, unholy, and even profane! It takes on the context of the meaning not common or in other words, not worldly, not everyday stuff. It is set aside, separate from the common everyday clothing.

No matter the culture, several thousand years ago, a decade ago, or today, clothes are an indicator and mark of what we think and value, including influencing how we feel, behave and respect. Clothes say what we think about and follow as with the entertainment industry. Clothes say what we think about what other people think about us, and like it or not includes our Creator! When it come to going before our Creator in worship, in His house the prevalent attitude is so casual, cavalier and nonchalant to indicate, it is not important as times change. Times sort of change, but G-d does not change and is not going to change.

We do not need to get into a clothing competition, but G-d gives us a "yardstick" by which to measure. There two extreme ends to that. One could say tank top, shorts, and flip-flops are one end and tuxedos are at the other end. A common sense, balanced view is in between the extremes.

Our worship in many situations may become too laid back, too casual, too informal, flippant even and oh yes, even very indifferent (as shown by our attire).

Even though worship is not a "dress parade", many times, we become too sloppy, and revealing in the way we dress for worship our attitude. Our clothes do contribute to the emphasis we place on worship to G-d. This does not mean we have to wear very fine and expensive clothes. However, the way we dress should be in keeping with the dignity of the occasion.

What you wear to worship at G-d's House IS IMPORTANT. Being ministered to by our Lord and the Holy Spirit is awesome. By our clothing, we can display many things – the condition of our heart being one of them. When we bow before the Lord and venerate His name in public worship, He deserves our loftiest expressions from within and without. This time is special, what we wear, and our attitude about it is a neon sign as to our respect and belief concerning our relationship with our Lord! It is a neon sign as to what is in our heart.

When dressing to go to G-d's house to worship and fellowship with Him, Keep in mind He is not our "friend", He is our King of Kings, Lord of Lord, our Creator, our Savior and our Judge. As shown:

- ❖ John 4:24 (NKJV) ²⁴ God *is* Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." Thus requiring our noblest demonstration of deference to Him!!

Do what you want, Do what you must, but remember:

YOU ARE WEARING YOUR "HEART" ON YOUR SLEEVE!!