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clothing, but which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works” (1 Tim. 2:9-10). Though specifically addressed to women, it also applies to men. And, if one can put on too much clothing, one can put on too little as well. Only the willfully blind cannot see this truth.

Are you submitting to God’s authority when it comes to modest clothing? If not, why not? “You are not your own,” “you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Cor. 6:19-20).

- Steven F. Deaton

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Must We Use The Words of Scripture To Be Sound?

Believe it or not, some brethren are asking this question, including those who are “gospel preachers.” It used to be the stated and nearly universal conviction of Christians to call “Bible things by Bible names.” Now, it is not so.

The above question recently came up in the context of offending a modern audience. It was suggested that if we use the words of John the immerser, “brood of vipers,” we may drive people off (Matt. 3:7). We are told there is a better way to put it—a non-offensive, gentle, loving way to expose those in sin. This is an example of the “wisdom of men” verses the “foolishness of God” (1 Cor. 1:25).

Why does man think he can improve on the word of God? Why do uninspired men believe they can be more polite and less offensive than an inspired man—a man who Jesus described as the greatest born among women (Matt. 11:11)? Is it arrogance or ignorance? Are they ashamed of the gospel (Rom. 1:16; Mk. 8:38)?

Peter said, “If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God” (1 Pet. 4:11). Paul said, “Preach the word” and, “which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual *thoughts* with spiritual *words*” (2 Tim. 4:2; 1 Cor. 2:13, NASB). Likewise, “Hold fast the pattern of sound words, which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim. 1:13).

Sadly, many have lost faith in the Word and will not preach it straight. Nor will many allow a modern John in their pulpit. He is too “rough” and “crude” for their delicate sensibilities. They are used to the finer things of life, including “polite society.”

Yes, we must use the words of scripture to be sound. If they offend—let them offend!

- Steven F. Deaton

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You Almost Persuade Me

“Then Agrippa said to Paul, ‘You almost persuade me to become a Christian’” (Acts 26:28). Agrippa’s choice that day was the worst he ever made. He chose to forego heaven, embrace hell, and to remain in the misery of sin. Men and women who turn down the gospel invitation continue to make the same choice as Agrippa.

“You almost persuade me to become a Christian” is the same as saying, “You almost persuade me to go to heaven.” Heaven is where the saved will be free from sorrow, sickness, and death (Rev. 21:1-4). It is the eternal home of the redeemed, where all is joy and peace and love. Why would one turn down an offer to go there?

“You almost persuade me to become a Christian” is the same as saying, “You almost persuade me to avoid hell.” Hell is where the unsaved will spend a never-ending night in torment; where the worm does not die and the fire is not quenched (Mk. 9:44-48). In hell there will be ceaseless weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matt. 25:30). Why would one turn down an offer to avoid it?

“You almost persuade me to become a Christian” is the same as saying, “You almost persuade me to give up sin.” Sin brings countless sorrows and immeasurable pain (1 Tim. 6:9-10). “The way of the unfaithful is hard” (Prov. 13:15). Why would one turn down an offer to escape such misery?

The reason people turn down an offer to go to heaven, avoid hell, and to remain in the mire and muck of sin is because the devil has deluded them. He is the god of this world that blinds the minds of men (2 Cor. 4:1-4). They, therefore, love darkness rather than light, unrighteousness rather than truth (Jn. 3:19-21; 2 Thes. 2:9-12).

What about you? Are you almost persuaded to give up sin, avoid hell, and embrace heaven? If so, why are you “almost persuaded”? Almost is to be lost.

- Steven F. Deaton

God’s Authority & Immodest Dress

Anyone who believes the Bible knows that God has all authority. He is the Creator of the universe (Gen. 1:1; Ecc. 12:1; Rom. 1:25). He is the Father of spirits (Heb. 12:9). He gives us life, breath, and all things (Acts 17:25). “For in Him we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17:28).

Jesus said, “All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth” (Matt. 28:18). This leaves ZERO authority to any man or group of men, including you and me. Those who are Christians are especially subject to the Father and Son, because they are a purchased possession of God. The blood of Christ paid for the Christian’s soul (1 Cor. 7:23; cf. Acts 20:28).

Not only did the Lamb of God pay for the Christian’s soul, but for his body as well. “For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Cor. 6:20). This is why Paul commanded, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service” (Rom. 12:1). Based on this truth, we are told not to conform to this world (Rom. 12:2).

Do we understand what this means? God has the authority to direct us in our daily lives. He has the right to regulate our jobs (Eph. 6:5-9), our marriages (Eph. 5:22-33), and our homes (Eph. 6:1-4). God’s authority extends to our body—He gives us the boundaries of our speech (Eph. 4:29; 5:4), our thoughts (Matt. 5:28; Phil. 4:8), and what we may take into our body (1 Pet. 4:3-4; cf. Prov. 20:1).

Does God also have the right to regulate our clothing? Is this the only area in our lives where He has no authority? Some Christians seem to think this way. Why is it that we can see God’s right to command us in all aspects of our life, except the manner in which we dress?

The Bible plainly teaches God does have the right to tell us how to dress. “In like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly

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Behold, now is the accepted time; behold now is the day of salvation. 2 Cor. 6:2