

## "THE PURPOSE OF CLOTHING"

One of the most effective methods used by Satan to lure humans into sin is changing the purpose of various aspects of life from the original, practical, utilitarian design to something entirely different and sinful!

One of the areas where this is most evident is in the purpose of clothing. When mankind was innocent and sinless, covering his nakedness was not necessary. Genesis chapter 2 ends with these words: "*And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.*"

But, as we are all aware, this innocence did not last forever. In Genesis 3 when sin entered the world, one of the first things that accompanied it was the sense of shame that comes from exposing one's body in public. "*Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings*" (Genesis 3:7).

It then became forever necessary for men and women to cover themselves with clothing. "*Also for Adam and his wife the LORD God made tunics of skin, and clothed them*" (Genesis 3:21). The source of many of King David's problems was his sinful reaction to the sight of a woman unclothed (2 Sam 11:2-3).

So, the initial purpose for clothing was to "*cover one's nakedness.*" When Noah became drunk and uncovered in his tent we are told, "*But Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it on both their shoulders, and went backward and covered the nakedness of their father. Their faces were turned away, and they did not see their father's nakedness*" (Genesis 9:23). This is a very practical use of clothing and one that is still necessary today.

However, it didn't take men long to change the practical purpose of clothing into something prideful and in many cases sinful. From Joseph's "*coat of many colors*" a sign that he was one of his father's favorites, (Genesis 37:3); to Samson's killing of thirty men of Ashkelon for their "*linen garments and thirty changes of clothing*" (Judges 14:12-19); to the soldiers gambling for the clothing of Jesus (John 19:23-24); clothes have gone from the practical to the prideful and sinful.

In America and many other parts of the world the purpose for clothing has changed drastically. While the original purpose was to "cover", the purpose now seems to be to **reveal** or at least to **accentuate** parts of the body. Clothing has also become a symbol of **status** and **affluence**.

While it is certainly not sinful to wear nice, clean, neat looking clothes, the child of God must never allow clothing to become a source of sinful pride (Proverbs 16:18). Nor should clothing ever be chosen, by Christian men or women, for the purpose of revealing that which was intended to be covered (1 Timothy 2:9-10).

Immodest clothing has become an engrained part of our culture. And, as sad as it may seem, **culture always eventually infiltrates the church**. Let us remember the words of the Holy Spirit through Paul, "*...present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do **not be conformed** to this world, but be **transformed** by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God*" (Romans 12:1-2).

(The original "mustard seed" that eventually became this article was a comment from Steve Higginbotham in an article entitled "Views From the Pews." jwc)