

God Has Spoken — Modesty and Purity

Modesty and purity of life are very close companions. The society in which we live gives little heed to the need for modesty in dress and behavior. Semi-nudity is so commonplace that a person who is dressed modestly is quite noticeable. People have forgotten or never have learned that God has spoken on this important aspect of human behavior. We do not set the standard for dress and conduct.

Adam and Eve made themselves aprons of fig leaves to cover their nakedness, but evidently still felt naked (**Genesis 3:7-10**). God was not satisfied, either, and made them tunics of skin and so clothed them (**Genesis 3:21**). To uncover the thigh and thus expose the upper leg brought shame (**Isaiah 47:2,3**). This principle is applied to men as well as women (**Exodus 20:26**). The principle of physical modesty is so clear that it is used to illustrate the godliness needed to avert spiritual nakedness (**Revelation 3:18**). The attire of a harlot showed what she was (**Proverbs 7:10; Genesis 38:15; Judges 16:1**).

Nowadays, excuses to undress almost completely are multiplied. Hot weather, swimming, sports, and even simply styles of fashion are all used to try to

By Gilbert Alexander

justify immodesty. God's message is ignored, and conformity to undress is embraced. Those who wish to please God need to "awake to righteousness" (**1 Corinthians 15:34**). "Be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds..." (**Romans 12:2**).

Immodesty of dress interferes with purity of mind and with purity of behavior. It is a trial of faith and a challenge to one's spiritual perspective even to walk the streets and shop in stores. Added to the daily menu are television programming, the internet, many of the new cell phones and how they are being used and abused, and the language of so many of the contemporary "songs" on radio. How can a Christian maintain purity of mind while filling his ears with the villainess and corruption of this world of darkness? When teen idols debase themselves in lewdness and lasciviousness, what are their worshippers going to do? "Keep yourself pure" is God's injunction (**1 Timothy 5:22**). Indecent exposure provokes lust and demonstrates base immodesty (**1 Peter 2:11,12**).



Lisa Carter (Luke's mother)	Jesse Godwin (Troy's father and Mac's grandfather)	Virginia Box (Sarah Norman's grandmother)	Louise Pack (Anna and Christopher's grandmother)
Gloria Detmer and Carol Dickerson (Toni Herd's Sisters)	Don Lanier (Father of Greg Lanier)	David Hartsell (Holly and Brad's Father)	Jamin Hymel (Chad's son)
Terri Moore (Joey's aunt)	Artina Hunt (Esther's friend's sister)	Betty Bradford	Hazel Gilliland and Sherry Carroll (Toni's relatives)
Ricky Tucker (Tyler's cousin)	Ermogene Laxson (Sara Lail's grandmother)	Danny Weldon (Rusty Weldon's brother)	William Smith (Ken Sullivan's brother)
Gerald White (Christopher, Anna and Wesley's Father)	Bernice Martin (Will Harris' great-grandmother)	Sasha Rozier (Makenzie Reynolds' cousin)	Eva Jean Cavender (Matt's grandmother)
John M. Rhodes and Bonnie Rhodes Kirkley (Toni Herd's family)	Howard Vaughan (Mary Ann's Granddad)	Aubrey Meeks (Toni Herd's Nephew)	Maria Aragon (Liseth's Mother)

July Birthdays
 2-Josh Gooch
 8-David DeFoor
 11-Chase Winslett
 11-Madi White
 11-Clay Morris
 11-Kelsey Gallahar
 12-Tyler Tucker
 14-Laurel Jerkins
 14-Megan Ryan
 15-Bradley Seymore
 15-Winston Atnip
 16-Katie Martin
 19-Ben Holcomb
 19-Jay Borden
 21-Tori Luther
 22-Kate Fortenberry
 24-Haley Gay
 25-Betty Bradford
 25-Yvette Rouse
 26-Brandon Hester
 27-Tiffany Green
 28-Jacob Bradshaw
 29-Hayden Phillips

News and Notes

- ☒ - The ladies' class this week is Thursday at 7:00 p.m. at Savanna Spohn's house. We will be studying Abraham
- ☒ - Please pray for Buddy Scalf, Ada Owens uncle who lives in West Virginia. He has been diagnosed with incurable cancer and his home has been flooded. Please also include his wife Priscilla.
- ☒ - David Hartsell returned home from the hospital.
- ☒ - Scott Perkins had successful outpatient surgery last week.
- ☒ - Please remember James Luther, a relative of Toni Herd, in your prayers as he is very sick.
- ☒ - Our new quarter begins today!
- ☒ - Please pray for Beth Lingerfelt's grandfather, Nelson Thayer, who has complications from an injured back.
- ☒ - Audio CD's will be in the foyer immediately after each service. They are also posted on www.auchurch.com

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Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (**Matthew 5:16**)

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The Flock Of God

By Sewell Hall

Few animals are as helpless as sheep. With very little defense against natural enemies, little sense of direction and no ability to find their own food, they are largely dependent on man to provide their needs. In the days before fences, owners of sheep had to stay with them in the wilderness, sometimes for months at a time.

The shepherd had to provide for the sheep all that they could not provide for themselves. He searched out green pastures where they could find food (**1 Chronicles 4:39-40**) and gently led them there, mindful always of those "with young" (**Isaiah 40:11**). He even protected them with his life. Young David recounted to King Saul how he had snatched a lamb from the mouth of a lion and killed both lions and bears (**1 Samuel 17**).

Giving so much of himself to the care of the sheep and being so often without human companionship, the shepherd developed a close relationship with the sheep. He had a name for each one; the sheep knew his voice and came

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when he called (**John 10:3-4**). He counted the sheep each night to be sure that all were safely in the fold (**Jeremiah 33:13**). If even one was missing, he scoured the countryside to find it (**Luke 15:4**).

The helplessness of the sheep, their total dependence on the shepherd and the shepherd's love for them made this relationship one of the finest and most often used figures of God's relationship to His people. As much like sheep as we are, what a blessing to have an all-knowing, all-wise, all-powerful, all-loving God as our

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Thoughts to Ponder

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. (**Psalm 23:1-2**)

Elders
 Walker Davis
 (334) 703-0050
 Larry Rouse
 (334) 734-2133

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES Sunday

Bible Class9:30 AM
 Worship10:20 AM
 Evening Worship 6:00 PM

Wednesday
 Bible Classes.....7:00 PM

E-Mail:
larryrouse@aubeacon.com

Larry Rouse
 Evangelist and Editor

Find us on the Internet: www.auchurch.com and www.aubeacon.com

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shepherd! David, the shepherd, expressed it so beautifully in those familiar words: "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want" (**Psalm 23**). David, however, could not know the absolute perfection the Divine Shepherd as we can know it, having seen Him on the cross, laying down His life for the sheep.

Owners of sheep sometimes had problems when the number of their sheep grew so large that they could not personally attend them. Fortunate, indeed, was any man like Jesse who had a son like David who would love and care for the sheep as though they were his own. All too often, the sheep had to be divided into flocks and left in the care of hirelings. Jesus explained: "He who is a hireling and not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them" (**John 10:12**). Jesus was actually describing the priests and teachers of His day who, as shepherds of Israel, had shown a total disregard for the sheep in their selfish pursuit of personal wealth and glory.

Today, each local congregation is a flock of God's sheep. Elders are the ones who are charged: "Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by constraint but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you but being examples to the flock" (**1 Peter 5:2-3**).

All too often, the picture we have of elders is "two or three men standing in a corner making decisions for the church" or sitting around a table interviewing a prospective preacher or working on a budget. Most of our prayers for them are to "rule well" (**1 Timothy 5:17**), but this is not their major function. Shepherds make some decisions and oversee the flock, but much more of their time is spent

with the sheep, seeing to their needs and caring for them individually.

The "Chief Shepherd" has every right to expect that the shepherds of local churches reflect His own love and care for the sheep. They, too, must defend the flock (**Titus 1:9-11**); they must feed the sheep by laboring "in the word and in doctrine" (**1 Timothy 5:17**); and they must lead by "being examples to the flock" (**1 Peter 5:3**). To accomplish all of this, they must know the Rock, making an effort to know each sheep by name and to be known by them. They must number the flock, not out of pride, but to know just exactly how many sheep are their responsibility. If one is missing (not just from the assembly, but from daily faithfulness), they must be ready to go and find it so that they can "warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all" (**1 Thessalonians 5:14**). They should be willing to sacrifice even their lives.

Shepherds of a local flock must account for each sheep (**Hebrews 13:17**). Consider God's judgment on the shepherds of Israel: "Woe to the shepherds of Israel who feed themselves. You eat the fat and clothe yourselves with wool; you slaughter the fatlings, but you do not feed the flock. The weak you have not strengthened, nor have you healed those who were sick, nor bound up the broken, nor brought back what was driven away, nor sought what was lost; but with force and cruelty you have ruled them ... My flock was scattered over the whole face of the earth, and no one was seeking or searching for them" (**Ezekiel 34:2-6**).

Considering the fearful inevitability of such an accounting, who would ever "desire the office of a bishop"? The answer: only those who love the sheep so sincerely that they cannot bear to see them lacking shepherds. These are the only men whom God would have for such work, and to them is the promise: "When the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away" (**1 Peter 5:4**).



On Grace and Being Misunderstood

By Doy Moyer

Occasionally I've seen the argument made that if we aren't teaching grace in such a way that people misunderstand and accuse us of permitting sin, then we aren't teaching it as it should be taught. After all, Paul was opposed over his teaching of grace:

"And why not say (as we are slanderously reported and as some claim that we say), 'Let us do evil that good may come'" (Rom. 3:8).

"What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?" (Rom. 6:1).

The question, however, is not whether we are being accused the way Paul was, but whether we are teaching grace in truth (Col. 1:6). There may be many reasons Paul was being wrongfully accused, but I seriously doubt that this was due to the idea that Paul rarely qualified his teachings about grace (i.e., that he often taught grace without teaching the need to obey God). I would argue this because:

1. Paul's teachings about grace and faith (which includes trusting obedience) are generously scattered throughout his epistles. We just don't find big gaps in Paul's teaching where we see nothing about the need to trust and obey God, for example, or where we see nothing about grace. Just read the epistles for this point (it's amazing how just reading the text will answer so many issues). Paul does not do a disservice to his readers by failing to talk about one idea more than the other. In fact, the better way to read Paul's teachings on this (so I believe) is that grace and faith are intertwined and dispersed ubiquitously throughout what he says. Both grace and faith are integral to everything that he teaches, and they stand under all of his instructions.

2. Paul did, in fact, answer the false accusations (see above). He had no qualms about making himself clear on the matter. He did not camp on vagueness or equivocation. He didn't fuss at his accusers about failing to teach grace. He simply corrected the misun-

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derstanding. But why was there a misunderstanding? It's an assumption (and I believe a bad one) to say people misunderstood because Paul didn't teach much about obedience. I would draw attention to the fact that Paul says the claims were "slanderously reported." This is the word for "blaspheme," which does not mean that these are people who simply misunderstood Paul and were seeking clarity from him. There was a willful intent to hurt Paul's reputation. That brings the issue to a

different level.

We do not do a service to the biblical teaching of grace by failing to teach trust (which, again, includes obedience). We don't do a service to ourselves by trying to teach about grace in such a way that we want others to misunderstand us. Why in the world would we ever want to be misunderstood? That's not what Paul did. That's not what we should do. We should, however, teach grace and faith in a way that makes both integral to everything else that we teach and do. The concepts ought to be interwoven and threaded throughout all that we teach.

And we ought to be as clear as we can be. We should be willing to quote Romans 6:1-2 just as assuredly as we are willing to quote Ephesians 2:8-9. If some honestly misunderstand what we are saying, we should willingly and gladly clear it up without insinuating that they are self-righteous or don't believe in true grace. If others will engage in slanderous reporting (as those who opposed Paul), then we should still clear things up on our end and then pray that these lost souls will repent and come back to the Lord.

Let grace and faith be wedded to everything that we teach. Let these concepts be engrained deeply in our hearts. Let us stand firmly, by faith, on the riches of God's grace.

