

# Have We Surrendered All Modesty?

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I fear that many parents of youngsters in their teen years have failed to teach them any sense of modesty. Perhaps this is so because many of us didn't learn much about it from our parents. Modesty can apply to one's salary, house, or any number of things in the sense of being unostentatious, humble, or even moderate. However, there is another shade of meaning to the word having to do with one's moral convictions and respect for one's own body. Used in this sense, the word has to do with purity, decency and chastity. It is this latter sense that I fear many of us do not know and are robbing our children of it.

Lack of the trait is what causes a physically mature woman to be more undressed than dressed when in public places. Women, whether you like it or not, wearing scanty swimming attire, shorts and halter tops, mid-thigh skirts, see-through and low-cut blouses, skin-tight pants, and the like in public places (some even in church assemblies) is but an advertisement of a lack of modesty. As I see some of our young girls being allowed to go on school functions in short shorts, I am unable to comprehend what their parents are thinking. Do they never stop to realize the image they are creating for their daughters? We could expect the untaught, unprincipled, and undisciplined people of the world to show little or no respect for their own bodies or for those of their children. But for the sake of our Lord and the righteousness He sets before us, ought not Christian people to be more decent? Shameless nudity has been steadily gaining ground in the past several decades. It is seen in the places that advertise "totally nude shows," in the movies and TV shows that feature so much exposed flesh they are called "skin flicks" and in the diabolical pornographic book and magazine trade. One is in a poor position to denounce such things on the one hand, while encouraging a climate of immodesty by their own dress habits and what they allow their daughters to wear.

Women and girls, like it or not, you greatly influence the morals of men and boys. How you feel about your own purity and chastity will determine how men or boys see and respect you. And don't forget it. **How you dress or undress in public is the most obvious index to how you value your chastity!** Before you call me a "dirty-minded man," read what Jesus said about our causing someone to sin by our careless behavior:

Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the

depth of the sea. Woe to the world for temptations to sin! For it is necessary that temptations come, but woe to the one by whom the temptation comes! (Mat. 18:6, 7).

But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart (Mat. 5:28, ESV).

[**Note:** I wrote this article for, and it was published in the April 1984, edition of *Sword and Shield*, Shelby C. Smith, editor.]

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