

Why Dress Distinctions?

#0481

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—February 18, 1974

This afternoon I have some things to share with you, but before I do it, I want to read you three statements. The first is from *Counsels on Health*, page 244:

“Let no one feel that it is his place to mold others to his individual mind or opinions” *Counsels on Health*, page 244.

Do I have opinions? Oh yes. Do you have opinions? Yes. But it is not my place to mold you to *my* individual opinions, and I mustn’t take advantage of my position as a teacher here to do that. *Counsels on Diet and Foods*, page 209:

“In presenting the gospel, keep out all your own opinions” *Counsels on Diet and Foods*, page 209.

When you’re giving Bible studies, people may ask you, “What do you think about this? What do you think about that?” Don’t dilute the milk of the Gospel with your what? Opinion. So many times when people ask you, “What do you think about this or that?” if you are watching, listening for the instruction of the Spirit, you can say, “Well, let’s turn over here to Philippians and see what the Scripture says.” “Let’s go to Isaiah and find a text that may answer your question.” And as you keep doing that from question to question, the people get the idea that the answer is where?

[Audience responds] The Bible.

It’s in the Bible. Is it?

[Audience responds] Yes.

Well, but suppose they ask something that isn’t *in* the Bible? It may be that it is not something that really needs an answer.

I find that a very helpful expression when answering many questions is, “I don’t know.” [Laughter] “I don’t know.” But when I don’t know something, how pitiful it is for me to give evidence of that by stating merely *my opinions*:

“Not one moment of our precious time should be devoted to bringing others to conform to our personal ideas and opinions” *Testimonies for the Church, Volume 4*, page 608.

What does “conform” mean? Well, what does “form” mean? “Shape,” yes, and “con” means “with” so “to shape with.” Conform means “to shape with something else or somebody else.” Now, I want to be conformed to who?

[Audience responds] Jesus.

To Jesus Christ, is that right? But I mustn’t seek to conform you to *me* or me to *you*.

“Not one moment of our precious time...” *Ibid.*

What does “precious” mean? Valuable. It costs a lot.

“Not one moment of our precious time should be devoted to bringing others to conform to our personal ideas and opinions” *Ibid.*

That would save quite a bit of time, wouldn’t it? And we can *use* that in presenting the Word of God.

Now, why have I read you this? Because I don’t know of any subject that I could present today that would set off more personal ideas and opinions than the one I’m going to present. And I think you’ll see what I mean before I’m halfway through. But, with Jesus’ help, I’m going to seek to not spend one moment of my time in trying to conform *you* to my personal ideas and opinions. And I don’t want you to do that with anybody else, you see. If I’m not to do it as a teacher then you wouldn’t want to do it as a student, would you?

“Not one moment of our precious time should be devoted to bringing others to conform to our personal ideas and opinions” *Ibid.*

Now turn to Acts, the 20th chapter, and the 27th verse. Paul is talking here to the elders of the church in Ephesus. He had labored among these men for quite a while. Here he’s having his farewell visit with them. He’s reminding them of his work and his burden for them. In the 26th verse, he says:

“Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men” Acts 20:26.

Now the 27th verse. Will you read with me?

“For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God” Acts 20:27.

What did Paul declare? The counsel of God. How much of it?

[Audience responds] All.

All the counsel of God. So in these earlier statements, we were warned against giving what? Our own opinions. But here Paul sets us an example of doing what? Declaring the counsel of God.

Now turn, please, to 2 Timothy, the fourth chapter. Where do we find the counsel of God? 2 Timothy 4:1. Paul is writing his last letter to Timothy, his son in the ministry:

“I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom” 2 Timothy 4:1.

To do what?

“Preach the word...” 2 Timothy 4:2.

Preach the word. Preach the word. Not what? Not your own opinions. Preach the word. So, as teachers, as preachers, as witnesses, there are two things we’re to do—one, we’re to echo what God says; the other, we’re not to try to get others to conform to our opinions.

Now, interestingly enough, life is made up of a *mixture* of these. Every Christian is studying the Word of God to find out what God says. But in the *application* of those things to his life, of necessity, he forms certain opinions. See? For example, do we have counsel in the Word of God about the matter of sleeping and eating, and all that sort of thing? The Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy? Yes, but can we find in the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy, can you find the exact time to get up in the morning? Can you find the exact amount of time between the time you get up and family worship?

Can you find the exact amount of time that you are supposed to spend eating? I could go on with a long list of things on that.

On that, you and I *seek* to follow the counsels that we find in the Inspired writings, but *through* our study and *through* experience, we form what? Opinions. That’s right. And if you have the same opinion that I do, I’m likely to think that you are either *wiser* than most people or *more conscientious* than most people. Do you see what I mean? Why? Because you what? Agree with *me*.

That isn’t necessarily so, is it? [Laughter] You might not agree with me at all on the exact time to get up in the morning. You might be wiser than I am, particularly for yourself and your program. Do you see what I’m getting at?

[Audience responds] Yes.

One temptation that reformers have is in mixing up these two things, confusing these two things, so that they read some statement in the Bible or the Spirit of Prophecy and then they seek to make of that a rule by which to measure others when,

in the first place, the Lord didn't give it for that purpose, and in the second place, perhaps what they're measuring is *not* exactly what's said, but rather, the application of it by the individual to his life.

Now, all this by way of background. You can see that with these facts before us, the preacher, the teacher, has a tremendous responsibility. There are some things we *must* present. He must not shun to declare what? *All* the counsel of God. We must be pure from the blood of all men.

The night I was ordained, dear old Elder Fulton preached from that message to the prophet Ezekiel, "Son of man, I have set thee a watchman." I've made you a watchman to the house of Israel. And if the watchman sees the sword coming and doesn't blow the trumpet, and people are slain, at whose hands will God require that blood? At the watchman's hands.

So I have some very serious and important things to study with you this afternoon, and as I say, remember, in presenting, they are going to set off waves of human opinion, but as far as I know how to do it, I am going to avoid human opinion. I am going to avoid telling you what I *think*. But I *am* going to try to present some facts from the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy.

The study that I want to give you is the relation of dress and morals as it relates to the distinction between men and women in their appearance. Now, this is a class in Christian Home: preparation for marriage and conduct of people of all ages, married and unmarried, in their relation with one another. This, of course, is one of the important points in it.

Now, let's go to Deuteronomy, the 22nd chapter, and the 5th verse, where we find a clear Biblical statement on this. May I suggest that instead of being *protective* of your opinions, that you simply put them on the shelf for the next few minutes and let us, the best we know how, just *listen* to the Word of God and the testimonies of His Spirit. Deuteronomy 22:5:

"The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the LORD thy God"
Deuteronomy 22:5.

Now there's quite a strong word used in this text, what is it?

[Audience responds] Abomination.

Abomination. This isn't just a misdemeanor in God's law book. It's a felony, you see; it's a crime, what he's talking about.

You remember in Ezekiel 9, the prophet sees the angel at God's direction going from door to door in the church and listening for what? Those that what? Sigh and cry. For what? The abominations that are done. Where? In the land, in the church,

in Jerusalem.

So there are abominations, and here's one of the abominations. We don't have to guess at it. God says:

"...all that do so are abomination unto the LORD thy God" *Ibid*.

Now, what is it that's abomination? A woman wearing what pertains to a man, or a man putting on a woman's garment. That's what?

[Audience responds] Abomination.

That's abomination.

Somebody says, "Well, I don't see why." Well, that's the point. Your *opinion* may not see it. That's why God gave us His Word. Now it's a wonderful thing when I finally come to the place where my opinions are the result of reading and finding out what God has said. Isn't that right?

Now, somebody says, "Well, that was a long time ago. That was way back then."

Yes, it was. Now let's bring it down to the Advent movement. I'm going to read Volume 1 of the *Testimonies*, page 457:

"There is an increasing tendency to have women in their dress and appearance as near like the other sex as possible, and to fashion their dress very much like that of men, but God pronounces it abomination" *Testimonies to the Church, Volume 1*, page 457.

Here's that word again? What is it?

[Audience responds] Abomination.

Abomination. What is it? Well, it's the tendency to have one sex in their dress and appearance as near like the other sex as possible. Could this apply to woman? Could it apply to men? Yes. That's right. Does God apply it to both in Deuteronomy? Yes, He does.

Now someone, of course, is racing way ahead of me. And you're thinking, "What's Brother Frazee talking about?" I'm not sure that Brother Frazee's going to *tell* you what he's talking about. [Laughter] It isn't for me, in this day of utter confusion on this subject, to set up *my* little interpretation or application or understanding of these principles to the present situation. That isn't my burden. No.

My burden is this—to declare the whole counsel of God. And God has set up

warnings on this thing. And when I give you the warnings from the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy, then I can leave with the Holy Spirit to help *you* to form your opinions as to what *you* do about it, you see. That's an individual matter. Do you see the difference? But to avoid proclaiming the principles because there's confusion in the application is to miss the whole point.

Now, let's see what the purpose of this is. On page 460 of Volume 1, this is a very interesting statement:

"God designed that there should be a plain distinction between the dress of men and women, and has considered the matter of sufficient importance to give explicit directions in regard to it; for the same dress worn by both sexes would cause confusion and great increase of crime" *Ibid.*, page 460.

What does "designed" mean? Planned. He made it that way. Isn't that an interesting statement? Written a little more than a hundred years ago.

"...The same dress worn by both sexes would cause confusion and great increase of crime" *Ibid.*

Has it happened? Yes. Is it happening? Yes.

Now, how far do I want to follow that sort of program? I certainly wouldn't want to be in the *lead* of that parade, would I? I'd hate to be in the *middle* of it. I'm not sure that I'd even want to bring up the *tail end* of it. What do you say?

"God designed that there should be a plain distinction between the dress of men and women, and has considered the matter of sufficient importance to give explicit directions in regard to it; for the same dress worn by both sexes would cause confusion and great increase of crime" *Ibid.*

Now more than once in this chapter, you'll find Deuteronomy 22:5 quoted. That's this verse we read from the Bible. And what does Deuteronomy 22:5 deal with? What subject? Dress. And whose dress? Men's dress like women's and women's dress like men's. And God calls it what?

[Audience responds] Abomination.

Now there's another facet of the appearance, besides the clothes, that has to do with this matter of *distinction*. Let's turn to 1 Corinthians, the 11th chapter, verses 14–15:

"Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have

long hair, it is a shame unto him? But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering” 1 Corinthians 11:14–15.

Now I think I’ve heard more arguments about these two verses than most of the other verses in the Bible. And I shall not seek to enter into them. I shall not seek to speak *ex-cathedra* and tell you what all this means in terms of the present style. No. This is not my purpose, dear ones, believe me, in reading this text.

My purpose in reading this text is very simple, and I shall tell you exactly why I read it. According to the Scripture, this text brings us the fact that just as in Deuteronomy, there is to be a distinction in the clothes, so, here, there’s to be a distinction in what?

[Audience responds] The hair.

The hair.

Now, who is going to decide for *you* how to make the distinction in the clothes? Why, you are. That’s right. This isn’t a regimented society, or regimented church, or regimented campus. And who is going to decide for you how to be sure that your hair is in harmony with these two verses in 1 Corinthians 11? Who’s going to decide that? Who’s going to decide how to apply it in your life? Why, you are, each one of you, you do, don’t you? Yes.

Now you should feel very comfortable in that, that is, provided you’re living up to the light that God gives you. Now, if I’m *not* living up to the light that God gives me, should I feel comfortable? No. And I shouldn’t boast about it if my conscience doesn’t bother me. You know, there are little pills called tranquilizers that enable people not to be bothered by conscience. But the enemy is not limited to little pills like tranquilizers. He has many ways.

But I want to emphasize these two things. I’m not seeking to apply them. I’m letting you and the Holy Spirit do that. But you should know that this is what is truth, and you should know that it makes a difference to God. And you should understand it for yourself. You’re in training, many of you, to be Gospel workers. You’ll be going out and giving Bible studies and winning people to this truth. And the religious world and the world outside are filled with all sorts of ideas and lack of ideals on this subject, isn’t it? Yes. And if you’re not careful, you’ll be found patting somebody on the back and assuring them that what they’re doing is all *right* when it’s all *wrong*, just because it happens to conform to what? Your *opinions*.

Be reticent about telling people what they’re doing is *wrong* if you’re not sure. But be careful, be reticent, about telling them what they’re doing is *right* when you’re not sure. Do you see what I mean? Leave them and their conscience with God. Leave them and their conscience with God.

Now notice that expression there: “Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is” what?

[Audience responds] A shame.

“Oh yes, but that’s old- fashioned, that idea. We’ve come to a *new* age now, a *new* culture.” “But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering.”

Now, let’s see some contrasts here. What about the names of the sexes? What are the names given here? A man and a woman. Those two things are put in contrast. All right. Now, what other contrasts do we have? Long hair and short hair. That’s right. Are they identified with one or the other of these? Yes. Now, if the woman has *long* hair, this verse says it’s what?

[Audience responds] A glory.

It’s a what? It’s a *glory* to her. And Paul says that something teaches us that? What is it?

[Audience responds] Nature.

Nature. Nature itself. On the other hand, if a man has long hair, Paul says that’s what?

[Audience responds] A shame.

A shame unto him. Now, I didn’t write any of this, and as I say, I’m not trying to interpret it or apply it. That isn’t the point.

I happen to have been born early enough to remember when the first bobbed-hair flapper came on the scene. And you have no idea what the cutting of women’s hair did in the religious world in all the fundamentalist churches and the Seventh-day Adventist church, in our schools, our sanitariums. In our academies and colleges during the 1920s, if a girl bobbed her hair, she went home. That’s right. If she took the shears and cut her hair, she went home.

Now I’m not trying to tell you what’s right and wrong. I’m giving you a little history. I didn’t write the history. I was there when it happened. But may I tell you, and this is simply a matter of history, there were three things that came in together in the aftermath of World War 1: the short skirt, like it had never been before, the cigarette smoking among women, and the bobbed hair. And at that time, our church leaders across the board took a strong stand against that. I have all this in my files from the *Review and Herald* and other sources. Back there, it was the badge of rebellion against the establishment for a woman to have short hair, short skirts, and smoke cigarettes. That’s what it was. Now, what it is today, that isn’t for me to say. I’ll have to tempt you to decide that.

Now we come along, as time rolls on, and *this* time the hair question, the agitation about it, revolves more around who?

[Audience responds] Men.

Around men. That's right. But again, there are certain attitudes that go with it. Let me read you something interesting from the *Ministry* magazine of December 1973, just a few weeks ago. This is page 10. The writer of this article is dealing with the enemy's plan to spread confusion among our people and to lead us to copy the world's ways and identify with them. And speaking of the popular culture, he says:

"They deny God's authority. They deny the authority of parents. They are in rebellion against anything established. Their attitude toward music, looks, speech, dress, and manners are all symbolic of this rebellion. It is not done unconsciously, not at all. It is deliberate and planned. Is this something to copy? Is this not basically antichrist? It isn't, for example, that there is any fundamental merit in the length of a person's hair, but long hair has become one symbol, among other things, of acceptance. It says, 'You are one of us.' But we are *not* one of them. But you say, 'It is so common.

Everyone is doing it.' When our people, even ministers, run to copy every new fad, fashion, and custom, I ask you, what does this indicate? Remember, we are supposed to have something better. We are not to hunger and long to identify with this rebellious culture. Our youth are not entirely to blame, it is we who have failed to set the record straight. We have attempted to bribe and bait them into staying in the church. It is we who have tried to spoon-feed them and sugar-coat the Gospel. Shall we sleep on, as the Bible says, as dumb dogs that cannot bark? We cannot continue to borrow and borrow and copy and copy. Can God bless what He has cursed? I ask in all sincerity, can He?" *Ministry*, December 1973, page 10.

Now I leave that with you for what it is worth in your mind. I come back to these Inspired pages. I want you to notice that a hundred years ago, there were certain trends in dress that were associated with rebellion against authority.

"There is an increasing tendency to have women in their dress and appearance as near like the other sex as possible, and to fashion their dress very much like that of men, but God pronounces it abomination... With the so-called dress reform there goes a spirit of levity and boldness just in keeping with the dress. Modesty and

reserve seem to depart from many as they adopt that style of dress" *Ibid.*, pages 457–458.

"With the so-called dress reform"—that's this American costume that was like men's dress. Now, this is a very interesting principle. The attitude and the dress went how? Together. That's it.

Now let's go to 1 Timothy 2:8–10:

"I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting. In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in..." 1 Timothy 2:8–9.

In what?

[Audience responds] Modest apparel.

Modest apparel.

"...with shamefacedness and sobriety..." 1 Timothy 2:9.

Modest apparel relates to what? Dress. Shamefacedness and sobriety relate to what? Demeanor, deportment, attitude. You notice that Sister White said that with that dress in which women *imitated* the dress and appearance of men, there went what? "A spirit of levity and boldness" that went with the dress.

"In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety..."
1 Timothy 2:9

Now, I thought it might be interesting for us, for just two or three minutes, to think of why is it that there are these tendencies for women to dress like men and for men, in their dress and appearance, to look like women? Why is it?

Well, there are two or three reasons. One is simply due to following the crowd. The fashion is introduced; people wear it. The text on that one is Exodus 23:2. Would you turn to that, please?

"Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil; neither shalt thou speak in a cause to decline after many to wrest judgment" Exodus 23:2.

What's the word in this text that in plain and modern English means "crowd"?

[Audience responds] Multitude.

A multitude. What's the third word?

[Audience responds] Not.

Not. Not what?

[Audience responds] Follow.

Follow. Follow what?

[Audience responds] The crowd. Follow the crowd. To *do* what?

[Audience responds] Evil.

To do evil. Will you read that part of the verse with me?

“Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil...” Exodus 23:2.

Part of it is due to *dissatisfaction* with the way God has made us. Some women are not satisfied with being women. They wish they were men. Some men are not satisfied with being men. They wish they were women. The text on this one is Romans 9:20:

“Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God?
Shall the thing formed say to him that formed *it*, Why
hast thou made me thus?” Romans 9:20.

Isn't it too bad when a man, *dissatisfied* with the way God has made him and with his mission in life, seeks to imitate and appear like a woman, and vice-versa? Isn't that too bad, friends? It indicates dissatisfaction. And trace it back, it's dissatisfaction with whom? With God.

Part of it, at least, I mean these tendencies, is due to rebellion against authority. I've already read you from this *Ministry* magazine, and I've read you from *Volume 1* of the *Testimonies*. The *Ministry* magazine is dealing especially with the question as it relates to men in our culture today; the reference in *Volume 1*, especially as it related to women in certain fashions back there.

Now let's see if we can summarize this a little. What is it that we're not going to spend one moment of precious time in? Seeking to get others to do what? *Conform* to our opinions. We're going to leave that with them and God. But somebody has a responsibility to declare what? The counsel of God, the Word of God. Has God said anything on this subject of dress and morals? Yes. Is a part of what He said on it marking the distinction between men and women? In what two ways? Their clothes and their hair. And God says if this is disregarded that it results in what? Confusion and a great increase in crime. Is it doing it? Yes.

All right. Now let's leave it right there as far as this class is concerned. I leave it right here. And do not run to *somebody* to find out what all this means. Go to Jesus. He's the One who inspired the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy, isn't He?

Now let me ask you this. If I understand what I've studied today, and if you understand what we've studied together, would you agree with me that as a man, I will say, "Lord, I choose that everything I wear will mark me as a man, a Christian man. It will witness to everybody that I'm a man, not a woman. That everything about me, from head to foot, the way I wear my hair, the kind of clothes I wear, my appearance, my attitude, everything, will bear that witness that I'm a man, not a woman." Is that right? Is that what these texts teach? That's right.

And if I *dull* this, if I leave that foggy, then I'm contributing to what two things? Confusion and crime. All right.

Now suppose that I'm a woman, a Christian woman, what do I choose? I choose that everything I wear, the way I wear my hair, my clothes, everything about me shall witness to everybody that I'm what? A woman, a Christian woman, and that there's no confusion about it.

One of the popular news journals, as some of these more recent styles began to come in, pointing to the way men and women were copying one another, quoted this statement that more and more we are seeing (and I quote) "men that look like women that look like men." Think it through. "Men that look like women that look like men."

Oh I'm so thankful, friends, for God's beautiful way, what do you say? I'm glad that God made man, and I'm glad He made woman. I'm glad He made *me* a man so that I can appreciate what a wonderful woman is. You know, really, I think it takes a man to appreciate what a woman is. Do you know what I mean? That's right. I think it takes a man to fully appreciate how wonderful a woman is. But oh, she needs to be a woman. A woman.

I'm glad you're having some classes, you women, in these things, but I felt that as a part of this class in Christian Home, that it is a part of my privilege and duty and responsibility to present to all of you, men and women here together, these simple, basic principles in the clear distinction between men and women, and that this is to be represented in dress and hair and that this avoids what? Confusion and crime. Oh, to be a part of God's glorious plan!

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