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"Shamefastness" and Dress

- by Jerry Fite

In the context of holiness, Paul instructs women to "...adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefastness and sobriety; not with braided hair, and gold or pearls or costly raiment; but (which becometh women professing godliness) through good works" (1 Tim. 2:9-10).

We communicate many things about our selves through dress. It should not be surprising that the woman of a "wily" heart is dressed "with the attire of a harlot" (Proverbs 7:10). The disposition of heart not only finds expression in word but often it manifests its character in dress.

The ostentatious or showy spirit often finds an outlet through extravagant hair styles, expensive jewelry and costly raiment. Paul is warning women readers to guard against inappropriate dress.

How does he combat the problem? Fight fire with fire. An unbecoming spirit is behind inappropriate dress, so if we concentrate on having a right spirit when we dress, our adornment should be appropriate.

One characteristic of a holy and godly heart is "shamefastness". According to Vine, this "is that modesty which is 'fast' or rooted in the character." Like "bedfast" is describing one confined to bed, "shamefast" is modesty firmly imbedded in character. This godly heart understands the limits or boundaries of propriety and shrinks back from ever crossing the line instead of seeing how close one can come to the line.

Shamefastness is that character of heart that is concerned with how certain actions will affect others. We see this clearly when Jesus speaks of the "importunity" or "shameless persistence" (the opposite of shamefastness) of one who approaches the door of a friend at midnight. He is persistent in asking for bread, but shamelessly so. He does not care if his friend is in bed at midnight with his children or what the friend will have to do to accommodate his request. He has no shame regarding how his actions are affecting his friend (Luke 11:5-8).

Our dress has an effect upon others. "Shamefastness" factors this in and makes sure the dress for the occasion will be fitting within the limits of propriety, therefore not adversely affecting others.

Our purpose in assembling is to worship and honor God, not put on a show with the new fashions. Shamefastness does not keep women from new things, it keeps her within the limits of modest dress, that manifests sobriety. Her dress never distracts other worshippers from the lofty purpose of honoring God by bringing undue attention to herself, or attracting the envious or even lustful gaze of the distracted.

Warm weather also tempts the ostentatious and showy spirit to show off more of the body rather than keep it modestly covered. Shamefastness will not allow an ostentatious spirit to take root and find expression in skimpy clothing. The woman with shamefastness considers how shorts exposing the thighs; halter tops, attracting eyes to the bare midriff; or swimsuits boldly revealing the female form will attract the wrong kind of response from men. So, she avoids such attire before the public's eye.

The woman wanting to dress becomingly as one who is manifesting godliness can do so in any society. Developing shamefastness will help tremendously in dressing for all occasions.

Salvation by Grace Doesn't Negate Conditions from God

by Heath Rogers

Grace is unmerited (unearned, undeserved) favor. It is when God gives us something, not because we have earned it, but because it pleases God to give it.

There is no doubt that we are saved by God's grace. The controversy comes from understanding how this salvation is obtained.

"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast" (Eph. 2:8-9). Many argue from this passage that God saves us by His grace through faith **alone**. They insist that we are saved the moment we believe. To suggest that we must do anything else to be saved requires works on our part which negates grace. This is a popular false doctrine, but it is contrary to the Bible's teaching on God's grace.

God's grace is conditional. God has freely given things to underserving men, but these individuals have always had to meet conditions to receive God's grace.

The city of Jericho. "And the Lord said to Joshua: 'See! I have given Jericho into your hand, its king, and the mighty men of valor'" (Joshua 6:2). The city was given to Israel. It was a gift. However, the Israelites had to meet specific conditions to receive the city. They had to march around the city for six days, and on the seventh day they had to march around the city seven times, blow the trumpet, and shout (vs. 3-5). The city was given to them, but only after the conditions were met.

Noah delivered from the flood. The entire world was evil, "but Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord" (Gen. 6:8). He was saved from the destruction of the flood, but he and his household would not have been saved if he hadn't built an ark (Heb. 11:7).

Naaman's leprosy. This Syrian commander was healed of his leprosy when he finally met the requirements set forth by the Lord and dipped seven times in the Jordan River (2 Kings 5:10-14).

Salvation from our sins is a gift from God. We can never earn it (Titus 3:5). It is ours to take freely, but only if we meet the conditions that have been set forth in the New Testament.

In obediently dying on the cross, Jesus "became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him" (Heb. 5:9). Jesus authored our salvation. He wrote the rules. He set forth the conditions that must be met. Salvation is not offered to all who have faith only, but to all who "obey."

Paul spoke of the Roman's salvation as a deliverance from the bondage and slavery of sin. "But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness" (Rom. 6:17-18). This freedom came when they obeyed the form of doctrine that had been delivered to them. What was this form of doctrine? Their baptism into Christ's death (vs. 3-4).

We are saved by God's grace, but don't let anyone convince you that salvation by grace does away with any conditions other than **believing in Jesus**. The gospel says we must also **repent of our sins** (Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30), **confess our faith** in Jesus (Matt. 10:32-33; Rom. 10:9-10), **be baptized** for the remission of our sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16), and **live faithfully** (Rev. 2:10).