

## Outward Appearance

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The topic of conformity of dress is something that has been on my heart. I used to think that dressing a certain way would bring us closer to God or help us to find favor with him because that's what I was taught (what was enforced), but suddenly, I realized that I'm judging people based on their outward appearance without intending to do so.

I started to wonder if what I was feeling was self-righteousness.

The scripture says in **Philippians 3:9**, "And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:"

I interpret this Scripture to warn that if we make laws, it will cause us to be self-righteous, correct? Let's see what Scripture says about outward appearance:

**1 Samuel 16:7** says, "But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart."

In this verse, we see that the LORD looketh on the heart and not on outward appearance as man does.

**Matthew 5:8** says, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."

**Isaiah 11:1** says, "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: **Isaiah 11:2** And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD; **Isaiah 11:3** And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears:"

Here we see a prophesy of Jesus coming as well as insight about how he will judge. As you can see, he won't judge after the sight of his eyes, nor from what he hears. What a great God we have!!!

**Matthew 23:25-28** says, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity."

Here, Jesus was rebuking the Pharisees for appearing righteous on the outside; however, it is the inside (heart) that matters.

**Ephesians 4:18** says, "Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:"

**John 7:24** says, "Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment."

**2 Corinthians 5:12** says, "For we commend not ourselves again unto you, but give you occasion to glory on our behalf, that ye may have somewhat to answer them which glory in appearance, and not in heart."

Are we glorying in our appearance, or in our hearts?

**2 Corinthians 10:7** says, "Do ye look on things after the outward appearance? If any man trust to himself that he is Christ's, let him of himself think this again, that, as he is Christ's, even so are we Christ's."

Here Paul is saying that just because someone doesn't look the same (outward appearance), it doesn't mean that they aren't the same in Christ.

So are we looking at people and thinking, "That person can't be in Christ because of the way they are dressed? Whether it be color or style?"

Acts 8:21, says, "Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God."

Galatians 6:12 says, "As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ."

After reading all these scriptures, I was thinking about how we have to be careful that we don't hold our outward appearances so high that they become an idol (Hosea 13:2).

Ezekiel 14:5 says, "That I may take the house of Israel in their own heart, because they are all estranged from me through their idols."

Let's all strive to keep our hearts in the right place, so God can use and bless us!

With all this being said, we are to make sure that we dress modestly.

1 Timothy 2:9 In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array;

I will close with the following two verses and with encouragement to please search the scriptures daily!

Romans 10:9-10 says, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."