



General Topics :: A Decent Proposal

A Decent Proposal - posted by freedbyjc (), on: 2006/5/15 8:13

A Decent Proposal

How to take the high road in a low-rise, skin-is-in society

by Dannah Gresh

There's a Hooters restaurant in my town, and I struggle each time I drive by it. Although I can hardly see in, that doesn't matter. It's my thoughts of how the waitresses dress that count. It's proof Satan works feverishly not just to tempt a man's eyes but also to infiltrate and control his imagination.

My husband, Bob, wrote those words. While Bob's a godly man in full-time Christian ministry, he, like most men, can be emptied by sexual images. But he's not afraid to talk about it, and that separates him from many.

The truth is, Christian men struggle deeply with visual temptation and mental sexual sin. Ask more than half of the men who attended a recent Promise Keepers conference and admitted to viewing pornography the week preceding the event. Ask the pastors struggling with online porn who regularly call Focus on the Family's pastoral care line.

Recently the men Bob ministers to have admitted there's a new place where temptation's a problem. "I'm struggling with the way women dress in church," they confess. It's the placement of the temptation that makes them feel so vulnerable. What's a guy to do when the same woman in his Sunday school class keeps coming in wearing a mini-skirt and tight shirt? Not much—except maybe sit in the front row.

Fuel on the Fire

I recently got an interesting e-mail from a young single woman who expressed the crisis many of us face: *"I'm 23 and was raised in a Christian home where modesty was taught. It wasn't until my college years that I began to realize how attractive men found my 4'9", 98-lb. body. Suddenly I had their attention. I work with the youth at my church and my pastor's wife has mentioned to me on several occasions that my skirts are too short or my shirts cut too low. But I always retaliate by saying I'm not going to dress like my grandma, and if a guy can't look at me without thinking of sex, that's his problem."*

Been there? Thought that? Me too. Many times the ways I've dressed as a single and as a married woman have flown in the face of a man's attempt to live in holiness before God... and, if he's married, in faithfulness to his wife. How that grieves me as I've become more aware of how fragile men are in this area! Social science reveals a man's sexual response is initiated by his autonomic nervous system (ANS), which isn't controlled by the will, but by the environment. If a man sees a woman walk by wearing revealing clothing, his ANS can be activated. The brain then sends chemicals rushing through his body. He may notice the change in his pulse and his body temperature. While many men override these responses in a godly manner, they can't control their initial intoxicating reaction to an immodestly dressed woman. God intends for a man to enjoy this intoxicating power, but through only one woman—his wife.

Heart of Darkness?

First Corinthians 10:32 says, "Do not cause anyone to stumble." What an uncomfortable challenge when it comes to fashion! But the problem with immodesty isn't just about causing our Christian brothers to stumble; it's also about our craving for the emotional rush we receive when we know we're being noticed. As the root of a man's sexual sin often is linked with the visual, so ours is connected to the emotional.

I still struggle with the temptation to accept the world's standards for fashion, but now I carry with me an awareness of the responsibility I have as a woman created to be intoxicating to one man, Bob. I've not only had to rearrange my wardrobe, but also my heart. Change hasn't come easily for me; even years after I'd thrown away a mass of immodest clothes and was asked to write a book on modesty, I resisted. When I got down to the root of the feeling, I was afraid God might ask me to change my unclean heart. And he did.

While I don't conform to legalistic views about fashion, I do conform to the Holy Spirit's conviction. As I've embraced those promptings, I've discovered a few things that have helped me take the high road in this skin-is-in society.

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If you're married, discuss your wardrobe with your husband. If not, try your dad or an older brother. Since I travel nation wide to speak with teen girls about sexual purity, I own some travel-friendly, trendy outfits, including a sheer blouse I use d to wear over a black tank top. My husband often challenged me about it, but I resisted him, saying it was "a style every one else was wearing" and "it never looks sexual to me." But a year ago, I removed it from my wardrobe as an act of obedience to God. Recently I received an e-mail in which a woman lovingly confronted me about that specific outfit she'd seen me previously wearing on national television. Ouch! :oops:

While I've been able to come to a better understanding of how a man's mind works, I'm still not a man. My husband's better able to explain why a certain outfit may be inappropriate. So every now and then, I ask him how I'm doing. I've been shocked at times when things I deemed appropriate appeared tempting to my husband. I have a single friend who asks her brother for such advice. A godly man in your life can be a good accountability partner.

Invite a friend over to clean out your closet. If you feel even a twinge of conviction as you read this, I'd encourage you to have a "fashion trashin' party." Invite a girlfriend over and trash anything from your closet that's questionable. Your friend's there for the things you're not sure about. Whatever she says is questionable goes.

Reward yourself with a shopping spree. Once you've rid your closet of those questionable items, grab your girlfriend and go shopping to replace what you've discarded. If you're into trendy stuff, this could be tough (I searched for three months last summer for a trendy little sundress and never found one that wasn't way too "little"). But there are tricks that enable me to wear most of the trendy stuff without compromising.

If you absolutely fall in love with a shirt that's too low-cut or too sheer, try a simple T-shirt under it. Buy these together with the promise they'll be worn that way. If you're not sure if a skirt is modest, test it out in the dressing room. Sit in front of the mirror on a chair with your legs crossed. Could you sit like that and not turn beet red if that mirror were your dear old grandfather? If you wear low-rider jeans or pants, compensate by buying longer shirts to wear with them. Not sure if a shirt is too tight? Try this: With the shirt on, use your finger to press the fabric against your chest in the area that's between your breasts. Now, quickly release your finger. If the fabric springs back like a rubber band, it's probably too clingy.

Spend time focusing positively on what your body truly is. If you've accepted Jesus Christ's forgiveness and made him your Lord, God dwells within you: *"Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body"* (1 Corinthians 6:19, 20). Each time you choose which clothes to wear, you're decorating the temple of the living God.

The apostle Peter advises us on how we should adorn the temple: *"Your beauty should not come from outward adornment... Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight"* (1 Peter 3:3, 4). Peter's not dissing the fashions of the day, he's calling women to a higher presentation of modesty, that of an inner confidence to say "no" to the culture.

Sisters, let's develop the inner confidence to say "no" to today's inappropriate fashion—and to adorn the temple of God regally both inside and out.

Dannah Gresh, the author of *And the Bride Wore White: Seven Secrets to Sexual Purity* and *Secret Keepers: The Delicate Power of Modesty* (both Moody Press), lives with her family in Pennsylvania. Copyright © 2003 by the author or Christianity Today International/Today's Christian Woman magazine. Reprint information on Today's Christian Woman. May/June 2003, Vol. 25, No. 3, Page 46

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And Guys this is not just for the ladies :-o...we need to pay attention to what we are wearing also. Be considerate to those around you...watch the tight clothing, the depth of the "V" in the polo shirt and length of the shorts. And you do not have to be build like a linebacker to be a distraction to others. As I found out in the recent past...

Although it is not written policy, As part of our leadership team and a member of our Praise Team and several music ensembles, I've asked my wife and son let me know if something I wear is inappropriate. When I mentioned this to one of the other Praise team members and apologized for my behavior, I got some very positive and appreciative comments for addressing the issue. We had an excellent general discussion with the older ladies teaching the younger ones what was

and was not appropriate on stage.

Any other thoughts & ideas?

Re: A Decent Proposal - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2006/5/17 0:01

Excellent article.

Sir, males are not the only ones disgusted by the immodesty one sees: I am a female and am disgusted, nay, sick at heart! All that exposed skin is an invitation to sin and don't let any female convince you otherwise. We females know what it takes to excite a male and will do it - which is fine and dandy if your male is your husband, but otherwise it is sin.

I am a fossil, OK? and that means I am a grandmother and am old enough to be the mom of most of these posters...so I am going to share an opinion here and please understand I do not imply this to be a salvation issue, but only to challenge your thinking.

When I was growing up, females tried to be feminine and they were. They worked to be pretty, to use their creativity to make a home beautiful and keep it orderly and clean. What do we see today? Sloppiness in attire, carelessness in appearance, homemaking skills absent (how to keep a home orderly, clean), cooking skills limited. The thrust has been to remove the woman from the home by promoting an education that will prepare her to compete in the marketplace at the expense of learning to be a "helpmeet". This has had disastrous consequences which can be seen in the breakdown of homes via of divorce.

Thanks for the post..

ginnyrose

EDIT: FYI, I will be married to the same man for 39 years in September!

Re: - posted by freedbyjc (), on: 2006/5/17 9:10

Thank you for your response and your thoughts.

"Fossils" have always great value to those seeking answers.

I too am a grandparent & have been married to one woman for over 25 years.

Again, we are to be "in" the world and not "of" it and too many times, if we do not keep our eyes on Jesus, and allow the focus our relationships to be on worldly values, we get lured into a trap that is exceeding hard to get away from.