

Lesson 8 | Clothing

Objective: To reflect on the biblical purpose of clothing, its origin, evolution, and spiritual significance, while adopting an attitude of respect, sobriety, and consistency both within the house of prayer and daily life.

Bible Reading: 1 Peter 3:3-4

Memory Verse: “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.” **Romans 12:1**

BIBLICAL TOPIC

When we talk about clothing, it can become a sensitive issue. Contradictory opinions, prejudices, and hasty judgments often arise. However, the best way to approach this topic is through biblical knowledge, historical reflection, and spiritual discernment. It is not a matter of imposing rules, but of understanding the underlying reasons, which are, why do we wear clothing, and how should that be reflected in our relationship with God?

The Bible shows that human beings were not created to be ashamed of their bodies. In **Genesis 2:25**, we are told that Adam and Eve were naked and were not ashamed. The human body, as formed by God, was not sinful or a cause for dishonor. It was after the fall, when they disobeyed God's command, that a distorted awareness of good and evil was activated in them, and they felt vulnerable. Their first reaction was to cover themselves with fig leaves (**Genesis 3:7**), but God intervened and made them tunics of skin (**Genesis 3:21**). This was not a punishment, but a sign of divine care, to protect their dignity in a world now exposed to sin and death.

Since then, clothing has served a dual purpose, it is to protect the body and to remind us of the need to live modestly and respectfully toward ourselves and others. This is due to the evil present in the human heart, still, nudity itself is not a sin, but morbid curiosity, lewdness, and perversion are. Therefore, God's Law established rules for covering nakedness both in daily life and in the sacred context. One example is when priests were instructed to wear linen undergarments so that their nakedness would not be exposed when they ascended the altar (**Exodus 28:42-43**).

For centuries, the tunic was the common garment for both men and women. When **Deuteronomy 22:5** prohibits men from wearing women's clothing and vice versa, it does not refer to pants or skirts—since these garments did not exist at that time—but rather to the wearing of clothing, accessories, or items designed specifically for the role of the other gender. This is to supplant, confuse, or corrupt sexual and social identity. Although the tunic was a garment shared in form, there were surely clear differences in design, color, or purpose.

Over time and with cultural evolution, pants were adopted by men as a functional garment and symbol of masculinity, while skirts and dresses became associated with femininity. This responds to a social convention that has been constructed over time. However, the Church—like any other institutional setting—can establish a basic dress code to preserve respect, identity, and unity within places of worship.

Now, what does it mean to dress modestly in the house of prayer? Think about how we prepare to enter a workplace, an official ceremony, or a high-end restaurant. In all these places, a dress code is respected without controversy. Why, then, resist when it comes to the house of God? Dressing respectfully in the congregation is not a meaningless requirement, but a way of honoring God, our brothers and sisters, and ourselves. The apostle Paul exhorts women (and by extension men) to dress with modesty, decency, and propriety (**1 Timothy 2:9-10**). Peter reminds us that what is truly valuable is what is inside, a gentle and quiet spirit (**1 Peter 3:3-4**).

Do to our agreements and out of respect, and to have a spiritual environment, in our church, we recommend that men wear pants and women wear skirts or dresses when attending the house of prayer. Not because these garments have power in themselves, but because they reflect unity and order. However, no one should be judged by how they present themselves, because judgment belongs to God. To have a change in our clothing, as in any spiritual area, is the work of the Holy Spirit, not social pressure. Our task is to guide with love, teach with patience, and preach by example.

Furthermore, caring for one's clothing is not the sole responsibility of women. Men are also called to dress cleanly, soberly, and respectfully, reflecting that they are consciously preparing to appear before God and live in harmony with their brothers. The apostle Paul wrote, "Let all things be done decently and in order" (**1 Corinthians 14:40**). This also applies to our image and presentation. Therefore, when we attend the house of prayer, we must ask ourselves, do my clothes reflect respect, humility, and commitment to God and the congregation?

On the other hand, in everyday life, we can choose more comfortable or informal clothing, as long as we maintain personal dignity and avoid promoting sensuality, vanity, or vulgarity. The Bible exhorts us to "...present our bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God..." (**Romans 12:1**), which also includes the way we dress. Although that choice belongs to the private and individual sphere, we must remember that "...but all things are naked and open to the eyes of him to whom we must give account." (**Hebrews 4:13**) Clothing in the house of prayer should reflect reverence and respect, and in daily life, it should reflect dignity and sobriety. It is not a matter of imposing a single way of dressing, but of living consistently, knowing that what we wear also speaks of what we carry within.

CHURCH ACTIVITY

Together with the youth group, conduct research on the origin of pants and dresses as differentiating elements between men and women in the history of clothing. Reflect on why it is important for the Church to have a clear social convention in this regard, especially in the house of prayer. This will help to promote respect, order, and unity among congregants. This activity should conclude with a group discussion on how our clothing choices can communicate honor to God and care for others.

HOME ACTIVITY

Answer the following reflection questions and share your answers in the next session:

- What does my dress code communicate about my respect for God and others?
- Am I willing to adapt my dress code in the house of prayer to promote unity and avoid others to stumble?
- Have I judged others by their appearance, instead of showing love and patience as God does?