



A weekly resource to spark biblically-centered conversations with your kids about the issues they face in today's youth culture.

MODESTY

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When the topic of modesty comes up, most people only see it through the lens of indecency. While true, we must consider that the definition of modesty extends beyond indecency and also includes boasting, pride, wealth, luxury and status (see [Merriam-Webster's Definition](#)). As Christians, we must seek to understand how to appropriately apply the topic of modesty into our context.



WORLD

What is Happening?

- You do not have to look far to realize that authentic self-expression is one of our culture's highest values. Our social media engagement is built on these values. Twitter provides the space for people to quickly and unapologetically share their own thoughts on any given topic, while Instagram provides the opportunity for people to creatively showcase their current aesthetic taste.
- Teenagers are constantly immersed in these narratives encouraging them to pursue independence and self-autonomy at all costs. Today, young women are encouraged to dress in whatever ways feel true to themselves, and to use their voice to elevate themselves in their current spheres of influence. In similar ways, young men are being influenced by personalities like Andrew Tate, encouraging them to imitate his macho version of masculinity, which includes boasting about influence, success, relationship status and personal records in the gym. The culture is catechizing teenagers to pursue the sin of pride and to reject biblical commands of meekness, humility, self-denial and modesty.
- When a topic like modesty gets brought up, it should be no surprise that it is met with some confusion and challenge. At this time, our culture is communicating that if anyone were to challenge you to think of yourself, your purpose, or your situation differently, they are inherently harming you in your pursuit of authentic self-expression and even targeting you with 'violence'.





WORD

What Does God's Word Say?

In Exodus 20, God commands the Israelites to have no other gods before him (20:3). God knew that as a result of the Fall, humanity would be prone to be proud, worshiping themselves and delighting in created things instead of him as Creator.

In the New Testament, Peter applies this command of loving and prioritizing God into his context. He instructs wives to, “not let your adorning be external—the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear— but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God’s sight is very precious” (I Peter 3:3-4). Similarly, when God appointed David as King, he said to Samuel, “Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart” (I Samuel 16:7). These passages remind us that a person’s true beauty is found as they cherish God and are sanctified into the image of Christ, not in their self-expressive, culturally relevant, or attractive appearance.

These passages remind us that a topic like modesty is not primarily about behavior modification, but that it is about our heart posture before the Lord. God created us to love and delight in him before anything else, including ourselves. As we disciple our teenagers to glorify him in all they do (I Cor. 10:31), we must first help them recognize idolatry in their hearts and teach them how to love God with their whole heart, soul, mind and strength (Mark 12:30).





Conversation Starters and Questions:

Scripture does not give us direct instruction regarding whether girls should be required to wear a t-shirt over their bathing suit and shorts to their knees. It does not ban the wearing of leggings or crop tops. Nor does it provide specifics on whether young men should have Instagram accounts where they post shirtless workout photos. It does however give us clear teaching that our priorities should be to point others away from ourselves unto Christ, and to consider the potential stumbling blocks of those around us.

When walking alongside young women:

- Ask them about who they look up to or get outfit inspiration from on social media or at school. Engage with them to find out why they like these particular styles and challenge them to consider the amount of time, energy and money they are spending on their external appearance.
- Encourage them to critically think about their wardrobe, if what they are wearing is situationally appropriate. Help them consider if their clothing decisions are “helpful” or “considerate” of others in their life.
- Ask them why they are wearing what they are wearing and challenge them to consider their motives with their outfit choice. Are they wanting to receive attention from men? Or for other girls to be impressed with their outfits/wealth?

When walking alongside young men:

- Ask them about who they look up to, on social media or in real life. Engage with them to learn what they admire about these people, and if they are trying to imitate them or not.
- Ask them where they feel tempted to be boastful, flashy or to receive attention from others. Engage with them to see if they have made an idol of their own self image or area of influence.
- Encourage them to ponder the amount of time, energy and money they are spending on their external appearance. Remind them of the futility of idols and the satisfaction found in Christ alone.

*So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.
(1 Corinthians 10:31)*



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