

## A Constant That Restricts

Written by Timm Watts

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The word of God is filled with un-changing principles that effectively aid us in holding together the spiritual fabric of our lives. These "constants" must be embedded in the heart of every generation of Christians if that generation is to maintain its true joy and peace. Further, if these fundamental precepts with their many beneficial restrictions remain intact and they are taught and practiced, Christianity has a much better opportunity to spread its stabilizing influence. "In the midst of a crooked and perverse nation," we can and must "shine as lights in the world" (Phil. 2:15). I give my wife great credit for helping me to appreciate the value of one of these "constants that restricts." Before our marriage, she and her mother made quite a search to find an acceptable wedding dress. "The necklines are just too low" she said. After finally settling on the dress of her desire, she informed me it was still necessary to "sew in" matching material to raise the neckline. I must say this "search and sew" event was viewed with much interest by the prospective groom. Shortly after our marriage, she involved me directly in similar situations where her obvious objective was simply to dress in a way "which becometh women professing godliness." I faced such questions as "Honey, do you think this is too tight?" and "Is this too revealing?" "Do you think this skirt is too short?"

Now, I was raised as one of six boys—no girls. I was not accustomed to answering such questions. Understand please, that my mother did not dress provocatively. My brothers and I were taught against wearing shorts and going without our shirts in public. (Actually I was at the end of that era where showing your nakedness was even opposed in the denominations.) I just wasn't accustomed to being one who could, in such an influential capacity, help someone else determine what in dress would actually reflect shamefacedness and sobriety. The society around me at that time (1986) had, for the most part, become comfortable with that thought process for men and women which declared, "The tighter and more revealing the clothing, the better!"

These concerns voiced to a husband by the wife of his youth conveyed a timeless "constant" that is often misunderstood or completely overlooked, namely, the ornament that God desires first reside in an inward man that is truly adorned with a "meek and quiet spirit."

Biblical modesty is a habit of the mind. My wife helped me to understand that obedience to this

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often forgotten guideline does not just happen. Just a mere outward presentation alone will not hold one "in check" when faced with the storms of temptation. Rather, there should be a habitual inner self-government that has a continual conscious commitment to shamefacedness. The fruition of such a mind set will be a DAILY exhibition— not just a restriction that is adhered to at times such as worship, funerals, etc. Having the ability to blush will provide a blessing in any generation. Again, such will endure when it is first seated in the inward man.

Such appeals from our help-mates (which my wife still occasionally makes) will prove to be of great value. First, they will remind us of the need to cultivate our own hearts to be sure that our moral compass is honestly seeking God's will and not our own desires. Secondly, the obedience of wives to this "constant that restricts" will aid them in all areas of Biblical submission which in turn will encourage Christian husbands in their roles to be strong, loving and decisive leaders in the home. Thirdly, when the desire for Biblical modesty is truly a habit of the mind led by inspired teachings, rather than the wisdom of this world, it will serve us greatly in solidifying our youth. A generation of boys and girls is crying out if we can but hear them and resolve to take the time to train. They need mothers and fathers who will help them to develop a desire for Biblical modesty and an appreciation for what such a "constant" will provide in their life relationships. May we not shortchange them.

"Constants that restrict" must be maintained. "Daughters of Sara" realize that continuous maintenance is required to reflect shamefacedness because of the constant bombardment of a society around them that is almost wholly given to "showing it off!" May we encourage our wives and sisters to keep the compass of their hearts pointed toward an inner self-government that humbly submits to the restrictions of the will of God rather than the desires of the flesh. As husbands and men may we reflect the same. Further, may we remember that strong front lines will be intimidated with promises that temporary "retreats" will not allow the enemy to advance. DO NOT believe such groundless pledges! "But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price" (1 Pet. 3:4). -454 Wilson Hill Road, Readyville, Tennessee 37149