

9.7.20 - Uncomely Parts

Why does society feel the need to cover certain parts of the body and not others? My first answer is that I believe Satan has convinced the church that certain body parts are dirty or evil or bad. Since the church used to lead the way in society it has successfully propagated that idea to most parts of the western world.

The next question is how was Satan so successful in getting the world to believe that covering what God had intentionally created uncovered was the right decision? I believe that he mainly used one verse in Timothy on “modesty” to deceive the Christian world and then let the Christians do his job of spreading that lie. The actual meaning of the word “modesty” in the verse in Timothy means “humble” so, if you were to obey the actual meaning and intent of the verse then the attire one would wear is what the poor had to wear...either nothing or very simple clothing. Today the church teaches the opposite of the verse and now proclaims proudly to wear one’s “Sunday Best” to church. This is in direct contradiction to the Apostle Paul’s teaching under the influence of the Holy Spirit. So, not only have we covered the image of God in our bodies due to Satan’s lie, but now we wear our best clothes, braid our hair, put our makeup on and our finest jewelry to go to church. It is a true statement to say that Satan is the father of lies.

We believe that the idea to cover our bodies and specifically certain body parts is a lie and in direct contradiction to the Word of God. The Apostle Paul used the physical body to illustrate the body of believers. His teaching is that we all have equal value in the body of Christ, that we all need each other, that the body works better when all its parts are in harmony and that we are less effective when a part is defective or missing. We are going to look at this illustration in terms of the church and the human body.

Here is the part of the illustration that we are focusing on, but it might be helpful to read all of **1 Corinthians chapter 12. 1 Cor 12:23-25 And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked: That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another.**

We will look at the spiritual application first:

The Corinthian church had a long list of problems. The sad part is that most of the problems we see in the church today were in the church at Corinth. I think it is safe to say that God made sure to include the book of Corinthians in the Bible to give us a guide to handling these same problems throughout the ages. This chapter is about spiritual pride...in other words, a spiritual "pecking order" i.e. I am more important than he or she or them and therefore I do not need to Or, I am in this position, so you need to do what I say. Or, I have this gift and my gift is more important than your gift, etc. This form of pride does not see any dependence on others to advance the kingdom. If the ones ministering in public do not recognize that their ability/gift comes from God, they lose sight of the need for the team. This attitude is detected by the team members involved and bitterness and strife become the norm...it can also become a contest for recognition. All of this is rooted in pride! You see, as Christians we are all members of the same spiritual body and as such there is no member that has higher or lower value. As members of the spiritual body we are of equal value and all contribute to the whole. The pastor is not more important than the members...imagine if that pastor had no members. The deacons are not more important than the Sunday School teachers, the Sunday School teachers are not more important than the students. Imagine if there were no nursery workers or janitors or volunteers to shovel the snow or maintain the building. You see, we tend to rank things into classes...the pastor is the head, the elders next, then the deacon board, followed by the etc. etc. According to the Bible the pastor is not the head of the church...Ephesians 5:23 says that Christ is the head of the church. Paul's teaching in 1st Corinthians 12 is that there are no "less comely" members of the body of Christ, all the members of the body are beautiful and all the members of the body have equal value and all the members of the body contribute to the success of the whole.

When considering the value of a member we rarely know the contribution that will be made by that member. We do not know what they will become as they grow in faith. Who would expect a shoe salesman to become a D. L. Moody or a drunken baseball player to become a Billy Sunday? Who would have known that the captain of a slave ship would write the classic hymn, Amazing Grace? We should simply trust God's judgment that all members are needed in the whole.

So, how does all of this apply to the physical body? Are there indeed "less comely" parts of the body or did God make them all with equal honor?

Let's look at our verses in Corinthians again: **1 Cor 12:23-25 And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant**

comeliness. For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked: That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another.

In our society today are there parts of the body that are considered “less honorable?” Are there parts of the body considered “less comely?”

Well, you tell me. What do think most mothers would tell their six year old daughters if they happened to see the six year old neighbor boy naked in his own backyard? Would they not tell them not to look at that naked boy? Would they exclaim something to the effect of “that’s dirty don’t look?” Wouldn’t most mothers tell the other mother to get some clothes on that boy? Why? Is there anything inappropriate going on? If the boy is simply playing in his sand box in the naked condition that God created Adam and Eve in, then what is he doing that is dirty or inappropriate? We have been conditioned wrong. We have been conditioned to think that a man’s penis is something dirty or less honorable / less comely. But is that conditioning Godly or is it all part of Satan’s lie? Did God create the penis? Is it not a member of the whole body? Did not God create it to be seen as God created Adam naked and not ashamed? Why should it be hidden unless it is less honorable or less comely? Is there something inherently shameful about a penis? According to 1 Corinthians God bestows more abundant honor on the parts that are now considered less comely. Is there any part on a man or woman that is dirty, less honorable or less comely?

Remember that Paul was using the body as an illustration to make a spiritual point. He was saying that the church member that you want to hide (the drunken baseball player) is the member that He is going to give more honor to (Billy Sunday). You see there are no less comely body parts...no parts that need hidden, just like there are no members of the body of Christ that are less comely either. As a side note, this is not the only naked body illustration that the Apostle Paul used. He also used the foot race as an illustration, telling us in 1 Corinthians 9 to “run that we may obtain”...a foot race that was held in the nude as both the Greeks and the Romans held their sporting events in the nude.

So, here we have the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 9 and again in 1 Corinthians 12 using the naked body as teaching illustrations of how to behave both in life and toward each other. Tell me again why you think he was saying to cover from the head to the toe in Timothy?