



THINK ON THESE THINGS

Philippians 4:8

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‘Show MORE of You’

By AL DIESTELKAMP

So says the tagline of a TV ad promoting a product claiming to combat the “heartbreaking” disease of psoriasis. It seems, however, that an increasing number of Christians have adopted this motto in the way they dress in public.

Before you dismiss this article as the ranting of an old man, please understand that I have been writing and speaking out about the sin of immodesty ever since I was a very young man. Admittedly, it appears to have been largely fruitless, but that doesn’t mean that we should give up.

Many Christians are careful about dressing modestly when assembling with the saints, but many are not so careful when out in the world. There was a time not so long ago when Christians enjoying leisure activities could be distinguished from others by how they were dressed. Too often this is no longer true. When Christians dressed more modestly, their attire was not so drastically different that they drew stares from onlookers, but they didn’t follow the world in exposing their nakedness.

The trend even among Christians to “show more of you” is apparent when viewing pictures posted on Facebook. Past efforts to discourage the wearing of shorts and rising hemlines which expose the thighs have been ignored. The objection has been raised that the Bible does not tell us where to draw a line between what is modest and what is not. While there is some truth to this assertion, not even those who use this argument really believe there is no way to determine what is modest. Otherwise, the logical end of that argument would justify any amount of exposure including total nudity. So, because we can’t “draw a line,” we occasionally see brothers going around shirtless and sisters wearing clothing with plunging necklines and both genders exposing their thighs and more.

It used to be that when a preacher was asked to perform a wedding of two Chris-

tians, he could assume that the bride would be wearing a modest wedding dress that symbolized her purity; but this is no longer true. Based on wedding photos, some brides (and evidently mothers of brides) must think that strapless gowns fall within the definition of modest or that wedding gowns are somehow exceptions to the call for modesty.

Though the biblical instructions regarding modesty are stated in a context mentioning women, this does not mean that principles of modesty are not applicable to men as well. I also recognize that the apostle Paul’s instruction “that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel” (1 Tim. 2:9) is addressing an over-emphasis on external beauty. One can violate this teaching by wearing anything that draws undue attention to the flesh. The apostle says adornment is to be “with propriety and moderation” [NKJV]. Other translations use terms or words such as “with shamefacedness” [KJV], “proper,” “discretely” [NASB], “respectable” [ESV], or “with decency” [NIV]. The bottom line is that it should be that “which is proper for women professing godliness” (v.10). Peter’s instructions for wives to manifest “chaste conduct” (1 Pet. 3:2) would necessarily include wearing apparel that reflects an inner beauty. Immodest exposure of one’s nakedness is not consistent with “chaste conduct.”

From the very beginning, God distinguished man from animals by clothing Adam and Eve to cover their nakedness (Gen. 3:21). Adam and Eve had already attempted to cover themselves using fig leaves (v.7); yet even they realized that they were still naked (v.10).

To be guilty of nakedness does not require total nudity, as illustrated by God’s instructions to Moses regarding the altar that was to be built: “Nor shall you go up by steps to My altar, that your nakedness may not be exposed on it” (Ex. 20:26). Throughout the pages of the Bible, the word “nakedness,” whether used literally

or metaphorically, is usually connected with shame. Even in the case where Peter was only partially clothed [“naked” in KJV, ASV] while out on a boat, he “put on his outer garment” before coming ashore (Jn. 21:7). It seems quite unusual for one to put on *more* clothing before plunging into the sea unless there was good reason to do so. Shame and modesty are good reasons.

Without minimizing the need for men to dress modestly, it is especially needful for women to do so. There is no denying that the typical man is more susceptible to seeing and lusting after women than the reverse. Men are typically more sexually aroused by what they see than are women. This may be why instructions on modesty are addressed to women. It also may be why Jesus’ words “whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart” (Matt. 5:28) were addressed to men. Obviously, it would be just as sinful for a woman to look at a man “to lust after him,” but Jesus presented the problem in the most likely context.

Finally, there is no excuse for looking upon others to lust after them, regardless of how they are dressed. Such behavior objectifies others who were created in the image of God. Unlawful lust is always the sin of the one who is lusting. Always! There can be no blame-shifting. Sinners are always responsible for their sins. Adam blamed Eve. Eve blamed the Serpent; but in the end each was guilty for his or her own sins. Yet, this truth did not absolve Eve or the Serpent of being complicit in causing others to stumble. As Christians, we are to avoid putting stumbling blocks in the paths of others (Rom. 14:13). Dressing modestly will not prevent all lustful looks, but it will absolve one from being a stumbling block for that sin. Immodesty is a contributor to lust.

Don’t listen to the world. To “show more of you” is shameless exposure and runs a risk of causing “the one who wills to do good” to “practice” “the evil” he “wills not to do” (see Rom. 7:14-25).

OUTRAGEOUS ACTS OF DEMONS

THEY AREN'T WHAT YOU EXPECT

By DAVID DIESTELKAMP

The Bible records demons doing (and causing others to do) some pretty crazy things. But they *are* demons, after all, so this is probably to be expected. A possessed child cried out, convulsed, foamed at the mouth, and was bruised. The demon made attempts to throw him into fire or water to kill him (Lk. 9:39; Mk. 9:22). Terrible, but not surprising. And the crazed man of Matthew 8 and Luke 8—breaking chains, living among the tombs, shrieking in the night—terrifying, but not really outrageous since that's about what we should expect from demons!

Don't forget the devil's temptation of Jesus (Matt. 4) and that it was he who put the idea in the heart of Judas to betray Jesus (Jn. 13:2). Evil to the core. But this is exactly what Satan and his angels are. What is so outrageous about evil being evil?

Yes, we have to be "alert and of sober mind" because the "devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour" (1 Pet. 5:8). Keep your spiritual armor on "that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil" (Eph. 6:11). We are not "ignorant of his devices" ["unaware of his schemes" - NIV] (2 Cor. 2:11). Don't be deceived. We must see the devil in all his terrifying ugliness—not as the "angel of light" he tries to present himself as (2 Cor. 11:14). But there is much more to learn here than the obvious lesson that the devil is evil.

The true outrageous acts of the devil and demons are often overlooked. These are the things they did that are truly out of character and unexpected. These are the things which are shocking because demons simply should not—in fact, would not—do them! These outrageous acts carry with them important lessons.

#1 SATAN QUOTED SCRIPTURE MATTHEW 4:6

"Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, 'If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: 'He shall give His angels charge over you,' and, 'In their hands they shall bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone.'"

There are a lot of crazy things about this, not the least of which is that the devil is twisting Scripture to the One involved in its inspiration! But what is outrageous about this is the fact that, by quoting it, he is suggesting that it is from God and should make a difference—that it should matter to people who want to please God. Can you be-

lieve that the devil recognized the authority of Scripture while many who claim to be Christians today do not!?

#2 DEMONS KNEW WHO JESUS WAS MARK 1:34

"Then He healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and He did not allow the demons to speak, because they knew Him."

Demons knew the power Jesus had and knew Who He was. People today can read of Christ's great power, but many do not recognize Him as the Christ, the Son of God. Sinister demons, blinded by sin, knew Him. What excuse can we have for not knowing Him?

#3 DEMONS CONFESSED JESUS LUKE 4:33-34, 41

"Now in the synagogue there was a man who had a spirit of an unclean demon. And he cried out with a loud voice, saying, 'Let us alone! What have we to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Did You come to destroy us? I know who You are—the Holy One of God!'"

This is certainly *not* what we'd expect from a demon, the very enemy of God and Jesus! The demon admitted Jesus was the "Holy One of God" and "the Christ, the Son of God!" (4:41). Why would a demon make this outrageous confession unless it was overwhelmingly evident and true?

#4 DEMONS BELIEVE AND ARE AFRAID JAMES 2:19

"You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble!"

It's startling to think that demons have some degree of belief and that many people don't. *That's* truly outrageous! And to James' point, it is even more astounding that some people will settle for non-saving, non-acting, non-obedient, non-working demon faith!

#5 DEMONS UNDERSTAND JUDGMENT MATTHEW 8:29

"And suddenly they cried out, saying, 'What have we to do with You, Jesus, You Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?'"

Demons understand judgment is coming and they tremble in dread and fear (Jas. 2:19). They are not playful and fun loving. They are condemned and doomed, and they know it. It is outrageous that, while demons know and fear their eternal future, most

people don't give death, judgment, and eternity a thought!

#6 DEMONS WORSHIPPED JESUS MARK 5:6-7

"When he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshiped Him. And he cried out with a loud voice and said, 'What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I implore You by God that You do not torment me.'"

Talk about outrageous—demons worshipping Jesus! There is only one explanation! *Jesus truly is Lord!* It's time we recognize who Jesus truly is and worship Him better than demons do!

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Settled Law



By AL DIESTELKAMP

Perhaps, like me, you have observed how some politicians who claim to be pro-life try to excuse themselves from speaking out against abortion on the basis that the Supreme Court has ruled on the issue, making it what they call "settled law." It seems as if they treat a Supreme Court ruling as having all the force of "the law of the Medes and Persians, which does not alter" (Dan. 6:8).

The "settled law" claim is merely an effort to excuse oneself from acting on principle and to avoid the political backlash one would otherwise receive from pro-abortion advocates.

Of course, abortion is not the only matter about which the Supreme Court has ruled in contradiction to God's law; and the more recent ruling which expanded the definition of marriage is only the beginning. Already we are hearing the "settled law" argument trotted out by politicians who claim to "personally believe" marriage should be between one man and one woman.

In truth, the only law which is "settled" and unalterable is the law of God: "Forever, O LORD, Your word is settled in heaven" (Psa. 119:89); Yet men are constantly trying to "unsettle" it to suit their own desires.

The Gospel Preached to Abraham

By **ANDY DIESTELKAMP**

We live in a world which continues to diminish the unique value of human life. General evolutionary theories conclude that our existence is a cosmic accident without purpose or meaning. Such a philosophy grants liberty from any kind of absolutes, freeing us to think and do as we please. Yet this “freedom” ultimately creates a “survival of the fittest” culture whose “laws” are relative, situational, and easily dispensable.

Scripture presents an entirely different and opposing view. There is no harmony between the views that life is an accident and that life is intentional. Scripture declares that God has created us on purpose for a purpose. The initiative has been God’s from the beginning. God’s sovereign initiative is seen in Creation and in His communication to and the covenants made with mankind from the beginning. This divine initiative culminates in the redemption of man (Rom. 5:8; 1 Jn. 4:9,10).

The Garden of Eden was a beautiful, God-designed paradise for man to live in and have fellowship with God (Gen. 2:10-14). His covenant with mankind assigned responsibilities and delineated blessings and curses (vv. 15-22). When this covenant was broken (3:6), blessings were removed (vv. 22-24) and curses were pronounced (vv. 16-19). The results were that sin propagated (4:7,8; 6:5), death reigned (5:5-31), and the world was condemned (6:6,7). Yet, were this the end of the story, Genesis would never have been written. The revelation of the history of mankind begins and ends with a God who abounds in grace and mercy. This is the message of Scripture.

It was the unilateral love and grace of God which gave man life and offered covenant fellowship with Him in Paradise in the first place. God’s love and grace did not vanish when man sinned. “If we are faithless, He remains faithful” (2 Tim. 2:13). Even in the midst of the faithless failures of men, God’s grace and patience were not hidden. Consistently God has pursued man and offered Him grace despite his sin (Gen. 3:8,9,21; 4:9-15; 6:8). It is man who gives up on God, not vice versa. It is God who once again initiated a covenant with Noah and his offspring (9:1-17). It is men who once again sinned (9:18,19), and sought to make a name for themselves (11:3,4) instead of obeying their covenant with God (cf. 9:1,7). Yet, once again, God graciously persisted in accomplishing His plan to redeem man from his own sins by making a covenant with a people set apart to bring forth One in Whom “all families of the earth shall be blessed” (12:3; Acts 3:25).

The hope of mankind to be delivered

from the consequences of sin is not limited to an obscure reference to Satan being crushed by the Seed of woman (Gen. 3:16). This promise would become more specifically foretold in future generations as God chose a man of exemplary faith through whom He would accomplish His purpose.

Abram was from Ur of the Chaldeans in the lineage of Shem the son of Noah (11:10-26). God told Abram to leave his country and his father’s house to go “to a land that I will show you” (12:1). Abram, his father Terah, and his family left Ur and travelled northwest to the city of Haran. When Terah died there at the age of 205, Abram was 75, and he “departed as the LORD had spoken to him” (12:4; cf. Acts 7:4) “to go to the land of Canaan” (Gen. 12:5).

God promised Abram a land and “by faith [he] obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would afterward receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going” (Heb. 11:8). This is the kind of faith which God values, and without it “it is impossible to please [God], for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him” (v. 6). Without doubt, the blessing of Abraham was contingent upon his obedience in leaving home and going where God directed him.

God promised to make of Abram a great nation. God promised to bless him and make his name great (Gen. 12:2). When Abram came into the land of Canaan, God appeared to him and said, “To your descendants I will give this land” (v. 7), thus intertwining the land and nation promises. Abram sojourned throughout the land of Canaan from north to south, calling on “the name of the LORD” (v. 8; 13:4). He had plenty of opportunities to return to Haran or Ur, but he chose to dwell in tents and wait for the better, heavenly place prepared by God (Heb. 11:9,15,16).

Ultimately, God promised to bless others through Abraham. “And you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse those who curse you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed” (Gen. 12:2,3). The apostle Paul refers to this as the gospel (good news) which was preached to Abraham and by which God planned to justify the nations by faith (Gal. 3:8) “that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith” (vs. 14). “For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus...And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise (vv. 26,29).

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**ABOUT
THIS
ELECTION**



By **AL DIESTELKAMP**

Franklin D. Roosevelt was president of the United States when I was born; but his successor, Harry S. Truman, was the first president that I was old enough to remember. This means that in my lifetime there have been thirteen different men who have held that office; and, if I live though January of next year, it appears that I will live under a fourteenth president.

Prior to 1971, a person had to be 21 years old in order to vote; so 1964 was the first presidential election in which I was permitted to participate. Admittedly, this election cycle is proving to be different (and more divisive) than any in my lifetime; but a study of history will show that by God’s grace our nation has actually survived even worse campaigns and some despicable and corrupt presidents.

The extreme distrust of and dislike toward the only two candidates who have a chance of winning the election have divided our nation, but we must make sure that this election does not divide our brethren. Public discussions (especially on social media) show that brethren are certainly not in agreement about participation or non-participation in this year’s election.

The aforementioned dislike and distrust of the candidates is even more noticeable among brethren and has elicited spirited debate about what should be our response. Opinions range from voting for the “lesser of two evils” to opting out of the election process altogether.

It is not my place or intent to tell you which candidate to vote for or whether to vote at all. Instead, I would like to remind you that it is not the outcome of this election which will determine the demise or exaltation of our nation. What will exalt our nation is righteousness (Prov. 14:34).

In the meantime, many of us must face the fact that no matter which candidate is elected, unless God intervenes, we may have to give honor to one whom we consider to be “despicable,” or “corrupt”—or both (Rom. 13:1-7). God is ultimately in control. As spoken by the prophet, “Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, for wisdom and might are His. And He changes the times and the seasons; He removes kings and raises up kings; He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding” (Dan. 2:20-21). He has the power to do with presidents what He did with kings.

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WHOM ARE WE HONORING?

By **DON B. NEWCOMER, JR.**

Suppose you had a major birthday coming up like a 40th or 50th. Your best friend says that he wants to throw a party “in your honor” to celebrate this milestone. He asks you what kind of celebration you would like to have.

You’re thrilled at his thoughtfulness, so you tell him the following: “I don’t like big crowds, so please keep it small, maybe 10-12 people. And I’d like it to be held in the evening at a certain restaurant.” He asks you about having a cake and you say, “I like white cake with chocolate frosting.”

The big day arrives, and your friend picks you up just before lunch. He takes you to a local fire hall and asks you to come inside because he needs to pick something up. You’re clueless, so you follow along.

When the door is opened, the crowd shouts, “*Surprise!*” You turn to your friend and ask, “What is this?” He says, “It’s the birthday party I told you I wanted to throw in your honor.” But you say, “Why are all these people here? It’s only lunchtime! What about the things I told you I wanted?”

He counters with, “Well, twelve people seemed too small a number to celebrate

your special day. So I invited about fifty people, including all my friends and family—and look—almost all of them are here! That restaurant you mentioned couldn’t hold this crowd, so I rented this fire hall near my house.” You spot the cake and notice it has yellow frosting. He sees you noticing and says, “I don’t like white cake, so I ordered a chocolate cake with butter cream frosting. I hope you’re happy; I threw this party *just for you.*”

This story shows the folly of what many people do in worship. They profess to want to worship God and to do those things which are pleasing to Him, but in their churches they structure their service in a way which pleases them. “*These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honor Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me*” (Matt. 15:8).

They add musical instruments because they don’t feel comfortable singing without some accompaniment. They hold their services on Saturday evening because they don’t want to have to get up early on the Lord’s Day. They hire preachers to “tickle the ears” (2 Tim. 4:3-4) of the members because they don’t want to be challenged about any sins in their lives. They have

meals in the building because it’s much more convenient to eat there than to have to go out to eat somewhere else. And they do other things without scriptural authority, all the while claiming to worship God in the way He desires. “*And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him*” (Col. 3:17).

Let us always remember *Whom* we worship and follow His instructions only. If our desire is to please God and His Son Jesus Christ, we will be careful to worship His way and not change our worship into something which we desire.

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Welcome, New Readers

Our mailing list gradually declines as some of our readers pass away, move without providing their new addresses, or others choose to access the articles online. However, with this issue we are pleased to have received a good number of new requests for the printed edition of this paper.