

We Are "Making A Statement"

by Bill Crews

Quite frequently we hear or read, usually in advertisements, of "making a statement." Yes, "making a statement" by the car we drive, by the house we live in, by the vocabulary we use, by the time piece we own, and by the clothes we wear. We are encouraged to buy a particular product, and the ads are designed to appeal to our vanity and ego. The clothes we wear do indeed "make a statement" in more ways than one. We are encouraged to want to say, "I am somebody"; "I am important"; "I am affluent"; "I have exquisite tastes"; "I look great." But the clothes we wear can also say, "I am vain," or "I am conceited," or "I am extravagant," or "I am worldly," or "I am lewd," or "I am an exhibitionist." And they can also say, "I have conservative and moderate tastes," or "I don't want to appear uncouth or unkempt," or "clothes are not the most important thing in life to me." The beholder needs always to observe the caution of Jesus: "Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgement" (Jn.7:24).

Consider some abiding principles found here and there in the Scriptures. In the law of Moses the Israelites were commanded: "A woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment; for whosoever doeth these things is an abomination unto Jehovah" (Deut. 22:5). Remember that both men and women wore robes, but there were definite distinctions in their clothing. Transvestism or cross-dressing make the wrong kind of statement. Proverbs 7: 10 speaks of a woman "with the attire of a harlot" who approached and seduced a foolish young man. Every generation and every society has been able to recognize prostitutes among them by certain attire worn by them. Their apparel "makes a statement" about the kind of business they are in, and godly women do not want to be mistaken for one of them. The rich are usually known by their garments. "Now there was a certain rich man, and he was clothed in purple and fine linen" (Lk. 16:19 -- his clothes were expensive). "For if there come into your assembly a man with a gold ring, in fine clothing" (Jas. 2:2). And the very poor are usually known by their garments. "And there come in also a poor man in vile clothing" (Jas. 2:2). "And drowsiness will clothe a man with rags" (Prov. 23:21). Women who are Christians are to "adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shame-fastness and sobriety" (1 Tim. 2:9). In both 1 Tim. 2:9-10 and 1 Pet. 3:3-4 the adorning of the inward man is to take precedence over the adornment of the outward man.

People who profess to be Christians should be concerned about "the statements they make" by means of the clothing they wear, and they should be sure that they adorn their bodies in a manner becoming to those who profess to be godly. By the way we dress or undress, by what we wear and the way we wear it, may we be pleasing to God, good examples to others, going to neither one extreme nor the other, and never serving as a stumbling block to anyone.

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