

**WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY  
ABOUT  
WOMEN WEARING PANTS?**

By Mrs. Teri Jeter

In the scope of what is of great spiritual importance – repentance and belief in the Lord Jesus Christ alone for salvation--the issue of women wearing pants is what one would call a minor issue and we shouldn't major on the minors; neither should we disregard them as being important in our Christian walk. I believe what a Christian, particularly a woman in this paper, wears is a **major** minor issue and a serious matter to God regarding our Christian walk. Prior to my conversion, I wore mostly jeans, occasionally pants, and very rarely a dress or skirt. In fact, I only owned one or two dresses/skirts. After my conversion, as I read God's Word and listened to sermons, particularly Dr. S. M. Davis' sermon entitled, *The Language of the Christian's Clothing*, I began to be convicted of my need to dress like a lady and to be modest in my dress. Initially, I based my beliefs on my past reading of Deuteronomy 22:5 and the principles found elsewhere in Scripture signifying that men and women are different and should act and look different. Recently, I again asked myself "What does the Bible actually say about the issue of cross-dressing?" Upon a re-examination of Deuteronomy 22:5 and a more in-depth study of God's Word and other sources, I have become more firmly entrenched in my beliefs in this area.

Rather than standing out as something refreshingly different, many Christians look like everyone else around them, i.e. the world. I don't expect the world to look like us, but neither do I expect believers to look like the world. The few times I have been able to sit down in the mall and just observe people, I have felt like weeping. Ninety-nine to a hundred percent of the people (most of them women) are wearing pants. We have become a unisex society and it is so sad to see Christians adding to the confusion. Buddy Davis of Answers in Genesis sings a song called "One Blood". He needs to write one entitled "One Sex": "We're one sex, we're one people...."

Before you say or think that I am being dogmatic ("arrogant; overbearing in asserting and maintaining opinions"<sup>1</sup>), it is not my intent to be arrogant or to assert my own opinion on this matter, but to speak the truth in love and to use God's Word in doing so. Is it dogmatic to want to please God in how one dresses and to instruct our brothers and sisters in Christ about what God says concerning how Christians, as His ambassadors, should dress? Otherwise, one would have to say that God was being pretty dogmatic in stating that for a woman to dress like a man or for a man to dress like a woman was an abomination to Him or for God to say, "*Be ye holy; for I am holy*" (1 Peter 1:16; Lev. 11:44). If that is God's "opinion", then it is incumbent upon us to assert and maintain such an opinion in a loving, compassionate way. However, isn't it more true to the definition of "dogmatic" to state that a Christian who supports women wearing pants is dogmatic in their beliefs because it is based on their preference, i.e. their opinion? It is somewhat amazing to me and very discouraging when those who are leaders of the flock seem to champion the

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<sup>1</sup> Webster's 1828 Dictionary.

world's ways in the name of Christian liberty, and call those attempting to live a holy life through dress, reading material, abstinence from forms of worldly entertainment, and wearing gender-specific and modest clothing, etc., as dogmatic. True, Christians should not be overbearing or arrogant in choosing to live a life well-pleasing to the Lord for then that wouldn't be well-pleasing to the Lord. However, Christians should be sharing those convictions set out in God's Word with other believers and, as part of God's Word and teaching the whole counsel of God, it should be taught and preached and lived before His flock by preachers and their families. Are we not to admonish ("to warn or notify of a fault; to reprove with mildness; to counsel against wrong practices; to caution or advise; to instruct or direct")<sup>2</sup> or reprove ("to convince of a fault, or to make it manifest") our brethren to walk worthy of their profession (Eph. 4:1; Col. 1:10; 1 Th. 2:12)? Instead, for many Christian leaders and laymen it has become one of those issues we like to dismiss with "Yes, I know what the Bible says, but... (you fill in the blank). Church leaders of days gone by exhorted Christians to dress modestly, but it is rarely taught today. So, as one writer put it, "...It may be that all the Christians that preceded our time were mistaken. Perhaps only the Christian teachers since the mid-1900's have applied the Bible correctly to this issue – or perhaps not! ...It is arrogance [dogmatic? – my observation] to just assume that the Christians of today are right and all those before have been wrong."<sup>3</sup>

Clothing is a public act and it is the Christian's outward uniform. What we wear does make a statement and many times a person's first impression of us is formed by what we are wearing. It can reflect what we think about ourselves or tell others about our spiritual condition. "Christian people can many times be picked out in a crowd because of the neatness and appropriate quality of their appearance."<sup>4</sup> For example, other believers have come up to me before and asked if my children are homeschooled and their basis for asking the question was because of the way they were dressed. At a recent bridal fair in our local mall, there were two ladies manning a vendor's booth (both wearing pants) who complimented me on the way the three young ladies who accompanied me were dressed and asking how I got them to wear dresses. They proceeded to state how feminine they looked and wished that more ladies would dress that way.

**"The lack of congruence in clothing cues and what we say verbally creates considerable confusion or suspicion in the mind of the hearer.** How we dress is just as vital as what we say in maintaining our relationships with others. Certainly our clothing ought to convey to the unsaved or the Christian the 'godliness,'

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Crank, David. "Clothing & Modesty". From Volume 3 Issue 2 of Unless the Lord...Magazine. (<http://www.unlesstheLordmagazine.com/articles/Clothing%20and%20Modesty.htm>)

<sup>4</sup>Jorgensen, Mrs. Alta. "Fashion Guidelines for the Christian Women". (<http://www.genesistreehouse.org/fashion.htm>)

'humility,' 'modesty,' 'submission,' etc., which we affirm with our mouth. This is not to infer that because a person adheres to a correct dress standard that this guarantees spirituality. Often this is not the case. **What we are saying is that the outward appearance should in no way misrepresent the inward man. Contrary to the warning of the old adage, most of society still judges a book by its cover.** Note this illustration. Suppose you were asked by a friend on the spur of the moment to meet his visiting relative at the airport. You have never met this visitor, and all that you know is her name, airline flight number, arrival time, and that she is a fine dedicated Christian. You arrive at the terminal and find the flight has already arrived and there in the waiting area are a dozen ladies, each apparently waiting on someone to meet her. If neither an airline representative or intercom is available, how would you go about finding your guest? If all twelve of the women were wearing pants except for one attractively dressed lady in a modest dress, which would you approach first? Probably the same one that most other Christians would. Yet many fine Christian women have surrendered this potential non-verbal testimony for the supposed benefits of androgynous fashion. Allowance or justification for Christian women wearing pants is attempted with various explanations. 'Fashionable,' 'Comfort,' 'Convenience,' 'Warmth,' 'Modesty,' or 'I just like them' are among the reasons given for wearing unisex clothing. These reasons, however, seem quite shallow as shown by fashion expert, Kennedy Fraser: <sup>5</sup> 'Comfort and naturalness remain small considerations in the fashion scene compared to the rules of society, questions of taste, and the sense of appropriate place and time. **People will never be induced to wear any sort of fashion if they see it being worn by people with whom they prefer not to be identified.**'<sup>6</sup> [Emphasis given in original]

I don't believe God is silent on this matter or takes it lightly. Neither do I believe it is an issue of preference or opinion. In re-reading Deuteronomy 22:5, I noticed for the first time that God calls it an abomination ("extreme hatred; detestation; defilement; pollution"<sup>7</sup>) for a woman to dress like a man or a man to dress like a woman. Therefore, it cannot be a ceremonial law but a moral law. A ceremonial law, which had nothing to do with inherent right or wrong, was established by God especially for the Jews. Did God ever use the expression "abomination unto the Lord" when He spoke of ceremonial laws? According to Stong's Concordance here are some other things God called an abomination: idolatry; human sacrifices; homosexuality (associated with cross-dressing); witchcraft; murder; and lying to name a few. Ceremonial laws are for a specific people and a specific time while moral laws never change—they are true for all people at all times. Anything God has called an abomination (as seen from the

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<sup>5</sup> Nicholson, William. Clothing the Universal Language, p. 52-53.

<sup>6</sup> Nicholson, p. 53. Quote by Kennedy Fraser in his book, The Fashionable Mind. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1981.

<sup>7</sup> Webster's 1828 Dictionary.

above list) has had to do with moral law and hasn't changed from the Old Testament to the New Testament. In Deuteronomy 22, there is a mixture of ceremonial and moral law. "Many verses are obviously moral law. If you see a neighbor's ox or sheep wandering, return it. Conserve natural resources so future generations can eat. Take responsibility in your home for the safety of others. A wife has a right to a fair trial if accused by her husband of impurity. Rape is to be severely punished; so is adultery. These are moral laws. Four verses in this chapter are probably ceremonial: don't sow mixed seed in a field; don't plow with an ox and ass together; don't mix fibers in woven cloth; do wear a fringe on your clothing."<sup>8</sup>

Many say because this command was given in the Old Testament, it is not relevant for Christians today who are under grace and not under the law. First of all, "**All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness**" (2 Timothy 3:16). 1 Corinthians 10:11 states: "*Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition....*" Besides, as cross-referenced in The Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge for Deuteronomy 22:5, the principle is found in 1 Corinthians 11:4-5, where there is to be a difference between a man and a woman when they prophesy or pray, and, then again, in verses 14-15 of that same chapter, about hair length. I realize those verses are talking about spiritual coverings, but God uses principles of nature pertaining to men and women to illustrate His point. At the very **least** Deuteronomy 22:5 should be obeyed in principle. For example, in determining appropriate music for the church, Scripture doesn't state that rock music (CCM) is bad, but the principles of what is godly or ungodly are found in 1 Corinthians 14:7-10 and other places in Scripture. One could ask, "Doth not nature teach there is a godly sound and an ungodly sound?" Another principle pertaining to Deuteronomy 22:5 is that God is a God of order, not confusion. "Male and female created He them..." (Genesis 5:2). He made them distinct—not the same. Shouldn't they wear clothing that makes them distinct—not causing others confusion as to whether they are male or female?

First Timothy 2:9 states, "*...that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety....*" The word *apparel* in 1611 meant "loose, long-flowing garment" according to the old Oxford English Dictionary. The Greek word *katastole*, used only in 1 Timothy 2:9, refers to women's clothing and means "properly a lowering, letting down, hence a garment let down."<sup>9</sup> In Deuteronomy 22:5, the Hebrew word *simlah*, which means "outer garment" is the word for *garment*. Thus, the implication is that the outside of the garment (that which is visible) ought to be the differentiating factor in determining male and female. In other words, "the silhouette, the

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<sup>8</sup> Handford, Elizabeth Rice. Your Clothes Say It For You, p. 38.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, p. 41.

total impression, is to be distinctly male or female. You ought to be able to tell, at a glance, whether one is a man or woman. In Zondervan's Pictorial Dictionary, the article on Hebrew women's dress says: 'A few articles of female clothing carried somewhat the same name and basic pattern, yet there was always sufficient difference in embossing, embroidery, and needlework so that in appearance the line of demarcation between men and women could be readily detected (page 227).'<sup>10</sup> There was obviously a clear distinction between what men and women wore in Bible times, despite the popular notion that men and women dressed alike back then, or God wouldn't have made a distinction in Deuteronomy 22:5. This command in Deuteronomy illustrates "a guiding principle that is reflected in nature and is consistent with God's intent and order in creation."<sup>11</sup>

I also consulted some commentaries and articles that contained excerpts of inaccessible commentaries. In the Keil and Delitzsch commentary it says, "that Deuteronomy 22:5 was written to maintain the sanctity of the distinction of the sexes which was established by the creation of man and woman."<sup>12</sup> Bruce Lackey goes on to say, "In other words, anybody who reads the Bible can see that all the way through in every age and every testament God has said that He wants men and women to look different. Consequently, we ought not to wear clothing that applies to the opposite sex."<sup>13</sup> In Matthew Henry's introduction to Deuteronomy 22, pertaining to verse 5, he states, "For the preservation of order and distinction, that men and women should not wear one another's clothes..."<sup>14</sup> and then under his commentary on verse 5 he writes, "I. The distinction of sexes by the apparel is to be kept up, for the preservation of our own and our neighbor's chastity, v. 5. *Nature itself teaches* that a difference be made between them in their hair (1 Cor.xi.14), and by the same rule in their clothes, which therefore ought not to be confounded, either in ordinary wear or occasionally...2. It forbids the confounding of the dispositions and affairs of the sexes: men must not be effeminate, nor do the women's work in the house, nor must women be viragos, pretend to *teach*, or *usurp authority*, 1 Tim.ii.11,12. Probably this confounding of garments had been used to gain opportunity of committing uncleanness, and is therefore forbidden; for those that would be kept from sin must keep themselves from all occasions of it and approaches to it."<sup>15</sup> [As an aside, I think it is interesting that in both Deuteronomy 22 and 1 Corinthians 11 it is dealing somewhat with establishing man's authority and woman's submission by dealing with keeping a distinction between the sexes.] John Gill, in his commentary on Deuteronomy 22:5 writes, "It being very unseemly and impudent, and contrary to the modesty of her sex; or there shall not be upon her any 'instrument of a

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid, p. 42.

<sup>11</sup> Nell, Kenneth. "Modesty in Dress: A Vanishing Virtue". (<http://www.brffwitness.org/Articles/2006v41n4p.htm>)

<sup>12</sup> Lackey, Bruce. "Bible Guidelines for Clothing." (<http://www.wayoflife.org/fbns/bibleguidelines.htm>)

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible. (<http://www.ccel.org/h/henry/mhc2/MHC05022.HTM>)

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

man' {f}, any utensil of his which he makes use of in his trade and business; as if she was employed in it, when her business was not to do the work of men, but to take care of her house and family; and so this law may be opposed to the customs of the Egyptians, as is thought, from whom the Israelites were lately come; whose women, as Herodotus {g} relates, used to trade and merchandise abroad, while the men kept at home; and the word also signifies armour {h}, as Onkelos renders it; and so here forbids women putting on a military habit and going with men to war, as was usual with the eastern women; and so Maimonides {I} illustrates it, by putting a mitre or an helmet on her head, and clothing herself with a coat of mail; and in like manner Josephus {k} explains it, 'take heed, especially in war, that a woman do not make use of the habit of a man, or a man that of a woman;'**...neither shall a man put on a woman's garment;** which would betray effeminacy and softness unbecoming men, and would lead the way to many impurities, by giving an opportunity of mixing with women, and so to commit fornication and adultery with them; to prevent which and to preserve chastity this law seems to be made; and since in nature a difference of sexes is made, it is proper and necessary that this should be known by difference of dress, or otherwise many evils might follow; and this precept is agreeably to the law and light of nature....**for all that do so are an abomination to the Lord thy God;** which is a reason sufficient why such a practice should not be used...."<sup>16</sup> The Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary states concerning Deuteronomy 22:5, "Though disguises were assumed at certain times in heathen temples, it is probable that a reference was made to unbecoming levities practised in common life. They were probably forbidden; for the adoption of the habiliments of the one sex by the other is an outrage on decency, obliterates the distinctions of nature by fostering softness and effeminacy in the man, impudence and boldness in the woman as well as levity and hypocrisy in both; and, in short, it opens the door to an influx of so many evils that all who wear the dress of another sex are pronounced 'an abomination unto the Lord.'"<sup>17</sup> Is there any wonder why there is such a preponderance of homosexuality today with all the cross-dressing going on? The Geneva Study Bible says regarding verse 5, "...For that alters the order of nature, and shows that you despise God."<sup>18</sup> Wesley's Explanatory Notes states, "**Shall not wear** – Namely, ordinarily or unnecessarily, for in some cases this may be lawful, as to make an escape for one's life. Now this is forbidden, both for decency sake, that men might not confound those sexes which God hath distinguished, that all appearance of evil might be avoided, such change of garments carrying a

<sup>16</sup> John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible. (E-sword program)

<sup>17</sup> Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary.

(<http://www.searchgodsword.org/com/jfb/view.cgi?book=de&chapter=022&verse=001>)

<sup>18</sup> Geneva Study Bible. (<http://www.searchgodsword.org/com/gsb/view.cgi?book=de&chapter=022&verse=001>)

manifest sign of effeminacy in the man, of arrogance in the woman, of lightness and petulance in both; and also to cut off all suspicions and occasions of evil, which this practice opens a wide door to."<sup>19</sup>

What about the term, "girding up your loins" and more specifically from Job 38:3 and 40:7 where the expression, "Gird up your loins like a man" is found? In the Bible, only men girded up their loins which occurred whenever a man had to work, run, or go to war by the man pulling up his "knee-length tunic so the length in front stopped at [his] upper thigh, and collect[ed] the excess material in [his] front. ([He would] pull the material forward so the back of [his] tunic [was] snug against [his] backside.) Next, [he would] tuck the extra front material down between [his] legs and gather it behind [him]. At this point, [he would] collect half of the material behind [him] evenly on each side of [his] back (left and right). The final step involve[d] wrapping each side of the material around [his] waist and tying it together in front."<sup>20</sup> In other words, like pants.

What words come to mind when the word *pants*, or *trousers*, or *breeches* is said? Some words that come to my mind are "men" or "boys" or "someone in authority" (thus the phrase, "Who wears the pants in your family?"). So, in some respects, wouldn't what one wears reflect their attitude toward authority? More words that come to mind when thinking about pants and women would be "feminism", "tomboy", "rebellion", "worker". (Are these the traits found in 1 Timothy 2:9?) An AOL search on "pants are a symbol of" was quite revealing; here are some of the phrases that came up: "authority", "my individuality and my belief in personal freedom", "our American freedom...", "masculine power", "manhood", "men's power", "independence for women", "maleness", and "the larger feminist movement and the breakdown of rigid gender roles". It has been said that pants are the uniform of the feminist movement.<sup>21</sup> Let's go a step further and ask what the term "cross-dressing" conjures up in your mind. "Transvestism", "homosexuality", "drag queen" are words that immediately come to my mind. Wikipedia, the free online encyclopedia, defines "cross-dressing" as the act of wearing clothing commonly associated with another gender within a particular society and associates it also with "equal clothing rights".

Even the world recognizes the distinction between men and women's appearance evidenced by the universal symbols designating restrooms in public places: a figure wearing pants for males and a figure wearing a skirt or dress for females. S. Franklin Logsdon states, "If pants for women are legitimate now, why weren't they acceptable earlier? It can't be pleaded that it is a change of styles. Styles are modifications within a general pattern or context; a symbol is a complete change of concept. Long hair for men, for instance, according to the Communist handbook for the

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<sup>19</sup> Wesley's Explanatory Notes. (<http://www.searchgodsword.org/com/wen/view.cgi?book=de&chapter=022&verse=001>)

<sup>20</sup> Cooper, John D. "Gird Your Loins With Truth?" (<http://www.realarmorofgod.com/gird-your-loins.html>)

<sup>21</sup> Logsdon, S. Franklin. "God Drew The Line." (<http://www.tbaptist.com/aab/goddrewtheline.htm>)



corruption of American youth, is not a style but a symbol—a symbol of rebellion. They claim, 'Every male with long hair is a TV commercial for the revolution.' Such matters, in the final analysis, at least for the Christian, are not appraised by opinion or argument or interpretation, but by spiritual discernment and obedience to the Spirit of God. To plead that 'I see nothing wrong with it' is not tenable. Adam saw nothing wrong with Eve eating the fruit. He joined her in doing so. Cain saw nothing wrong with offering grain in worship. Aaron saw nothing wrong with the people dancing around a golden calf. Yet, each of these was a serious offense to the Lord and brought His strong condemnation."<sup>22</sup> He goes on to recite an interesting manifesto of a group of concerned college students: "Please give us back our girls. We've had it! Take away the pants and other male garments which have become a blighting scourge in blacking out as a thick cloud the loveliness with which the divine Creator endowed womanhood.' 'Give us back the silk and satin and lace, even the gingham and calico in the former modest apparel, that once again the beauty of the fairer sex may elicit our fond appreciation of our profound respect.' 'Our plea is not alone a selfish one. It isn't merely a desire to regain what we now know is our great loss of feminine charm. Our concern is also for the coming generations. We fear, as things now are going, our babies will not have mothers of the dainty, attractive, commanding sort, but the fearful monstrosity of unisex."<sup>23</sup>

"Paul Harvey, in a coast-to-coast newscast, made this comment: 'Looking down the corridors of a high school or college when classes are changing, it is virtually impossible to tell which are male and which are female, apart from the way they carry their books."<sup>24</sup>

Mr. Logsdon reminisced, "As a twelve year-old boy, I made a strong plea to change from knee breeches to long pants. Dad refused utterly, explaining that I must wait until I was thirteen, because long pants are a symbol of manhood."<sup>25</sup>

"On June 25, 1977, the American Broadcasting Company, in [a] research presentation called Close-up, [stated], 'Approximately twenty-five years ago, the female began to adopt the life-styles of men, to demand men's work-patterns, to participate in masculine activities, and to wear masculine apparel."<sup>26</sup>

If women are allowed to wear pants, why can't men wear dresses? People who support women wearing pants seem to forget the other half of Deuteronomy 22:5. Why would it be so frowned upon if men wore dresses? Because dresses have always been associated with what women wear (or should wear). A man named David Hall

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<sup>22</sup> Logsdon, S. Frank. "God Drew the Line." (<http://www.tbaptist.com/aab/goddrethewheline.htm>)

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

appeared on the Phil Donahue Show one day in a skirt that was well below the knee. When Donahue asked why he was wearing a skirt, Mr. Hall replied, "I really think the time has come for men to change....And if we're talking about equality, let's have the appearance of equality. And the only way we can do this is for men to change into the only alternative garment that exists."<sup>27</sup>

A homosexual website called Mind Station that advocates that men wear skirts reports in their article, "Men in Skirts?", "After two World Wars, wearing pants became a symbol of masculine power. In America, the post-war years saw men in pants and women forced back into skirts and dresses. The question, 'Who wears the pants?' was asked of men when their authority was questioned. Women openly rebelled in the 1960's and 1970's and won back their right to wear pants whenever they wanted to. Now, four year-old girls 'wear the pants' and so pants no longer carry the symbolism of masculine authority. Some modern men have decided that it's time men also had choices in clothing again."<sup>28</sup>

A New York image consultant advocates dresses or skirts in place of pants for female executives stating: "Why not wear pants? You have absolutely nothing to gain by wearing them. You're not showing individuality; you are being rebellious. [and] People don't like rebellious executives."<sup>29</sup>

Gary Maldaner of Plain Path Publishers states, "It is imperative to God that Christian men and women maintain a distinction between the sexes. Gen. 1:27 A person's sense of sexual identification goes far beyond the clothes he or she chooses to wear. The primary sexual identification of an adult resides in the mind and is established during the years of childhood prior to puberty. Few people ever consider the developmental influences leading to the formation of a person with homosexual desires. God made man to normally respond with a desire for the opposite sex. Therefore, for a man to desire a woman he must have established, through childhood and adolescence, a mental identity as a man. If he does not accomplish this, then he reaches maturity with a desire for, to him, the 'opposite sex'—another male. Nobody would deny the danger of dressing a little boy in dresses during his formative years. Nobody would deny the danger of a little boy seeing his father wearing dresses every day (the effeminate man), or of this same little boy observing his father constantly abdicating his God-ordained role of family leadership (becoming, in

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<sup>27</sup> Denton, Tony E. "Clothing and the Christian". June 1986. (<http://www.asitefortheLord.com/sys-tmpl/clothingandthechristian/>)

<sup>28</sup> "Men in Skirts?" (<http://mindstation.com/culture.html>)

<sup>29</sup> Nicholson, William. Clothing the Universal Language. Quoted in an article by Pamela Saturn, "Who's Wearing the Pants?" in Glamour, September, 1985, p. 174.

actions, the 'weaker vessel' 1 Peter 3:7). Why cannot we recognize the danger of a young boy identifying himself with a mother who is dressed in man's clothing (the masculine lady)?<sup>30</sup>

Why has there been a change in fashion? Pastor Damien DiMedio answers, "While fashion has always changed through time, this generation has seen a change in certain values which were once held by society as a whole. This change can be justly attributed to the upsurge of the feminist movement. With this movement also came the push for the 'career woman,' increased demands for child care, and a general abandonment of the accepted role models for men and women....As society moves further and further away from God's righteous standard, human values change to accommodate man's sinful desires....To the feminist, the thought of pre-defined roles for men and women is repulsive. It is this feminist, anti-God, anti-Bible philosophy which has slowly permeated our society causing many to reject the 'moralism' which was once widely accepted by our culture at large."<sup>31</sup>

After WWII, pants as a symbol of male authority was changed to a symbol of equality by feminist groups. This change in fashion has led to androgynous or unisex clothing which compliments the homosexual agenda. "Rudi Gernreich, the inventor of unisex clothing was one of the founders of the Mattachine Society, one of the first gay rights organizations. He called his UNISEX clothing 'an anonymous sort of uniform of an indefinite revolutionary cast.' Bisexuals, Transsexuals, and Cross-dressers are claiming the right to wear skirts and are actively pursuing its fulfillment by creating a new line of men's clothing via the top designers of this world. Men's skirts will be the next fashion explosion of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The unisex advocates argue that, 'If women can wear pants, then men can wear skirts.' Is it really that farfetched? Will it ever become a reality? Well, no one ever dreamed that men would plait their hair and even worse, pierce their ears. Not just one, but both ears are sporting earrings. How farfetched is the idea of men in skirts, now that you are reminded that men are wearing earrings? Their plans are picking up momentum as well. In fact, Ohio University has a unisex restroom because their transgender students wanted a symbol on the restroom door that identified their sexuality."<sup>32</sup> In the twenties "wearing slacks to the office or to a park was still out of the question, and any female who appeared on a formal occasion in a trouser's suit was assumed to be a Bohemian eccentric and probably a lesbian."<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Maldaner, Gary. "The Importance of Outward Appearance".  
(<http://www.plainpath.org/store/index.php?pid=4204834&SID=6607163&PageID=2&act=cart-showpage>)

<sup>31</sup> DiMedio, Pastor Damien. "Who Wears the Pants?"  
([http://www.earnestlycontending.com/KT/Studies/modesty/who\\_wears\\_the\\_pants.html](http://www.earnestlycontending.com/KT/Studies/modesty/who_wears_the_pants.html))

<sup>32</sup> Heron, Lynford. "The Gender of Pants", The Centurion Press, Friday, July 19, 2002.  
(<http://www.centurionministry.org/body/pants.htm>)

<sup>33</sup> Nicholson, p. 44.

"The wearing of men's clothing by women can mean many different things. In the 1930's, it projected sophistication, power, and a dangerous eroticism while the jeans and pants of the 1960's and the 1970's were serious gestures toward total sexual equality.<sup>34</sup> But what impact has the unisex culture had on our children? Society's well-defined roles for men and certain other roles for women are normally translated into appropriate clothing expression and how we dress helps to set the stage for children learning the required social behavior associated with sex roles.<sup>35</sup>

**Studies have revealed that these sex roles are often distorted or blurred by the androgynous, unisex fashions, especially the practice of women wearing trousers.**"<sup>36</sup> [Emphasis in the original.]

Another issue regarding Deuteronomy 22:5 and cross-dressing involves modesty. Pants are contour-revealing clothes. There is a natural law of vision or line-of-sight principle. Artists recognize this principle in their vocation as they are "aware of the power of lines that can be used to attract the eye to a certain area. [When] intersecting or converging lines attract the eye and emphasize that area and it becomes the point of attention."<sup>37</sup> I will be honest and state that, even as a woman, the first thing my eyes are usually drawn to when a woman wearing pants is walking in front of me is her posterior. Elizabeth Rice Handford relates a conversation she had with a Christian leader who felt his daughters would be more modest in slacks than skirts at camping and sports activities:

"But how can your girls fulfill the Bible command to look different from men when they wear slacks?" I asked."

"By their pretty girlish curves," he answered."<sup>38</sup>

A former fashion designer says that a good rule to follow in deciding what clothes to wear is "to keep your silhouette unmistakably feminine, so that at a distance no one would mistake you for a boy or man."<sup>39</sup> Otherwise, the only way to tell is to look at those parts of the body that distinguish between male and female and isn't that what satan wants us to do? One may wear loose slacks, but they still show the form of their legs, thighs, and posterior, and as soon as that lady bends over, squats, or sits down, those slacks will be stretched tightly over their form and reveal just as much as if they wore tight pants.

Part of dressing like a female is being feminine. In past days, words such as "genteel", "refined", "dignified", "discreet", and "feminine" were used to describe women. Webster's 1828 Dictionary defines *feminine* as "pertaining

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<sup>34</sup> Nicholson, p. 53. Information from Alison Lurie in her book, The Language of Clothes. New York: Random House, 1981, p. 229.

<sup>35</sup> Nicholson, p. 53-54. Information from Betty L. Davis, "The Relationship Between Masculine-Feminine Personality Traits and the Feelings Associated With the Wearing of Bifurcated Garments," (Master's Thesis, Pennsylvania State University, 1965).

<sup>36</sup> Nicholson, p. 54. Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Jorgensen, Mrs. Alta. "Fashion Guidelines for the Christian Woman." (<http://www.genesistreehouse.org/fashion.htm>)

<sup>38</sup> Handford, p. 66.

<sup>39</sup> Jorgensen, Mrs. Alta. "Fashion Guidelines for the Christian Woman." (<http://www.genesistreehouse.org/fashion.htm>)

to a woman, or to women, or to females; soft, tender; delicate; effeminate; destitute of manly qualities." *Masculine* is defined as "having the qualities of a man; robust; resembling man; coarse; opposed to delicate or soft; bold; brave." I am sorry but I have trouble describing a woman in pants as soft, tender, delicate, effeminate, or destitute of manly qualities. The definition for *masculine* comes more readily to mind. Webster's 1828 Dictionary did not have a definition for *pants*, but *pantaloons*, *trowsers*, and *breeches* all are defined as garments worn by men. The example given for the use of the word *breeches* is: "To wear the breeches is, in the wife, to usurp the authority of the husband. Johnson." Pants have defeminized women. Most girls have worn pants all their lives so they move like boys, sit like boys, and aren't comfortable in dresses, if they even own one. They don't know how to act like a lady. If you notice fashion ads of women in pants, a lot of times they are posed in postures that would be typical for a man. Someone once wrote to Ann Landers, "I would like to comment on that letter written by a teenage girl who complained about the terrible manners of teenage boys in her school. She gave, as an example, the way the boys shoved the girls around and elbowed in front of them to get a seat on the school bus. Our children are grown, but in 'my day'...we had no such problem. Why? Because boys looked like boys, and girls looked like girls and behaved like young ladies. Today, almost every girl I see looks like 'one of the guys' in her jeans....After all, Ann, when a girl looks like 'one of the guys,' she shouldn't be surprised if she is treated like one."<sup>40</sup>

"The way we dress has an affect on our own behavior. It is a proven fact that school children behave in a more orderly way when properly dressed. A girl who acts like a tomboy will walk, stand, and sit in a more lady-like manner if she is wearing a dress, than when dressed in jeans or pants. Many women are careless in the way they sit if they have worn pants frequently. If we wear sloppy clothes, it isn't long before that shows in our manners."<sup>41</sup>

### **SOME ARGUMENTS GIVEN BY WOMEN WHO WANT TO WEAR PANTS AND REPLIES:**

- 1. "Slacks are more modest than the skirts most women wear. Isn't it better to wear slacks than to be immodest? Aren't pants the lesser of two evils?"** "Charles Spurgeon said, 'When choosing between two evils, choose neither.' Is it better to be immodest or to wear men's apparel? Spurgeon says, 'Choose neither.' You don't have to choose between immodesty and unwomanliness. You can be modest and womanly. When we must make a moral decision, let's erase from our possible choices every alternative that involves wrong. If you feel you have no

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<sup>40</sup> Denton, Tony E. "Clothing and the Christian." June 1986. (<http://www.asitefortheLord.com/sys-tmpl/clothingandthechristian/>)

<sup>41</sup> Jorgensen, Mrs. Alta. "Fashion Guidelines for the Christian Woman." (<http://www.genesistreehouse.org/fashion.htm>)

choice but the lesser of two evils, it is because you have not considered all the alternatives. You do have another choice, somewhere, somehow, so that you won't have to break any of God's commands...1 Corinthians 10:13...There is always some way to solve a problem without choosing evil. You may have to do some creative thinking (and perhaps some designing and sewing...). But you *can* find a garment to wear that is both feminine and modest—and functional."<sup>42</sup> True, a lot of skirts/dresses are immodest, but there are also a lot of modest skirts/dresses available and it still doesn't excuse disobedience to God's command. Even loose pants are immodest as motions such as bending or sitting tends to pull the material close to the body outlining the woman's form.

**2. Aren't belts, underpants, socks, shirts, etc. worn by men?** It is not about the hidden things that others can't see. A belt doesn't have anything to do with the gender of the person. It's all about what one looks like when one wears pants and being able to determine the gender of that person from a distance.

**3. What about when women work out in the field or outdoors, in factories, climb ladders, partake in sporting events, hiking, etc.?** As far as when women work outside the home, women shouldn't be working outside the home but they are to be "keepers at home." My personal philosophy is that if it is an activity that requires a woman to wear pants to be modest, it is probably an unladylike activity to begin with and she doesn't need to be a participant. Culottes if they are fashioned so as to look like a loose-fitting skirt could be an option for climbing ladders or hiking. Non-bulky pants worn under a skirt or dress is another alternative. Also, "the right kind of training helps a girl to automatically take care of her skirt, without her having to consciously think, *Oh dear, I've got to keep my skirt down.* She can be taught to be aware subconsciously of her skirt. [For example,] at a Sunday school picnic once, as I ran pell-mell down a hill, I stumbled and skidded, face down, full-length for what seemed like a hundred yards! When I picked myself up and limped back to my friends, my sister whispered, 'Libby, not a thing showed! You held your skirt down the whole way!' Believe me, at that moment, modesty wasn't what I had on my mind. Evidently you can train the subconscious mind to take care of that, if you work at it, and my parents did."<sup>43</sup> "There may be some situations where a skirt is obviously unsuitable, and a ski

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<sup>42</sup> Handford, p. 45.

<sup>43</sup> Handford, p. 67.

outfit, wind suit, or snowmobiling suit might be appropriate. In my judgment, the sheer bulk of such an outfit keeps it from being very revealing."<sup>44</sup> "Some women wear slacks only at home or while working in the garden. They find them more convenient than a skirt which might trail into the dirty scrub water or snag on a rosebush."<sup>45</sup> Even at home there are neighbors or passers-by who would observe and she also needs to consider being found in slacks should someone come to call or service personnel (like pest control workers, plumbers, etc.) make a visit. Before 1900, women and girls did just about everything in dresses. There are still plenty of things, including most of the above-mentioned items, that can be done in long, heavy, full skirts. "Gardening, housework, hiking, bike-riding, even riding a horse can be done decently if the skirt is long enough, heavy enough, and full enough!"<sup>46</sup>

**4. Pants are not really that immodest.** "The following is from What in the World Should I Wear? by Mrs. Cathy Corle:

*A friend of mine told me that her decision to restrict her wardrobe to dresses and skirts came as a result of a ladies' class. All the arguments and reasons that could be given were unheeded until the lady who was speaking said, 'Let me just demonstrate something to you.' She asked the ladies in the audience to close their eyes momentarily. She held up a large picture of a woman in an attractive, modest feminine skirt and blouse. She asked the ladies to open their eyes. Then she inquired, 'What is the primary focal point to this picture? Where did your eyes first fall naturally?' The audience agreed that their eyes were first drawn to the face of the woman in the picture.*

*She once again asked the ladies to close their eyes. When they opened their eyes they were looking at a large poster of a woman in a sport shirt and hip-hugger blue jeans with snaps down the fly. She asked, 'Now, be honest with yourselves, and tell me where your eyes first fell naturally when you looked at this picture?' Many of the ladies in the crowd were surprised to find that most people's eyes first focused upon the hips and crotch area that were so vividly emphasized before they ever noticed the woman's face.*

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<sup>44</sup> Handford, p. 68.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Van Nattan, Mary. "Modesty A Matter of Heart—That Which Pertaineth To the Man Part 1." (<http://www.balaams-ass.com/journal/homemade/modestp4.htm>)

*If this happened in a crowd of ladies, how much more would it be true of men? For my friend, Joetta, this was all the 'evidence' that was needed.*<sup>47</sup>

**5. Pants are more comfortable and practical to wear. They allow more freedom of movement.** This argument parallels argument #3. "It's kind of funny that for nearly 6000 years, women always wore long dresses, but only since the last 60 years, a dress is suddenly 'impractical' and uncomfortable to wear! Women think that we cannot so much as rake a few leaves without adorning ourselves in a pair of pants. If you saw a man wearing a dress, what would you call him? Uh-huh, you would have no trouble knowing that it was wrong, and an abomination to God (even if his dress was in a masculine color). But we have been conditioned by the world and erring brethren that a pair of pants is a good and acceptable thing for a woman to wear today. Just because it is common does not make it right. In fact, I believe that the big push for UNI-SEX is all part of Satan's plan to further defile mankind by mixing the genders. Have you noticed how wimpy the boys are getting to be and how masculine the girls are becoming? Women's sports are the rage, and not just sports, but EXTREME sports. We would rather learn how to 'Kill 'em on the court' than to learn to be chaste and skilled at homemaking. This is how we have come to put our women in military combat positions. We would have never even considered this years ago, but now we are eliminating the difference in the sexes that God made."<sup>48</sup>

"There are women that will declare that they have to wear pants because they need 'freedom of movement' for the things they have to do. Having worn skirts almost exclusively for years now, I find this excuse somewhat comical. Once you become 'acclimated' to skirts, you will know that a long, full skirt allows more 'freedom of movement' than most pants. Blue jeans and pants tend to be worn tight, especially around the crotch. They 'ride' up, they bind, they cut into your stomach. Some pants pull down in back when you squat to do something. Besides all of that, they make you look awful unless you maintain a fashion plate figure. Unless you want to put your legs up in the air or something, skirts just make better sense for comfort and movement, and loose jumpers and dresses eliminate binding at the waste. If your excuse is that a skirt doesn't give you enough

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<sup>47</sup> "Attributes of a Godly Woman." (<http://our.homewithgod.com/ewerludv/attributes5.htm>)

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.



leg room to do what you have to do, then you need to get yourself some fuller skirts and dresses!”<sup>49</sup>

**6. “Wearing pants may be wrong for some saved women, but I’m not ‘convicted’ about it.**

...Does that give you permission to rebel against the Word of God? You must ask yourself, ‘What is the FINAL AUTHORITY on deciding what I believe and how I live? The Bible? Or how I ‘feel’ convicted?’ [Jeremiah 17:9 and Proverbs 14:12] Human feelings are very deceptive. We cannot rely on them. Any ‘leading’ you may feel to do or not to do, something that is contrary to the Word of God is not of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit **NEVER** leads contrary to the Bible, but He always leads according to the Bible....Many people claim to be ‘convicted’ [that it is o.k.] about forsaking church attendance, drinking alcohol, smoking, gambling, cursing, fornication, adultery, and all manner of activities clearly forbidden in the Bible, but that does not make it all right for them to do these things.....To try and say that wearing pants may be wrong for some saved women and not for others is to engage in **moral relativism which strips all authority from God’s Word**. God does not have two sets of standards....Wearing pants is either wrong for ALL saved women, or it is wrong for none. In deciding if something is right or wrong, our first consideration must **ALWAYS** be what the Word of God says, not how we may ‘feel convicted.’”<sup>50</sup>

[Emphasis in original.]

**7. “But my husband likes me to wear slacks....** You know I believe God wants us to obey our husbands implicitly. Does he want you to wear slacks because you seem to be more fun, less inhibited, when you wear them? Do they seem to make you more his pal, his companion? That’s a gift you can give him, no matter how you dress. If you are earnestly obeying your husband in everything, not just where your ‘druthers’ coincide with his will, I have a hunch he’ll defer to your convictions about this. My husband does not feel as strongly as I do about my not wearing pants, but he treasures my relationship with the Lord and wouldn’t want me to do something against my conscience.”<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Vam Nattan, Mary. “Modesty A Matter of Heart—That Which Pertaineth To a Man Part 2.” (<http://www.balaams-ass.com/journal/homemade/modestp4.htm>)

<sup>50</sup> “Modesty.” (<http://www.momof9space.com/modesty.html>)

<sup>51</sup> Handford, p. 44.

- 8. What about warmth?** “It is possible to layer clothes with a skirt or jumper. The biggest difference will be your legs. I use heavy tights, long johns that end at the knee or ankles, and heavy knee socks. If you want to use leggings, check the fabric content. I do not believe Lycra is as warm as cotton or wool.”<sup>52</sup>

In conclusion, Pastor DeMedio counsels, “The truth of the matter is, we are not to judge the validity of anything in the light of worldly trends. Pants may be more modest than a mini-skirt, but that does not make them right. As the day grows darker, God’s people ought to shine brighter. We are those who live ‘in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world,’ (Phil.2:15). Compared to the world, we ought to be a whole lot different. As the words of John R. Rice in his hymn so aptly describes, ‘Misunderstood because we’re oft peculiar...’<sup>53</sup> The Apostle Paul said in 2 Corinthians 3:2: *Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men....* “It is time we ask, ‘What does the world see as they ‘read’ our clothing?’”<sup>54</sup>

Bruce Lackey has developed five principles to aid in determining appropriate Christian clothing, whatever item of clothing it may be, and whether male or female, adult or child. They are:

1. Is it worn by the opposite sex? Again, not hidden objects, but the outward garments. And what do I look like from a distance to others?
2. What does it make others think of me? In other words, what signals am I sending? Or what statement am I making?
3. Predominately, what kind of people dress that way? Who am I identifying with with what I am wearing?
4. Must I use the arguments of the world to justify it?
5. Will it cause others to stumble?<sup>55</sup>

Bruce Lackey gives more excellent advice on the subject of children and clothes: “The best place to start on this [wearing clothing specific to their gender] is when the child is born. If you start when the child is born, you won’t ever have to make any changes. If you don’t start then, you’ll always be wondering when

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<sup>52</sup> Theall, Susan. “Modesty.” (<http://users.bigpond.net.au/joeflorence/Modesty.htm>)

<sup>53</sup> DiMedio, Pastor Damien. “Who Wears the Pants?”

<sup>54</sup> Nicholson, p. 64.

<sup>55</sup> Lackey, Bruce. “Bible Guidelines for Clothing.” (<http://www.wayoflife.org/fbns/bibleguidelines.htm>)

you should make this change. Just start right in the beginning. Cut the baby boy's hair like a boy's hair should be cut, and don't put feminine clothes on him. Put pants on him. And if it is a girl, don't put pants on her; put a dress on her."<sup>56</sup> How many times have you noticed that people are confused about whether a baby is a girl or a boy even is the baby is dressed in blue or pink because baby girls aren't dressed in dresses anymore (or very rarely)?

A feminine woman is generally held in higher esteem and more respected, elevated in position, as it were, but when she chooses to wear worldly attire and dress like a man, she steps off that pedestal.

Besides being extremely distasteful to God, which in and of itself is enough to make us think twice about what we wear, by dressing in clothes that pertain to men, isn't that allowing culture once again to dictate to the church in our conforming our standards to theirs? If it is truly an abomination to God, and I believe it is because God's Word says so, how can someone disobey His commands and receive His full blessings? This is one of those areas in our lives as Christians that instead of trying to exercise, erroneously (because God commands otherwise), our so-called Christian liberty, we should start denying ourselves, take up our cross, and follow Him (Matthew 16:24). Obeying God and denying ourselves just allows us to experience the blessing of God's love for us and it becomes really no sacrifice at all. "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous."<sup>57</sup>

Before the days ere darkness came,  
The sexes did not dress the same.  
For God decreed it long ago—  
What many now don't seem to know—  
That sexes must in godly fear  
Unlike each other to appear.  
The line God drew in words sublime  
Must never fade in passing time.  
His moral laws must ever stand,  
Whatever styles may now command.  
The world at large may set the pace  
To lead some saints into disgrace.  
The argument they often use,  
Is that this law is for the Jews.  
Or that the cloth is not the same,  
Which argument is very lame.  
The one who is the Father's child  
Should never be so sad beguiled.  
It's not the color of the cloth or kind;  
It's the cut of the cloth God has in mind.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> 1 John 5:3 (KJV)

<sup>58</sup> Logsdon, S. Franklin. "God Drew The Line." (<http://www.tbaptist.com/aab/goddrewtheline.htm>)