

GRACE GAZETTE

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Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.

Hebrews 12:12-13

ADORNING THE DOCTRINE OF GOD

That they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. Titus 2:10

According to a recent report that I read, the global cosmetic market in 2021 was worth over 560 billion dollars. Add to that the total cosmetic surgery market of 45 billion dollars and we see a trend which only seems to increase from year to year. Tattoos, piercings, and other body modifications add another 3 billion dollars to that total. To say that women and men, place a great value on their appearance is somewhat of an understatement. Such has been the case in every generation and in all cultures around the world.

Tattoos and piercings were, once, somewhat rare in civilized societies, and considered an oddity or novelty reserved for sailors and military men. Now they have become so much in the mainstream that to be without such is considered an oddity by the rank and file who rush out to adopt the mores and habits of the world at large. Many seem to run out of space on their bodies to put tattoos well before they are old enough to regret them. While we would never seek to bring condemnation upon any who choose to “adorn” themselves in this fashion, we would point out that the LORD did forbid the Israelites (i.e.; that nation which HE set apart from other nations on the Earth as a type and foreshadow of that Holy People which HE chose in CHRIST from the beginning) from copying these habits from the heathen tribes around them. *“Ye shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor print any marks upon you: I am the LORD.” (Lev 19:28)*

The children of GOD are not called to serve the LORD out of a duty to the law of sin and death, but rather to follow the Law of LIFE in CHRIST JESUS. The freedom of the sons of GOD is not given to them so that they might be in conformity to the world, but rather that they might be set apart from it. Their liberty is given to them so that they might, in love, serve one another rather than indulge the lusts of their flesh. *“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.” (1Pet 2:9-12)*

Paul reiterated this admonition to the Corinthians, which was first spoken by Isaiah, (see Isa.52:11) as he reminded them of their calling, *“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.” (2Cor 6:14-17)*

The main consideration that he has is as they are called to stand with CHRIST and the gospel, against the world which is not a friend to HIM or the Gospel of HIS glory. While he is not primarily

speaking in terms of morality or fleshly habits, one cannot deny that the morality to which the sons of GOD are called is quite in contrast to the darkness of the world, who have not the LIGHT of CHRIST ever before them. *"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."* (Rom 12:1-2)

With all of that in mind, he writes to Titus concerning "adorning the gospel" in all things. *"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."* (1Cor 10:31) The Greek word which is translated into English as "adorn", literally means "to put in proper order, to decorate or garnish." The sons of GOD are not free to pick and choose what suits them in following CHRIST, but are rather compelled to follow HIS "doctrine" (i.e.; teaching). Well did Peter confess, *"Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life."* (John 6:68)

So, in order to "adorn the doctrine of GOD our SAVIOR in all things" we must be given an understanding of the fact that it is HIS doctrine and not ours. We are not called to "interpret" HIS doctrine or to seek ways in which we might apply it or avoid it, but rather to simply bow our knees before HIM and say as Jeremiah before the court of King Jehoiakim, *"As for me, behold, I am in your hand: do with me as seemeth good and meet unto you."* (Jer 26:14) We see the example of our LORD and SAVIOR as HE gave HIMSELF up to the FATHER in the behalf of HIS brethren, *"nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt."* (Mat 26:39) Can the man who would "adorn" HIS doctrine have any less regard for it.

When Martha was cumbered about much serving and expressed to the LORD her dissatisfaction with what she perceived Mary was failing to do, the LORD gently upbraided her and reminded her that Mary had chosen the "*better part.*" HE was not telling Martha that what she was doing was sinful nor even unnecessary, but rather (in contrast) that there are better endeavors to apply oneself to that will ultimately be of greater profit. So too, Peter says of chaste women, *"Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; 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. For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves."* (1Pet 3:3-5)

Peter is not condemning the practices of "*plaiting the hair*", etc. but rather pointing out (in contrast) the activity which is of much greater profit and is that to which Godly women must aspire. So too when Paul makes a similar exhortation in I Timothy 2:9. He exhorts them to dress in a fashion which *"(which becometh women professing godliness) with good works."* (1Tim 2:10) The adorning which all of the people of GOD (men and women) must place the most emphasis upon is not their physical appearance but rather that they be found demonstrating a love for the SAVIOR and HIS "doctrine."

To "adorn" HIS doctrine is not to simply acknowledge the truth of it and to study it, but rather to delight oneself in it, serving the LORD with a "*pure heart.*" (i.e.; with singleness of purpose). One cannot serve the LORD without serving HIS brethren. *"Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently."* (1Pet 1:22) This is the "outgrowth" (see Phil.2:13) of the work of the SPIRIT of GOD in the lives of the sons of GOD who are bought with the precious blood of CHRIST. *"For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe."* (1Thes 2:13)

Ultimately to "adorn" HIS doctrine is to be found walking according to Paul's exhortation, *"That ye would walk worthy of God, (i.e.; in a fitting or becoming fashion) who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory."* (1Thes 2:12) We can never be "worthy" in the sense of deserving such a calling, but by HIS grace HE does "fit" HIS children for their calling. *"Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."* (Tit 2:13-14) *"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."* (Eph 2:10) This is the adorning of HIS doctrine. Have you been clothed by HIM? You shall be found naked, otherwise. mam