

ISSUE

18.6

BULLETIN OF
THE OLSEN
PARK CHURCH
OF CHRIST

Faithful Sayings

February 7,
2016

Services

Sunday: 9:00 AM

10:00 AM

11:00 AM

Wednesday: 7:00 PM

Elders:

Pat Ledbetter
Jeff Nunn
Kyle Pope

Deacons:

Steve Dixon
Ryan Ferguson
Arend Gressley
Ben Hight
Jack Langley
Blake McAlister
Brady McAlister
Walker McAnear
Sam Nunn
Lance Purcell
Rusty Scott
Justin Smiley
Trevor Yontz

Evangelist:

Kyle Pope



Are Leggings Modest?

By Kyle Pope

Six years ago the question below was posted on our church website. At the time, I had to ask my wife what “leggings” were to even be able to answer the question. In the years since then it has become more and more common for women to wear leggings (not merely underneath a dress) but as the only covering for the lower body. For Christians seeking to follow Scripture I offer the response I wrote to this anonymous question in 2010 before this garment had gained its current popularity.



Question: *Is it really modest dress when short dresses are worn and skin tight leggings are worn under them?*

Answer: There is no question that in our world both men and women often fail to wear clothing which would be considered “**modest apparel.**” Even within the church, far too often we allow how we dress to be shaped by the world’s standards rather than by principles taught in Scripture.

Paul commanded Timothy (through the direction of the Holy Spirit), “...that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works” (1 Tim. 2:9-10, NKJV). The word translated “**modest**” is the Greek word *kosmios* which means “orderly.” It is the adjective form of the verb *kosmeō* translated “**adorn**” in the same

verse. Literally, women are commanded to “order themselves in orderly apparel.” Part of the definition of apparel that is “orderly” (or “modest”) is provided in this passage. Modest apparel is not “**braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing.**” Some see in this a prohibition of these specific elements. However, modern culture has seen items such as gold and pearls become much more common and less expensive to the general public than in ancient times. Braiding of hair among Roman aristocracy was considered a badge of wealth and privilege. Today, a little girl who braids her hair says nothing about her financial status. What is clear is that these elements (whether specifically prohibited or not) in part define *immodest* apparel as that by which one parades wealth and status.

However, two additional words that Paul uses to modify this command further define “**modest apparel.**” He commands them to dress “**with propriety and moderation.**” The word translated “**propriety**” is the Greek word *aidōs*, which Thayer defines to mean “a sense of shame or honor, modesty, bashfulness, reverence, regard for others, respect.” The King James Version rendered this word,

“**shamefacedness.**” This is an appeal to a sense of shame. A godly man or woman must realize that there are parts of our bodies that are to be covered. Paul taught in 1 Corinthians 12:23 that we have “**unpresentable parts**” which demand “**greater modesty.**” After Adam and Eve ate from the tree they realized a sense of shame and covered themselves (Gen. 3:7-9). The fig leaves with which they covered themselves



were insufficient, so God made for them **“tunics of skin”** (Gen. 3:21). A tunic was a garment much like a long lab coat, which covered the upper body and the thighs. In the Law of Moses God taught that the **“nakedness”** of a man and woman belonged strictly to his or her own mate (Lev. 18). The definition of **“nakedness”** is established (in part) by the instructions given to the priests. The tunics and trousers they were commanded to wear were to **“reach from the waist to the thighs”** (Exod. 28:42b). This was in order **“to cover their nakedness”** (Exod. 28:42a). That tells us that **“nakedness”** (as God defines it) either includes the thighs or that garments such as the tunic provide the type of coverage that prevents exposing one’s **“nakedness.”** So, when Paul commands Timothy to teach women to wear **“modest apparel with propriety,”** Paul is teaching that Christians should feel a sense of shame (or respect) in covering their **“unpresentable parts”** which leads them to dress with **“shamefacedness.”**

The second word Paul uses to modify the term **“modest apparel”** is **“moderation.”** The Greek word here is *sōphrosunē* meaning “sound-minded.” This word is often used in contrast to drunkenness. The KJV and ASV translate this word **“sobriety.”** A Christian man or woman must dress in a manner that reflects a sober consideration of what our dress communicates. This has to do with wealth (as noted above)—*Am I trying to exalt myself above others by the clothes I wear?* But, it also has to do with how



alluring our clothing may be—*Do I dress in a manner that might cause another person to struggle with lust?* Jesus taught that we personally must avoid lustful thoughts about others (Matt. 5:28), but the Christian man or woman must be conscious to avoid laying a stumbling-block before others. This isn’t always just a matter of what parts of the body are uncovered. Solomon warned the young man to guard against the immoral woman dressed **“in the attire of a harlot”** (Prov. 7:10), which in the time of Judah involved being fully covered (Gen. 38:14-15). I may cover parts of the body



which are scripturally defined as “nakedness,” but if I do so in a manner that is provocative and alluring I am not dressing with “**sobriety**” (or “**moderation**”).

Now then, regarding whether “short dresses” with “skin tight leggings under them” constitute modest apparel, there is a great deal of personal judgment that must come into play here. First, is a “short dress” something

above the ankle or above the knee? Based on Exodus 28:42 clothing that does not extend from “the waist to the thighs” exposes (or may expose) one’s “nakedness.” Christian women (and men) should not dress in a manner that does that. Second, are these “skin tight leggings” thin and revealing or thick insulated material? Also, why are these leggings being worn? Is it to allow a woman to raise her dress line or to provide additional modesty? As observed above, a person may be fully covered and yet still dress provocatively. Here in the Panhandle of Texas, with the strong winds that are so common, wearing a floor-length dress doesn’t guarantee a woman that she won’t have to struggle with being uncovered. Leggings may well provide additional modesty in such conditions. A Christian woman must consider carefully all of these factors in choosing what is “**proper for women professing godliness, with good works.**” With all of that said, in my personal opinion, if I was a woman I would not feel that I was wearing “**modest apparel**” if I wore thin leggings with a dress which came much above the knee.



Faithful Sayings Issue 18.6 February 7, 2016

4700 Andrews Ave.
Amarillo TX 79106
806-352-2809
www.olsenpark.com

Welcome Visitors

**We are so glad that you joined us today.
Please come again.**

● **Let us know if you have any questions.**