

“THAT I MAY KNOW WHAT TO DO UNTO THEE...”

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In all things Jesus is our Example. When you read through the most precious accounts of our Savior meeting and healing people, raising some from the dead, blessing and giving all that He had and was, do you ever stop to wonder why not much is said about Christ giving jewels, rings, and earrings to people? It is because it was out of harmony with His practice here on earth. He would never give us an example that was contrary to His will. He came to show us the Father, and did not wish to draw attention to Himself. He was meek; even when He healed He would say, “See thou tell no man” (Matthew 8:4).

Even upon the cross, why is it that Scripture never records the Roman soldiers casting lots for the great big diamond ring, the dazzling necklace, or the 24 karat gold bracelet of Christ? It is plainly because He did not possess such things. Surely the adornment of the Son of God would have been something great if that would have been in His plan. The soldiers would have killed one another for the glorious jewels that God Himself would have provided for His Son! The only thing that they wanted from One that they considered to be lower than you and I, was His garment. “They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, ‘They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots.’ These things therefore the soldiers did.” He had a nice coat, probably much like the one that He made back in the garden for Adam. Christ’s garment was “without seam, woven from the top throughout” (John 19:23-24). Durable, plain, and modest. In fact, the reason why the devil caused our Lord to be shamed by His garments being removed was because it was out of harmony with Christ’s principles, and it ought to be out of harmony with ours as well. Christ gave His all for us that we would have everything. Ask yourself, “Would God take something from me that was for my own good?” I dare say the answer would be no. Psalm 84:11 says, “no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly.” Jesus loves us more than His own life.

“Jesus said unto him [you], If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow Me.” The choice right now is ours. We can give over our will, or be shamed like the rich young ruler, who “went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions” (Matthew 19:21-22). The words recorded of the rich young ruler are the last we read of him.

You will not find in the Bible a heavenly being dressed in apparel that is inappropriate. It is said of an Angel after the resurrection of Christ, “they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment” (Mark 16:5). Plain, durable, and modest. It is not recorded that the Angel had really nice legs seen under his/her shorts or skirt. There is no mention of the flashy colors. No gold, jewels, or costly array. The only things that are mentioned are “long,” and “white.” We ought to learn from the Angels. Let us take heed not to bring glory to ourselves. Jesus should be the focus of every conversation and thought.

“Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created” (Ezekiel 28:13-17). Lucifer was a beautiful creation. He was made with all sorts of precious ornaments. He fell from his holy positions because he thought he was beautiful, then he became Satan. Why? How? “Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty.” Satan remembers how easy it was for him to fall due to pride of dress and vanity, so he attacks humanity with all that he is worth on this point. The idolatry of dress is, in reality, a moral disease; it shows a desire to magnify self, rather than pass the thoughts of others from

oneself to Christ. Let us labor to bring glory only to our Creator. The idolatry of dress is a moral disease. Adornment is an outward sign of an inward, spiritual problem. Again, look to Christ.

Isaiah 3:16-26 just about covers it, but so many people try to make excuses about this or that. Please, in the name of the Lord, do not be as the heathen. Follow the Holy Spirit in the regeneration, as we can see the Lord coming sooner than we ever have imagined. I wish to go home with Christ, don't you? Let's be sure to dress for the occasion.

In the very next chapter of Isaiah we see an interesting scenario. "In that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel: only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach" (Isaiah 4:1). People all over the world today wish to eat the way they wish and dress the way they wish, but still wish to be called by the name of the Lord. This is not acceptable in His sight. We must take up the cross of reformation, even in our appearance; we must die to self.

Notice what it was that God asked of the children of Israel in regard to their rings and earrings, as they were going to make an altar unto Him for worship. "God said unto Jacob, Arise, go up to Bethel, (Bethel meaning "House of God") and dwell there: and make there an altar unto God, that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother. Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that were with him, Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments: And let us arise, and go up to Bethel; and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went. And they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods which were in their hand, and all their earrings which were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the oak which was by Shechem" (Genesis 35:1-4). Now, a god is an idol. "Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen" (1 John 5:21). We should also be clean when entering into Bethel, the house of the Lord. We also just read that the Lord had them change their garments, and we have already seen what kind of garments are appropriate in the sight of a Holy God; durable, plain, and modest. Our God requires us also to be neat and tidy. (On neat and tidy see Deuteronomy 23:12-14 and notice why God requires it.)

God was somewhat fed up with His rebellious people, insomuch so that He told them that He was not going to lead them any longer. Notice what He commanded them to do. "The LORD said unto Moses, Depart, and go up hence, thou and the people which thou hast brought up out of the land of Egypt, unto the land which I swore unto Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, saying, 'Unto thy seed will I give it: And I will send an angel before thee; and I will drive out the Canaanite, the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite: Unto a land flowing with milk and honey': for I will not go up in the midst of thee; for thou art a stiffnecked people: lest I consume thee in the way. And when the people heard these evil tidings, they mourned: and no man did put on him his ornaments. For the LORD had said unto Moses, Say unto the children of Israel, Ye are a stiffnecked people: I will come up into the midst of thee in a moment, and consume thee: therefore now put off thy ornaments from thee, that I may know what to do unto thee. And the children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments by the mount Horeb" (Exodus 33:1-6). Does dress have something to do with the way God relates to us? The Bible would certainly say so—even if our hearts don't seem to... Let us learn to be extra cautious about how we present ourselves before our brothers and sisters in the faith, but especially before our God (Notice, God asked the children of Israel to take off their jewels after He told them they would inherit them from the Egyptians as spoil. Exodus 3:21-22, 12:35-36).

Some will say, "Wait a minute! What about the prodigal son obtaining a ring from his father?" I quote a book called Answers to difficult Bible texts, by Joe Crews from Amazing Facts. "Some have used this Scripture to justify the wearing of jewelry, but remember that this story is a parable and all the characters and events are symbolic of spiritual realities. God is represented by the father in the story, and the children could be any of us who profess to be in His family... The placing of the father's coat...

symbolizes the imputed righteousness of God, which must cover our miserable sins and failures. The sign of servitude was removed when the father commanded that shoes be placed on his feet- an act signifying acceptance into the rights of sonship. Then, finally, the signet ring was placed on the prodigal's finger to represent the restoration to full authority in conducting the family business interests. Such rings were not worn as ornaments, but for the practical necessities of signing official documents and discharging legal obligations (Esther 3:10, 8:2). To use this parabolic incident to defend modern ornamentation is totally unreasonable and unbiblical.”

In the time of the judges of Israel there was a certain man named Gideon. This man was a mighty man of valor and the Lord was with him; but when he asked for jewelry and then made an ephod, or a vest out of it, it became a snare. Everyone wanted it. That is always the case when it comes to ornamentation. Our carnal hearts cannot handle the temptation of our outward appearance being attractive to another person's eye. God would rather us stay clear from it. Let us in the school of Christ learn to be humble. See Judges 8:24-27.

In another section of Scripture we see a woman named Jezebel. She was not highly esteemed in the eyes of our pure and holy God, for she was a tyrant along with her husband Ahab (See 1 Kings 16:30-31, 18:3-4, 21:25, & Revelation 2:20). You would never, as a Godly man or woman, wish to follow any example of a woman like that would you? Probably not. So then, take a look at 2 Kings 9:30 and stay away from her example.

After sin had come in and destroyed the natural light of God's presence around Adam and Eve, they made for themselves, then invented from carnal minds, “aprons,” or skirts, made of fig leaves (Genesis 3:7). This was not proper in the eyes of God as far as modesty was concerned, because when He clothed them He made for them “coats of skin” (Genesis 3:21). A coat will cover much more than an apron in the Hebrew. When we take the time to compare these two words, “aprons” and “coats,” in Strong's concordance we see a distinct difference. The apron is “a belt, for the waist, an armour, or girdle.” and the coat is “a shirt, coat, garment or robe.” God was teaching His children about proper Christian dress. A question comes to mind... Did God place upon them a ring or necklace of any sort to show them that a new covenant was made between them? No. He clothed them with a coat and that was it, something that was durable, plain, and modest (Notice the comparison between the materials in Adam and Eve's story—Adam and Eve made a garment with fig leaves. God made His with animal skin.). I am sure that what God made for Adam looked different from what He made for Eve (See Deuteronomy 22:5). Did God have the ability to give them something that was extravagant? Of course, but again, He desires His people to be “a peculiar people” (Titus 2:14).

Marriage is a sacred and holy institution, and since we are in Genesis, why not continue to talk of marriage and something that is often associated with it. When God performed the first marriage ceremony in the garden of Eden did He use the wedding ring? (Genesis 2:21-25) No. This practice came in through paganism.

“Ring, circular band used to decorate ears, toes, noses, or, most often, fingers. The finger ring has traditionally been worn for a number of reasons. It may have a symbolic meaning, as a wedding ring; it may identify the wearer or indicate rank or authority, as a signet ring; it may be thought to have magic powers, as a talismanic ring; or it may be worn merely as an ornament. In ancient Egypt signet rings bearing carved scarabs (beetles) or engraved hieroglyphs developed from seals carried on cords. The Greeks wore gold bands, often with a cameo or other engraving. The ancient Romans regulated the wearing of rings by law. In early Rome, iron rings were worn by all who were freeborn. Under the early empire, high-ranking citizens were permitted to wear gold rings; later on, freeborn citizens wore gold, freed slaves wore silver, and slaves wore iron. Roman matrons wore wedding rings, sometimes with a small key attached, to signify their authority in the household.

The early Christians adopted the use of rings, and during the Middle Ages, (5th century to 15th century) it became customary for a bishop to receive a ring as part of the ceremony of consecration. Popes traditionally receive the so-called Fisherman's ring, a signet ring with the name of the pope encircling a representation of Saint Peter in a fishing boat. The pope uses the ring to attest to papal briefs, and it is destroyed when he dies. Since medieval times rings have also been presented to kings at their coronation. During the 16th century the popularity of rings reached its height, and one or more rings, usually set with jewels, were often worn on every finger. Signet rings were also worn.

Engagement rings have been given since ancient times. One set with a diamond became popular in the 15th century. Wedding rings are also an ancient tradition, and the gold band has been popular since the 16th century. In the United States today, a married woman often wears both an engagement ring and a wedding band, and a married man often wears a wedding band” (Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 1999).

Notice that this excerpt says nothing of the custom being Biblical, but rather pagan.

I have read an advertisement on the internet with this statement... “Pay tribute to your inner goddess. - Jewelry.com” There was a woman that had jewelry on herself with a seductive look on her face. Is this the image that a Christian woman should portray? The examples that we find in the Scriptures of such people are Jezebel and the woman of Revelation 17. Let us take heed to our outward appearance to give glory to God.

Isaiah 61:10 states that God will adorn His people with ornaments and jewels. Some will inevitably desire to base an entire Theology on this verse on the subject of Christian dress, but in light of the fact that this verse is used as an analogy in a spiritual context, referring also to a specific time, namely wedding ceremonies, it would be hard to convince, in view of the rest of the opposing evidence, that this allows us to dress any way we wish. I would also have to ask the soul holding this position for further evidence.

Some have said that Ezekiel 16:3-14 gives us sanction to dress with fine apparel and costly array—such are mistaken. First, they must look at verse 2. This is a beautiful description of Christ spiritually leading and adorning the church, which in verse 13 He calls “a kingdom.” And then verse 14 and onward speak of this church turning from God and trusting to herself. This cannot, and definitely does not, support that idea (Notice verse 17).

Speaking of His people in Hosea 2:13, God refers to the woman when she worshipped Baalim. She had decked herself with earrings and jewels as a sign that her heart was turned away from God, and that she had forgotten Him. May it never be so with us. May we stand on the firm foundation of the Bible and stay far on the safe side, far from the practices of this world in rebellion against the plain teachings of Scripture.

Search the Scriptures, you will never find jewelry on Paul. In fact he addresses this, “In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works” (1 Timothy 2:9-10).

Peter, like Paul, was looking back on the Old Testament Scriptures that they both knew very well. They both gave inspired counsel that we should stay away from the things that have led the people of God into idolatry since the beginning of the world. So he says “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” (1 Peter 3:3-5).

Also, unlike the women of Revelation 12 representing God’s true church, we see the harlot women of Revelation 17 representing the false churches. If you contrast these two you will find that God’s women is adorned with natural beauty, of which Christ highly esteems (see Matthew 6:28-29). The

harlot women is “arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls” (Revelation 17:4). Which woman in Revelation does God esteem as His?

Clearly we see that God desires His people to be especially inwardly pure, but also outwardly. Let us strive to “enter in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it” (Matthew 7:13-14).

Every truth leads us closer to Christ, Who is “the Way, the Truth, and the Life.” (John 14:6) May God bless you in your walk with Him.

In wearing jewelry, or a ring of any sort, you are opening yourself up to questions. Not necessarily by those who do not know the truth, but by those who do. Those who do know what the Bible says may have some question on why it is that you would consider wearing jewelry contrary to what the Bible says, while those without Biblical knowledge may only ask you about it if they think that you are single. If this occurs you ought to know right from the onset that this person does not realize that you are a Christian, and should know that you are. You could use this opportunity to witness to this person saying, “I love Jesus so much that whatever He asks me to do I am willing to do. He has done so much for me, and if He says in His word that He would prefer me not to wear something that would only attract attention to myself, than I say without reserve, ‘Not my will, but Thine be done.’”

I recently heard a story, firsthand from a church member, of a lady that we will call Sandy, getting off of the subway. She was approached by another lady that grabbed her arm and said, “Follow me and act as though nothing is wrong.” When the ladies got above ground Sandy was informed by the other lady that she had overheard some of the gangsters on the train speaking of attacking Sandy and taking her jewelry, that is why she was so urgent in getting her off the subway into an open public place. This world is not our home, the people of this world would do us harm for any of several silly things. Let us be cautious in every aspect of our lives.

I was in the Rivertown Mall in Grand Rapids, MI, looking for a hairbrush. I never did find one, but I did notice something very interesting. Right in the center of the mall there are two levels, and on each of the four corners of both levels there are jewelry shops; rings, necklaces, bracelets, earrings, etc. In the center of the mall there are 8 corner stores dedicated to nothing other than adornment. Do you think that the devil knows that this is a temptation?

A man was asking for the seventh day Sabbath off from work. His boss in an angry tone said, “Take off your gloves.” The employee was taken by surprise and said, “What?” The boss said louder, “Take off your gloves!” The employee took off his gloves, the boss looked at his hands, and said, “Alright.” The employee said, “What is all that about?” The boss said, “Adventist’s don’t wear jewelry.” The employee was also a member of the church I was pastoring and was tempted not long before to put on his class ring; that would have been a violation of conscience and of God’s will, and would have resulted in a misrepresentation of Biblical truth. Be prayerful about your willingness to follow God in His highest standards.

Please consider all of these words of Holy Scripture. God loves every one of us, and wishes for us to be like Him in every way. Let us not live so we will always have to find justifications for our actions, but rather let us live, without question, to the glory of God. He is coming soon.