

Dressed for Worship 6-1-14 PM

One thing we all agree on is that dress codes will not remain the same long. It seems like society is moving to casual constants; meaning, casual clothes have become the norm for all occasions. Twenty years ago if we had seen someone at the grocery store in their pajamas, we would have believed them mentally ill. Today it is not even noticeable. Our society is obsessed with dressing down, perhaps because of our leisure and comfort obsession.

What about worship? We traditionally dress in non-casual clothing for worship services, but we do not all dress the same. Is there a worship dress code in Scripture? If the answer to that is no (which we will see in a moment it is), does it matter what we wear?

Dress Codes in Scriptures begin in the Old Testament. The priests in Exodus 28 were given very specific clothing that was to be prepared by divinely inspired tailors. We see that the priests wore bells for his safety; wore gems to represent the tribes; wore long garments (and could not climb stairs) for modesty; finally, they wore Urim and Thummim to speak with God. It was not clothing that was ornamental, it was actually utilitarian. It was an outfit made for purpose, not appearance.

What about the New Testament dress code? There are many passages that speak to our attire in general. I Timothy 2:9 and I Peter 3:3 both describe modesty as the basis of Christian attire. I Corinthians 14:36-40 tell us that worship service is based in reasonable and orderly, reverent conduct. But the only passage that speaks to what we wear in worship is James 2:1-13. When we read this, we see that in fact the Bible plays down dressing up. It warns us NOT to judge a man by his clothes. Therefore, as we said before, we can find no dress code in worship in the New Testament. There is no "wear your best" passage; instead we dress NOT to attract attention.

So does it matter what we wear to worship? Perhaps we ought to begin by asking whether it matters to you the reader. Many people will say "it does not matter" when it comes to clothes; however, is that true? Simply ask someone to wear a garment that is "ugly" or ask a man to wear a shirt that is feminine in color or cut, and we will see instantly that when we say "it does not matter", we are being dishonest. It does matter to us what we wear, and not recognizing that truth in worship is dangerous. It is dangerous because we are actually reflecting our attitude by our attire, and a casual attitude is deadly.

Does attire & conduct cause others to see us as either interested or uninterested? Absolutely. Imagine being in court, and the attorney representing you comes in wearing pajamas, or a track suit. It instantly conveys a message to the court that this person does not take serious the position they are in. In the Old Testament, Priests put on garments to prepare themselves to coming before God. But we also know that it prepared their mindset in service. we know of two priests who came before God without the proper attitude - Nadab and Abihu. There is a death sentence in being unprepared. God may not condemn casual clothing in worship, but He utterly condemns casual attitudes. Can we genuinely say that casual clothes are not the result of casual attitudes?

Casual Worship can consist of coming unprepared physically, emotionally, mentally or spiritually. Our attire has little importance in and of itself. However, our attitude has great importance, and our attire can reflect our attitude