



The Reflector

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Some Things Lost in the Shuffle

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"For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus, so that he would not have to spend time in Asia; for he was hurrying to be at Jerusalem, if possible, on the Day of Pentecost." (Acts 20:16).

Most of us, living as we do in a fast-paced society, can relate to Paul's being in a hurry to get to some place. There seems to be that ever lengthening to-do list along with the ever shrinking number of time slots into which we can fit things. Demands of modern life keeps us constantly on the go. There are more and more places that we think we have to be and things that we think we have to do.

Paul may have been in a hurry, yet he had time for the really important things. He had time to stay seven days at Troas and meet with the disciples on the first day of the week. (vv. 6,7). He had time to send to Ephesus, about 36 miles away by sea or 70 miles by land, for the elders of the church, wait for them and encourage them to be faithful (vv. 17-35).

I fear that many Christians are in danger of losing, if not they have not already lost in the shuffle, some very important characteristics of their lives. This may be done by either crowding out more important things with a multitude of trifles; or by rushing through things that should not be rushed.

It would be impossible to compile a complete list of things that may have been lost in the shuffle of modern life, so we will confine our observations to a few that we have observed in recent years. By doing this we hope to encourage each of us to, in the words of the song, "take time to be holy."

Thankfulness and Thanksgiving

Like the nine healed lepers (Luke 17:11-19), we rush on our way without taking time to express our thanks – either to God or to anyone else who may have favored us. Oh, we tell ourselves that we are thankful and we will take time, one day, to express our thanks. To be thankful is great (Col. 3:15), but we must combine our thankfulness with thanksgiving (Rom. 14:6; 1 Tim. 4:4,5). Are we so busy that we cannot stop long enough tell God that we thank Him for our food, clothing, shelter and many other things that he supplies us daily? Are we so rushed that we cannot say a simple "thank you" to people who are so kind to us daily? Oh, many of us will offer the expected meaningless formality of a "thank you" as we rush on our way, but what about a really meaningful expression of thanks? Have we allowed ourselves to become too rushed for such things?

Common Courtesy

Courtesy is commendable in anyone and expected of Christians. Two non-Christians were commended by Luke for their courtesy – Julius (Acts 27:3) and Publius (Acts 28:7). Christians are commanded to "be courteous" (1 Pet. 3:8). From *philophrōn* or *philophrōnos* (*philo* meaning friend and *phronos* meaning mind), the idea is that of "friendly thoughtfulness" (W.E. Vine).

Have we allowed common courtesy to be tossed aside by our fast-paced life styles? I am afraid so. We see evidence of it on our highways and streets.

Just observe the mannerisms of drivers during rush hour traffic and other times for that matter. We see far too little courtesy shown to others in public gatherings, in the market place, in the home, at work and almost any place we must go in our daily lives.

Communion In Worship

Public worship should be a time for communion with God and with others of like precious faith. This is especially true when Christians assemble for the Lord's Supper. (1 Cor. 11:20,21,33).

In recent years, we have noticed the tendency of brethren to be too rushed to experience any real communion in worship. Some are too rushed to even attend church services. There is a living that must be made, a function (social, recreational, civic, business-related or domestic) that must be attended, a deadline that must be met, or a TV program that we simply must see. So, the easiest thing to drop from the schedule is public worship; or, if we do find time to attend, we want to get it over with as soon as possible so that we can get on to all these other things. Consequently, we are either too rushed or too preoccupied for real communion with God and each other as we worship. Someone has said that the real pattern of modern worship is: rush in, rush through, rush out. I tend to agree. It is not good.

Companionship

We hardly have time for companionship with members of our families at home. Our lives have become like the fellow that is said to have jumped on his horse and rode off in all directions. We have become, like Martha, "worried and troubled about many things" (Luke 10:38-42), to the point that we cannot just sit, enjoy and profit from one another's company. Genuine hospitality suffers because we have become so rushed that, if we show hospitality, we begrudge the time it takes away from something else (cf. 1 Pet. 4:9).

Moments that could be spent in companionship, like the few moments before and after church

services, are lost because we are too rushed to get on to something else. Having someone just come by the house or inviting him over is out of the question, because we have so much to do. All of this even causes church discipline to be ineffective. One of the things that is used to shame the subject of discipline into repentance is to stop "keeping company" with him to the point of not eating with him socially (1 Cor. 5:11; 2 Thess. 3:14). How can we "withdraw" or stop that which was not taking place to begin with? If the erring brother has not been used to keeping company with his brethren, then he will not miss that company, and will have less incentive to straighten up.

Bible Knowledge

Depth of knowledge cannot be gotten "on the run." One might learn some algebra, ancient history, or some other subject by a hurried fragmented reading of the text book or by occasionally hearing it discussed, but, unless he is a genius, he will not likely pass the course in this manner. One must have time to study and mediate upon the material to really know the subject matter.

Likewise, one can get some Bible knowledge by hurriedly reading, casually listening to tapes, or listening to the preacher or teacher – but to really learn the Bible he must do much more. There must be time for research (Acts 17:11). There must be time for meditation (Psa. 1:3; 119:148; 1 Tim. 4:15,16). In slower times, much of this could be done as one traveled in the buggy or on horse back or walked or even worked. I knew of one preacher who, in the early days of his life, carried his New Testament under his hat while plowing the fields so he could stop and read a portion and meditate upon it while he worked. Our fast way of doing things today will hardly allow such study and meditation while traveling or working, so we must be more diligent to make time for study and meditation. We need time to study scriptures within their contexts, to look up words, and think conclusions through as we use the scriptures as a basis for discerning

between good and evil.

“A little knowledge is a dangerous thing” applies to Bible knowledge (cf. 2 Pet. 3:16). We must not get so rushed that we do not stop often for much reading, studying and meditating with Bible in hand. It is vital to spiritual growth and our eternal salvation.

Brethren, what has happened? Have we not gotten so caught up in trying to keep an overly crowded schedule of things, either self-imposed by our egos or things we have allowed the demands of modern life to impose upon us, that we have simply lost many things that are badly needed to maintain the kind of life that God wants for us? This may very well be the case.

We need to find some way to regain what has been lost in the shuffle or we could lose our souls.

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Dressing For Spiritual Success

Tim Norman

God wants “women to adorn themselves with proper clothing, modestly and discreetly, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly garments; but rather by means of good works, as is proper for women making a claim to godliness” (1 Timothy 2:9-10 NASB).

Why does God care about the way we dress? Simple. Our clothing, or lack thereof, affects other people, sometimes profoundly. God wants to make sure our clothing affects people for good, not evil.

In 1 Timothy 2:9-10, God gives us three keys to dressing for spiritual success.

Modesty Is The First Key To Dressing For Spiritual Success (1 Timothy 2:9). Dressing “modestly” means “dressing or behaving so as to avoid impropriety or indecency, esp. to avoid attracting sexual attention.”

The original Greek word is *aidos*. It means to dress with a “sense of shame,” i.e. with a keen awareness of and sensitivity to the importance of dressing with propriety or decency.

Some people dress improperly because they

have no shame. Christians should be too ashamed to ever dress improperly.

A young woman once wore short shorts to an airport. She ran into a preacher she knew and was immediately ashamed of her clothing. If she had dressed with modesty, a sense of shame, she wouldn't have bought the short shorts much less have worn them in public.

Modesty or *aidos* "implies an innate moral repugnance to the performance of dishonorable acts...Aidos... is self-motivated and implies reverence for the good as good, not merely as that to which honor and reputation are attached... Thus *aidos* ... would always restrain a good man from an unworthy act... “In 1 Timothy 2:9, *aidos* refers to that ‘shamefastness’ or modesty that shrinks from exceeding the limits of womanly reserve, as well as from the dishonor that would justly attach to do so” (Trench).

Why is modesty, a sense of shame, key to adorning ourselves with proper clothing? Because pleasing God must be our highest priority if we're going to overcome such powerful influences as the fashion industry, our peers, or own personal preferences, etc.

Unfortunately, modesty doesn't govern how most people dress. In the early seventies, faithful preachers taught long and hard against miniskirts with little apparent effect. Yet, what happened when Paris decided that miniskirts were out and long skirts were in? Overnight, many “Christians” started adorning themselves with proper clothing. Clearly, pleasing God wasn't their primary concern.

What really governs the way we dress?

Discreetness Is The Second Key To Dressing For Spiritual Success (1 Timothy 2:9). Dressing “discreetly” means being “careful, judicious, circumspect” in our choice of clothing.

“Careful” means “done with or showing thought or attention.” “Judicious” means “having, showing or done with good judgment or sense.” “Circumspect” means “to be watchful in all

directions and with regard to all possible consequences."

The original Greek word is sophrosune. It means to dress with "good sense" ... literally soundness of mind... sanity" (Lenski). "Inherent in this...word is the use of "good judgment' in the matter of dress" (Fee). Why is discreetness, thought or attention, good judgment or sense, watchfulness in all directions, key to adorning ourselves with proper clothing? Because dressing for spiritual success requires us to **think** and **think well**.

We can't just "throw something on" and hope to dress properly. We must know what the Bible says about proper and improper clothing. We must wisely apply these principles. We can't be naive about the way our clothing, or lack there, affects other people. We must make sure our clothing will be modest in all situations. If we're not sure something is proper, we must err on the side of caution. No matter how much we want to wear something, we can't make excuses for improper clothing.

Do we really think about what we wear?

Putting Far More Emphasis On Inward Than Outward Beauty Is The Third Key To Dressing For Spiritual Success (1 Timothy 2:9-10).

Our text, 1 Timothy 2:9-10, is a "not, but" passage similar to John 6:27, "Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life." In this passage, Jesus isn't forbidding us to work for food that feeds our bodies as required in 2 Thessalonians 3:10. Rather, Jesus is commanding us to work much harder for food that feeds our souls.

Similarly, 1 Timothy 2:9-10 and 1 Peter 3:3-4 don't forbid styling hair, wearing jewelry, or putting on expensive clothes. Rather, they teach us to put far more emphasis on good works than things like hair, jewelry, and apparel.

God is not anti-fashion or anti-attractiveness. The excellent wife whose price was far above jewels

wore clothing of fine linen and purple (Proverbs 31:10, 22). She rightly cared about her outward appearance, but she cared far more about her inward appearance (Proverbs 31:10-31).

Why is putting far more emphasis on inward than outward beauty key to adorning ourselves with proper clothing? Because dressing for spiritual success requires more than modesty and discreetness. It also requires us to keep clothes, even modest and discreet clothes, in their proper place. If we focus on adorning our body to the neglect of more important matters, we are still far from properly dressed.

Are we really more concerned about the way we look inwardly or outwardly.

~via **What Is True?**; Little Rock, Arkansas and **Market Street Messenger**, Athens, Alabama.

Have You Counted The Cost?

David A. Cox

Often people view Christianity and the life that is to be lived as too restrictive and confining. They want to enjoy all the seeming "pleasures" of this life which are not possible to those that have Christ living in them. What about this? Is the Christian's life too restrictive?

There is an old song we sing that asked the question, "Have you counted the cost if your soul should be lost?" What is the cost if one is lost? (1) His soul is cast into hell (Matthew 25:41; 10:28). (2) A loss of great joy; life has frustrations but to be saved will give us the greatest joy (2 Corinthians 4:16-18; Romans 8:18). (3) No hope of heaven as our eternal home. As we live as Christians doing the Lord's will we look with hope to a better and eternal day (Revelation 2:10; Hebrews 6:18-20). But for the soul that is lost in eternally this hope is lost (Luke 16:19-31).

Let us all count the cost should our soul be lost. Then, understanding the great cost of our soul being lost, let each determine to seek after the Lord with all of our heart, soul and mind (Matthew 22:37). Truly giving ourselves as a living sacrifice.

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