



Main Idea: God cares more about what's on the inside than what's on the outside...and we should too.

Scriptures: James 1:13-14, 1 Samuel 16:7, 1 Peter 3:3

Hey, everyone! So glad to have you with us here at [\[youth group\]](#). This evening, we're jumping into a pretty loaded topic. I can already see some people dodging eye contact and starting to squirm, and honestly, I'm feeling a little uncomfortable up here myself too. That's okay! It's important for us to wrestle with tough and sometimes uncomfortable topics, and that's especially true for tonight.

So, before we jump into it, let's pray for the Holy Spirit to calm us and open our ears and hearts to receive the Word tonight! [\[Pray here.\]](#)

With tonight's topic, I want to be especially upfront—we're talking about **modesty**. Now—you can be honest! When you hear the word modesty, do the walls come up for you? Where you start to feel uncomfortable? If so, let me just say, me too. And here's why:

[\[Teacher's Note: share a story about a time you experienced a "modesty" issue, and it was uncomfortable. It could be a personal experience, or a time you overheard a conversation like "can you believe \(s\)he's wearing that?" Keep it lighthearted, but address the discomfort.\]](#)

In the past, the topic of modesty hasn't always been handled great by the church, and it has been girls especially that get it the worst. The word "modesty" has at times been wielded as a weapon to tell girls, in particular, how they should dress, shame them when they don't dress that way, and blame girls for being victims of things said and done against them. Because the word modesty has such a troubled past, I wanted to be upfront at the start of our time together to hopefully help you lower those walls because this is a conversation we need to have! So, before we get into Scripture tonight, I need you to hear a couple things that I'm NOT saying.

[\[Teacher Note: customize the message as you see fit, but I highly encourage you to begin with what you're NOT saying—perhaps especially if you're a man. This was the key to getting my group—and my girls](#)

especially—to lower their walls and be open to hearing the rest of the message.]

I'm not saying that:

- If you dress a particular way, you're causing someone to sin.
- If you see someone dressed immodestly, you should avoid looking at them for fear of lusting after them.
- Modesty is all about covering specific parts of your body with your clothes.
- Your top priority in picking out your clothes should be that they don't provoke someone to sin or to lust.

I also want you to know that as we talk about this topic, I'm not going to be focusing exclusively on girls. Modesty is for guys, too! I also want you to know that the purpose of all of this is not to shame anyone. The purpose is for us to seek a biblical understanding of modesty.

Just as I want to be upfront about what I'm NOT saying, I also want to be upfront about what I AM saying. When it comes to modesty, I want you to know that:

- It is up to each of us to manage our own thoughts and actions. What people wear or how they present themselves is not an excuse for our thoughts to run wild.
- The temptation around this issue is *lust*, not other people's bodies. Other people's bodies don't cause us to have sinful thoughts; our own sinful hearts do.
- **James 1:13-14 (NIV)** tells us that:
 - ***¹³ When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; ¹⁴ but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed.***
- The heart of modesty is about humility, meekness, and love.
- You should dress in something that's appropriate to the activity you're getting ready for. For example, if you're going swimming, it might be a little strange to show up in jeans and a sweatshirt, the same way it would be weird for you to show up to a formal banquet in your swimsuit. Wear what's appropriate for the occasion!

Similarly, I want you to know that modesty is for both guys and girls. And just as I'm not speaking on this topic tonight to bring shame, I want to remind you that God doesn't shame you either. God gives grace!

One last thing before we open the Bible to see what wisdom God offers in living modestly, I alluded to it earlier, but I think it's helpful if we reframe our conversation in terms of humility instead of modesty. Modesty is a loaded word. For many of us, the word is like a scar that reminds us of old injuries and makes us squirm as we remember the pain that got us here. Since the heart of modesty is humility, I want us to approach our conversation thinking more in that term.

So now that you have an idea of where we're going (and where we're *not* going!), let's look at scripture together!

The first place I want to go is 1 Samuel 16:7. For context, the Old Testament prophet Samuel would appoint the next king over Israel. The first king—King Saul—hadn't led in line with God's will, and God guided Samuel to this man named Jesse. God told Samuel that the new king was one of Jesse's sons, and one-by-one, Jesse presented his sons to Samuel. These young men passed in front of Samuel; they were tall, strong, striking men—the kind you'd expect to be king!—but God didn't choose any of them to be the next king.

We'll pick up in **1 Samuel 16:7 (NIV)**. Let's read it:

7 But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."

Samuel did what all of us do, he considered physical appearance as the most important thing. It reminds me of a time I did the same thing:

[Teacher Note: share a lighthearted story of a time you were surprised by someone because they did something that you didn't expect for them to do based on their appearance.]

To Samuel, a king should be tall and strong and really command with a physical presence. But to God, what matters is the heart! David was the

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