

# Practicing Holiness

(Adapted from *Path to Righteousness* by Linda Poitras)

“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord”  
(Hebrews 12:14).

## Introduction

According to *The New Life Study Bible*, after we have God’s Spirit in us, with the resulting powerful revelation of God’s glory and majesty, the way of holiness becomes so clear that even a fool could not miss it. All the redeemed should then walk in complete holiness. Do we claim to be redeemed? Are we walking in this “Way of Holiness?” After we get on this “highway” we must stay on it – no detours allowed.

It is impossible to make a list of all the things a person could be tempted to do that would take him off this “highway.” Anything that could be labeled “worldly” has already been shown to be wrong. Let us look at some of the “standards of holiness” that are given for our protection, with God’s Word and His Spirit as the source of warning against them.

## Adorning the Temple

The Bible has much to say about the adornment of God’s temple. In the Old Testament, the Tabernacle had to follow specific guidelines laid down by God, given to Moses (His servant) and carried out by the people (his children, the Israelites). There were instructions for every part of the adornment of the physical temple, and even the priests who officiated in that temple (Exodus 35-40).

God was particular that His instructions were followed exactly for both. In Leviticus 8, Moses brought Aaron and his sons before the Tabernacle, and gave them the clothes God had said they should wear. He also washed them according to the instructions of the Lord. In the tenth chapter of that same book, two of Aaron’s sons decided they would do something their way, rather than as God had commanded. Remember this was under the Law, and so God immediately sent fire to consume them. They died right there. It did not matter that they were sons of the high priest. It did not matter that they were especially clothed to perform God’s work in His temple. Disobedience brought immediate death.

Does this tell you anything about how serious God is about His instructions? Even something so trivial as a little bit of incense not according to His instructions? God cares! He notices what you are doing, and He will ask you to give an account of how you have followed His instructions on the judgment day (Romans 2:4-7). This is the day of grace, but grace will not help you on that day.

God's plan for man and His "temple" began in the Garden of Eden and has continued up until today. God made the first clothes, and He expects us to take note (Genesis 3:21).

God commands a covering because of the built-in awareness in the human conscience of the difference between men and women (Genesis 3:7-10). The clothes made by Adam and Eve were not correct or sufficient, so God made them better ones. They made clothes of fig leaves – easily spoiled, not difficult to see through, not comfortable, and pieced together with possible holes (have you ever tried sewing leaves together?). In short, the clothes Adam and Eve made were not good. But when God began to sew, He did it right. He took material that would not tear, was all in one piece, too thick to see through, and durable enough to last. God knows more about what we need than we do.

After this first clothing creation, God did not make any more clothes in the Old Testament. However, He did make sure the Israelites were able to keep wearing the clothes and shoes they had on when they left Egypt (Deuteronomy 29:5). God kept His people properly clothed. David, in some of his writings, along with his son Solomon, had some instructions about adornment:

- ☞ Clothing should identify with the godly (Psalm 1:1).
- ☞ Clothing should be attractive (Proverbs 31:21-22, 24).

What do we read in the New Testament as instructions given to God's people, His temple of clay? Paul and other church leaders had many instructions to give the churches. It was not just the Old Testament writers who spoke out.

- ☞ Clothing should be modest (1 Timothy 2:9).
- ☞ Clothing should be moderate (1 Timothy 2:9, 15; Philippians 4:5).
- ☞ Clothing should not be costly (Matthew 6:25, 30-33).
- ☞ Clothing should not confuse the sexes (Deuteronomy 22:5; 1 Corinthians 6:9).

These Scriptures let us know that God still cares about the adornment of His temple. The writer of Revelation paints us a picture of what the Bride of Christ will look like at His appearing (Revelation 19:7-8). She is dressed without ornaments, jewelry, or paint.

According to the *Accelerated Bible Curriculum – Lesson 7*, the custom of wearing ornaments and jewelry is almost as old as man. The earliest rings known are those found in the tombs of ancient Egypt.

- It is believed that wearing jewelry was more the result of a desire to secure various openings of the human body against the entrance of evil spirits than purely for female vanity (*Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*).
- *Encyclopedia Britannica* tells us that the symbolic significance of the ring is based on its being considered substantially a "magic circle."
- In early times, it may be said that every ornament was an amulet. From the wearing of amulets, the use of ordinary jewelry originated (*Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*).

- Since jewelry and ornaments had such an early beginning in human history, it is not surprising to find them referred to in the first book of the Bible. After God told Jacob to return to Bethel and build Him an altar, Jacob told all the members of his household to be clean and change their garments and to put away strange gods (Genesis 35:2,4). So what did they do? They gave him all their strange gods, and all their earrings, and Jacob hid them under the oak by Shechem. The initial step in turning to God through consecration and prayer was to remove jewelry.
- In Exodus 33:1-11, we read of how the children of Israel left Egypt with many golden and silver ornaments, given to them by their Egyptian neighbors. However, God was going to use them for His Tabernacle. The Israelites made a golden calf from some of these same earrings. When God required the removal of ornaments for a consecration unto Him, the Israelites finally obeyed, and God accepted their consecration and self-denial. This attitude still touches the heart of God.
- The book of Revelation speaks of the harlot church and makes a contrast between her and the Lamb's wife: *"And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication"* (Revelation 17:4).
- The picture of the Bride of Christ is the opposite: *"...and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints"* (Revelation 19:7-8). Christ's bride will be composed of Spirit-filled believers who have carefully and consistently obeyed the teachings of God's Word on godly dress and adornment.

Why do we take chances and believe that the grace of God will save us from His wrath on the judgment day? We may not be like Nadab and Abihu (Aaron's sons) who offered "strange fire" unto the Lord when He had given them explicit instructions. But, when we disobey Him about the way we keep His temple, we are asking for the same punishment – the fire of His wrath.

The adornment God most appreciates is a meek and quiet spirit, humility, modesty, moderation, godliness, and good works (1 Peter 3:3-5). Relics from our old life of sin belong to the kingdom of this world, and simply take away from the Christian's testimony. They distract attention from the adorning of the beautiful Spirit of God. Let us follow God's instructions and wear His adornment.

### **A "Covering" for the Temple**

The Tabernacle in the wilderness had a special covering which was made with several different materials and fashioned after the direct order of God (Exodus 36). The curtains, doors, and the wall around the Tabernacle on the outside had to be according to these instructions. God is definitely a God of details!

When God decided to make our bodies His dwelling place, He again had a definite and specific plan. He did not leave it to chance. God had already designed the covering He meant for us to

use for His temple. This plan is revealed to us in Paul's writings to the church at Corinth in 1 Corinthians 11:3-16.

There is much controversy about these instructions, even as in the Old Testament some did not believe it was necessary to follow God's instructions with regard to the Tabernacle. Clearly, 1 Corinthians 11:15 speaks of the God-given covering of a woman. This chapter also clearly speaks of the reason why a man should not have his head covered.

The length of one's hair is not merely a matter of style. It has a much deeper significance, and even involves a person's attitude toward God. That is why it is so important that we understand what Paul was teaching, so we can know God's plan for the covering of His temple.

### A Sign of Submission to Authority

- ☞ 1 Corinthians 11:3 – Christ (the human side of Jesus) was glad to submit to the Father (the Spirit who dwelled within Him). He was willing to follow God's plan, even unto death (Philippians 2:8).
- ☞ The man must submit himself to Christ.
- ☞ The woman is to subject herself to the man, her own husband, and through the man, to Christ. When a woman chooses the man she will marry, she chooses the man she will obey. This submission is not to every man, but to her own husband (Ephesians 5:22; Colossians 3:18; 1 Peter 3:1).

The key here is that it is not difficult for a woman to submit to the man she has chosen as her leader, since she knows he is following Christ. The problem comes when a man is chosen who, according to God's Word, is supposed to be our "head," and we know he is not submitting to the Lordship of Christ. Then, we are asking for trouble, because we are choosing to submit to someone who is not in submission to authority. This will only bring pain. Since the Garden of Eden, women have had problems discerning spiritual things. 1 Timothy 2:13-14 tells us: *"For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression."* A woman's uncut hair is a symbol of the "covering" of a strong, godly man who is himself submitted to his authority – God.

### Because of the Angels

1 Corinthians 11:10 tells us a woman should have power (authority) on her head *"because of the angels."* Why does it matter what the angels think? Why are they watching us? Three reasons are:

- ☞ We know that angels are curious about the experience of the Holy Ghost (1 Peter 1:12).
- ☞ Because of pride and rebellion, many angels were cast out of heaven along with their leader, Lucifer. So, angels watch to see if women will also be rebellious, or if they will wear the mark of consecration, submission, and power. Since the church is referred to as a woman, women show the angels how submissive the church is to Christ, the head of the church. Their uncut hair is a symbol of submission to authority.

📖 Believers (both men and women) shall judge angels (1 Corinthians 6:3). If someday we shall judge angels for their lack of submission to God's authority, we must presently show submission by obeying God's Word concerning the hair question.

### **A Woman's Hair is Not to Be Shorn or Shaven**

1 Corinthians 11:5-6 says that when a woman prays or prophesies, her head must be covered, unless she wants to be disgraced or shamed. Your hair is given to you for a covering (1 Corinthians 11:15).

### **A Man's Hair *Must* Be Cut**

*"Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him"* (1 Corinthians 11:14). The *Accelerated Bible Curriculum, Lesson 7 – "Separated Because of Him"* – states:

- Man was made in the image of God, and he has been given the highest authority in the human race. That is why he must not have his head covered. If a man wears long hair, he dishonors himself and his head or authority – God. Long hair on a man directly opposes this line of authority.
- How short is "short hair" for a man? It must be short enough to distinguish him from a woman. This length may vary in different generations or in various national cultures.
- Did Jesus wear long hair? Many try to justify wearing long hair with the excuse that Jesus wore His long, but history does not support that idea. A German painter, L. Fahrenkrog, says: "Christ certainly never wore a beard and His hair was beyond a doubt closely cut. For this we have historical proof. The oldest representations, going back to the first Christian centuries, and found chiefly in the catacombs of Rome, all picture Him without a beard."
  - ✓ History clearly states that all Jews, except those taking a Nazarite vow, wore short, trimmed hair. Christ was familiar with the Jewish Talmud which required priests to cut their hair every thirty days. They were not supposed to shave their heads – a sign of sorrow – nor let it grow long – a sign of rebellion.
  - ✓ Long hair today speaks of rebellion and casting off authority. It identifies the wearer with the anti-God, against authority crowd. Pastors and churches who are not aware of this evil and allow rebellious young men a place of honor or leadership are actually fighting against God.

### **A Sign of Separation**

The way we wear our hair – both men and women – is a declaration of our desire to be separate unto the Lord. God has always had a separated people – first the Jews, and now all those who follow His plan, given in His Word (1 Peter 2:9). Here are some of the signals given by the length of a person's hair, both men and women:

- Hair provides a distinction between the sexes; it makes a woman appear feminine and a man appear masculine.
- A woman’s uncut hair shows submission to her own husband, and to the plan and will of God.
- Her uncut hair is a sign to the angels that she is not rebellious.
- A woman’s long, uncut hair identifies her with those who wish to please God.
- A woman’s long hair is given for her “glory,” the honor resulting from God’s good opinion of her.
- A man’s short hair shows that he is under submission to his authority, which is Christ.
- A man’s short hair is a symbol of his authority.
- A man’s short hair identifies him with those who wish to please God.

God’s Word gives no guarantee that following His plan will be easier, more fashionable, or healthier. But when men and women determine to please the Lord, they are rewarded with His promise to answer their prayers.

**Conclusion**

These two areas of “practicing holiness” in no way cover all the things we do or do not do as Christians. They are simply the most talked about and often the most questioned of our Christian habits. They are also the most obvious to our fellow man, and show the world our desire to please the Lord and be a separated people.

Even though we know the salvation of the soul is not by works of righteousness but by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8-9), we know to demonstrate our faith with works. Why? Because faith without works is dead (James 2:20-24). The “practice” of holiness serves as a demonstration of our faith in the Lord through works of righteousness (1 Corinthians 15:34).

*“All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Timothy 3:16).*

The “Path to Righteousness” is a great place to be – right inside God’s Word – where He gives instructions for the correct use of His temple.

**Study Questions**

1. Give a brief explanation (with Scripture reference) of the importance and instructions for “adorning the temple” as found in the Old Testament. \_\_\_\_\_

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2. Given the following statements about clothing, write the verse of Scripture that supports each.

- 1) Because of the built-in awareness in the human conscience of the difference between men and women, God commands a covering \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) Clothing should be modest \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) Clothing should identify with the godly \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) God made sure the Israelites were able to keep wearing the clothes and shoes they had on when they left Egypt \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) Clothing should be attractive \_\_\_\_\_
- 6) Clothing should not confuse the sexes \_\_\_\_\_
- 7) Clothing should be moderate \_\_\_\_\_
- 8) Clothing should not be costly \_\_\_\_\_
- 9) The bride of Christ will be arrayed without ornaments, jewelry, or paint at His appearing \_\_\_\_\_

3. List six (6) facts about the wearing of jewelry and give the reference used for each.

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_  
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- 2) \_\_\_\_\_  
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- 3) \_\_\_\_\_  
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- 4) \_\_\_\_\_  
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- 5) \_\_\_\_\_  
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- 6) \_\_\_\_\_  
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4. Describe and briefly explain the importance of and what was used for the “covering” for the temple in both the Old and New Testaments. \_\_\_\_\_

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5. List and briefly explain the three (3) components of the covering as a sign of submission to authority. Support your statements with Scripture where possible.

1) \_\_\_\_\_

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2) \_\_\_\_\_

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3) \_\_\_\_\_

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6. What is the key to these three components? \_\_\_\_\_

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7. List the three (3) reasons given in 1 Corinthians 11:10 that a woman should have power (authority) on her head "because of the angels." (Support your answers with Scripture.)

1) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

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3) \_\_\_\_\_

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8. Give a brief explanation (with Scripture reference) for the following statement: "A man's hair must be cut." \_\_\_\_\_

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9. What does 1 Corinthians 11:14 say about a man's hair? \_\_\_\_\_

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10. According to historical facts, did Jesus wear long hair? Explain. \_\_\_\_\_

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11. In today's culture and society, what does long hair on a man symbolize? \_\_\_\_\_

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12. The way we wear our \_\_\_\_\_ - both men and women – is a declaration of our \_\_\_\_\_ to be \_\_\_\_\_ unto the \_\_\_\_\_.

13. List eight (8) signals given by the length of a person's hair, whether man or woman.

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2) \_\_\_\_\_

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4) \_\_\_\_\_

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8) \_\_\_\_\_

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### Additional Notes

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