

PRAISE FOR THE 1ST EDITION OF *BEYOND YOUR WARDROBE:*

“Humility, gratitude, grace, and faithfulness are just a few of the ways Bethel Grove takes modesty ‘Beyond Your Wardrobe.’ I love that she dives right in by going to the heart of the issue, but she isn’t afraid to answer the questions we all know every girl has, and still brings it back to what’s in our hearts in the end. Reading Bethel’s book is like talking to a big sister. She isn’t afraid to share her opinion, but you know she is pointing you in the right direction.”

Heather Hart – Director of FindingYourTrueBeauty.com

“Bethel is a rising voice out of the young generation on behalf of modesty. She speaks out of her own experience, vulnerability, passion, and research. It is refreshing to find someone in your corner who, ‘gets it’ when it comes to the tensions of this topic. But more importantly, she dives deeper past the rules and into the heart.”

Danielle Brown – Kids Lead Pastor of 7 years

“*Beyond Your Wardrobe* takes a deeper look into modesty while reminding the reader of their tremendous value in Christ. God’s word is clear and speaks to modesty for both young men and young women and shows its direct correlation with the condition of the heart. Challenging and thought-provoking you will appreciate this exploration of the idea of modesty.”

Jeff Dungan – Father of a Princess Worth Dying For

“Bethel Grove’s *Beyond Your Wardrobe* is thought-provoking and challenging, in a good way! What a wonderful book. It is a timely reminder for some of us, and a straightforward introduction for others. Modesty is a lost art and an overlooked concern for many men and women of faith. As she says, we need to honor God with our bodies. She reminds us to have the right mindset for all of our decisions, not just our attire. This book will make you consider your choices and the motivations behind them. God bless Bethel for using Scripture to be her guide. Let us all take note.”

Karen Parkison – Teacher, Mother, and Youth Leader

"Beyond Your Wardrobe is an incredible read full of the truth about God's opinion when it comes to modesty compared to the opinions of society. Reading the book I actually felt that it further opened my eyes to everything I was taught by Bethel in her bible study...I highly recommend it to women of all ages struggling to define God's opinions when it comes to modesty."

Katie M – High School Senior

"Bethel has some insights about modesty that were new to me. Having read and thought a lot about modesty, I was pleased to still be learning from Bethel's writing. It is refreshing to see a woman living out modesty and practicing what she teaches."

Dessa C – Wife and Mother of 6

"If you're like most men, you probably have no idea what a big deal this issue is for women. Reading this book will help you understand the challenges that women face today in making wise and godly decisions regarding their clothing, and you'll be better equipped to support the women in your life in their wardrobe choices. Plus, there's also some great advice for men when it comes to their clothing choices as seen through the eyes of our sisters in Christ."

Matt Stafford – College Professor

"This book is an excellent source for the truth about modesty, and not just for young teen girls and young adult women, but for anyone who might not fully understand what the Scriptures have to say about it. The author truly believes this and writes it in a way that is relatable and easily understandable."

Cody Lynn - Older Sister and Daughter

"In this book, Bethel talks about a topic that has been misrepresented by society. As you dive into this book, it becomes clear that modesty is about representing Jesus, and representing yourself as God's masterpiece."

Madeline Dungan – Mixed Media Artist

Beyond *Your* Wardrobe

A BIBLICAL APPROACH TO UNDERSTANDING
MODESTY, WHY WE WEAR CLOTHES, AND
HOW TO ADORN OURSELVES APPROPRIATELY



Bethel Grove Publications

*Beyond Your Wardrobe: A Biblical Approach to Understanding Modesty,
Why We Wear Clothes, and How to Adorn Ourselves Appropriately
[Chapter 4 Sample]*

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*Beyond Your Wardrobe: Finding Freedom in Embracing God's Call to
Modesty and Unfading Beauty*

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*Study Guide for Beyond Your Wardrobe: A Six Week Study Into Modesty
and Unfading Beauty*

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Preface to the Updated Edition

When I decided I was going to write my first book, I had no idea where my self-publishing journey would lead. All I knew was that I love writing and modesty was a topic I had researched well enough that I felt I could write a book on the subject. I had no idea what I was doing when I started, but I was determined to do my best with what I had. Since *Beyond Your Wardrobe*, I have released several other titles that have taught me so much about self-publishing. Based on this knowledge and my desire to see this book used to its best potential, I decided that it was time to update the book that started my self-publishing journey.

So this edition of *Beyond Your Wardrobe* has a new cover, new subtitle, several updated sections throughout, and the addition of the study guide and Bible study curriculum that was originally published as a separate book. All of these updates will hopefully improve the quality of the book and will reflect a more complete biblical perspective on why we need to allow the Bible to shape our decisions about what we wear, not the culture or societal trends. Thanks for taking part in this journey.

Bethel Grove



Introduction

We all know people who just don't get it. The person who laughs five minutes after someone tells them a joke. The student that just doesn't understand what the teacher is telling him. We've all known people like them or perhaps have even been that person a few more times than we want to admit. But what's worse is when someone continues to repeat the same mistakes over and over, never really learning from the consequences of their previous choices. Maybe you've known someone that is heading into a physically or emotionally dangerous situation, but you cannot convince them to walk away. This type of situation can be a powerful reminder that if we don't learn from the past, we are likely to repeat our mistakes.

When Disney's *Frozen* was released in November 2013, it took the world by storm. I remember how shocked I was to see it become so popular so quickly, but I came to enjoy it as I watched my oldest nephew love that movie from the first time he saw it. However, one of the biggest gaps in the plot from my perspective is that there are a few characters that just don't get it, even when the truth that would solve their problem is right under their nose. It's not Anna, Kristof, Sven, or even Olaf that can't put the pieces together; it's King Agnarr, Queen Iduna, and Elsa. This point was illustrated

well with the YouTube video, “How Frozen Should Have Ended.”¹

Despite their best intentions, the king and queen didn’t recognize that fear was her enemy and love was the solution. By teaching Elsa “conceal, don’t feel,” her parents unknowingly taught her to suppress the one emotion she needed to feel to control her powers - love. While I get why Grand Pabbie didn’t just come out and say, “The answer is love,” Elsa had plenty of opportunities to find this solution sooner if she had just listened to Anna. At one point, Elsa asked Anna what power her sister had to stop her, convinced no one could. However, the truth was that Anna was one of the only people who could help Elsa because Anna was the person she loved the most. By the end of the film, when Elsa hears that love will thaw, she finally gets it, but it’s interesting to think about how different the story would have turned out if she had just listened to Anna.

The same thing tends to happen to Christians. Many of us hear the truth of God’s Word over and over again, but we never let it sink in enough to acknowledge that what it teaches us can be a solution to our problem, not the cause. I think that this is especially true when it comes to modesty, often resulting in one of two responses. Like Elsa’s parents, some Christians try to address the physical symptoms of immodesty by making rules to keep everyone in line, all the while ignoring the underlying condition that causes the problem: the attitude of our hearts. Many others, Christians and non-Christians alike, choose to respond like Elsa, just throwing out the rules and living the way they want, believing that there are no consequences.

I believe these responses are a result of the lies that our culture constantly feeds us about our worth and identity.

When someone finds their worth and identity from many of the false sources our society teaches today, it causes their heart to be enslaved by their false source, having to return to it over and over again just to be filled up. These false sources and the lies that support them are a huge part of what has caused most Christians to have a fundamental gap in their understanding of their value, which impacts their ability to understand modesty from a biblical point of view. The world tries to convince us that living according to God's Word, especially on a topic like modesty, will inhibit us from living our lives to the fullest. However, through my study and research, I have found that the truth of God's Word is the very place where freedom can be discovered by anyone who chooses to embrace modesty. Most people do not usually associate the words "modesty" and "freedom" with one another. I pray that you will by the end of this book, because when I began to embrace the call to modesty in my own life, it came to change the way I saw myself and the way I saw everyone around me.

This book is written for those who want to go deeper. I hope girls and women of all ages will be a part of this journey. I even hope that some men will be willing to join us to gain a biblical perspective on this topic. This journey won't be an easy one. It may be uncomfortable as you have to adjust your mindset to align with God's perspective instead of a worldly viewpoint. I believe the rewards will be worth the work and will help you live and dress in the freedom of God's grace, not a bunch of manmade rules. I am hoping that you will join me so that we can experience this freedom together. Let's get started. [Note: You will be skipping to **Chapter 4** for this sample]



Chapter 4

Appropriately Adorned

When I started the seventh grade, I transitioned from homeschooling into a private Christian school. Needless to say, I was pretty nervous. I had been homeschooled since the second grade and didn't know what to expect. It didn't take very long for me to find my way, thanks to my new teacher. One of the things I admired about her so much was that, aside from making sure we got a great education, she called our class her "little disciples," emphasizing that this was more than just a job to her; it was her ministry. I am still receiving the blessings of that ministry today.

One of my favorite lessons I learned from her wasn't even a classroom lesson. It was common around the beginning of the school year to have the "modesty talk" with the female students. They always had a collective one for both junior high and high school girls, but in my eighth-grade year, they decided to do a second one with just the junior high girls. At this point, I don't remember too much of what was said in this meeting, but one comment she made has stuck with me ever since she said it. She told us in her sweet little Alabaman accent: "Remember girls, as Gandalf said in *The Lord of the Rings*, 'Keep it secret, keep it safe.'"

Needless to say, we all laughed so hard! People still laugh when I share that story today. This quote in many ways was a significant catalyst to starting my modesty journey as well as

much of the insight I share in this book. However, some people have objected to this metaphor since I started sharing it. The primary objection that most people have is not with the “keep it safe” part, but instead with the “keep it secret” part. Because of these objections, I decided to take a second look at why using the word “secret” in this discussion could be a problem.

NEW CHOICE OF WORDS

Modesty was associated with the word “secret” for quite some time. Dannah Gresh’s books *The Secret Keeper* and *The Secret Keeper Girl* were some of the primary examples. But in recent years, more people have been rejecting its use in this context. It wasn’t until Dannah developed a ministry around “Secret Keeper Girl” that she realized what a problem the word “secret” created. In her case, the events hosted by her ministry often led to many girls confessing that they had been sexually abused. She came to realize that she no longer wanted to imply that the girls should keep secrets, because for these girls, what was going to set them free was telling the truth. That was the main reason that Dannah and her team chose to change the name of her ministry to “True Girl” and even the titles of the corresponding books were changed to reflect the new name of the ministry.¹

Although I was also caught up in using the word “secret” while teaching modesty for many years, I too have concluded that this word may not be the best choice. Here’s why: the word “secret” often has a negative connotation and implies shame, guilt, or regret. Some people I asked in an online community said that they struggled with the previously mentioned *Lord of the Rings* quote as a modesty analogy because it’s equating the Ring of Power, an instrument of absolute evil, with our sexuality, which is a gift from God and should not be perceived as evil. While they all agreed that it is important to “keep it safe” when it comes to our sexuality,

they concluded that “keep it secret” might not be the right way to phrase it.

As I have thought about this, I have chosen to change some of my word choices when discussing modesty or sexuality. This is because I firmly believe that our sexuality is a gift from God that is meant to be used in the right time and place – marriage. Modesty is meant to be the protection or the outer wrapping that keeps this gift safe. Without that wrapping or with an insufficient amount of that wrapping, that gift has the opportunity to be misused. In most cases, this misuse will be by someone it wasn’t even intended for and will distract them from seeing the God we worship. To understand why this is significant, we need to understand more about the way that God designed us.

THE GIFT OF POWER

Some of you may be surprised that this passage that we are about to read is even in the Bible, or that I am publically sharing this in a book. But these verses are going to be important for helping up learn two things: helping women understand the minds of men and helping all of us understand the way that God designed our bodies. Let’s take a look at Proverbs 5:18-19:

“May your fountain be blessed, and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth. A loving doe, a graceful deer— may her breasts satisfy you always, may you ever be captivated by her love” (NIV).

As I said earlier, some of you may be shocked that I chose to share this verse with you. Even though some of this wording seems blunt, this translation is a toned-down version of the original meaning of the Greek words.² So let’s look at vs. 19 again, but this time in the ESV.

“Let her breasts fill you at all times with delight; be intoxicated always in her love” (ESV).

Intoxicated? Now that is strong wording! This verse tells us that our bodies have the power to intoxicate a man with our beauty. It’s pretty incredible for us to realize that God designed us that way. This power should be seen as an incredible gift to be used in the right way at the right time. The problem is that most of us are either unaware of how great this power is or we use our knowledge of this power to bring attention to ourselves. As Christian women, our goal should be to save the most personal parts of our beauty for the man we marry.³ It should be vice versa for Christian men – they should be saving the most personal parts of their manhood for just one woman – their wife.

1 TIMOTHY 2:9-10

The reason that many people reject biblical modesty is simply because they don’t know or understand what the Bible actually says about it. Whether it’s because they don’t know where it’s mentioned in the Scriptures or because someone interpreted the passages poorly, many Christians do not have a solid biblical understanding of modesty. This needs to change. Regardless of our previous perceptions of this topic, we all need to take the time to understand what the Bible tells us about what we should wear, so we can shape our lives in response to it. So since we want to learn more about what the Bible has to say about modesty, I want to take a look at 1 Timothy 2. This is one of the only direct references to the word that translates as “modesty” in the New Testament and is usually the first passage referenced when discussing the topic.

“...women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control not with braided hair and gold or

pearls or costly attire, but with what is proper for women who profess godliness – with good works” (ESV).

Now is anyone confused by any of the language and cultural references here? To be honest, they confuse me and I’ve graduated from a Bible college! I think that this is one of the main reasons why this passage is misunderstood: most of us don’t know how to adapt the cultural references into a contemporary context. So that’s exactly what we are going to do. We’re going to go through the five points that this passage teaches us about how women were supposed to dress back then, so we can learn how this applies to the way we should dress today.

1. WE SHOULD ADORN OURSELVES

First and foremost, Paul says that women should adorn themselves. Remember how I shared earlier that some women use the words “frumpy and dumpy” to describe modesty? I think this passage tells us otherwise. The word that is used for “adorn” here could be defined as making something beautiful. Now, I’m not saying that we need to plaster on makeup and wear formal clothes all the time, but this passage tells us that we should put some effort into our appearance, especially on Sundays at church. It’s a great reminder that sometimes, not putting effort into your appearance can be just as much of a distraction as putting too much effort into your appearance. It’s important to learn the difference between too much and not enough.

2. WE SHOULD ADORN OURSELVES APPROPRIATELY

This passage also says that we need to be adorned in respectable apparel. The word “respectable” could be translated as modest, proper, suitable, or appropriate. Through my study of the Scriptures, what I believe this is talking about is about learning to dress in a manner that is

always “appropriate to the occasion.” This is a phrase I coined that I believe fits best with the concept that this Scripture is teaching here about clothing and modesty. Here are a few questions to illustrate how it works:

- Would you want to wear sweatpants and a t-shirt to prom?
- Would you wear a prom dress on a regular school day?
- Would you wear a swimsuit for a job interview?

If you answered “no” to all these questions, you are right! This is because none of these clothing options are appropriate for the given situation. “Appropriate to the occasion” means choosing what to wear based on what you know is appropriate to wear for every given situation. Some situations, like the ones listed above, are no-brainers. Other situations are not as obvious. For example, if you chose to go on a mission trip to a foreign country, you would probably need to do some research to determine if any of the clothes you plan to bring would be considered inappropriate in that country. We need to learn to do this in our own country too. We have to learn to be thinking ahead about what is appropriate in each situation specifically because it shows respect and honor to those around us.

3. WE SHOULD ADORN OURSELVES WITH SELF-CONTROL

Next, we are told that we should be adorned with modesty and self-control. The ESV uses these words side-by-side, and I don’t think it’s a coincidence. The word for “self-control,” aside from implying moderation, also can be translated as “sound judgment” or “sound mind.” This means that you are to have the discernment to know what is right and wrong and then use your sound judgment to choose to do what is right.

When you know you have the power to attract attention to yourself with your appearance, it takes sound judgment to not use that power selfishly. You have to learn how to intentionally hold back from showing off your body so that you are not a distraction and so you can save those parts of your beauty for the person you will marry. Learning how to develop sound judgment about the clothes you wear begins with studying His Word. This and other passages in the Scriptures show us principles about clothing and behaviors we should avoid. When you learn these Scripture and take their wisdom to heart, having sound judgment in any situation will become second nature to you.

4. WE SHOULDN'T ADORN OURSELVES IN VANITY AND WORLDLY WEALTH

Vanity is being too focused on your physical appearance. This includes your clothes, but also your hair, your makeup, your complexion, and even your body image. When you are more concerned with the way you look on Sundays than you are about the sermon, you have not only missed the point, but you run the risk of becoming a distraction to those around you. You then exchange the sound judgment you're supposed to have for bad judgment that often leads to compromise.

We are also not to get caught up in worldly wealth. Braids, gold, pearls, and costly attire were all ways that women of the early church would display their wealth or social status. These women were trying to make themselves feel more important than the women of lower class. Their appearance became a distraction and proved to be an inappropriate way to dress, especially in a setting of home churches. Even if they were not showing cleavage or their legs, their fancy up-dos, their bright-colored robes, and all their shiny bling were a distraction for those trying to

worship the Lord. A church service is not an appropriate place to draw that kind of attention to yourself. It wasn't appropriate in the first century and it's still not appropriate today. That's part of the reason why it's so important that what we wear is appropriate for each given situation.

As I mentioned earlier, I am a big Disney fan. My favorite movie of all time is Disney's animated classic *Beauty and the Beast*. One of the things I have always wanted is an authentic replica of Belle's yellow dress in my size. Just imagine what would happen if my dream came true and I was so excited about getting this dress that I decided to wear the large, yellow, puffy dress, along with the matching accessories and up-do, to a church service. What do you think would happen? It would be a *huge* distraction. People would spend more time watching me than singing the songs or listening to the sermon. Even if my dress wasn't inappropriate, it would be meant to draw too much attention to myself and that would make it immodest. That is what we have to learn to avoid.

5. WE SHOULD ADORN OURSELVES WITH GOOD WORKS (GODLINESS)

Instead of adorning ourselves in wealth and vanity, we are to adorn ourselves with the kinds of actions that bring glory to God, so that we in the process are adorned with godliness. The word "modest" here implies reverence or honor, not only for God, but also for rulers, parents, and others worthy of respect. The way we live our lives should be a continual act of worship to the Lord. We should be adorned with godliness, so the good works we do will point people back to the God whom we profess to worship.

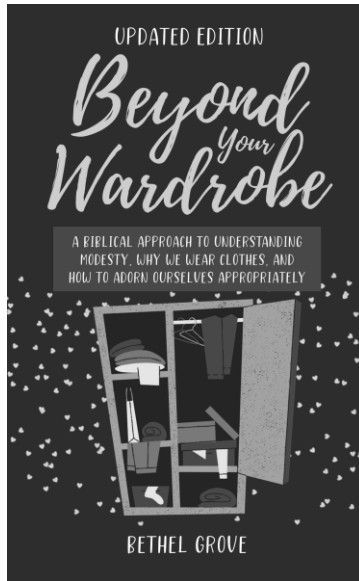
One of my favorite teachings on this passage is by David Platt, author of the book *Radical*. In a longer sermon about 1 Timothy 2, he spends about 7 minutes discussing the biblical

concept of modesty from verses 9-10. Of all of the things he said in that sermon, one quote stands out from the rest:

“Let us raise up women across this church that get up every day, including Sunday, thinking humbly, ‘How can I dress today and what can I do today that will draw the most attention to the glory of my God?’ That’s not easy in today’s culture. That’s totally against the grain.”⁴

I love how this question gets to the heart of biblical modesty. We need to live our lives in such a way that we are not trying to draw unnecessary attention to ourselves. The One we are taking attention away from when we dress this way is the God we worship. We were made to be His creation and to bring glory back to Him. We’re going to take about how to make that happen in the next chapter.

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