

Purity in Clothing

by Rick Leibee

The sermon emphasizes the importance of purity in clothing as a reflection of one's heart and relationship with God.

Duration: 1:13:48

Scripture: Ephesians 4:22

Topics: "Spiritual Freedom", "Godly Living"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the concept of being a slave to fashion and challenges the audience to consider what they are truly enslaved to. He emphasizes the importance of being a bondservant to Christ and living a lifestyle that aligns with God's truth. The preacher highlights that fashion is often used as a means to identify with certain groups or individuals, and that clothing can reveal a person's beliefs, feelings, and general approach to life. The sermon encourages listeners to guard their hearts and make specific applications in their homes and church community to be free from the fashions of this world and instead focus on following God's Word.

Transcript

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It's good to be here this morning. I was blessed very much to be here and hear the singing, the worship, and to be reminded in the opening what a privilege it is, what a joy it is to be here in this land that we live, that we can come. And also that clear call that it is God's will that all men be saved.

All men, even some of us here. There may even be those sitting in this very room who do not know the Lord Jesus. The all men isn't just all as we look out, but it's all as we look in too, isn't it? So may God hear

our prayers and may our hearts be open to Him this morning and to Jesus.

Shall we bow our heads for a word of prayer as we begin? Yes, Father. We can say it is good to be in the house of the Lord, Your house of prayer, Your house of worship. We are thankful that we can enter in.

And God, we ask You now to meet with us. To lead us, to guide us, to teach us as we look into Your Word for Your truths, Father. May they go into our hearts and into our lives.

That we may not lose our saltiness, but we may be children of God. We may be seen in this dark world as a light that draws men, not to us, but to Christ. To Christ.

And may we preach Christ in all that we do and say this morning. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Well, the burden that the Lord has laid on my heart to share this morning is a topic that has not been preached on or taught, I think, in a number of years from our pulpit here. And that is on dress or clothing. Purity in clothing is the topic for this morning.

Purity in dress. Can we have godly attire? Is it possible? Does God desire it? That is what we want to look at in God's Word this morning. Purity in clothing.

As I begin, I have a little poem here that is precious to our family. We borrowed this poem years ago and at times it has found its way on our walls and different ones of the children's room. And it is a blessing, but it is also a challenge.

And there are some real truths here that I would like to begin with as we open up. And it says, Look like the world to win the world. Oh, what a foolish notion.

Can worldly life and speech and dress draw souls like plain devotion? Look like the world to win the world. Oh, sheerest words of folly. When God himself hath called the saint to live a life that is holy.

A holy life. A separate life. A life that is lived for Jesus.

A fully consecrated life is that which truly frees us. And this morning, that is the desire of my heart and I hope it is yours too. To be free.

To be free. But what do we want to be free from? Well, we want to be free, as we heard this morning earlier, from self, don't we? And God can do that. And that is His desire too, that we be free from self.

And as we are free from self, we will be free from the desires of this world. The desires to look like the world. The desires to dress like the world.

To be like the world. To follow after the fashions and the goings on of this world. But we can only do that by the power of the Holy Spirit.

And that is what Jesus wants to do. To free us. That we can be free to live as we ought.

And free to live according to the way God wants us to live. So this morning, as we look into God's word concerning this very important subject, it is my heart's desire to challenge you. To challenge each one of you in your hearts.

Not in your head, but in your heart. Concerning this issue. And to exercise ourselves spiritually.

To exercise ourselves spiritually with the applications that we take from the principles in God's word. And during the times today that I refer to perhaps specific items of clothing, my desire today is not to offend anyone. God knows my heart.

But I want to be careful and I want to say it in the right way. So you pray for me. You give me grace.

But instead of offending, my desire is to lift up a godly standard. And to lift up the principles in God's word. And not be ashamed of what God has to say concerning this part of our life.

Because it also deals with our hearts. And this subject of clothing, of dress, is worthy of our time and attention this morning. It is one that God speaks about in virtually every book of the Bible from cover to cover.

It is something that He pays attention to. So we want to pay attention to. But it is also a subject that for some of us gets close to us in a way.

And it causes us some fear and trembling perhaps as we think about dress and clothing and modesty and what's the application of these things. And I wonder when I announced the topic this morning, what was your reaction? What did you think? Did you flinch a little, sister, perhaps? Brother, did you wonder what this is about? Young person, does it bother you when your parents talk about the way you dress? Or make suggestions? And there's something about dress that does that to us. Because it is a personal thing.

Because we choose what we put on. It doesn't accidentally get on us, does it? We choose. We purposely choose what we wear.

It's not an accident. It's not like the color of our hair, is it? We choose it. So I wonder what your reaction was this morning.

And I would like to ask you a question with regard to that reaction. And that is simply, do you love Jesus this morning? Do you love Him? Do you really love Jesus? You know, the Bible says clearly in 1 John 5, 3, for this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not grievous.

They don't hurt our hearts. They don't tear at us. They don't tug.

We just say, yes, Jesus, we love You. And we let go and we let God work in our life. And so as we look at God's commands, precepts, and principles this morning concerning dress and clothing, I want to speak to your heart.

I want to speak to your heart this morning. As I said earlier, I don't want to make a list. I don't want to make an intellectual plea to your head.

I want to talk to your heart this morning. I want God to speak to your heart. And I believe that what's in our hearts not only comes out of our mouths, but it's also expressed in our lives in the clothes that we choose to wear.

What one wears is an outward manifestation or indication of what is in their heart, isn't it? Do you believe that's true? I do. That what is in a person's heart comes out and is expressed or manifested or is an indication of what is really in their heart. I believe that's true this morning.

And that's why I want to speak to your heart. I also recognize today that we will be coming. We will be coming from different perspectives and different backgrounds.

That's okay. God accepts us all where we are. But for those that come from perhaps a traditional setting, traditional background and are blessed with some right principles this morning to help them, I would say caution, caution, warning.

Do not dishonor the memory of your righteous ancestors by just coasting, by just thinking, well, we've always done it this way. Coasting doesn't work. Shame on you if you have not looked into God's Word and you don't have a heartfelt, as we talked about earlier, conviction and understanding and application of the principles in God's Word concerning what He says about dress.

He has a lot to say about it. Let's don't coast this morning. Because, you know, if we just hold on to tradition... You know, it's a funny thing I've noticed.

Tradition slips away after we get out of certain settings, doesn't it? Have you noticed that too? It seems like those that leave those settings that were very traditional are the very ones that seem to almost go the furthest once they're out of the setting. So was it the tradition that held them or the setting? I don't know the answer, but there seems to be something wrong with that. Something is wrong with that, isn't it? And it's because it's not in their heart, is it? A setting is not enough.

God knows that. And we don't want to preach a setting. We want to preach the Word of God.

We want it to speak to our hearts. Also, there are others from different backgrounds. Perhaps your background is similar to mine.

I'm a remnant person. That's what we call those around here that are not from a traditional background. I'm not sure what all that means either.

But I like that name, remnant. It has a good ring to it. But you know, there's a problem too sometimes in our perspective.

There are some things about our perspective that we need to get right. Because sometimes, I know I struggled with this early in my Christian walk. I felt, well, I'm under grace.

I'm free. I don't want to be encumbered with rules or commandments or precepts or principles. God knows my heart.

Of course, I didn't know my own heart. I was deceived. It will all work out.

It will all come out in the wash. I would say to people like myself and to you if that describes you, caution, caution, warning. It's not going to come out right.

And the reason I can say that is God's commandments are beautiful. They are. They're loving.

Much as a loving Father sets rules and guidelines and standards in the home, why does He do that for His children? Because He's mad at them? He's angry with them? No, He loves them. He wants them to come out right. He wants to set things in their life, set order in their life, put them on the way that they should go.

He sees things that they cannot see. He sees dangers. They have no idea that there's a danger there.

But He can set up guidelines and precepts and things in their life to steer them in a safe and a good way. God, how much more can He do that? His commandments are beautiful. You know, Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount, He came not to change one jot or tittle of the law, but to fulfill it.

So again, this is a heart issue. But it's a heart issue that is based on the Word of God. And that's the right heart attitude we need to have.

It's an attitude that comes out of the perspective of the Bible, not necessarily from our background, whichever direction we may have come from, but from the perspective and the background of what God would have us to think. You know, the right thinking in every area of life is this, isn't it? You ever think about that? The right thinking in every area of life comes out of here. So may God help us to have the right thinking as we look at this subject today.

Today I'm going to be giving eight principles concerning purity in clothing that I have found in the Word of God. I'm not saying that that is an exhaustive list. There may be more.

You may be able to combine a couple of them. But I believe that these eight are in here very clearly given by God. Eight principles for purity in clothing.

And I know many of you this morning and other mornings like to take notes in church. And I bless God for that. That's good.

And this morning, I would urge everyone that can to write down these eight principles. Because when it gets up to eight, I don't know about you, but it's hard for me to remember all those. But I would like to refer to different ones of them at different times as we're talking this morning, as the Word of God is being preached.

So if it's possible at all, I would make an appeal that you take some notes this morning and you get these eight principles down and you pray about them afterwards too and you study them out for yourselves. Because that's my desire is to confront you with what the Word of God says. And if necessary, once we're confronted with the Word of God, things can happen.

Maybe corrective action. Perhaps even repentance. Isn't that how God works? We're confronted with His Word.

The Holy Spirit works. So whatever is the need in your life, we pray that God would work in our midst. These eight principles are benchmarks or tidewater marks that we have used in our family for a number of years to help us make applications, biblical applications, on what clothing we wear.

And I do want to say that by clothing, what I mean, you would think we all know what I mean by clothing, but just to make sure, I want to describe that. And by clothing I mean garments, raiments, or apparel of any kind, including shoes, hats, belts, even glasses. Do you know glasses are a fashion statement with the world today? We have to be careful.

So by apparel, I mean anything that we would put onto our body. By clothing. When I say purity in clothing, we want to include the whole picture, don't we? We don't want to leave something out and say, oh, that doesn't count.

Well, it's apparel. Apparel. And apparel is a Bible word.

We see it in the Old and the New Testament. Apparel. Worn on the body.

I want us to remember this morning where clothing came from as we begin. Before I give the eight principles, I want to remind ourselves where clothing came from. First of all, it was invented or made by God.

As we look in Genesis 3:21, God says, the Lord God made, notice the word made, made coats of skins, plural, and clothed them. He's talking about Adam and Eve. And the reason He did that is the fig leaves didn't meet His standard.

They didn't do what He wanted them to do. He was concerned enough that His first reaction when He saw them was to what? Make clothing. Did you ever think about that? Now, there's a lot of other reasons for that having to do with sacrifices.

We won't talk about that this morning. But it is interesting that one of the first things He did was He made clothing. Coats and skins.

Both. Plural. And that's what He did.

He clothed them. God made the clothes. God clothed them.

It was His design. It was His idea. And I'm sure they fit His standard.

So they came from God. As we also look at the Bible in the Old Testament, we see God is very careful about clothing. And so we want to be careful about clothing.

Have you ever read the list that a priest, what a priest had to wear to enter in to the Holy of Holies? Do you know who was in the Holy of Holies? God. You know, today, we say we have access to the throne, don't we? We like that. We like being called children of God.

We like calling God Father. But God was so careful with those that were allowed to approach Him with the way they wore. I don't know all the reasons for that, but it's here.

Also, when the children of Israel were approaching Mount Sinai before He gave them the Ten Commandments, what did He ask them to do? Do you remember? Sanctify yourselves and what? Your clothing. Clean it. Wash it.

Purify it. God is very careful about this. There is something about clothing, about apparel, that gets the attention of God and it should get our attention too.

So I want to remember this morning, where did clothing come from? Who's concerned about it? It's God, and so should we as His children. Well, the first principle that I see in God's Word, number one, is men, brothers, as spiritual leaders in the home, you must be involved in making clothing decisions. Men, as spiritual leaders in the home, you must, I want to emphasize must, you must be involved in making clothing decisions.

Remember what I said, it affects the heart. If you get nothing else, please hear me on this. Please get involved.

Do not delegate this. Do not abdicate it. Do not shove it off onto your wife.

You know, the tendency in men sometimes is to think, well, my wife knows more about clothing. After all, she makes most of them. It will all work out alright.

Well, praise God for godly wives. But men, we're the spiritual leaders of the home. God speaks about clothing and apparel in the Bible.

It is up to us to understand it and to teach it and to guard over the hearts of our family. And you know, if we don't do that, there will come a day when your daughter, maybe your son, but probably your daughter will come down the stairs when she's a teenager or a young person perhaps, or down the hall and she'll be wearing something and you'll think, where did that come from? And you don't approve of it. And you'll send her back.

And if you've never taught, if you've never been the spiritual leader in this area of your home, you know what will grow in her heart? You know what will probably be there? Resentment. Because she doesn't understand. Why did you send me back? You know, we must teach these things.

That's what being a spiritual leader is, isn't it? We share from God's heart to our heart to their hearts the Word of God. You know, that's what a spiritual leader is. It makes decisions based upon that.

From God's heart to our heart to their heart. And that's what we need to do. God is concerned how we attire ourselves.

Study it out for yourselves, brother. Pray about it. Do you ever pray about clothing decisions? That's interesting.

Pray about what we should wear. Do it sometime. Let your children know that you do it.

That you care. That you care how they look, how they're attired. God cares and so do you.

Papa cares. And as you do that, as you're the spiritual leader in your home, in this area, I believe your wife will honor you and love you for it. And I believe your children will too.

So men, as spiritual leaders in the home, you must be involved in making clothing decisions. The second principle this morning, the second principle that I'd like to share is clothing must be clearly male or female. In other words, apparel is gender-driven.

Clothing must be clearly male or female. Clothing is gender-driven. Men's clothing is to be men's clothing.

Masculine. Women's clothing is to be women's clothing. Feminine.

Let's look in God's Word for a few different verses. Let's first go to Deuteronomy 22. This is such a clear verse.

Deuteronomy 22, verse 5. The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man. Neither shall a man put on a woman's garment. Now notice the word garment here.

It doesn't just mean a dress. It means any type of apparel that pertaineth to a woman. Okay? Neither shall a man put on a woman's garment, for all that do so, notice the word all, all that do so are abomination unto the Lord thy God.

This is an arresting verse because of the word abomination, isn't it? There's a strength given to this verse. There's some teeth put into it that is arresting, that should get our attention. An abomination.

Now abomination, as we know, means an extreme hatred. This is God's Word, by the way. This is not my Word.

This is God's Word. God is saying He has an extreme hatred for this. Another definition of that is He detests it.

It's a detesting. Now I wonder, if you were to see a man coming down the street, what the world calls dressed in drag, meaning wearing women's clothing, a dress, you would probably have a reaction, wouldn't you? And you would probably detest that and you would think, that's not right. But what happens when a woman comes down the street dressed like a man? God seems to be saying here that He feels the same about either one.

Do we? Do we? And I want to be careful with this. I don't say this in judgment. I say this because this is what God says.

God is calling this an abomination. And may God help us to understand God's heart so that we can correctly apply the principles in our family and in our lives. But God would look at each one of those in the same light.

I wonder if we haven't been broken down by the society we live in and we don't detest the things that we should. And we don't see it from God's perspective. May we open our eyes and our hearts to the way God sees things.

Not in judgment, but in understanding of there is something about this that gets the attention of God in such a way that it's an abomination to Him. You know, much could be said about this topic with regard to society in general today. Pick up any catalog from a major department store today.

I won't name the names, but you know the ones. And if you look at the clothing in there that's supposed to be for the boys, you kind of wonder who is it really supposed to be for. It looks like it would be better off in the girls' section.

But then you go over to the girls' section and doesn't it look like it would just about be better off in the boys' section? There's a merging, a blending. They call it unisex. You ever heard that phrase or androgynous? There's a spirit in our society, and it is a spirit, that is pushing to diffuse out this gender-driven dress, clearly male, clearly female, and make it unisex.

I don't believe that's according to the heart of God. I believe it is clear here that that is not what God desires in dress for us, especially us, the children of God, who see God's heart and see God's warnings in Scripture. But that's what's going on in our society today.

And we may look at this this morning, and some of you may have already said in your own hearts, well, this doesn't apply to me. My wife doesn't wear pants, and I don't wear any of my wife's clothing. And that's true, and we can be thankful that we don't have those problems.

And yet, as we look at some verses in the New Testament, I believe God wants us to have a New Testament understanding of this, an application. So on this idea of clearly male and female, our second

principle, I want to read a couple of verses in the New Testament. Turn with me first to 1 Corinthians 6. 1 Corinthians 6, verse 9. And hold that place, and then turn back over to Matthew.

I want to look at these two verses side by side for just a minute. You'll see why as we read them. Matthew 11, and I'll read, I think, two verses here.

Yes, 7 and 8. First, let me read the Corinthians passage. 1 Corinthians 6, 9. Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? And then he's going to define some of those people that God is calling unrighteous. And remember, these people will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Be not deceived, neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate. That's the word we want to look at this morning. Nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind.

Effeminate. What does effeminate mean? Well, in the Greek, the Greek word is malikos. Malikos.

Effeminate. Malikos. And it clearly means those things that are feminine or womanly, that a man takes on those characteristics, either in clothing, dress, appearance, or lifestyle.

Effeminate. We've seen men that are that way. We know what it is.

But we also now see what God says about it. But let's turn over to the passage in Matthew. Remember, our principle here is clearly male or clearly female.

The passage here is going to be speaking about John the Baptist. And Jesus is going to give a testimony, He's going to give a word, a teaching, about who John the Baptist is and what manner of man he is. And he is a man's man, isn't he? He lives in the wilderness, wears a camel hair coat and leather, eats wild honey.

He is a man. He is a man of God. Jesus called him the greatest man ever born of woman.

So what is Jesus going to say about him here? Let's start in verse 7. And as they departed, Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind? See, he's emphasizing. This is not a wishy-washy fellow. This is a man.

He stands for the Word of God. He stands for right. He preaches repentance.

He preaches sin. He tells the truth. This is not a reed shaken by the wind.

But now, listen to how he describes this man. You would think there was a lot of attributes he could have given him. But listen to what he says in verse 8. But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed.

Notice he's going to talk about clothing here. A man clothed in soft raiment. You know what the word soft is? Malicose.

Malicose. It's the exact same word. Flip back over to Corinthians.

Malicose. A man clothed in malicose, effeminate raiment. Behold, they that wear soft, effeminate, malicose clothing are in the king's houses.

Now, the point I want to make here is that we look at a verse like that in Deuteronomy and we think, perhaps a part of us thinks Old Testament. I hope not, but a part of us may. But as we interpret this or look

at it through New Testament eyes, we see that Jesus and Paul, both in the New Testament, there's something about effeminate, something that pertains to a woman that a man does that still gets the attention of God and is still not right with God's Spirit.

Those are the ones that are not going to inherit the kingdom of God. And so as we look at ourselves here, as we look at John the Baptist, and then when we think of ourselves, what could be the application? I don't know all the applications, but I would be careful, brothers. Please don't wear shirts made out of the same material that your wife makes her dresses out of.

Is that too simple of an application? You know, I've seen that sometimes. And I don't say that again to offend anyone in particular, but to lift up a godly standard, we don't want to be effeminate, do we? Clearly, we don't want to be malicious. We don't want to be part of this.

But I would also say to you fathers with your sons, you know, in a day and age that we live, where the way the hair is cut, the eyeglasses, the clothing that we see in the world is so becoming unisex, and to me that really means effeminate for men, we need to be so careful with what we buy or what we purchase or what we allow our little boys to wear, what haircuts we let them have, what eyeglasses we let them have, what shoes, even our shoes. You know, shoes can be effeminate on men, can't they, if they're the wrong style. I hope I'm not too practical here.

Does this make sense? You know, this is what we need, isn't it? We need to think about these things as fathers. If we can understand the principle, from God's heart to our heart, may He give us the grace to make the right application. Alright, the third principle this morning is one I think we can all, you probably would have guessed that I have, and it's an important one, and that is not following, not following after the fashions of this world.

Not following after the fashions of this world. Let me explain what I mean by fashion or fashions of this world. I looked in several different reference books, encyclopedias, dictionaries on fashion and clothing and studied this out a little bit, and it's very interesting.

The fashion industry really knows who they are. They're right about themselves. Listen to what they say about themselves.

They say fashion is a term commonly used to describe a style or a form of clothing worn by most of the people of a country or a certain group type. A fashion remains popular for a few months or sometimes even a year or so before it is then replaced by another, and it is fashionable only as long as a segment of society accepts it. Now, get a picture of that in your mind if you will.

What it basically means is that somebody in Paris or New York or whoever decides these things says, okay, this year we're all going to wear bell-bottom trousers, and they're going to be huge like this. And everybody goes out and buys them. Spends a lot of money, by the way, replacing their wardrobe.

Then a few months, perhaps a year later, they decide, well, we want trousers this year to be really tight like this. They leave those, run over here, and get those. That's the picture.

That's fashion. That's following after the fashions of this world. Whatever the world says, let's go do it.

Let's go over here, then over here, then over here. They know it about themselves. Do we? They also say that this is an interesting thing they said about themselves.

I've been using the phrase this morning that the clothes we wear reveal a little bit about our heart. The fashion industry understands that too. Are you surprised by that? I really wasn't surprised, but it was interesting.

These are some exact words taken from several different references about the fashion industry. It said, fashion and clothing show what people believe and are really like. That's what these books said.

Isn't that interesting? It reveals their beliefs, feelings, their personality, and their general approach to life. That's their heart, isn't it? We say the heart, but this is what they say. It reveals their beliefs, their feelings, their personality, and their general approach to life.

That's what the clothing does. Then it also gave some primary reasons that people follow after fashion or that people choose certain types of clothing. And here's the reasons that they gave.

Number one, to identify with a select group of people. They want to identify with this group of people over here. Maybe it's movie stars, sports figures.

Notice everybody wears those jerseys, wear the hats with the insignia. That's fashion because they want to identify with that select group of people. Musicians.

Certain people listen to rock and roll music, country-western music. Have you ever noticed that if a young person starts listening to country-western music, what also changes? You know, first it goes through their ear. Then where does it go? Their heart.

But then it's expressed and manifested where? Have you ever noticed the boots start getting pointy? Wear a lot of jeans? Western shirts? You know, isn't that true? Isn't that true? And they know this. And they play upon this because that's part of their industry. One of the other primary reasons they gave why people follow after fashion is to raise their status.

They want to be something they're not. They want to make themselves look like they, I guess, make more money or have more prestige. I don't know.

Another reason they gave, this one we could have guessed, is decoration or outward adornment. They just want to look special. Four, to gain acceptance.

They want other people to think they're on the in crowd or they're in the know or they're doing the right thing at the right time. Remember earlier when I said we wanted to be free? Oh, may God help us to be free. May God help us to be free.

You know? A wholly consecrated life. That is what frees us. That is what frees us.

You know, they even have a phrase in the fashion industry. And some people will proudly say, well, you know, I'm a slave to fashion. You know, they are.

They are. What are we a slave to? Are we a bondservant to Christ? Therefore, are we really free? Are we really free? Well, this principle is not following after the fashions of this world. Let's look at a few verses from God's Word so we can be properly grounded in this from God's perspective.

Turn with me to Ephesians 4. Ephesians 4. I think I'll start in verse 21. Ephesians 4, verse 21. If so be that ye have heard Him and have been taught by Him as the truth is in Jesus, that ye put off concerning the

former conversation... Conversation here isn't words.

It's lifestyle, behavior, your general approach to life. Okay? Put off. Put off concerning the former conversation in the old man which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your minds that ye put on the new man clothed in righteousness, we could say, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

We're to put off the old and put on the new. Turn over with me to 1 Peter 1. A similar verse. One that's a real blessing.

1 Peter 1, starting in verse 14. As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts of your ignorance, but as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation because it is written, Be ye holy for I am holy. God is holy.

You know, if we lose our saltiness, I don't know what that says to the world, but it doesn't say much, does it? And the world will toss us out. So all manner of conversation, we need to put on the things of God. We know that without holiness, no man shall see God.

And so our dress, and our attire, and our apparel, it may be the only book some people get to read sometimes. I don't know. Depends on who they are and where you are.

But we need to put on the new man in our minds and in our hearts, and what's in our hearts will then come out, won't it? It will be a manifestation, an indication of what's in the heart as what apparel we choose, what attire we have. And I believe that the life and the conduct, or the conversation, to use the Bible word here, of the child of God is in direct opposition to the expressions, clothing, whatever, approach to life, of those around Him who follow after the God of this world. You know, there is a God of this world, the Bible tells us.

And the world is following after the God of this world in fashions and in many other areas of life, aren't they? And they follow after the God of this world. But the child of God whose mind has been renewed by the Word of God, His life should be in opposition to that. He should want to go a different way.

He wants to be holy. Does the world want to be holy? No. Do we want to be holy? Yes.

So our life, our conduct, in all manner of conversation, is in opposition to the God of this world and the fashions of this world. So in this principle, we do not want to follow the fashions of this world. The fourth principle is related to this third principle a bit, but it still stands on its own.

It still stands on its own as a biblical principle relating to how we dress, to purity in clothing. And it is this. Our apparel should be otherworldly or separate.

Separation is a doctrine we know, we preach, we believe in. And our apparel should be otherworldly or separate or distinctive from this world. Our apparel should be otherworldly or separate or distinctive from this world.

Again, remember earlier that I said clothing reveals a person's beliefs and feelings and their general approach to life. In other words, it shows their hearts. If we treasure the clothing of this world, what does it show? It shows our hearts.

It shows our hearts. Jesus taught us that, didn't He? What we treasure, our hearts will be there also. So if we treasure the clothing of this world, it shows our hearts, doesn't it? Let's turn to 1 John 2 and read that verse.

Verse 15. 1 John 2 verse 15. Remembering our principle here is our apparel should be otherworldly or separate.

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. Romans 12.2, we won't turn there, says, and be ye not conformed.

We don't want to fit the mold. Go in and do the things this world does. Be ye not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.

In other words, do we dress like we belong to this world or do we dress like we belong to God? Give yourself a test sometime. Go to a mall or a shopping center, especially you men. I'll challenge you even more so.

You know, it's easier for us, if we're not careful, to dress just like the world, isn't it? You know, our wives are often wearing a cape dress, a jumper and a veiling. What are we wearing? As we go to that mall or that shopping center, sit down and watch for a while and see, am I any different? Am I separate? Do I dress like I belong to these people? That's the world. Do I dress like I belong to God? You know, because our apparel needs to be separate, needs to be distinctive.

The reason we can say that is God says in His Word in 1 Corinthians, come out from among them and be ye separate. 2 Corinthians, excuse me. Come out from among them and be ye separate.

And one way we can be separate and identify with the cause of Christ is in our clothing. We know that it needs to start in our hearts because we know we want to be separated under Jesus. It's not that we're separated physically from this world.

We're not preaching monasticism here, are we? We're preaching a spiritual truth, a spiritual doctrine. We need to exercise ourselves spiritually to understand it. I remember a number of years ago in my early Christian life, I went to visit a brother in his home.

We spent the night there. I think we were there a couple of days. And he told me this story that happened to him.

And it had a big impact on me and the way that I felt God would have me to begin to try to dress in a way that would be pleasing to Him. And this is his story. He said one day they were going shopping.

They went in this large department store. He and his wife. His wife was dressed with a modest jumper, full, loose, not form-fitting.

She had her veil on. The dress was long. He was wearing dark pants.

They were also loose, not concealing, not revealing. He had on a plain shirt, long sleeve. I believe he had a beard at that time.

I'm pretty sure he did. At least he did at the time he told me the story. And so they go into this store and she goes on this side of the store and he goes on that side of the store and they're trying to get their list

done.

But they get turned around and he doesn't know which direction to find her. And evidently, a lady that was in the same aisle as him observed his dilemma and she came up to him and said, are you looking for your wife? And he said, well, yes. As a matter of fact, I am.

I don't know where she is. And she said, well, I do. She's over on aisle three.

He said, thank you. And he walked away and he thought, I don't know her. She doesn't know me.

But you know what? She knew that he belonged to her and she belonged to him and they didn't belong and look like the rest of the world in that store. And you know when he told that story, God smoked my heart. I looked down at myself.

I was wearing a pair of jeans and a polo knit shirt, a pair of top siders. I'm being specific here. You give me the grace to do that.

My wife was sitting across the room. She was dressed just like she is now. And in my heart, I hung my head and I thought, God, are you speaking to me here? And you know He was.

He was speaking to me. I realized that I was dressing just like I always had. I was still wearing the fashions of this world.

I was not dressing separate. I was not dressing distinctive. I was dressing like I still belonged to this world.

I was not dressing like I belonged to God, much less belonged to my wife, who was clearly dressing, I believe, like she belonged to God. And you know, God convicted me of that. And I began to change the way I dressed.

And with God's help, and I give God the glory here, I don't tell this story about myself. I tell this story because the principle works because did you know that it wasn't very long after that that I had similar experiences to that? I even had people approach me and ask me if I was a Christian. You know, I never had anybody walk up and ask me if I was a Christian before I changed the way I dressed.

Have you ever had anyone come up and just ask you, are you a Christian? You know, I never had that happen when I was dressed the other way. Since then, I have had it happen numerous occasions. It has happened.

And it can happen to you. And we want to give God the glory for that. But that's what this principle is all about.

Our apparel should be otherworldly or separate or distinctive from this world. God says it in His Word. God wants us to have the right application of this.

The fifth principle that we have this morning on purity in clothing, the fifth principle is not excessive adornment or not with adornment, not with outward adornment, but oh, that we be led in a plain path as it says in Psalms. Not with excessive or outward adornment. Not with adornment, but that we be led in a plain path.

Turn with me to 1 Timothy 2.9 1 Timothy 2.9 In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel with shamefacedness and sobriety, not with broided hair or gold or pearls or costly array. And then flip over with me to 1 Peter 3.3 and I believe we'll read 4 also. 1 Peter 3.3 Who's adorning? Let it not be the outward adorning of plaiting of the hair and of wearing of gold or the putting on of apparel.

Notice that one there with the putting on of apparel. Adorning apparel. Apparel that is for adornment if we understand the flow here.

But let it be the hidden man of the heart in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit which is in the sight of God of great price. You know, even in our desires to turn away from the fashions of this world and we may do that. We may say, no, I'm not going to follow after the fashions of this world and we give that up.

Bless God. You know, we can still overdo, can't we? We can still have adornment. It may not be the fashions of this world, but we can still overdo.

We need to watch ourselves for frills and extras. Frills and extras on our apparels. And if I could speak to the mamas for just a minute carefully, I know you love your babies.

You love your little children, don't you? But you know, it's very easy to want to put a lot of extras on them, isn't it? It's very easy to want to add a lot of frills and a lot of extras. And as we do that, what we're adding is adornment. And it's clear how God feels about that.

And are we setting a snare for them perhaps that as they get older, they have to give up that adornment and they don't understand why. Well, they'd always had it before. What's wrong with it now? You mean it's okay if I'm one, but it's not okay if I'm eleven? I don't think that's the right application here.

I think we need to be careful of adornment. And fathers, would you help your wives with this? Would you guard over their hearts? You know, they do love those babies. And they do want to show them attention and love.

And sometimes it's easy to have a lot of extras and a lot of frills, which is adornment, isn't it? And brothers, while I'm speaking to you, if you will allow me this morning, we need to be careful too, don't we? You know, notice I'm not preaching to the sisters today, man. I hope you notice most of the comments have come your way. And that's the way it should be, isn't it? You accept that, don't you? You want that.

Amen. I know you do. But brothers, you know, it's easy for us to pick up adornment too.

No, we may not add lace to our collars. But are we wearing shirts with big, bright, bold stripes a lot? Do you catch yourself doing that sometimes? Big, bright, bold checks. Why do we do that? Is that outward adornment? Are we seeking things like that on purpose? Do we choose that clothing? Yes, we chose it.

Does that reveal something about our heart? Perhaps. So let's be careful. We can get into outward adornment too, can't we? You know, we want to say adornment and then we want to look over at the ladies' side.

Let's don't do that. Let's look at ourselves. And I'll say that again carefully.

But I believe it needs to be said. Let's look at Joshua for just a minute. Let's look at chapter 7. There's an interesting account here of Achan that I want to just read one verse out of that I hope will help us.

Joshua chapter 7. We all know who Achan is. The sad story of he and his family. Do you remember the very first thing that Achan did wrong? We all remember the gold, don't we? And the silver.

Notice what happens here. And Achan answered Joshua and said, And indeed I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel, and thus I have done. Listen to the first thing he's done.

When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment. Now by goodly, I look this up, it means heavily ornated, adorned. There's something about garments or clothing that is heavily adorned that gets our attention.

That's the first thing. Notice he didn't see the gold first, did he? He saw the clothing. And he was attracted to it.

He even said he coveted it. He wanted it. He liked it.

And he was a man. Did you notice this again? I'm talking to the men. He liked that clothing.

It caught his eye. It was a goodly Babylonish garment. And he coveted it.

And he took it. And he wanted it. Remember earlier I asked you, Do you love Jesus? Do you really love Him? Well, the Bible says the love of God is that we obey His commandments, and His commandments are not grievous.

And as we're looking at this area of adornment this morning, please don't grieve. Please don't long for adornment. Achan did.

Let's don't be like that. Let's be careful with this. Let's don't grieve or long for outward adornment.

Let's long for a heart that is after God. A heart that is holy. A heart that is free.

Oh, to be free. To be free from longing after those things. What a freedom.

What a joy there is. I don't desire that for myself. And may God help me also.

I'm no different than you. I don't preach this as having all the answers. I don't want to look at those garments and desire them either.

The sixth principle this morning is modest. Modest as in not revealing or alluring, but to conceal and maintain purity. 1 Timothy again 2.9 says in like manner also that women adorn themselves in modest apparel.

Modest. We won't turn there, but in Isaiah chapter 3, verses 16 through 24, God talks to the women there of Israel about wearing clothing and adorning themselves in modest apparel. And you see God's displeasure at this kind of clothing that is not modest, but instead is revealing and alluring and drawing attention and does not maintain purity.

And He pronounced a judgment on those people there in Isaiah 3. And that was one of the reasons for the judgment. So we get a picture here of what God told His people. of what God thinks about this kind of dress.

And we desire apparel. We desire clothing that covers, that is full and loose. You know, it not only covers, but it's full and it's loose.

It is not tight or form-footing. The word apparel here in 1 Timothy is in the Greek katastole or katastole. And it basically means the application, the interpretation as you study it out would be double coverage.

Double coverage. And that's the term we use today, isn't it? Double coverage. To help us maintain this purity in this area of modesty of revealing and not alluring done to conceal.

But also, we need to be careful here because just because a person is double covered doesn't mean they're modest. You know, it's not a definition. It's an attitude of the heart that will be expressed in the way that it is used, in the way that it is actually worn, in the way that it is actually sewed or put together or bought off the rack.

When I say full and loose, I mean not form-fitting, not done to accentuate the figure, the waist. Have you seen a cape dress or a jumper that was done to accentuate the figure? I have. I can take you to grocery stores or stores here in this very county where the dress is as immodest as if I took you to the mall where the persons may be wearing cape dresses and jumpers.

Have you seen that? It's true, isn't it? They fit a definition, double coverage. But see, it's not just about definitions, is it? It's about our spirits. And if that clothing is not full and loose, instead it's form-fitting, done to accentuate the figure, then is that modest? No, I don't believe that is.

I don't believe that's in keeping with God's heart here. And so we need to be careful of this ourselves. We need to look at ourselves and we need to make the right applications.

And that's why items such as skirts can be a problem for you sisters because skirts by definition are going to come in at the waist, aren't they? And accentuate the waist. So we need to be careful in what articles of clothing we pick and how we use them. The question I would like to ask you is does our apparel conceal or reveal? Does our apparel conceal or reveal? And what is our purpose in wearing it? To conceal? To cover? Or to reveal and to show? What spirit are we about? Brothers, again, I don't want to leave you out.

I speak to you this morning by God's grace. How about your pants? Your trousers? Are they too tight? Do they reveal? Or do they conceal? You know, men have physiques. We have figures, don't we? Your shirts, are they too tight? Are they too form-fitting to show that manly physique? Are our shirt sleeves too short to show off the muscles? The manly physique? What are we wearing? Is it to reveal or to conceal? You know, we can make the wrong applications of biblical principles here just by wearing certain types of clothing, but we can still wear them in the wrong way.

Can't we? So may God help us with this one. Modest as in not revealing or alluring, but to conceal and to maintain purity. It is the heart of God that we walk pure.

Be ye holy, even as I am holy. And as you're wearing some of these clothing, would you wear them if God were there? You know, we can give ourselves tests. Would you wear them with Jesus? Would you do that? Would that be pleasing? Is that the right biblical application? Number seven.

Modest as in not drawing attention to self. We talked about self already this morning. I want to talk about it again a minute here with regard to dress.

Modest as in not drawing attention to self. Often it has been preached and taught from this very pulpit that we must die to our self. We agree with that doctrine, don't we? That's true.

It's biblical truth. We know it's true. Our spirit says, yes, Lord, I need to die to self.

I do not want the self-life. I'm tired of the self-life. I don't want it.

And we know that the self-life wants to lift itself up. It wants to lift itself up in what? In pride and in vanity. That's one of the end results of the self-life, isn't it? Pride and vanity.

And how is vanity expressed? It can be expressed in our clothing, can it? Vanity. The self-life leads to vanity. But by faith, we reckon ourselves dead to the flesh as we take up the cross of Jesus.

You know, I came across an excerpt that I want to share with you from John Wesley. From John Wesley, back in the 1700's, this godly man who wasn't afraid to tell the truth and preach the gospel. This is what he said.

He said, the wearing of gay or costly apparel naturally tends to breed and increase vanity. By vanity here, I mean the love and desire of being admired and praised. Every one of you that is fond of dress has a witness of this in your own bosom.

It means in your own heart. You know that it's there. This is John Wesley's words.

Whether you will confess it before a man or no, you are convinced of this before God. You know it in your hearts. It is with a view to be admired that you thus adorn yourselves, and that you would not be at the pains of the world, if there were none to see you but God and His holy angels.

Now, the more you indulge in this foolish desire, the more it grows upon you. You have vanity enough by nature, but by thus indulging it, you increase it a hundredfold. Oh, please stop.

Aim at pleasing God alone, and all these ornaments will quickly drop off. John Wesley. He understood that men wanted to draw attention to themselves.

You know, it's no different now than it was 200 years later, is it? You know, God says in His Word, He fashioneth our hearts alike. And that doesn't just mean today. That means the hearts of men.

And so we can look at truths like this from godly men of another era and still see the truth in them, and they still bear witness in our hearts. So what do we want to have? We do not want to have clothing that draws attention to itself or to ourself. I remember we had a young lady staying with us once in our home, and we were talking one night about clothing and modesty and dress, different topics.

And she said something that I found very interesting. I was blessed by it. She said, you know, as I choose my clothing, as I choose the material before I make it or if I have to buy something, as I look in my closet, I always ask myself, will this clothing put me in the foreground or in the background? Will it cause me to stand out or will it help me to stand up for Jesus? And you know, that was such a simple application, but I really appreciated that idea of modesty.

And this was a young girl. She was only about 20, but she already had the heartbeat of this, I think, a little bit, didn't she? She understood. As I look at this clothing, is it going to put me in the foreground or keep me in the background? Is it going to cause me to stand out or will it help me to stand up for the cause of

Christ? So I was blessed when I heard her say that because it went in line here with the rest of this verse and the rest of the verse over in 1 Peter 3 because instead of drawing attention to ourselves, we should have, the Bible says, the ornament of what? The ornament of a meek, a meek and quiet spirit, as it says in 1 Peter 3.4. Am I meek? Can I ask myself that question? Am I meek? You know, Jesus only described Himself that one way.

As the meek and lowly Jesus. The meek and lowly Jesus. Do you know when they wanted to mock Jesus, do you know what they did to Him? They took away His meek clothes.

They put on Him what? A rich piece of scarlet, royal, expensive, costly array, drawing attention to Himself clothing. And the Bible says it mocked Him to put that clothing on Him because it mocked who He really was. He wouldn't have worn that clothing.

That wasn't for Him. But to mock Him, they put that kind of clothing on Him because He was the meek and lowly Jesus. May we be meek and lowly as our Jesus is.

Now there's another definition of modesty that comes under this principle that I do want to bring out. Modest as in not drawing attention to self. And as we look up the word modesty in the Greek, and it gives several different definitions, one of them that we do need to give here is modesty, we can almost think of it as the opposite of something.

Modesty is orderly, calm, and peaceable. We heard about peaceable this morning. Quiet, I guess, and peaceable.

We heard about from Brother Aaron. Well, modesty, there is a quiet, calm, peaceableness to it. And the opposite of that, one of the definitions, the opposite of that of immodesty is disorder set in disarray, disconcertant, chaotic.

Have you ever looked at the clothing of this world? Even if it covers someone's body, it could be immodest because it could be discordant, out of order. The colors mixed, matched, swirled around, stirred around, and just off, and not in an order. God is an orderly God, isn't He? He set an orderly universe in place.

We even teach that in our homeschool to our children. We say, you know, two plus two is four. Do you know why? Because God is an orderly God, and it's always that way.

God has set certain things in order. He is an orderly God, and He wants things done orderly. He wants our appearance to be neat and orderly, doesn't He? That is part of modesty, isn't it? We're not preaching anything today to be... We're not preaching a poverty gospel to be dirty.

That's not what I'm saying. Please don't misinterpret anything I've said today. It is orderly.

It is orderly. It's not disorderly. It's not chaotic.

You know, and this can be expressed even in coats. If you notice coats today, you get these big coats, and one of them will have a quadrant or a quarter that will be fuchsia. And this one will be black, and this one green, and this one gray.

There's something about that that doesn't line up with modesty the way God defines it and the application that we need to have. So may we be careful here, and we may be humble and orderly and not draw attention. Remember, our principle here is to not draw attention to ourselves, whether it's our clothing or

even our coat, because we're talking about apparel here, aren't we? All of our apparel.

We're not going to leave anything out, are we? God doesn't want us to, so we don't want to either. The eighth principle is not costly or expensive. Not costly or expensive.

Of course, we see that clearly here again in 1 Timothy 2.9, the end of the verse, where it says, not with voided hair or gold, which is expensive, or pearls, which is expensive, or He says it plainly here, costly array. The word array here again is apparel. Not just a shirt, not just a pair of pants, but array.

The whole package. Choose whatever. Costly array.

Let's also turn over to Acts 20 for a little insight here from Paul on apparel. Acts 20.33 Paul says, I have coveted... Notice the word covet. I have coveted no man's silver or gold.

We can understand that. But look what he puts. He doesn't put houses or livestock, which was usually in that day used to measure wealth, wasn't it? But instead he says, or what? Apparel.

Apparel can be very expensive, very costly. Achan coveted a goodly Babylonian garment. You think that was an inexpensive garment or a costly garment? It was costly.

I'm sure it was. And it brought God's displeasure. It brought God's displeasure.

You know, the clothing industry, as I was looking at this, I mentioned earlier, I looked in some reference books. One other thing I learned that was interesting is the clothing or the fashion industry in this country alone, forget worldwide, but in this country alone is a multi, multi-billion dollar industry. Huge.

Staggering. Staggering. In this state alone, in Pennsylvania State alone, it is a two billion dollar industry.

In Pennsylvania alone. In our neighbor to the north, New York State, it is a four billion dollar industry. In just these two states, six billion dollars is spent a year on fashion and clothing.

Six billion dollars a year. That staggers my eyes. It's beyond belief almost, isn't it? But it's done.

Every year. Year in and year out. And do we as the children of God want to line the pockets of the fashion industry, the clothing industry? Or spend large sums of money on the finest apparel which money can buy when it can be useful in God's kingdom? We're a missionary church, aren't we? Praise God, we're a missionary church.

Oh, let's don't line our closets with clothes either. With costly array and expensive clothing. There's much work to be done out there.

May God help us to be as conservative as possible. And again, I'm not preaching a poverty gospel. I don't want to be misunderstood.

But you know, there's a balance here that God wants us to walk in. There's a truth here, isn't there? Not costly array. There's another caution I'd like to give here on this principle and that is we don't want to violate one principle for the sake of another, do we? We can be tempted to do that.

You can go to a garage sale and see a dress there that would fit one of your little girls. It's just her size and it's only 50 cents or a dollar. And you buy it.

But you get it home. It's way too short. And you think, well, but it was only 50 cents.

I'll go ahead and put it on her. But it's immodest. We don't want to violate one principle for the sake of another.

We don't want to hold one up necessarily higher than the other. We need the Spirit of God to help us make these applications. And that's the way it is with principles, isn't it? We have to look at this thing and pick it up.

Men, remember, as spiritual leaders of the home, you must be involved. You must help. You must make the proper teaching from God's heart to our heart to the hearts of our family.

In conclusion, turn with me over for another verse here in Zephaniah. Zephaniah 1. Very interesting verse here. I'll read verses 7 and 8. Hold thy peace at the presence of the Lord God for the day of the Lord... Now, the day of the Lord we know is a day of judgment, right? And that's what is being pronounced here, a day of judgment, okay? For the day of the Lord is at hand, for the Lord hath prepared a sacrifice.

He hath bid His guest. And it shall come to pass in the day of the Lord's sacrifice that I will punish... Look who he's going to punish. I will punish the princes and the king's children and all... not just the princes and the king's children, and all such are clothed with strange apparel.

Now, if we look at what's going on here in Israel, we realize that the day of judgment is coming. And we know that God's promises are not slack. He will do as He says.

He will come. He did come, didn't He? And the children of Israel bring punishment. And we know as we look at this with New Testament eyes, we have an application here.

We have a principle here. There is something here as God. He gives here in Zephaniah and other places in Joel, lists of certain types of people and certain types of sin that grieved the heart of God, that God was not happy about.

He was displeased. And He knew judgment needed to come for the good of the people. He needed to get their attention.

He was not happy. God was going to punish them. Would you think that in that list He would include something about all who wear strange apparel? That doesn't sound right at first to our ears.

I know when I read this at first, I thought, what is God saying? All those that wear strange apparel. Well, first of all, strange means alien, outlandish, foreign, different, very wonderful. That's what strange here means.

It means alien, outlandish, foreign, different, very wonderful. And see, what God really sees, it's not just the piece of cloth that they had on. He knew that they had given up.

They had turned away from their normal dress, the dress of Israel, the dress that was pleasing unto God, the dress that He had given them under the covenant. And they had gone and they had turned their hearts to other things. And see, it's their hearts that He's after, isn't it? It's always our hearts that God is after.

And here it's no different. He knows that those that have on strange apparel, they're wearing out their beliefs, their feelings, and their approach to life. In other words, their heart is on their sleeve, so to speak.

And God sees their heart, but He sees what they have on, and He sees this strange apparel. He says, those that I'm going to punish are all that have on strange apparel. This should wake us up.

Are we sitting in church? Are there Christians sitting in churches today wearing strange apparel? Wearing strange apparel. God knows that the apparel that we wear reveals our hearts. So, I think the thing I want to say here is that our heart is also part of our attitude.

And I know that God wants us to have the right attitude. An attitude toward the Word of God. An attitude toward Him.

That is a heart that is bowed. A heart that is ready to receive what God has to say. And one of the principles I gave at the beginning, again, was to exhort the men to get involved in this.

And as I said earlier, if you get nothing out of it, men, other than this and the other principle, be the spiritual leader of your home. You must get involved in the clothing decisions. Because it's really a heart issue.

And you see this in God's Word. God knows our hearts. He knows what strange apparel really means, doesn't He? He knows what's behind that strange apparel.

He sees. So, guard over the hearts of your family. Set these principles or others that you may get from the Word of God in order, in order, in your home.

Make the specific applications you need to do in your home. And may God help us. May we as a church make the specific applications that we need to make.

No, we do not want to make a list of rules. We do not want to have a list posted on a board. You can wear this.

You can't wear that. That is not our heart's desire. Our heart's desire is to have a heart after God and to be free from the fashions of this world and be free to look at God's Word and make the applications so that we can encourage one another.

Yes, we can admonish one another. And yes, even in love, rebuke one another in all areas of the Christian walk including dress. Because don't forget, the rebuke of a friend is better than the kiss of an enemy, isn't it? And so may we be mature in this area.

May we be mature in a godly church willing to hear from God and the principles that He has in His Word. And may He direct us in a path that is godly and holy that we may be holy even as He is holy. May God add His blessing to this Word.

Thank you.

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