

## ~MODESTY (342)

[Hebrew, *tsa-na`*; Greek, *ai-dos*]

- .. Before God
- .. In What To Boast
- .. God's Regard For Modest Ones
- .. Do Not Go Beyond The Things Written
- .. Jesus Christ's Example
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- An awareness of one's limitations, also chastity or personal purity. The Hebrew root verb *tsa-na`* is rendered, be modest, in,
- He has told you, O earthling man, what is good. And what is Yehowah asking back from you but to exercise justice and to love kindness and to be **modest** in walking with your God? (**Micah 6:8**)
- He has told you, O earthling man, what is good. And what is Yehowah asking back from you but to exercise justice and to love kindness and to be **modest** in walking with your God? (**Micah 6:8**)
- Its only occurrence. The related adjective *tsa-nu'a`*, **modest** occurs in;
- Has presumptuousness come? Then dishonor will come, but wisdom is with the **modest** ones. (**Proverbs 11:2**)
- Where it is **contrasted** with **presumptuousness**. Although some modern scholars believe that the sense of this root is, **be cautious, careful, judicious**, many take it to mean, **be modest**.
- For example, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* by Brown, Driver, and Briggs, 1980, p. 857, says: **That the root conveys the idea of one who is retiring, modest, or humble. Modesty is a translation of the Greek *ai-dos*'.**
- Likewise I desire the women to adorn themselves in well-arranged dress, with **modesty** and soundness of mind, not with styles of hair braiding and gold or pearls or very expensive garb. (**1 Timothy 2:9**)
- *Ai-dos'* used in a moral sense expresses the thought of **reverence, awe, respect** for the feeling or opinion of others or for one's own

conscience and so expresses shame, self-respect, a sense of **honor, sobriety, and moderation**. [A Greek-English Lexicon by H. Liddell and R. Scott, revised by H. Jones, Oxford, 1968, p. 36]

- Comparing *ai-dos'* with the more common Greek word for **shame**, *ai-skhy'ne*.
- But God chose the foolish things of the world, that he might put the wise men to shame, and God chose the weak things of the world, that he might put the strong things to shame. (**1 Corinthians 1:27**)
- And their finish is destruction, and their god is their belly, and their glory consists in their shame, and they have their minds upon things on the earth. (**Philippians 3:19**)
- Lexicographer **Richard Trench** says that *ai-dos'* is the nobler word, and implies the **nobler motive**, in it is involved an innate moral repugnance to the doing of the dishonorable act, which moral repugnance scarcely or not at all exists in the *ai-skhy'ne*.
- He states that *ai-dos'* would always restrain a good man from an unworthy act, while *ai-skhy'ne* might sometimes restrain a bad one. [Synonyms of the New Testament, London, 1961, pp. 64,65]
- Thus, the conscience is especially involved in the restraining effect implied in *ai-dos'*.

## .. Before God

- With regard to **modesty**, in the sense of a proper estimate of one's own self, the Scriptures give much counsel. Wisdom is with the **modest** ones, says the proverb. This is because the person manifesting **modesty** avoids the dishonor that accompanies presumptuousness or boastfulness.
- Has presumptuousness come? Then dishonor will come, but wisdom is with the **modest** ones. (**Proverbs 11:2**)
- He is following the course approved by Yehowah and is therefore wise.
- Trust in Yehowah with all your heart and do not lean upon your own understanding. (**Proverbs 3:5**)

- In all your ways take notice of him, and he himself will make your paths straight. (**Proverbs 3:6**)
- The fear of Yehowah means the hating of bad. Self-exaltation and pride and the bad way and the perverse mouth I have hated. (**Proverbs 8:13**)
- I have counsel and practical wisdom. I, understanding, I have mightiness. (**Proverbs 8:14**)
- Yehowah loves and grants to such one wisdom. One of the requirements for gaining Yehowah's favor is to be **modest** in walking with him.
- He has told you, O earthling man, what is good. And what is Yehowah asking back from you but to exercise justice and to love kindness and to be **modest in walking with your God**? (**Micah 6:8**)
- This involves a proper appreciation of one's position before God, **recognizing ones sinful state** as contrasted with Yehowah's greatness, purity, and holiness.
- It also means that a person should recognize himself as a creature of Yehowah, altogether dependent on Him and subject to His sovereignty. Eve was one who failed to appreciate this.
- She stepped out for complete independence and self-determination. **Modesty** would have helped her to dismiss from her mind the thought of becoming, like God, knowing good and bad.
- At this the serpent said to the woman; You positively will not die. (**Genesis 3:4**)
- For God knows that in the very day of your eating from it your eyes are bound to be opened and you are bound to be like God, knowing good and bad. (**Genesis 3:5**)
- The apostle Paul counsels against overconfidence and presumptuousness, saying; Keep working out your own salvation with fear and trembling.
- Consequently, my beloved ones, in the way that you have always obeyed, not during my presence only, but now much more readily during my absence, keep working out your own salvation with

fear and trembling. (**Philippians 2:12**)

### **.. In What To Boast**

- **Boastfulness is the opposite of **modesty**. The rule is, may a stranger, and not your own mouth, praise you, may a foreigner, and not your own lips, do so.**
- **May a stranger, and not your own mouth, praise you, may a foreigner, and not your own lips, do so. (**Proverbs 27:2**)**
- **Yehowah's own words are;**
- **This is what Yehowah has said; Let not the wise man brag about himself because of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man brag about himself because of his mightiness. Let not the rich man brag about himself because of his riches. (**Jeremiah 9:23**)**
- **But let the one bragging about himself brag about himself because of this very thing, **the having of insight and the having of knowledge of me, that I am Yehowah**, the One exercising loving-kindness, justice and righteousness in the earth, for in these things I do take delight, is the utterance of Yehowah. (**Jeremiah 9:24**)**
- **Better is the one lightly esteemed but having a servant than the one glorifying himself but in want of bread. (**Proverbs 12:9**)**
- **Pride is before a crash, and a haughty spirit before stumbling. (**Proverbs 16:18**)**
- **Better is it to be lowly in spirit with the meek ones than to divide spoil with the self-exalted ones. (**Proverbs 16:19**)**

### **.. God's Regard For Modest Ones**

- **The apostle Paul shows God's regard for the modest ones and also cites his own conduct in the congregation as exemplary of such modest attitude. He wrote to the Christians at Corinth:**
- **For you behold his calling of you, brothers, that not many wise in a fleshly way were called, not many powerful, not many of noble birth, but God chose the foolish things of the world, that he might put the wise men to shame, and God chose the weak things of the world, that**

he might put the strong things to shame, and God chose the ignoble things of the world and the things looked down upon, the things that are not, that he might bring to nothing the things that are, in order, that no flesh might boast in the sight of God just as it is written. He that boasts, let him boast in Yehowah.

- And so I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come with an extravagance of speech or of wisdom declaring the sacred secret of God to you. For I decided not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ, and him impaled.

- And I came to you in weakness and in fear and with much trembling, and my speech and what I preached were not with persuasive words of wisdom but with a demonstration of spirit and power, that your faith might be, not in men's wisdom, but in God's power.

- For you behold his calling of you, brothers, that not many wise in a fleshly way were called, not many powerful, not many of noble birth. (1 Corinthians 1:26)

- That your faith might be, not in men's wisdom, but in God's power. (1 Corinthians 2:5)

## **.. Do Not Go Beyond The Things Written**

- Later in his letter Paul emphasized the need for **modesty** on the part of all, just as he himself had displayed **modesty**, a proper evaluation of himself.

- The Corinthians had fallen into the trap of boasting in certain men, such as Apollos, and even in Paul himself. Paul corrected them, telling them that they were fleshly, not spiritual, in doing this, and said; Now, brothers, these things I have transferred so as to apply to myself and Apollos for your good, that in our case you may learn the rule:

- Do not go beyond the things that are written that is, do not go beyond the limits that the Scriptures set for human's in their attitude toward one another and toward themselves, in order, that you may not be puffed up individually in favor of the one against the other.

- For who makes you to differ from another? Indeed, what do you have that you did not receive? If, now, you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as though you did not receive it?
- Keeping this in mind will prevent haughtiness and boastfulness in regard to oneself or another as to family descent, race, color or nationality, physical beauty, ability, knowledge, mental brilliance, and so forth.
- Now, brothers, these things I have transferred so as to apply to myself and Apollos for your good, that in our case you may learn the rule; Do not go beyond the things that are written, in order, that you may not be puffed up individually in favor of the one against the other. (1 Corinthians 4:6)
- For who makes you to differ from another? Indeed, what do you have that you did not receive? If, now, you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as though you did not receive it? (1 Corinthians 4:7)

## • Jesus Christ's Example

- Jesus Christ is the finest example of **modesty**. He told his disciples that he could not do a single thing of his own initiative, but only what he beheld the Father doing, and that his Father is greater than he is.
- Therefore, in answer, Jesus went on to say to them; Most truly I say to you, The Son cannot do a single thing of his own initiative, but only what he beholds the Father doing. For whatever things that One does, these things the Son also does in like manner. (John 5:19)
- I cannot do a single thing of my own initiative, just as I hear, I judge, and the judgment that I render is righteous, because I seek, not my own will, but the will of him that sent me. (John 5:30)
- You heard that I said to you, I am going away and I am coming back to you. If you loved me, you would rejoice that I am going my way to the Father, because the Father is greater than I am. (John 14:28)

- **Jesus refused to accept titles not due him. When a ruler called him, Good Teacher, Jesus replied; Why do you call me good? Nobody is good, except one, God.**
- **And a certain ruler questioned him, saying; Good Teacher, by doing what shall I inherit everlasting life? ([Luke 18:18](#))**
- **Jesus said to him; Why do you call me good? Nobody is good, except one, God. ([Luke 18:19](#))**
- **And he told his disciples that as slaves to Yehowah they should not feel puffed up, either over things accomplished in God's service or because of their worth to God.**
- **Rather, they should have the attitude, when they had done all the things assigned to them, that, we are good-for-nothing slaves. What we have done is what we ought to have done.**
- **So you, also, when you have done all the things assigned to you, say; We are good-for-nothing slaves. What we have done is what we ought to have done. ([Luke 17:10](#))**
- **Additionally, the Lord Jesus Christ, as a perfect man on earth, was superior to his imperfect disciples and also possessed great authority from his Father.**
- **Yet, in dealing with his disciples, he was considerate of their limitations. He employed delicacy in training them and propriety of speech toward them. He did not put upon them more than they could bear at the time.**
- **I have many things yet to say to you, but you are not able to bear them at present. ([John 16:12](#))**
- **Come to me, all you who are toiling and loaded down, and I will refresh you. ([Matthew 11:28](#))**
- **Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am mild-tempered and lowly in heart, and you will find refreshment for your souls. ([Matthew 11:29](#))**
- **For my yoke is kindly and my load is light. ([Matthew 11:30](#))**
- **And he came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and he**

said to Peter; Could you men not so much as watch one hour with me? ([Matthew 26:40](#))

- Keep on the watch and pray continually, that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit, of course, is eager, but the flesh is weak. ([Matthew 26:41](#))

## · In Dress And Other Possessions

- In instructing the overseer Timothy as to seeing that proper conduct was observed in the congregation, Paul said,
- Likewise I desire the women to adorn themselves in well-arranged dress, with **modesty** and soundness of mind, not with styles of hair braiding and gold or pearls or very expensive garb. ([1 Timothy 2:9](#))
- But in the way that befits women professing to reverence God, namely, through good works. ([1 Timothy 2:10](#))
- Here the apostle does not counsel against neatness and good, pleasing appearance, for he recommends, well-arranged dress. But he shows the impropriety of vanity and ostentatiousness in dress calling attention to oneself or to one's means of life thereby.
- Also **modesty** relating to respect for the feelings of others and to self-respect and a sense of honor is involved. The Christian's manner of dress should not be shocking to decency, to the moral susceptibilities of the congregation, causing offense to some.
- This counsel as to dress would shed further light on Yehowah's attitude toward the proper view and use of other material possessions that a Christian may have.

**See Also HUMILITY**