

# ADORNMENT

## Youth Bible Study

### God's Standard

- What does God want us to put off and put on?

### God's "Standard":

- **Strong's H5251** – something lifted up; a token to be seen far off
  - Another word for standard is the word banner. In Bible times a banner was set up on high mountains, especially in case of an invasion; it showed people where to assemble. Other words for banner are ensign, flag, or sign.
  - A standard or banner was a flag or symbol that was carried into battle for the purpose of identification on a battlefield. The man who carried the standard was called a standard-bearer. The loss of a standard was considered a disgrace, so that standard-bearers and their escorts were regarded as men of the greatest honor and bravery, expected to sacrifice their lives in defense of their standards when necessary, and to set an example of valor at all times.
  - God's people today have been given a banner that is to be displayed. They are spiritual standard-bearers. The standard was carried for the "purpose of identification" in Bible times.

### "Adornment" Definitions

- **Dictionary:** something that adds attractiveness
- **Wikipedia:** An adornment is generally an accessory or ornament worn to enhance the beauty or status of the wearer. They are often worn to embellish, enhance, or distinguish the wearer, and to define cultural, social, or religious status within a specific community. When worn to show economic status, the items are often either rare or prohibitively expensive to others. Adornments are usually colorful and worn to attract attention.
  - **Items of adornment:** "These include cosmetics, jewelry, clothing accessories, facial hair, fingernail modification, piercing, lip plates, tattooing, braiding, and head gear" (Wikipedia).
- **Strong's Concordance:**
  - **G2889 ("adorning"):** ornaments, decorations
    - "whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning" (1 Peter 3:3)
  - **G2885 ("adorn"):** to put in proper order, arrange
    - "women adorn themselves in modest apparel" (1 Timothy 2:9)
      - dress in a way that makes the Christian standard attractive
    - "adorn the doctrine" (1 Timothy 2:10)
      - live in a way that makes the doctrine attractive
  - (Note: there are other forms of this word in the Old Testament)

### Forms of the Word Adorn – Some Bible References:

- Isaiah 61:10 – "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of

righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels."

- Look up the following words in Strong's Concordance:
  - "ornaments" – With a tiara, head-dress, diadem (dressed in the manner of a priest)
  - "jewels" – "The word rendered <jewels> here (כִּלְיֹת keli'yot) does not of necessity mean merely jewels. It properly means an apparatus, implement, utensil, vessel; and then dress, ornament of any kind; and would be better rendered here, in a more general sense, bridal ornaments" (Albert Barnes' Notes on the New Testament & Strong's Concordance).
- Jeremiah 31:4 – "Again I will build thee, and thou shalt be built, O virgin of Israel: thou shalt again be adorned with thy tabrets, and shalt go forth in the dances of them that make merry."
  - "tabrets" – musical instruments; very ornamental
- Luke 21:5 – "And as some spake of the temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts."
  - speaking of the appearance of the temple
  - expensive stones
  - "It would seem that . . . in the temple of Jerusalem . . . that the people, to express their gratitude to God, had suspended on the pillars and perches of the temple gifts and offerings" (Albert Barnes' Notes on the New Testament).
- 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."
- 1 Peter 3:3-5 – "Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; 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. For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands."
- Revelation 21:2 – "And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."
- **Popular Opinions Concerning Worldly Adornment**
  - "The outside doesn't matter as long as the inside is right."
  - "God looks on the heart."
  - "God doesn't care what you wear."
  - "It is all right as long as it is in moderation."
  - "It is expected."
  - "You will not fit in."
  - "You look plain without it."
  - "Everyone else is doing it."

- **Adornment – What to Put Off & What to Put On**
  - Why does one wear worldly adornment?
    - "In ancient times bodily ornamentation were associated with pagan worship practices and personal self-decoration for beauty. Today, bodily ornamentation are mostly for self-beautification and sexual appeal" (Christian Dress & Adornment).
  - What is the **purpose** of adornment?
    - Something that adds attractiveness (physically or spiritually)
    - **Put off** – "that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel" (1 Peter 3:3)
      - things that are only worn to attract attention to you physically
    - **Put on** – "modest apparel" (1 Timothy 2:9); "meek and quiet spirit" (1 Peter 3:4)
      - put on things that let Christ shine through you (spiritually attractive)
- **Does It Matter What You Wear?**
  - **Clothing and adornment reflects character**
    - Who are you modeling after in your clothing choices?
    - Who are you modeling after in your adornment?
    - What do your clothing choices or adornment choices say about you?
  - **Adornment is a reflection of what is in your heart**
  - **Compare the 2 women described in Revelation**
    - They are differentiated by their dress and adornment
      - **The church** – "And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars" (Revelation 12:1).
        - sun, moon, and stars = represent truth, light
        - "And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints" (Revelation 19:8).
      - **Babylon (false religion)** – "And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication" (Revelation 17:4).
        - Babylon is also called "Jezebel"
        - How was Jezebel's appearance described?
          - "painted her face" (2 Kings 9:30)
  - **Adornment: the Wedding Ring**
    - **History of the Wedding Ring**
      - Generally believed to have begun with the Egyptians
        - In ancient Egypt, where the ring comes from, it also represented the sun, great symbol of adoration since it was the sign of Ra, the sun god (History and Symbolism of the Wedding Ring)
      - Circle – represents eternal (never ending) love
        - "This is an un-Scriptural symbolism, for Romans 7:1-3 declares that marriage is

- only for as long as both of the marriage partners live physically" (Marriage and the Wedding Ring).
- Why wedding rings were worn
    - **ownership** – showed that the man possessed the woman
    - **status** – ring (in ancient times) denoted one's wealth
    - **submission** – ring placed on woman's left hand, her weaker side (indicates submission)
  - "From the Encyclopaedia Britannica (11th edition, Vol. 23, p. 351) we are told that "this use of the ring which was thus a purely secular origin received ecclesiastical sanction . . . from the eleventh century." This was the **age of great spiritual darkness**, when the church was practicing much corruption and many pagan customs, some of which were never dropped by many of the Protestant reformers" (Marriage and the Wedding Ring).
    - **Pope Gregory 1**, in A.D. 860 decreed that as a required statement of nuptial intent, the groom to be **had to give his intended an engagement ring**. He further decreed the ring be of gold to signify financial sacrifice (Wedding Rings/Jewelry).
  - **Engagement/Wedding Rings in America**
    - It wasn't until the late 19th century, after the discovery of mines in South Africa drove the price of diamonds down, that Americans regularly began to give (or receive) diamond engagement rings.
      - More affordable
      - (Before that, some betrothed women got thimbles instead of rings.)
    - In 1919, De Beers experienced a drop in diamond sales that lasted for two decades.
      - In the 1930s, it turned to the firm N. W. Ayer to devise a national advertising campaign—still relatively rare at the time—to promote its diamonds.
      - Ayer convinced Hollywood actresses to wear diamond rings in public, and, according to Edward Jay Epstein in *The Rise and Fall of the Diamond*, encouraged fashion designers to discuss the new "trend" toward diamond rings.
      - [http://www.slate.com/articles/news\\_and\\_politics/weddings/2007/06/diamonds\\_are\\_a\\_girls\\_worst\\_friend.html](http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/weddings/2007/06/diamonds_are_a_girls_worst_friend.html)
    - "A diamond is forever" (1948) campaign to increase sales
    - when did men began wearing wedding rings? (more commonly)
      - WW2
      - a reminder of the wife back home
      - a big campaign by jewelry companies
  - **Wedding Rings Rejected By**
    - The Methodists followed the teachings of John Wesley that wedding rings were pagan and should not be worn.
    - Mennonites likewise rejected the wedding ring as pagan.
    - All early Baptists in America rejected use of the pagan wedding ring.

- The original Seventh Day Adventists abstained from use of the wedding ring because of its pagan origin.
- Sixth-seal Church of God (D. S. Warner) preached against outward adornment: wedding rings, ear rings, lipstick on women, or following "worldly fashions" (Wikipedia)
- All the holiness movements, including the more devout Apostolic Pentecostals rejected wedding rings as pagan.
- There was a time in America when the majority of Christians did not wear jewelry of any kind including earrings and wedding rings.
- The emphasis on personal holiness fell into decline in the later 1800s, and from that time, wedding rings became more and more accepted (Jewelry/Wedding Rings).
- **Reasons Given for Wearing a Wedding Ring**
  - **"Lets other people know you are married/taken"**
    - For women, the wearing of modest dresses also signals to unbelievers that the wearer is dedicated to righteous living, which is readily understood to include marital fidelity. As for men, neat and modest attire coupled with discreet conduct does more to protect one from the improper advances of women than a wedding band. Women can readily tell by a man's eyes and actions whether or not he will respond to their advances. It is my experience that a man who freely speaks of his wife and children in a respectful manner will rarely be faced with advances from immoral women. (Should Christians Wear the Wedding Band?)
      - Consider: Find opportunities to speak of your husband/wife/children in a conversation
    - "Would you rather be protected from improper advances by members of the opposite gender by wearing the wedding band, which identifies you with popular culture and its moral indecency, or by wearing godly clothing and having a godly lifestyle which signal that you have convictions that set you apart from popular culture?" (Should Christians Wear the Wedding Band?)
  - **"It is expected"**
    - The Bible speaks against following the customs of the world (Leviticus 18:3-4; Jeremiah 10:2-3)
  - **"Shows your commitment to your spouse"**
    - Biblical definition of "commitment" or the world's definition?
    - What is the world's definition of commitment? (Discuss/Consider)
    - What is the Bible's definition of commitment?
      - Husbands love your wives (Ephesians 5:25)
      - Wives submit to your husbands (Ephesians 5:22)
      - Man shall leave his father & mother (Genesis 2:24)
      - Bible definition includes **actions** to show commitment
        - not an **object** (ring)
    - wedding ring usage hasn't helped the divorce rate

- **"It helps you to fit in"**
  - Is this in accordance with the life of a Christian?
  - "And be not conformed to this world" (Romans 12:2)
    - "Do not be shaped by this world"
    - "And fashion not yourselves like unto this world"
- **"Reminds you that you are married"** (this is an actual reason!)
  - why do you need to be reminded?
- **Concerns About the Wedding Ring**
  - "When the wedding ring is worn because of its supposed or real symbolisms, it opens the way for the wearing of other jewelry, for there are all kinds of rings and pins which are said to have symbolic significance" (Marriage and the Wedding Ring).
  - **Missed Opportunities to Witness**
    - "The absence of the wedding ring on the part of men and women of integrity and moral purity may also at times provide invaluable opportunities for witnessing to those who may wonder why they do not follow the customs of the world. Modest appearance, good behavior, and pure speech do much to motivate attitudes of purity" (Marriage and the Wedding Ring).
      - "It is the testimony of those who have observed jewelry being accepted in the church that, in a least some of these cases, the door was opened by the adoption of the wedding band" (Should Christians Wear the Wedding Band?).
  - **It can become a contest (cause for envy)**
    - who has the biggest, most expensive
    - is this good stewardship?
    - is this modest apparel? (1 Timothy 2:9)
    - is this costly array? (1 Timothy 2:9)
  - **It can be addicting**
    - "Soon a mother ring, promise ring, graduation ring, grandmother ring, etc. are accepted. After that the mindset moved to – if you already have 3 or 4 rings why not put a 'ring' around your wrist, and then your ankles (bracelets), and then your neck (necklace) ..." (Is It Wrong to Wear Wedding Rings?).
  - **Other**
    - Nuns considered themselves married to Christ; thus, many of them wear a wedding ring
    - Priests consider themselves married to the church; some priests wear a wedding band
    - The wedding ring is supposed to work as an "anti-cheating device" (Psychology Today)
  - **Costly**
    - The average engagement ring costs \$5,200, and luxury engagement rings cost an average of \$13,500 (A New/Old Approach to the Wedding Ring).
    - "One Month's Salary" Rule – has changed to two/three month's salary
      - Who set this guideline? Diamond Marketers
      - Online Engagement Ring Calculators – to help you know how much to spend

- new couples spend the first few years of their marriage paying off the ring (not to mention other wedding costs)
- **Twitter Post**
  - Woman posted picture of her very small engagement ring:
    - "Imagine finally being proposed to and this is the ring (small ring) you're given"
    - Reply: "Are you marrying the ring or the man?"
- **Headline and Article**
  - Woman rejects elaborate proposal because the "ring was too small"
  - "While diamonds may be forever, marriages that begin with expensive bling are less likely to last long term, according to a recent study from Emory University. In the research, two economics professors polled 3,000 American adults who were presently or had previously been married, discovering that individuals who spend serious cash on engagement rings and the wedding ceremony were more likely to get divorced" (Fox News).
- **Consider:** if we wear wedding rings, are we adopting something that has pagan origins AND giving it a Christian meaning?
- **Of Interest**
  - "There was a minor outcry when Prince William announced that he would not be wearing a wedding ring following his marriage to Kate Middleton, as if he was committing some modern solecism. In fact, he is merely continuing the British upper-class male tradition not to" (The Telegraph).
    - "Before Prince William married Kate Middleton in 2011, the palace issued a statement, noting that the couple had discussed it and that the prince's decision not to wear a ring was 'personal preference.' The statement continued, 'He doesn't even wear a signet ring — and decided he didn't want to'" (New York Times).
  - Some do not wear wedding rings due to reactions to metal
  - Discuss/Consider: when can wearing a wedding ring be dangerous? (On the job)
- **Taking Off the Wedding Band** (Source:Huffington Post)
  - When angry, many couples report taking off their rings
    - (what about eternal love?)
  - "Unfortunately rings are easily removed and this can cause trust issues and confusion among couples."
  - One in eight of those polled said thought they would be judged as "boring" if people knew they were married, while more than a third blamed it on work and said they had a better chance of winning business if they did not wear a band.
  - Men were most likely to take their ring off before socializing, while women were more likely to remove theirs after a fight.
  - A third of couples said they would be more confident their partner would not cheat on them if they wore a ring as it would be a reminder of their commitment.
  - Some people thought their wedding ring was seen as a challenge by the opposite

sex. Men said they got more attention from women after they started wearing their ring, while women said they received less attention.

- "The Bible is completely silent on wedding bands per se. The reason is simple. As far as we know this custom was not widely practiced during Bible times" (Should Christians Wear the Wedding Band?).
- **Scriptures to Study**
  - Isaiah 3:18 – "In that day the Lord will take away the bravery of their tinkling ornaments about their feet, and their cauls, and their round tires like the moon."
  - Exodus 33:5 – " For the Lord had said unto Moses, Say unto the children of Israel, Ye are a stiffnecked people: I will come up into the midst of thee in a moment, and consume thee: therefore now put off thy ornaments from thee, that I may know what to do unto thee."
    - can we find where God said to put them back on?
  - Jeremiah 4:30 – "And when thou art spoiled, what wilt thou do? Though thou clothest thyself with crimson, though thou deckest thee with ornaments of gold, though thou rentest thy face with painting, in vain shalt thou make thyself fair; thy lovers will despise thee, they will seek thy life."
    - "spoiled" – when destruction is coming, what will you do?
    - speaking to backslidden, rebellious Israel
  - 1 Corinthians 6:20 – "For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."
    - "glorify" – bring honor
    - another definition for adorn is "to embellish with honor" (Strong's Concordance)
  - Ezekiel 23:40 – "And furthermore, that ye have sent for men to come from far, unto whom a messenger was sent; and, lo, they came: for whom thou didst wash thyself, paintedst thy eyes, and deckedst thyself with ornaments."
    - this verse is speaking of harlots and idolaters
  - Genesis 35:1-4 – "And God said unto Jacob, Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there: and make there an altar unto God, that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother. Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that were with him, Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments: And let us arise, and go up to Bethel; and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went. And they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods which were in their hand, and all their earrings which were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the oak which was by Shechem."
    - consider: foreign gods (idols) and adornment grouped (buried) together
    - Bethel means "house of God"
    - not just removed but buried (hid under the oak)
    - if they were just removed or laid down – easier to pick back up later



- **John Wesley ("On Dress" sermon)**
  - **(1)** Wesley's first reason is that wearing luxurious clothes and ornaments "engenders pride, and where it is already, increases it. . . . Nothing is more natural than to think ourselves better because we are dressed in better clothes."
    - Wesley illustrates this point by pointing to the many thousands of people in England, not only lords, but also "honest tradesmen," who infer "the superior value of their persons from the value of their clothes."
  - **(2)** Wesley's second reason is that "costly apparel tends to breed and to increase vanity. By vanity I here mean the love and desire of being admired and praised. . . . The more you indulge 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. O stop! Aim at pleasing God alone, and all these ornaments will drop off."
  - **(3)** Wesley's third reason is that "costly apparel naturally tends to beget anger, and every turbulent and uneasy passion. And it is on this very account that the Apostle places this 'outward adorning' in direct opposition to 'the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit.'" By "anger" Wesley apparently means inner tension, for he explains that the "outward adorning" makes it impossible to experience the "inward quietness of spirit."
  - **(4)** Wesley's fourth reason is that "costly apparel tends to create and inflame lust." Apparently Wesley is thinking of immodest dress, which can inflame "base appetite." "You kindle a flame which at the same time consumes both yourself and your admirers."
  - **(5)** Wesley's fifth reason may be called irresponsible stewardship. The money spent to buy costly adornments cannot be used to adorn oneself with such good works as clothing the naked. To those who argued, "I may be as humble in cloth of gold as in sackcloth," Wesley responded, "If you could be as humble when you choose costly as when you choose plain apparel (which I flatly deny), yet you could not be as beneficent, as plenteous in good works. Every shilling which you save from your own apparel you may expend in clothing the naked, and relieving the various necessities of the poor."
  - **(6)** Wesley's sixth reason is that outward adorning undermines "the whole nature of inward holiness." "All the time you are studying this 'outward adorning,' the whole inward work of the Holy Spirit stands still; or rather goes back, though by very gentle and almost imperceptible degrees. Instead of growing more heavenly-minded, you are more and more earthly-minded. If you once had fellowship with the Father and the Son, it now gradually declines; and you insensibly sink deeper and deeper into the spirit of the world, into foolish and hurtful desires, and groveling appetites. All these evils, and a thousand more, spring from one root-indulging yourself in costly apparel."<sup>35</sup>
    - his insights on how the outward adorning affects the inward work of the Holy Spirit
    - <http://www.giveshare.org/bacchiocchi/dressbacchiocchi.html>

- **Questions to Consider**

- Adornment/Jewelry – how much is too much? Where does one draw the line?
- Are earrings okay for women but not for men? How many earrings are too much?
- If a ring in the ears is all right, why not one in the nose?
- Are watches jewelry? (According to "the Insurance Bureau of Canada": First, a watch is never considered jewelry. According to the definition, a piece of jewelry is used only for decoration or adornment. That's simple and logical. For that reason, watches and jewelry are usually listed separately in insurance contracts.)
  - <https://www.nbc-insurance.ca/advice/benefits/smartwatches.html>

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