



# DEFENDER OF TRUTH

## MAGAZINE

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THEME:  
*Keeping Oneself*

Unspotted from the World

James 1:27



# DEFENDER OF TRUTH

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# EDITORIAL

In 1 Peter 5:8, Christians are admonished to be sober and vigilant because our adversary, the devil walks about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. The strategy of the devil is to tempt Christians to sin, thus making us impure.

Keeping oneself unspotted from the World which is the theme of this edition of Defender of Truth magazine will assist Christians to heed the call to soberness and vigilance.

Previous editions of the magazine can now be viewed and downloaded from the website [www.defenderoftruth.com.ng](http://www.defenderoftruth.com.ng). The site also has articles, books, audio and video sermons which the reader will find edifying.

## KEEPING ONESELF UNSPOTTED FROM THE WORLD

by **Afolabi A. Akinyemi**

*Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world. (James 1:27)*

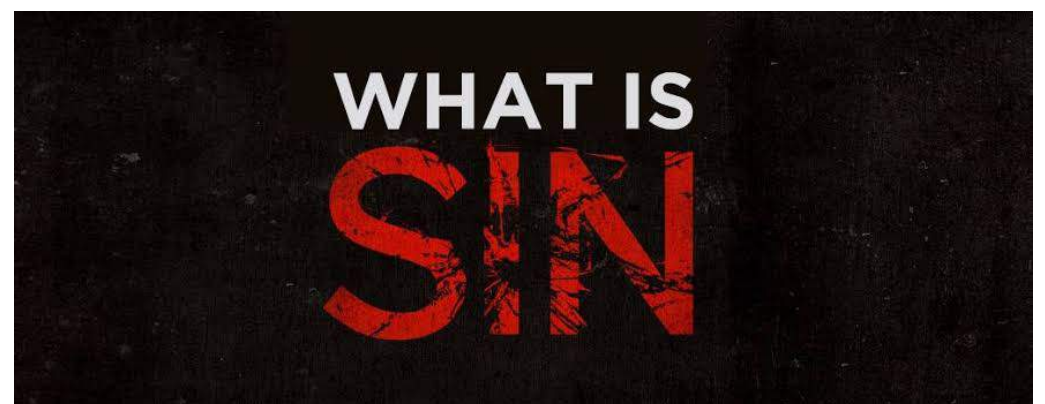
**O**ur text states categorically that to keep oneself unspotted from the world is a prerequisite for pure and undefiled religion before God. The word unspotted is translated in Greek as *aspilos*, “unspotted, unstained”, is used of a lamb, 1 Pet. 1:19; metaphorically, of keeping a commandment without alteration and in the fulfillment of it, 1 Tim. 6:14; of the believer in regard to the world, Jas. 1:27, and free from all defilement in the sight of God, 2 Pet. 3:14.”

The command to keep oneself unspotted is found in other Bible passages. Paul, the Apostle writing to Timothy said “that you keep this commandment **without spot, blameless** until our Lord Jesus Christ's appearing” (1 Timothy 6:14). Timothy had earlier been commanded to “flee these things (foolish and harmful lusts) and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness” (1 Timothy 6:11). Peter also wrote “Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, **without spot and blameless**.” (2 Peter 3:14)

To be unspotted translates to holiness or purity and the Bible makes it clear that Christians are called to holiness and this is a condition for pleasing God and receiving the reward of eternal life.

“Pursue peace with all people, and **holiness**, without which no one will see the Lord.” (Hebrews 12:14)

“For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God; that no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter, because the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also forewarned you and testified. For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in **holiness**.” (1 Thessalonians 4:3-7)



### Sin is the cause of defilement

Sin which is described in the New Testament as lawlessness (1 John 3:4) and unrighteousness (1 John 5:17) defiles Christians. It represents the danger to the soul of man because living in sin leads to eternal damnation. The wages of sin is death. (Romans 6:23)

“Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God” (1 Corinthians 6:9-10)

“But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.” (Revelation 21:8)

It is because of the danger that sin presents to man that it took the life of the only begotten son of God to redeem man. (Romans 5:8-11) It was for this purpose that He was born. (Matthew 1:21) Peter, the Apostle describes what our attitude should be in consideration of the great sacrifice made by our Lord that we might be saved.





*"For to this, you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: "Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth"; who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously;<sup>24</sup> who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed."* (1 Peter 2:21-24)

We are urged to follow the sinless example of our Lord Jesus Christ. Our commitment to Him is to live righteously having died to sins through the new birth. Romans 6:1-4 tells us that we are buried with Christ through baptism into death and just as Christ was raised from the dead, we should walk in newness of life.

In 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, after stating that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God, Paul the Apostle, said in verse 11 *And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.* Those who have been washed, sanctified, and justified are expected to live in holiness. (Ephesians 4:17-24; 1 Thessalonians 4:7)

## What Should Christians Do About Sin?

- 1. Hate it.** The consequence of sin and the great price that was paid for it should make every Christian hate sin. We are instructed in Romans 12:9 to *"abhor what is evil; cling to what is good"*. The Psalmist urges people of God in chapter 97 verse 10 *"You who love the LORD, hate evil!"*
- 2. Admit it.** A Christian who is found in sin should be willing to admit it. It is impossible to hide from God. All things are naked and open before Him. (Hebrews 4:13; Job 34:21) God instructed the children of Israel not to take anything from Jericho during the city's conquest. Achan took some things and hid them from Joshua and the people but could not hide them from God (Joshua 7). King David thought his sin of adultery and murder was hidden, but Nathan the Prophet of God pointed it out to him. (2 Samuel 11; 12:1-14). God wants Christians to examine themselves and confess their sin.

*If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.* (1 John 1:8-10)

- 3. Repent of it.** Jesus said *"I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish"* (Luke 13:3). Repentance is a change of mind which leads to a change of life.
- 4. Pray for forgiveness.** Simon, the sorcerer was admonished *"Repent therefore of this your*

*wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you. For I see that you are poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity. Then Simon answered and said, pray to the Lord for me, that none of the things which you have spoken may come upon me."* Acts 8:22-24

Christians are urged to always examine themselves to check whether they are still in the faith. (2 Corinthians 13:15; Galatians 6:4) This is a sure way of ensuring that they are unspotted from the world.

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<sup>1</sup> Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old & New Testament Words

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# YOU ARE THE SALT OF THE EARTH

by Bro Opemipo Olusola

*"You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men." (Matt.5:13)*

This beautiful description of the citizens of the kingdom of Christ here on earth is derived from our Lord's sermon on the Mount. Christ had earlier told His disciples that they should be fishers of men (Matt.4:17).

Here in Matthew chapter five, He tells them further what He designed them to be –the salt of the earth, and light of the world. In this article, we shall focus on this phrase. **"THE SALT OF THE EARTH"**



## You Are the Salt of the Earth

Salt has several characteristics. It is white, enhances flavor, preserves, purifies, etc. Based on the context, it is the ability to enhance flavor to which Jesus refers in His illustration. Notice "..... but if the salt loses its flavor...." Salt gives flavor to that which is otherwise bland. Job mentioned this ability in Job.6:6; "Can flavorless food be eaten without salt?" Without salt human life cannot be sustained.

## Salt and Preservation of the Earth

Knowing fully well the importance of salt to the substance of human existence. Christ our blessed Lord employed this metaphor to show His Kingdom citizens how important they are to the preservation of the earth.

Kingdom citizens must be righteous in this wicked World. Remember during the days of Sodom and Gomorrah, Abraham made supplications to God, perhaps God would stay His actions in destroying the two ungodly cities. But God could not find ten righteous persons in those cities. Therefore, they were utterly destroyed with fire and brimstone from heaven.(Gen.18:23-33;19:24, 2Pet.2:6-8; Ps.107:34)

Every burnt sacrifice under the Old Testament era must be sprinkled with salt (Lev.2:13). Under the New Covenant, our bodies are the living sacrifices that must be presented to God with the salt of holiness and of good works. Our physical bodies

must be instruments for God's righteousness and not for sin any longer, Rom.6:12-13. Our Lord commands that "we must have salt in ourselves..." (Mk.9:49-50) Hence, we should not yield our body members to fornication, drunkenness, idolatry, covetousness, lying, envying, anger, malice; being a slave to many vile passions and hatred.(Tit.3:3; 2 Pet.4:3-4)



## Necessary Qualities for Being Salt of the Earth

Jesus Christ was not addressing the unbelievers but His disciples. Therefore, for someone to be the salt of the earth, he or she must first be a disciple of Christ. He must believe the gospel of Jesus Christ, repent of sins, confess Christ as the Son of God, and be baptized by water immersion for the forgiveness of sins, then Christ shall add him or her to His church which is non-denominational (Acts.2:36-42,47). Sinful lifestyles are like salt mixed with sand, which is not useful for cooking. Thus, we must first clean ourselves of all impurities. There are certain qualities that you must possess to bring out your flavor (taste) as the salt of the earth;

1. **Love:** -You must possess a selfless virtue that always seeks the well-being of others. You would not want to constitute a stumbling block on the ways of others in preventing them from Christ, (1 John.2:10). Your love toward God's service can motivate others to wake up in their service to God. Love involves the willingness to serve others to bring them to Jesus, (Matt.20:20-25).
2. **Goodness:** - It is a virtue that involves deriving pleasure in putting smiles on the faces of poor and broken-hearted persons. Barnabas was a shining example of this. He was a good man, nick-named by the Apostles as "the Son of Encouragement". He had houses and lands. He sold them and brought the proceeds to the Apostles' feet. (Acts.4:34-37). Dorcas was another salt in her generation, many widows, orphans, and others were weeping after her death, showing her goodness; the clothes she shared with them while she was alive. Our present world needs more Christians like Barnabas and





Dorcas who will savor the earth with many more good works! (Acts.9:36-39).

*"For we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them."* (Eph.2:10). Just as our Blessed Lord was going about doing good, so must we also do good works. (Acts.10:38).

3. **Humility:** - Jesus Christ who was born in a manger instead of a royal palace, lived with Joseph, the poor carpenter, instead of living with the royal and wealthy ones; suffered unjust treatment; tolerated insults and open embarrassment, wearing the crown of thorns though sinless yet, he was numbered among the criminals. No wonder, Jesus Christ is the only qualified prophet to invite all proud and sinful laden men to Himself saying: *"Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls"* (Matt.11:29).

You can never be the salt of the earth when you are proud in your speech, look, dress and ceremonies, etc. Proud Christians who do not take correction nor accept discipline whether by individuals or by the local church make themselves bad examples for others around them. God resists the proud but He gives grace to the humble (Jam.4:6). The only way to overcome worldliness is to put on the spirit of humility (Jam.4:7-8). Then your good tastes will draw other people to Christ.

4. **Self-control:-** This is the ability to restrain oneself, especially towards yielding to evil temptation. Joseph, Daniel, and his three friends were tempted but they overcame and were divinely promoted (Gen.39:8-10; Dan.1:8-10; 3:5-30). We are already living in a world that is full of temptations, (Matt.18:6-9). Stumbling comes through what we see, what we hear, eat, drink, where we go, etc. But if the salt of the gospel is in us, it will help us to mortify all our sinful members on earth (Col.3:5) and it will help us abstain from all the appearances of evil, (1Thess.5:22). You will surely lose your taste if you easily fall for every temptation that comes up your way. Why not imitate brother Paul who says: *"But I discipline my body, and bring it into subjection lest when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified"* (1 Cor.9:27). Being salt of the earth involves much self-discipline, (Matt.16:24-26; Mk.9:49-50). We must exercise self-discipline toward alcoholic indulgence, sexual immoralities, worldly fashion, ill-mannered temperament, love of money, lying, forsaking the assembly of saints, and other ungodly lifestyles.
5. **Fruitfulness:** - This involves the zealous desire to win souls for Christ, (1 Cor.9:16). Christians must proclaim the pure gospel of Christ to the whole earth to bring new disciples to Christ. For it is written: *"For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea"* (Isa.11:9). Christ our Blessed Master and Savior instructed His disciples to go and preach His good news about the redemption of mankind unto the whole creatures, (Mk.16:15-16; 1 Cor.15:20-22). You have lost your flavor when you fail to do this.

The scattered disciples due to persecution went

everywhere preaching the word. (Acts.8:1-4). *"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes"* (Rom.1:16). If Christ felt no shame to die for my sins, then I must not be ashamed of teaching His truth to the sinful world as well.

### Areas to Demonstrate Your Flavour

1. **In your speech:** Christians' words must be seasoned with salt, giving grace to the hearers, (Col.4:6). Corrupt communication ought not to proceed from the mouth of the kingdom citizens, (Eph.4:29). Disciples of Christ must be wise in the use of their tongues to teach knowledge rightly and thereby heal the sin-sick world (Prov.15:2,4; Matt.10:16). Everyone shall be held accountable for the words of his mouth on the judgment day, (Matt.12:36-37).

2. **In your Character:-** We have been called out of the world of sin unto holiness, (1Thess.4:7). There is no salt in us when our lifestyles are still the same as at the time when we were held captives by the world and its sinful passions, (Tit.3:3). The scriptures say *"Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; old things have passed away; behold all things have become new"*. (2Cor.5:17; Rom.12:1-2). Your friends, family, neighbors, and business colleagues must see positive changes in you, after your water baptism into the body of Christ which is your baptism certificate which everyone reads, (2Cor.3:2).

All our sinful members must be destroyed (Col.3:5). *"having your conduct honorable among the gentiles..... that they may by your good works they observe may glorify God in the day of visitation"*. (1 Pet.2:12) Our behavior among fellow believers and unbelievers must be seasoned with salt. Remember our Lord's words *".... Have salt in yourselves, and have peace with one another"* (Mk.9:50).

3. **In your dressing:** - Here is another area where our flavor can be easily felt by the world. The world is crazy about fashion; cravings for the latest fashion styles; Half-naked clothing or nude fashions, immoral make-ups, excessive use of Jewellery, worldly hair-cuts, hairstyles, nail fixings, eyelashes, extravagant spending on physical adornments, etc. Be reminded that you have been called out of the world, you are not of the world anymore (John.17:14).
4. **In your expenditure:** - The kind of job which a Christian engages in to earn his living income matters a lot (Eph.4:28). But what exposes him the more is what he spends that hard-earned money upon. Do you know that you prove your flavor to the world by what you spend your income on? Do you remember to give bountifully to God on the first day of the week when the church gathers together? (1Cor.16:1-2; 2Cor.9:6-7). Do you remember to share all good things with your preachers and those vessels that build you up spiritually? (Gal.6:6). Do you remember to repay your aged parents

for all their care? (1Tim.5:4; Eph.6:1-3). Do you share with the needy ones around you both in the church and outside the church as the opportunity presents itself? (Gal.6:10; Matt.25:41-46). Do you make adequate provision for your nuclear family members as a Christian? (1Tim.5:8).

If you fail all the above responsibilities but spend your money on pleasures, amassing properties, perishable items, extravagant ceremonies, and alcoholic beverages, you are already losing your taste. Remember, you are a steward over your money and other possessions; you shall give an account of your stewardship to God (Rom.14:12, 2 Cor.5:10; Rev.20:12).

5. **In your ceremonies:-** These are social events that involve the gathering of the people together for a particular celebration or a solemn assembly. Christians as the salt of the earth are obligated to do all things to showcase the glory of the Almighty Father who has redeemed them from eternal doom through Jesus Christ. (1Cor.10:31-33).

In such gatherings, songs that befit God's worship ought to be heard, statements that adorn the gospel of Christ ought to be said, dressing that befits God's royal priests ought to be seen; gospel messages that expose sin and draw people's hearts to Heaven ought to be preached, as the celebrant(s) ought to reflect his/her Heavenly citizenship to the public and not to display worldliness! Phil.3:20-21; Tit.2:8,10; 1 John.2:15-17.

When your social ceremonies cause believing and the unbelieving guests into sins of drunkenness, lascivious dance, fights, tribalism, idolatry, and unkind treatment of the poor ones, then you have become tasteless salt, ready to be trampled under the foot by men.



### Salt can lose its flavor

Salt can lose its ability to enhance flavor. We too might lose our ability to be a flavoring agent for the world by allowing impurities into our lives (1 Cor.15:33). Therefore we need to keep ourselves from sin (Eph.5:3-7). If we lose our flavor, we will be thrown out. Jesus taught us the possibility of losing our salvation. (Matt.13:40-43; Rev.3:15-17).

### Conclusion

Now that we have learned what it means for a Christian to be the salt of the world and the blessings that associate with it. Are you the salt of the earth in your daily character and speech?

Have you not lost your flavor when you fight, keep malice, curse and indulge in worldly pleasures? Have your marriages not become tasteless in the neighborhood? Where is your seasoning as a Christian when you dress like a prostitute or as a gangster? How many souls have you won through your stiff-necked or rebellious attitude? Tasteless salt is good for nothing except to be thrown away and trampled under the foot by men.

However, our blessed Lord does not desire the death of sinners but that all might come to repentance. Repent today because tomorrow might be too late. (2 Pet.3:8-9).

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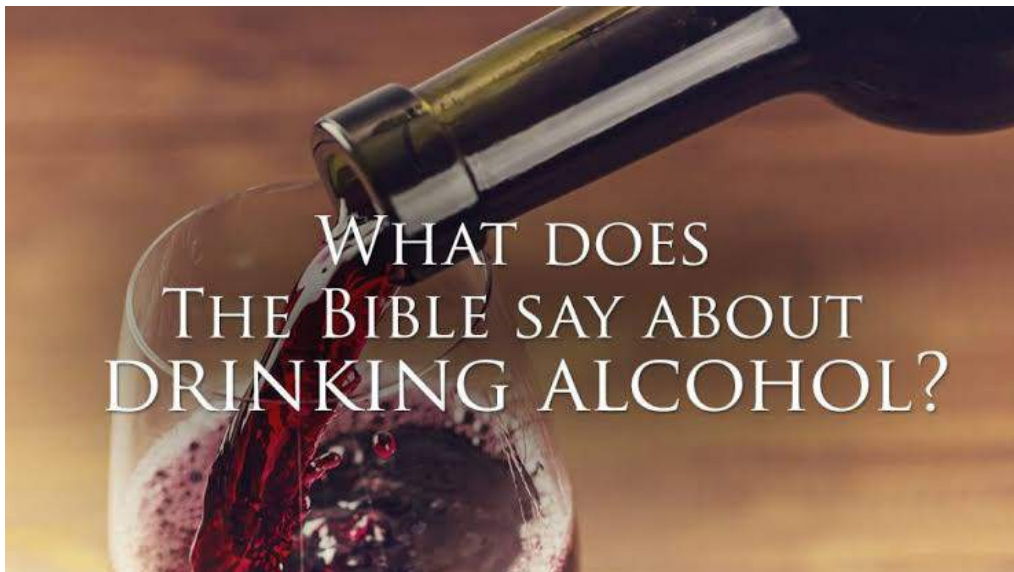
# THE CHRISTIAN AND THE USE OF ALCOHOL

by Jobalo Oshikanlu

**Bible Gem:** *Wine is a mocker, Strong drink is a brawler, And whoever is led astray by it is not wise* (Proverbs 20:1).<sup>i</sup>

## Introduction: Drinking Alcohol

Drinking beer, wine, rum, whiskey, and other beverages which contain alcohol, and are therefore capable of making one drunk, is a very old practice. The first time drinking is mentioned in the Bible is in Genesis chapter 9. Noah, a righteous man became drunk and lay naked in his tent. This good man had his sense of right and wrong dulled by the evil effects of drinking. In Genesis 19, we read of another righteous man, Lot, who was overcome by the evil effects of alcohol – and had sexual relations with his daughters – another good man who lost his sense of right and wrong when under the evil influence of alcohol.



## The Bible and the Use of “Wine”

Some people try to support their sinful habit of drinking by going to the Bible. They point out that some passages in the Bible speak of drinking wine as a good thing (Genesis 14:18; Amos 9:14; Zechariah 10:7, etc). The first question for such people is why they ignore the vaster volume of biblical passages which condemn the drinking of wine and major only in those that appear to justify such drinking (Genesis 9:20-21; 19:30-35; Leviticus 10:8-10; Proverbs 20:1; 23:29-35; 31:4-5; Daniel 1:8; Isaiah 5:22; 28:7; Habakkuk 2:15)?

The next question is whether the Bible can, in what would be a material contradiction, both condemn as well as justify or commend the drinking of wine. If the Bible does so, then it cannot be the word of God! But in fact, the Bible does not contradict itself in any way as it is indeed the word of God, as diligent and careful studies will always

show.

A correct understanding of the word "wine" in the Bible depends upon the meaning of the words which are translated as "wine" in our English Bible. The Old Testament was originally written in the Hebrew language, and there are eleven different Hebrew words which are all translated as "wine". The New Testament was originally written in Greek. Two Greek words are translated as "wine" in our English New Testament: *oinos* (the general word) and *gleukos* (denoting sweet "new wine").<sup>ii</sup>

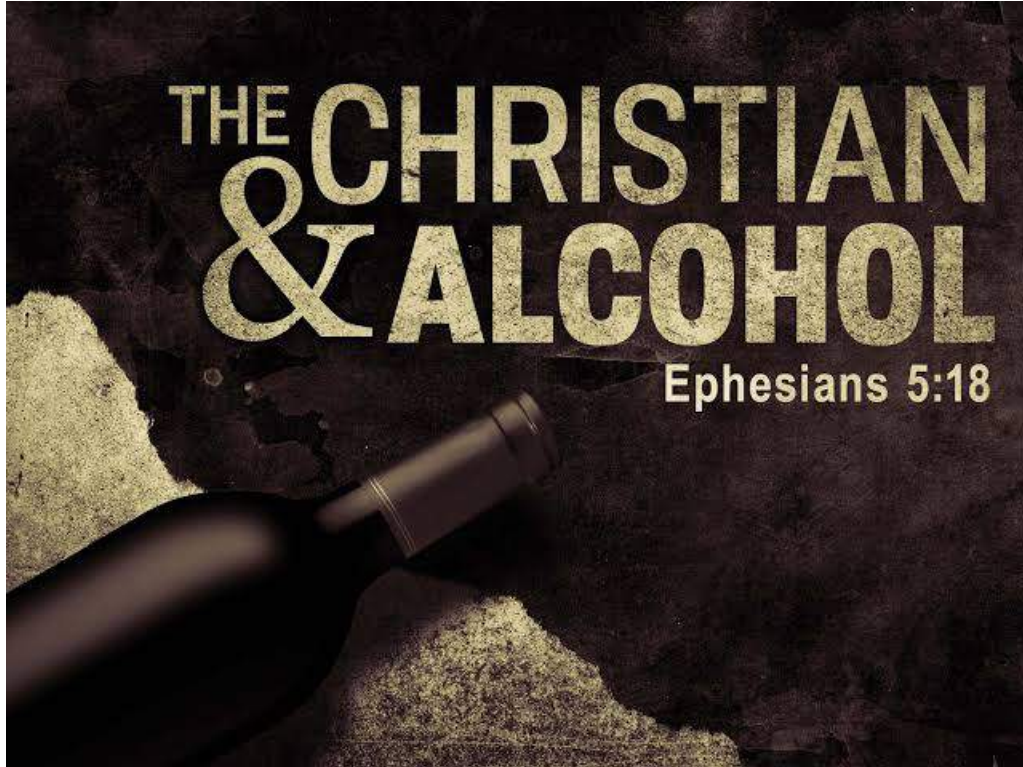
The Bible Scholar, Moses Stuart, correctly states that "...whenever the Scriptures speak of wine as comfort, a blessing, or a libation to God, and rank it with such articles as corn and oil, they can only mean, such wine contained no alcohol that could have a mischievous tendency; that whenever [the Scriptures] denounce it, and connect it with drunkenness and reveling, they can only mean alcoholic or intoxicating wine."

The word "wine" simply refers to the juice of the grape. The fresh or pure juice of the grape has no alcohol in it and is incapable of making anyone drunk. However, when the juice of the grape is fermented, then it contains alcohol and will intoxicate – fermented wine is alcoholic wine, whilst unfermented wine is non-alcoholic (so long as no alcohol has been artificially added). As the Bible says, for example, in Isaiah 65:8: "*As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one says, 'Do not destroy it, for a blessing is in it'...*" – the context is clear that unfermented wine is referenced in this passage, as "the cluster" refers to grapes that are still on the vine. While the juice is still in the grapes on the vine, the juice (wine) is unfermented and non-alcoholic!

The Bible is filled with warnings of the dangers of drinking fermented or intoxicating wine: "*Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has contentions? Who has complaints? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes? Those who linger long at the wine, those who go in search of mixed wine. Do not look on the wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it swirls around smoothly; at the last it bites like a serpent, and stings like a viper. Your eyes will see strange things, and your heart will utter perverse things. Yes, you will be like one who lies down in the midst of the sea. Or like one who lies at the top of the mast, saying: 'They have struck me, but I was not hurt; they have beaten me, but I did not feel it. When shall I awake, that I may seek another drink?'*" (Proverbs 23:29-



35). See also Isaiah 5:22-23; 28:7-8 and Habakkuk 2:15.



### Alcohol in the New Testament

There are strong condemnations of drunkenness in the New Testament. In 1 Corinthians 5:11, 13, the Apostle wrote: *"But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner—not even to eat with such a person ... Therefore put away from yourselves the evil person."* Note that the Holy Spirit calls the drunkard "an evil person". In 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, the Holy Spirit further lists the sins of which the Corinthians had been guilty before they became Christians. "Drunkards" are listed along with fornicators, adulterers, homosexuals, sodomites, thieves, and others. Those who continue in such conduct *"will not inherit the kingdom of God."* Further still, in the list of the sins or "works of the flesh" in Galatians 5:19-21, "drunkenness, revelries and the like" are included along with such sins as adultery, fornication, and murder, and it is emphatically declared that *"Those who practice these things will not inherit the kingdom of God."*

It is sometimes argued that it is alright to drink as long as one does not get drunk. We must point out that this is a very dangerous position to take given that we must "abstain from all appearance of evil" (1 Thessalonians 5:22). Ephesians 5:18 states *"And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit."* The expression "do not be drunk" is defined by VINE's Expository Dictionary as "to grow drunk (an inceptive verb, marking the process of the state expressed)".<sup>1</sup> In other words, "do not be drunk" means *do not even begin the process of becoming drunk*. See also Luke 12:45 and 1 Thessalonians 5:7,22.

### Conclusion

The process of becoming drunk begins with the first drink or glass, and then the second. As there is no science to determine the quantity of drink at which point intoxication sets in or the senses begin to get dulled, it is important to avoid drinking alcohol altogether. This is not the least because it is a very well-known fact that people do many evil things and cause a lot of injuries under the influence of drink or arising from drinking. Alcohol consumption also contributes to many of the major health problems of men and women in the world today. But even more disastrous, those who are guilty of drunkenness risk eternal destruction of their souls in Hell Fire!

<sup>1</sup> Except as otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from the New King James' Version (NKJV).

<sup>2</sup> See VINE's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words, BS440.S746 1996, page 677.

<sup>3</sup> Ibidem, page 186.

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# PORNOGRAPHY AND GAMBLING

by Osamagbe Lesley Egharevba

## Introduction

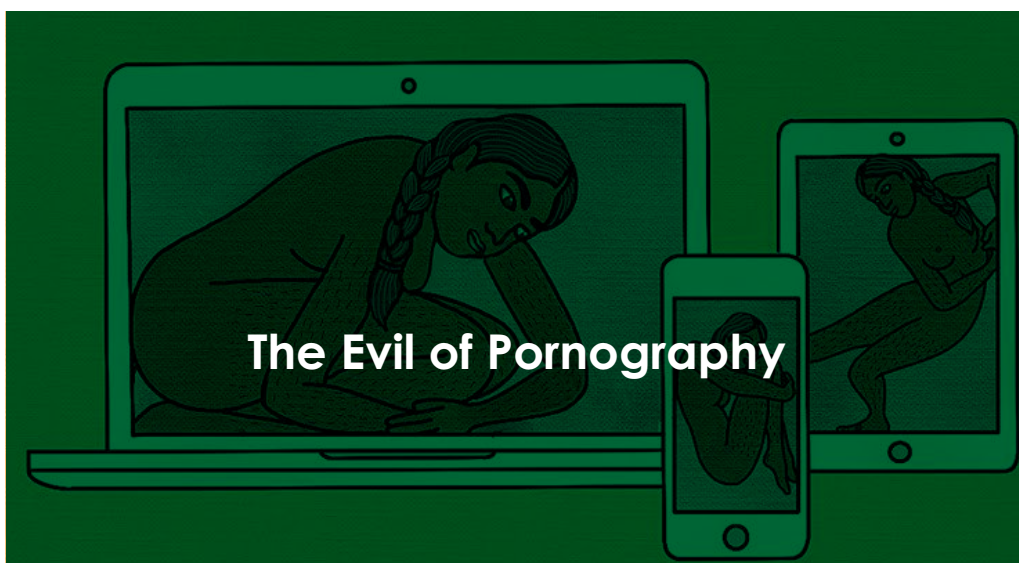
In speaking of a religion that is pure and undefiled before God and the Father, the Bible teaches that such kind of religion is that which requires one *“to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.”* These are essential requirements by God and anyone who desires to practice a pure and undefiled religion must be willing to abide by them. In this writing, we will focus our attention on the part of the verse that requires one to keep oneself unspotted from the world. There are so many things in the world that Christians must not involve in. The Bible sums it up into three in I John 2:15-17:

*“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.”*

We are in the world, but we are not of the world, and other passages (such as Romans 12:4 and James 4:4) clearly instruct us not to be conformed to this world. This means that we should not put on the habit or style of living that is in the world which is contrary to God's law. In other words, we must avoid the three things mentioned in the above quoted Bible passage. In this article, we shall focus on two things that are common in the world today – pornography and gambling.

## What is Pornography?

According to Merriam Webster's dictionary, pornography is defined as the depiction of erotic behaviour (as in pictures or writing) intended to cause sexual excitement. Pornography is more prevalent in today's world than ever before. It may be found in written materials (including romance novels, photographs, movies, electronic images, videos, social media posts, phone apps, erotic telephone conversations, music, or any other medium.



## The Evil of Pornography

Physical intimacy is a part of God's plan of happiness and the Bible teaches that sex is honorable within marriage (Hebrews 13:4). However, Satan often uses our desires against us and places us in situations where satisfying our desires will cause us

to break God's law. And so, many today indulge in pornography by sinfully allowing themselves to enjoy the pleasure of printed or visual material that explicitly describes or displays sexual body parts or activity to stimulate erotic feelings. The most common way this is happening in our culture today is by viewing sexually charged images and videos on the Internet. There are various dangers of indulging in this act.

**Indulging in pornography is a sin:** In Matthew 5:27-28, Jesus said *“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”* From this passage, not committing adultery goes beyond taking someone's wife. Jesus teaches that it prohibits you from lusting. He says that looking at a woman for lusting is a sin. So, if one indulges in pornography, one is sinning. And we know that the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23).

**Indulging in pornography will lead one to hell:** People who habitually and unrepentantly indulge in pornography will go to hell. Paul said in Ephesians 5:3–6

*“But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving. For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience”.*

Indeed, sexual immorality includes pornography. Furthermore, the Bible says in 1 Corinthians 6:9–10:

*“Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God”.*

"The sexually immoral" includes people who indulge in pornography and this passage teaches that such people will not inherit the kingdom of God. Indulging in pornography is a sin against God. Jesus pronounced, *“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God”* (Matthew 5:8). If one is indulging in pornography, then such is not pure in heart. And only the pure in heart will see God.

**Indulging in pornography does not glorify God with your body:** Paul said in I Corinthians 6:18-20: *“Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.”* We are to glorify God with our bodies by not committing sexual immorality. When we indulge in pornography, we sin against God himself because God owns our bodies. Indulging in pornography does not glorify God with our bodies.





### What is Gambling?

Merriam Webster's dictionary defines gambling as the activity of betting: the practice of risking money or other stakes in a game or bet. Another definition of gambling as cited by J.W. Hamilton is "desiring the possession or possessions of another (the prize), the gambler creates a risk (that of losing his possession) in an attempt through the chance to gain the possession or possession of another with nothing given in exchange. Gambling takes many forms: card games, dice, numbers, betting, slot machines, sports pools, punch boards, bingo (for money or prizes), raffle tickets, matching, and even pitching pennies"

Like many sins, gambling is not directly named in Scripture. It is nonetheless, condemned in principle numerous times. For example:

**Gambling violates the golden rule:** The golden rule is stated in Matthew 7:12 thus: *Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.* Gambling seeks to enrich self while ignoring the welfare of your neighbor. Would a gambler wish the same thing for himself as he wishes for his co-gamblers? A gambler seeks for others to lose, while he wins. Just because others are willing partners does not make it right. This is covetousness! (Luke 12:15 4). How are we doing good to all when we hope they lose their money? (Galatians 6:10 5). Love does not harm a neighbor (Romans 13:10).

**Gambling causes many sorrows and even destroys the soul:** Gambling is accompanied by other evils such as Greed, broken homes, theft, organized crime, murder, drinking, suicide, etc. Hence, gambling is the enemy of mental peace. It brings fear and anxiety. It creates an obsession with money that consumes the gambler. The Bible says in I Timothy 6:10: *"For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs"* Anyone who wishes to honor God and respect his neighbor must avoid this noxious habit altogether.

**Gambling is dishonest:** Gambling violates the principle of doing honest work for one's daily bread. The motive for

gambling is to prosper from others without a fair exchange and this is contrary to what God wants us to do: *"For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat"* (II Thessalonians 3:10).



### Conclusion

Pornography and Gambling are evil for secular and spiritual reasons. In keeping oneself unspotted from the world, the child of God must not practice them in any way, shape, or form! Let us conclude by reminding ourselves of Romans 12:2: *"And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."*

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# BIBLICALLY ACCEPTABLE DRESSING

by **Oladapo Olawale**

The world is confused as to what is proper and befitting dressing. It is assumed that what is modest will depend on the weather, social occasions, sporting activity, individual comfort, reigning fashion, and so on. It is also often questioned whether God has any laid-down pattern of dressing for us today or whether He left the subject within the realm of individual discretion. Many in the secular world have particularly challenged the bible's concept of modesty, contending that modesty is only a thing of the mind and that what constitutes modest dressing varies from culture to culture. There is also the false idea that one's dress should be able to accentuate his/her physical features as designed by God without offending anyone. Dressing as one sees fit is seen as a way of expressing one's freedom which to them Christian modesty restricts.

It is because of these worldly misconceptions of modesty that the topic of this discussion has been aptly framed as biblically acceptable dressing. We may rightly, therefore, recapture this topic as Biblical modesty. Without a doubt, God has prescribed an acceptable pattern of dressing for His children in His word. God's standard of modesty should be the acceptable standard for everyone irrespective of race, culture, fashion fads, and personal preferences.

## BIBLE STANDARDS ON ACCEPTABLE DRESSING

Although the Bible does not contain passages that specifically set the length and breadth measurement of what makes any clothing acceptable, it nevertheless laid down principles or standards of what constitutes modest dressing for anyone seeking to please God. Some of the bible standards for acceptable clothing are considered briefly.

### (a) Nakedness must be covered

Ordinarily, covering one's nakedness would seem like something everyone should understand and be able to comply with, yet being covered is something many people today resist. Right from the beginning in the garden of Eden, when sin entered the world, Adam and Eve became aware of their nakedness and they made coverings for themselves with fig leaves (Genesis 3:7). In this context the word coverings (Hebrew: *chagorah*) means a girdle to cover the loins (like boxer shorts or underwear) or an apron worn around the hips. In other words, they just covered the basics. But we would notice that they hid from God because they still felt naked (Genesis 3: 8 – 10). God was also not satisfied with the coverings they had on, as he then made them tunics of skin and clothed them (Genesis 3:21). Tunics as used in the passage (Hebrews: *kethoneth*) mean a coat or garment which is said to have sleeves and reaching to the knees. In other words, the proper clothing God made for them not only covered their loin area, but it also covered their bodies from shoulders to knees.

Under the law of Moses, God was particular about the clothing of the priests and gave specifications as to how they are to be sewn. In addition to their robes and tunics, the priests' clothes consist of underwear that is required to cover their loins up to the thighs (Exodus 28: 40 – 43). No part of the body was to be left exposed so as not to incur God's wrath during their

priestly service. This underlines the importance God attached to covering nakedness. Christians who are God's priests today (1 Peter 2:9) and whose bodies are the temple of God (1 Corinthians 6:19) ought to understand the serious need to glorify God with proper and modest clothing.

It is instructive to note that the bible's standard of what amounts to nakedness is different from the standard held by the world. A person who is wearing inadequate clothing is usually seen as naked. For instance, Adam and Eve as mentioned above had figs of trees sewn around their loin area, yet they remained naked. In Isaiah 47:1-3 the shame brought about by the fall of Babylon under God's divine justice was compared to a beautiful virgin who was forced to remove her outer clothes meant to cover her legs and thighs and made to labour at the mills. With this, her nakedness was uncovered. In effect, Isaiah points out that when one is left with only an undergarment on, which leaves one's legs and thighs exposed, one is naked and in a shameful position (see also Revelations 3:18).

Having a part of the body such as the breasts or buttocks exposed is considered as being naked (Ezekiel 16: 6 – 10; Isaiah 20:4) Similarly, in 1 Samuel 19:24 Saul was said to have *stripped off his clothes... and lay down naked* whilst Micah in Micah 1:8 said, *I will go stripped and naked*. Naked as used in these passages is defined by the Strong's concordance as: 'nude, either partially or totally: --naked'. In these passages, it would seem the outer garments were taken off leaving them clothed with only their inner garments, yet the bible talks of being naked (see also Job 22:6; John 21:7).

In the New Testament one of the Greek words translated as naked is *gumnos* which according to the Vines Expository dictionary can signify being scantily or poorly clad (Matt. 25:36, 38, 43, 44; Acts 19:16); with torn garments (Jas. 2:15); clad in the undergarment only, the outer being laid aside (John 21:7). Notwithstanding the sexual freedom propaganda today which encourages immodest dressing, being scantily clad is still seen as inappropriate in many quarters. Half-nakedness is very illogical because if one justifies it, he may as well rationalize being completely naked to be consistent with the idea of individual sexual freedom.

Nakedness -whether partial or total, under normal circumstances, is something anyone would be ashamed of. Unfortunately, many expose much more than their legs and thighs today and like the people in Jeremiah's day do not even blush about it (Jeremiah 6:15). For any dressing to be of biblical standards, one's nakedness must not be exposed; in other words, from shoulder to knees, the loins and thighs must be fully covered. One must not also be scantily clothed, putting on only what at best counts for an undergarment.

### (b) Clothing must be befitting of godly profession

We read in 1 Timothy 2:9-10 thus: *In like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in **modest apparel**, with **propriety** and **moderation**, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, but, which is **proper** for **women professing godliness**, with good works*. The essential words to understanding this passage have been highlighted in bold letters. First, modest apparel means clothing that is tidy, neat, orderly, well-arranged, or decent. In the immediate context of



this passage, the Apostle sought to caution against flamboyant and extravagant dressings which tend to draw undue attention to someone thus reducing one to a spectacle. Being scantily dressed as well can draw unnecessary attention to oneself. Mention is then made of propriety which was translated in the King James version as shamefacedness. The idea is that a sense of shame should govern the clothe that one decides to put on.

The last relevant phrase is that which is proper for women professing godliness. There is a way that one dresses that cannot be befitting of the profession of the Christian faith. It may be akin to the attire of a harlot (Proverbs 7:10). Tightly fitted clothes, too short or skimpy clothes, and too thin, revealing apparel will not be proper for women professing godliness. Another qualification to this is found in Titus 2:3 which states that older women are to teach the younger women to be chaste. The word chaste according to the Vines Expository means *pure from carnality, modest, perfect*.

The foregoing, by implication, means that a godly woman must dress in a way that reflects godly values, rather than promoting or endorsing worldliness, she ought to have a sense of shame about herself and have as her ultimate goal pleasing God. In the context of the above passages which refer to a godly woman, does this mean there are no biblical standards of dressing for godly men? Absolutely not, for the simple reason that God did not leave Adam alone with his fig leaves loin cloth, he equally provided him tunics to cover his nakedness. In the same vein, we see the strict requirements regarding clothing for the priests. A godly man must also have a sense of shame in the way he dresses. Biblical standards of modesty are as applicable to men as they are to women. It would seem that the emphasis is on women dressing modestly due to the male and female physiological differences which indicate that men are generally more prone to be easily provoked to lust by women. But a scantily dressed man is as much able to stimulate evil desires in a woman.

It is also important to state that wearing clothes that belong to the opposite sex (cross-dressing) is neither decent nor befitting of a godly profession. A man and a woman can be distinguished by the clothes made for their gender. This may vary from culture to culture. The practice of transgender cross-dressing that has become rampant nowadays remains abhorrent to every generation. It is indeed a shameful practice and does not meet the standard of being befitting of godly profession discussed above.

**Anyone desirous of pleasing God will not be so enamoured with fashion fads that leave out parts of his/her body exposed. Dressing in modern-day swim wears, midriff shirts, slit shirts and dresses, clothes exposing the chest or breast, transparent clothes, short knickers, and miniskirts, tightly fitted wear (including sportswear), and cross-dressing are not befitting of godly profession. These clothes instead are befitting of carnality or worldliness!**

### (c) Clothes must not cause offense

An important principle in the Bible that applies to the way we dress is that it must not cause other people to sin. When a person exercises his or her wrongful choice of dressing immodestly, they can provoke lust causing another person to sin. It is a well-established truth that one is addressed by the way one dresses. It is, for this reason, the bible also talks of the

attire of a harlot (Proverbs 7:10) as distinguishable from the attire professing godliness (1 Timothy 2:10).

It is sometimes argued that whoever lusts after another person merely does that because he either lacks self-control or has usually nurtured lustful thoughts. It is surmised that the person who lusts is the one who sins and that the immodest dresser bears no guilt at all. Although this thinking may be strictly entrenched and acceptable under secular laws, it falls short of Christian standards. If this thinking is taken to its illogical end, it will be justifiable for anyone to go about stark naked without offending anyone's sense of decency. Nevertheless, in formal settings, dress codes are often put in place for many reasons, significant of which are to ensure a sense of decency and that lustful thoughts and ideas are kept away from the workplace as best as possible.

Whilst harbouring and nurturing lustful thoughts is evil (Matthew 5:28) promoting and creating an environment for lust is likewise sinful (Luke 17:1). Evil resides in the heart of its projector as much as it lies in the eye of the beholder. Jesus Christ stated that causing offense is inevitable, but woe to him by whom offenses come (Luke 17:1 – 2). Judgment awaits those who cause others to stumble either by their false teachings and deliberate or negligent conduct!

A child of God seeking to please God does not conduct himself/herself in a way that leads other people to sin. A Christian is expected to be circumspect in the way he lives (Ephesians 5:15) ensuring that he lives and conducts himself in a way that is worthy of the gospel of Christ (Philippians 1: 27). Dressing lasciviously is worthy of the way of the world but unworthy of the gospel.

## CONCLUSION

As considered above, biblically acceptable dressing follows biblically acceptable standards. The way we clothe ourselves has far-reaching spiritual consequences and must not be taken for granted. Sadly, immodest dressing has found its way into the church and many professing Christ have become so neglectful of the standards expected of them. Emulating worldly standards in dressing makes us enemies of God (James 4:4). If we are to serve the Lord, we must take care not to follow worldly standards of dressing, rather we are to transform the way we think to conform to God's pattern on how we ought to dress (Romans 12:1 – 2). Amid a crooked, confused/perverse world, God's children should be the guiding light on what proper clothing stands for (Philippians 2:15)

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# THE EVIL OF FORNICATION AND ADULTERY

by Kayode Adekunle

## Introduction

*"Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?" 1Cor 6:18-19*

*"Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge". Hebrews 13:4*

These two passages of the scriptures, no doubt show the evil of fornication and adultery, the first one showing the evil they bring to the committer and the second one indicating God's displeasure to the acts.

The Oxford Advanced dictionary defines fornication as **"sexual intercourse between people not married to each other"** while adultery is defined as **"sexual intercourse between a married person and a person who is not their spouse"**.

An evil thing or practice is what is contrary to godliness, an abominable thing to God that goes against morality and is injurious to the soul of man.

## Sexual Act and Marriage

The sexual act is one of the privileges that God created solely for marriage. It is the act that makes procreation possible. The book of Genesis records this; *"Then God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.'" Gen 1:28.* The importance of companionship in marriage is also emphasized when God said *"it is not good that man should be alone"* and that *"a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh"* Gen 2:18; 24. There is no doubt about the fact that sexual act between husband and wife enhances their companionship and makes possible *"the two becoming one flesh"* Paul asked the Corinthians *"do you not know that he who joined to a harlot is one body with her? Quoting God, he says" the two He says "shall become one flesh"* 1Cor 6:16. Paul further said to them, to avoid *"sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife and let each woman have her own husband. Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband. The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. And likewise, the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does."* 1Cor 7:2-4.

## The Evil of Fornication and Adultery

### God Hates Any Sexual Act Outside of Marriage between a Man and A Woman

The Bible makes it very clear that God frowns at any sexual act that occurs outside marriage. In His laws to the Jews, He told them not to *"commit adultery"* Ex 20:14. The punishment for fornication was *"stoning to death"* Deu 22:21. God's displeasure to adultery is well pronounced when He killed the first child that was born out of adultery for King David by Bathsheba 11Sam12:13-25.

## Adultery Destroys Marriage

God in his infinite wisdom created the institution of marriage. Husband and wife are expected to be faithful to each other. *"Marriage bed must not be destroyed by fornication or adultery"* Heb13:4. Christ made it clear that "sexual immorality" can lead to marriage termination. He says to the Pharisees *"And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery, and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery."* Matthew 19:9

## Fornication and Adultery Destroys the Physical Body

Christians in Corinth are warned that when a man or a woman engages in sexual immorality they destroy their own body. Paul says this to them *"Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's."* 1Cor 6:18-20. He equally says this to them *"Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are."* 1 Cor 3:16-17

## Fornication and Adultery Contaminates the Church

The Bible makes it clear that sexual immorality contaminates the Church of God. When the brethren in Corinth failed to deal with the case of sexual immorality that took place amongst them Paul likened the sexually immoral brother to *"a little leaven leavens the whole lump"* 1 Cor 5:6. He warned them not to *"keep company with anyone named a brother who is sexually immoral"* 1Cor 5:11

## Fornication and Adultery take one to Hell

There is no doubt in the Bible that fornicators and adulterers who fail to repent before death will end up in Hell. 1Cor 6:9-10; Gal 5:19-20; Heb 13:4; Rev 21:8

## Conclusion

God hates all forms of sexual immorality and all those who love God must emulate Him in this regard. Sex is only for a man and a woman who are married to each other, so in order not to incur the wrath of God let every man and woman run away from fornication and adultery.

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