

## **To serve ourselves**

I was listening to a podcast talk about what we should own or be dedicated to. Beyond that the women were asking the question: should we take care of ourselves or just serve others? I have witnessed a Pastor talk about why he owns fancy things. It's like he needs to be clear about it in public. There are some American pastors that wear very expensive clothes. Should a religious public figure look dishevelled or pristine? Should the Christian wear Sackcloth or Gucci? Many people will not darken the door of a church based on what they have seen on Christians.

In Christian university I was in the company of the most beautiful women in the world. It's like the Christian has a hold on the beautiful children market. I also witnessed these kids wearing really nice clothes. There were no students that looked poor but you could say they looked beautiful and rich. I have been to several Christian homes. Most of these people are rich. Only once did I ever witness a Christian leader's home that looked plain. They divorced a few years later. Maybe the husband should have spent more on his wife!

I mention all this because there is a thing called the prosperity gospel. Believe in God and He will bless you. You will never go without. Now, to be fair, I have been taken care of by God. I have always had a roof over my head and food on the table. Blessed? Yet, many Christians starve. Many Christians die a horrible death. Not enough faith? The unbelieving world is looking at the church. They are observing the Christian. These people have an opinion on what we should say, look like, and do. Is the rich and pristine Christian portraying the real Christian look that God desires?

What does God have to say? Matthew 23:5-7 *““Everything they do is done for people to see: They make their phylacteries[a] wide and the tassels on their garments long; 6 they love the place of honor at banquets and the most important seats in the synagogues; 7 they love to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces and to be called ‘Rabbi’ by others.”*

God is concerned with how we look. More over, He is concerned with how we want to be seen in public. Does that mean we should look poor? We must always remember that the Bible is in a different context. They did not have Old Navy. There was no Walmart. The choice of clothing was by thread count. What type of robe did you own. Jesus noticed. The Bible notices John the Baptist for what he wore. What did Jesus’ wear? Did Mary have the latest fashion. What we do know of God and the Bible is the absence of status. The people of the Bible are not generally described. David was but ruddy? My guess is that what we wear should match our actions.

What do I mean by that? I can imagine that a missionary wearing expensive shoes would not match the mission field. A pastor in a 17000-seat church wearing 5000-dollar shoes might not match helping the poor. Should church people parade their latest buy? Let’s get back to the two women that I opened with. They were talking about taking the time to work out, read the Bible, and eat well. What they were not talking about is what to wear in public. Yes, we should look well. Jesus told us that looking dishevelled is not a great look. Looking rich isn’t a great look either. Just be modest and look the part. Look like a normal Christian.

Where does that leave us? I do think Christians should look healthy. That means, yes, we need to eat well, workout, and get sleep. We should have good clothes. Expensive clothes? How about some but not all. Why can’t God allow beautiful children? Why can’t Christian women be good looking? Should the men look and act gentle and soft? My wife says hell no! We should

look similar to the world around us in many ways. Just look normal. Yet, we should stand out in our actions. We should stand out in our words. There is a trainer I know who is Christian. He is a beautiful man. Yes, he is soft spoken but he has a powerful presence and grip. He owns nice things but his character drips Christian. He is far more a beautiful human than a sex object. The words powerful, humble, and gentle come to mind. Yet, he is built! Be built to withstand falling into the prosperity gospel trap. Be mindful of clothing and how much you need. I seriously doubt a tither to the church should be overwhelmingly pretty. The tither just does not have that mindset. At least they shouldn't.