

Blockages to Accepting Jesus

I can't look the way I want

The way Christians dress or look has been topic of much discussion, debates and preaching through the ages. The bible does not say you should not take care of your appearance or that you cannot wear jewellery or colour and style your hair. The following scripture says we should not concern ourselves only with the outward appearance, but it is the beauty of the inner heart that God loves.

1 Peter 3:3-4

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.

Many scriptures have been taken out of context with regards to the way Christians should dress especially women, but once you read and study the bible and let the Holy Spirit guide you, you will know what is pleasing to the Lord and what isn't. When you first come to the Lord, just come as you are and don't worry about what you look like, it is your heart and your desire to follow Him that He is concerned with. If your dress sense is a little risqué, the Holy spirit will work with you (if you let Him) to assess yourself as you progress and you will be able to decide what to keep and what to shake off.

Christians all over the world do not dress the same, you have the casual dresser, the smart dresser, the 'I'm on the red carpet dresser,' the cultural dresser. The Lord will not take away your creativity or your desire to adorn yourself, He just asks that we keep it in moderation and concentrate more on our heart and not the outward appearance. A good rule of thumb would be not to show flesh that we all know should not be on show and make sure you can move or bend in your clothes, your rib cage is not restricted and you can actually breathe. This is worth noting for anyone and not just

Christians, so this shouldn't be an issue for the Christian. If you come to the Lord with piercings and tattoos and anything else you adorned yourself with in the world, He will welcome you with open arms, let Him work with you as no one else can.

Our world puts too much emphasis on looks and outward appearance. Your looks do not define your heart or your love for the Lord and no one should be able to convince you otherwise. Although God does not hold our past against us, if we try to bring that past into our future then that becomes a problem. God is not interested in Christians 'looking the part.' The Scribes and Pharisees in Jesus' time looked the part but were completely corrupt inside and were very harmful to the people they should have been protecting and Jesus did not like it. He was angry with them for leading people astray and adding to their suffering. The following scripture tells us exactly what Jesus thought of the religious establishment of His time who looked the part but were corrupt inside.

Matthew 23:27-28

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness.

Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

They dressed right, looked the part but their hearts were unclean, cold and without love just like the bones of the dead, with no life in them. Jesus was not in their hearts and they were definitely hypocrites. While it is good to look right and dress appropriately, do not get too caught up with the outward appearance and don't judge others because of how they look, actually don't judge at all. Don't use the way you look to hide an unrighteous lifestyle because it cannot be hidden from God.

When God looks at you, He sees the blood of His Son Jesus Christ, then He looks into your heart to see if love is dwelling there. He does not see your latest designer shoes or your bright green coloured hair or your tattoos. If, however He looks into your heart and sees self-worship, pride,

vanity, hatred, idolising the materialistic things that you own, then that's when you need to be concerned. When you dress up your heart with love, forgiveness and tenderness, removing hate, greed and self-righteousness, then you are dressed well.

Christians are just a bunch of hypocrites

No, Christians are not a bunch of hypocrites! Whilst I am not disputing that there are hypocrites in the world, they are not a special breed of humans bred by Christianity. The word hypocrite originates from the Greek word hypokrites, which means "stage actor, pretender, dissembler." A hypocrite is a person who professes to be one way when in actual fact they are another way. In the case of a Christian they may preach that people should have high morals, principles and beliefs when they themselves are not living a high moralistic life and are not practicing what they preach. Someone who condemns others for the same things they are doing in secret would be classed as a hypocrite.

On that premise, let's focus for a moment on some major institutions and establishments in the world; governments, politics, education, healthcare, family institutions, the world of the rich and famous! I could name every area of life and you will find loving faithful generous true people and you will find damaged people, 'hypocrites,' people who don't really believe in what they are publicly declaring. How often is it revealed in the media that someone claiming to be leading a healthy lifestyle dies suddenly from a drugs overdose, someone passes a new law whilst at the same time they are breaking it themselves, someone professes to be looking after the vulnerable while abusing them. Unfortunately, it is prevalent in the world today and not sacred to any one establishment.

When a person becomes a Christian, they are not immediately made perfect. They strive to be like Christ but it is a lifelong process. Remember Sanctification is the cleaning up process where the Holy Spirit starts working with the new Christian from the beginning of their journey and continues throughout their life. The person still has free will, is free to make

their own decisions, can choose to hold on to the old person and refuse to let the Holy Spirit work with them to clean them up. They are babies in Christ, they have to learn to live and think differently. They have the enemy snapping at their heels and residue of past desires and habits that they are now fighting against. They are not yet fully re-generated and now they are faced with new challenges. As is the nature of a baby, they stumble, fail sometimes, fall down, throw tantrums, wear themselves out, say and do the wrong things because they don't yet know any better. It is only through love and nurturing that the spiritual baby will grow into a mature spiritual adult. When we make mistakes, God forgives us, but 'man' says 'you're a hypocrite or you're not Christian.'

The Apostle Paul was being used greatly by God, so he acknowledged the fact that he could become boastful and that people would want to praise him and put him on a pedestal. He was aware that Satan was also active and had placed one of his messengers around him to 'buffet' him, feed his ego. The thing to note here is that Paul knew what Satan had done, he knew the game, Satan's game. Paul was a game changer, he took the problem straight to Jesus in the following scripture.

2 Corinthians 12:8-9

For this thing I besought the Lord three times, that it might depart from me.

And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for you: for My strength is made perfect in weakness.

Jesus is saying that He knows our weaknesses, that we will get above our stations, do things that we know we shouldn't, make genuine mistakes, but His Grace, which is His love, forgiveness and mercy is more than enough to deal with our weaknesses. If we were perfect we wouldn't need Jesus so, it is in our weakness that we experience His great strength. Don't let the world tell you that because you are making some mistakes you are a 'hypocrite;' I'm not saying there are no hypocrites in the Christian faith, because they killed our Lord of Glory two thousand years ago and some would kill Him again now if they could. But let's keep it in context and not

tarnish everyone with the same brush. God says, when you fall, He will pick you up and you must hold on to that, as long as God forgives you, don't worry about what anyone else thinks of you. Tell the world to ease up, you are on the greatest journey of your life and you are striving for perfection, but not yet perfect.

I don't really understand what it's all about

You cannot be blamed for being more than a little confused by all the different denominations in the world; what is right or wrong, what to commit to and what to steer away from, who to believe or not to believe. The enemy has worked ceaselessly from the dawn of our creation to corrupt and destroy us. All this confusion in the world today comes directly from him influencing people to go against God's will. If you want to find the truth, the first place to start searching is in your heart. Have a real desire to know the truth and ask God to help you find it. Whether you believe in Him or not at this point is of no consequence, set your heart on seeking the truth. Ask Him, 'Lord are you real?' 'do you love me as much as people say you do?' 'how can I find you?' 'so many people say so many different things I don't know what to believe,' 'please direct me to the right place or send someone to help me.' The Lord will answer you, it won't be when you think He should or how you imagine He will, so be determined and keep asking, He will answer you.

In life when you set your heart on finding that perfect job, or partner, or home, think of all the things you did to make it happen, the level of commitment you showed until you achieved your goal. People spend their entire lives searching, researching, conquering the highest mountain, sailing around the world, diving to the deepest depths of the ocean all in the name of discovering life and living it. This is the same principle when seeking the Lord, don't ask once then give up, if you desire an answer, don't stop until you get one. You will definitely get an answer from God, and I say that unreservedly.

Jeremiah 29:13

Excerpt from Chapter 6 of My Alabaster Box

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And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me
with all your heart.

Ask the Lord to lead you to the right person to help and guide you. Speak to a Christian with personal experience of Jesus Christ, not just a church goer or someone following a set of religious rules. Stay away from any newly founded sects, cults or religious groups claiming they have the answer to everything and are here to get you into heaven. No one can do that, only God. There are many bible translations designed for all ages and different abilities. Knowing the Word of God is the first step to dispelling the myths and gaining a better understanding of the world you live in. The King James version and the New King James version are my favourite translations but there are many more translations available today for all levels of understanding. We are all responsible for finding the truth for ourselves by going directly to the Lord.