God Wears Clothes

Adam Hellyer 25 August 2016



In the West, movies and TV are increasingly significant in shaping how society thinks. Movies have always been more than entertainment. Since the days of the Hays Code, law-makers and movie-makers have appreciated the impact film can have on our personal behaviour and morality. Here we take a biblical look at sex and nudity.

At the time of Jesus, the Jews had strict laws regulating morality and keeping sex within marriage. However, the nations around Israel had no such restraints. In Egypt, it was normal for female dancers to perform nude. In Greece, athletics contests saw both men and sometimes female participants take part in the nude. In both Greece and Rome, religious rites and ceremonies involved striptease and sexual activity. Prostitution was rife, and art and entertainment often included nudity. In Corinth, Temple prostitutes worked at the temple of Aphrodite, sleeping with worshippers. Herodotus records that there was a practice on Cyprus, also known in Babylon, where females were required to attend the temple once in their life to have sex with a stranger.*

Our culture today is little different. It is practically expected of every young man or woman to lose their virginity before their wedding day. People are pushing for public nudity to be more acceptable. Pornography is everywhere. And film and TV love to use sex and nudity to add excitement to the entertainment on our screens. But is this a culture we should embrace? Is

entertainment involving sex and nudity something that sits well with the Spirit of Jesus within us?

> God has made it plain, since the fall, that nudity is something to be kept private.

Nudity in The Bible

From very early on, the Bible tells us that post-fall, public nakedness is wrong. Adam and Eve were placed in the garden naked and unashamed. But from the moment Adam sinned, they realised they were naked and that it was now wrong. When God arrived, He did not sit them down and tell them to just be okay with it; to embrace who they were and not be so prudish. No, He makes them garments.

God's view of post-fall, public nakedness is reinforced when Ham comes across his father, Noah, drunk and lying naked in his tent. Rather than cover him up, Ham runs off to tell his brothers. For this he is cursed. God has made it plain, since the fall, that nudity is something to be kept private.

> Even in eternity, when we are fully free from sin...we will still wear robes, given by God.

God Wears Clothes

If nudity was the ultimate sign of innocence or purity, it would follow that God would reveal Himself as a nudist. He does not. Nowhere in Scripture does God reveal Himself as nude. When the Bible speaks of Him or His angels, it often includes descriptions of their clothes. Whether in the New Testament account of John's Revelation, or the Old Testament record of Isaiah's vision, where 'The train of His robe fills the temple' (Isaiah 6:1).

Even in eternity, when we are fully free from sin, forever and ever, we will still wear robes, given by God. Public nudity got left behind in Eden.

Looking with Lust

When Jesus upgraded the law for the New Covenant, He raised the bar on adultery. Under the Old Covenant, adultery involved sleeping with someone other than your marriage partner. But Jesus says, 'I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.' (Matthew 5:28) Perhaps it was a divine premonition of

this divine standard that caused Job to declare, 'I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a young woman.' (Job 31:1)

The New Testament is full of warnings against sexual sin. In other areas, we are told to resist the devil and stand firm. Of sexual sin, it simply says FLEE!

There is nothing wrong with sex. God created it. But He created it to be enjoyed within marriage. If I participate in entertainment that stirs up lust, or where I am a fly on the wall during sex acts God intended to be private inside marriage, then I have not obeyed God. I have not loved Him.

> ...whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure

Think on These Things

I can argue, 'All things are lawful for me', but in reality, not all things are helpful. Paul writes, 'For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another' (Galatians 5:13).

The next time you're making a movie selection, consider the teaching of Paul. Writing to a society filled with a lust for nudity and sex, Paul wrote:

'... whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.' (Philippians 4:8)

Further reading: Exodus 20:14; Leviticus 18; Genesis 2:25; Genesis 3:7; Genesis 3:21;Genesis 9:18-29; Isaiah 6:1; Revelation 19:13; Revelation 7:9; Job 31:1; Matthew 5:28; 1 Corinthians 6:12,18; 1 Corinthians 10:23; Hebrews 13:4; Galatians 5:13

*Herodotus, The Histories 1.199, tr A.D. Godley (1920)