

Clothing

Back in Yeshua's time there were not a lot of distinctions between the clothes of women and men, but there were a few. Anything that is considered to be the clothing of the opposite sex would be explicitly prohibited by Deuteronomy 22:5. "A woman is not to wear men's clothing, and a man is not to put on women's clothing, for whoever does these things is detestable to ADONAI your God." Deut. 22:5 CJB. Men or woman were not to dress like the opposite sex.

So, wearing of dresses and makeup that makes men look like women is prohibited. Wearing clips for a kippah wouldn't make a man look feminine; men dying hair is accepted in our society and so that wouldn't be wrong. Women wearing pants is accepted in our society, but women who try to look like a man would be wrong (or copying known homosexual styles). We can draw the conclusion that the point of Deuteronomy 22:5 seems to be about not imitating the (pagan) homosexual dress practices of that time. This would still apply to believers of the true God today.

Does a woman wearing tzitzit violate this commandment? Wearing a tallit does not have anything to do with demonstrating sexual orientation in our society although it does in Israel. Wearing tzitzit is commanded in the Bible which is often on a tallit. Yeshua, probably referring to a tallit, says that we can wear a tallit while praying (Matthew 6:6).

It is up to us how we observe this. Perhaps we decide to only wear a tallit or tzitzit on a specific occasion. Tzitzit are worn so that we will remember to keep God's commandments. The Holy Spirit was given to believers in the Messiah and is to help us live right too (John 16:7). Extra commands about apparel which are not in the Bible are not binding, but these things can be worn with the knowledge they don't have to be worn. Women should be aware of the social practices in Israel and not wear a tallit or a kippah there (they can always be worn at home).¹ A veil is a more appropriate covering for a woman than a kippah.

A kippah or veil is worn for the purpose of recognizing that God is over us. There is nothing wrong with that; it is not commanded in the Bible though neither is a veil (1 Cor. 11:2-16). Some things should not be worn because of their pagan associations. Also, we have to ask ourselves if what a person is wearing (or how we are acting) is violating a sexual dress code for our society, and where do we draw the line with this commandment.

It's not okay just to wear just anything we want to and the Bible views modesty as a commandment. Rabbi Shaul² (Paul) said, "Likewise, the women, when they pray, should be dressed modestly and sensibly in respectable attire, not with elaborate hairstyles and gold jewelry, or pearls, or expensive clothes. Rather, they should adorn themselves with what is appropriate for women who claim to be worshipping God, namely, good deeds." 1 Tim. 2:9-10 CJB.

It's not saying a person can't dress up at times, but we should never be telling others by our dress that we are not modest or not sexually clean whether male or female. We should all, "be dressed modestly and sensibly in respectable attire" and in appropriate attire for each situation (implied by the context of the 1 Timothy Passage). This does not mean we can't wear a t-shirt or a swim suit. Again, we should dress appropriately and be modest. Shaul also says that we should set our aim on doing good deeds instead of dressing up.

¹ In Israel, only homosexual women wear a kippah or a tallit; it is cultural.

² In Acts 23:6, Shaul (Paul) says he is a Jewish leader and they don't argue the fact. Instead they argue about the resurrection.

One command by Shaul concerning apparel has caused some confusion among believers because of a mistranslation in some Bibles. Some translations of 1 Cor. 11 use the word head covering instead of veil. The Complete Jewish Bible correctly translates 1 Cor. 11:7 CJB, "For a man indeed should not have his head veiled." We should understand that Shaul is speaking from the Torah (Deut. 22:5). Veils are for women to wear and not men. Also, it is not referring to covering our heads with a tallit for prayer as this is acceptable for both men and women. In 1 Cor. 11 it is referring to appropriate attire based on the command in Deut. 22:5.

Perhaps after reading this you could see how some deviant dress practices could be wrong. What is our clothing communicating? We should dress appropriately for the situation and be communicating that we are a good, modest and kind people by how we dress and act.