

Ornaments *and* Christianity



Jonathan Mukwiri

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By Jonathan Mukwiri

Christians should always be “Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord” (Ephesians 5:10). We must seek to put on the ornament that will never perish, that will promote the happiness of all around us in this life, and will shine with undimmed lustre in the immortal future, which ornament is the adorning of a meek and lowly spirit.

God tenderly regards those who reveal the meek and lowly spirit of Christ. “Though the Lord be high, yet hath He respect unto the lowly” (Psalms 138:6). Their choice of dress and general lifestyle is based on pleasing God and denying self. They may be looked upon with scorn by the world, but they are of great value in God’s sight.

What we wear as Christians must reflect our love for God. To this, Jesus summarised the first set of laws by saying, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment” (Matthew 22:37, 38).

If we practice this love for God, self-denial and sacrifice will mark our Christian life. We will seek to please God in what we wear. John reminds us that,

"whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight" (1 John 3:22).

Things that are pleasing to God include loving the people around us. It extends to being careful lest we set a bad example and cause others to sin. Jesus warns us that, "Whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea" (Matthew 18:6). Let your adornment lead others to Christ.

If a Christian is moved by love for God and love for others, one will be sensitive to the slightest indication of God's will, and seek to please God than self. Such will hear the voice of God clearly say, "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye. Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding; whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee" (Psalm 32:8, 9). Your adornment reflects your Christianity.

Self-denial: virtue of Christianity

Most people who profess to be Christians have developed a worldview of religion, which does not

interfere with personal rights and freedom. Any doctrine that teaches Christianity as having the values of self-denial and sacrifice is dismissed as being narrow and legalistic. Church leaders dare not teach self-denial lest many supposedly fine people be discouraged from joining the church by self-denial's arbitrary imposition of Christian rules.

But the world's standards of personal rights and freedom often conflict with Christianity. The path to eternal life is not a soft, flowery way of ease. Jesus laid such emphasis upon this in so many texts that we cannot be blind to it. He said, "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matthew 7:14).

One of the very first principles of being a Christian is self-denial. Christ said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me" (Luke 9:23). To be a Christian requires complete surrender of self to Christ.

If we are Christians, we must preach and live the gospel of Christ, and "walk, even as He walked" (1 John 2:6). If we must be saved, we must not allow anything or anyone to come between the will of Christ and us. Self must be fully surrendered or we will be lost. Our adornment must reflect self-denial.

We must not disregard and teach others to disregard the price of discipleship so that people will not feel that the path is too narrow and restrictive. Jesus said, "Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:33). Self-denial is at the heart of true Christianity.

Jesus told the rich young ruler that he lacked only one thing in his preparation for Heaven, but that one thing he was not willing to do. He would have to surrender his wealth in order to be saved, but he was not willing to give it away. He loved something more than he loved the Lord, and he went away sorrowful and lost. Love not ornaments than Christ.

The position of Christ was so strong on this point that He even said, "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me" (Matthew 10:37). Deny ornaments to have Christ.

When you devote precious time to trimming your apparel, remember that Christ the King of glory wore a plain, seamless coat (John 19:23). You who weary yourselves in decorating your persons, please bear in mind that Jesus was often weary from incessant toil and self-denial and self-sacrifice to save men from sin. Walk as He walked (1 John 2:6).

Practicing a principle of self-denial does not mean one cannot dress beautifully. But ornaments should not measure beauty. It is right to love beauty and to desire it; but God desires us to love and seek first the highest beauty, that which is imperishable.

No outward adorning can compare in value or loveliness with that “meek and quiet spirit,” the “fine linen, white and clean” (Revelation 19:14), which all the holy ones of earth will wear. This apparel will make them beautiful and beloved here, and will hereafter be their badge of admission to the palace of the King. His promise is, “They shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy” (Revelation 3:4).

Christians must be renewed after the image of God, in righteousness and true holiness. Then the love of the world, the love of self, and every ambition of life calculated to exalt self will be changed by the grace of God and employed in the special work of saving souls for whom Christ died.

When the principle of self-denial is practiced, humility will take the place of pride, and haughty self-esteem will be exchanged for meekness. Every power of the heart will be controlled by disinterested love for all mankind. In such a renewed heart the wearing of ornaments find no place.

Ornaments in the Old Testament

Now of course one may ask, "What is wrong with my little arm-band or bracelet or ring on my finger?" That is a very sad question for any faithful Christian to ask, but certainly one that needs an answer. The sadness lies in the implied attitude that reflects a legalistic desire to do only the things that are laid down as divine "do-it-or-else" laws – the bit-bridle laws. It would also imply a further question: "What can I get away with and remain a child of God?"

The right question to ask is "How much can I do to please Jesus whom I love?" A Christian who understands the love Jesus offered to save us, the advocacy our Lord is offering in our behalf in the heavenly courts, will not risk displeasing the loving Lord. Certainly, a faithful Christian will not look for loopholes in God's law or seek to comply with the minimum requirement of God's will.

But an answer to the supposed first question need be given. Through the prophet Isaiah God sent one of the most scathing denunciations of ornaments that can be found anywhere in the Bible. Nowhere do we find a more direct and unequivocal revelation of God's feelings toward the wearing of ornaments.

In Isaiah 3:16 God does not generalise about ornaments, but gives a long list of specific articles that were being worn by the “daughters of Zion.” Remember, God is the same yesterday, today, and forever, and if God was not pleased then He certainly is not pleased today with the wearing of ornaments.

God said, “Moreover the Lord saith, Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet ... In that day the Lord will take away the bravery of their tinkling ornaments about their feet, and their cauls.... The chains, and the bracelets, and the mufflers.... the ornaments of the legs, and the headbands, and the tablets, and the earrings, The rings, and nose jewels” (Isaiah 3:16-21).

Do not fail to notice that the list of ornaments God objects to wearing includes “rings,” which certainly include wedding rings. Nowhere in the Scripture is there support for wearing wedding rings. The wearing of wedding rings is strictly a tradition that springs from paganism and has since been embraced and “baptized” by many churches.

Cardinal John Henry Newman points out that “the ring in marriage,” along with many other pagan

customs, infiltrated Christianity through the compromising influence of his church (John Henry Newman, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* (London: Longmans, Green & Company, 1906), pp. 372, 373).

Wedding rings are traditions of men, which are opposed to God's will. Jesus condemned the custom of following tradition of men against the commands of God. "And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition" (Mark 7:9).

Back to the prophet Isaiah, in the fourth chapter, verse 4, we read: "When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion ... by the spirit of burning" (Isaiah 4:4).

Here you notice that God refers to all these objects of adornment as "filth." He further describes most graphically the ones who survive the "washed away" of the filth of ornaments:

"In that day shall the branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel. And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem" (Isaiah 4:2, 3).

God uses that word “comely” to describe His faithful church. “I have likened the daughter of Zion to a comely and delicate woman” (Jeremiah 6:2). Wow! You become a comely and delicate woman when the Lord washes away the filth of ornaments!

Back in Isaiah, as if to reinforce His assessment of the objectionable adornment under consideration, God made the following observation: “The shew of their countenance doth witness against them; and they declare their sin as Sodom, they hide it not. Woe unto their soul for they have rewarded evil unto themselves” (Isaiah 3:9). No question is permitted to remain about the impropriety of outward adornment.

Instructed to put off ornaments

Ornaments include wedding rings. The word “ring” is first found in Genesis 41:42 where Pharaoh took his off and put it on Joseph’s hand. The event was not a wedding. The ring was used as a symbol of power and authority. But remember it is Pharaoh, an idolatrous pagan ruler, who gives the ornaments.

The Egyptians worshipped idols, they did not fear God, and these pagan people and their idol gods did wear jewelry. For “four hundred and thirty years” (Exodus 12:40) the Israelites had lived in bondage in

Egypt, and they copied the pagan culture of wearing ornaments. As they finally left Egypt, they carried on them much “jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment” (Exodus 12:35).

It is of some of the jewelry carried from Egypt the Israelites later gave to Aaron to make idols for worship, the idols they had learnt to worship in Egypt. Aaron made a golden calf from the ornaments of jewelry given to him by the Israelites.

“And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me. And all the people brake off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron. And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt” (Exodus 32:2-4). This was sin against God!

God was not pleased, and He commanded His people to put off all the ornaments. “For the LORD had said unto Moses, Say unto the children of Israel, Ye are a stiffnecked people: I will come up into the midst of thee in a moment, and consume thee: therefore now put off thy ornaments from thee, that I may know what to do unto thee” (Exodus 33:5).

The same God who required the Israelites to take off the ornaments requires us today to take them off. When God said, "put off thy ornaments," He meant it. Nowhere in Scripture God ever told the Israelites they could put ornaments back on. If God said to take it off and gave no authorization to put it back on, then these ornaments of adornment are forever to remain off the body of God's chosen people.

We see even the "stiffnecked people" of Israel by then obeyed God and put off the ornaments. "And the children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments by the mount Horeb" (Exodus 33:6). You cannot put on ornaments and claim to obey God.

If any man condones the putting on of ornaments, he sins against God who commanded His people to put them off. Church leaders, who condone wearing of ornaments by their indifference to such direct disobedience, likewise sin against God.

One of the sins of king Saul was he allowed the women to put back on ornaments. "Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, who clothed you in scarlet, with other delights, who put on ornaments of gold upon your apparel" (2 Samuel 1:24).

After kings like Saul sinned against God by allowing the Israelites to wear ornaments, God insisted on His earlier command to have ornaments

put off. We find the next mention of these ornaments is in Isaiah 3:18 where God strips Israel again, but this time He will send them into captivity into the land of the pagans whom they lusted after.

The prophet Isaiah tells us what God planned to do with ornaments: "In that day the Lord will take away the bravery of their tinkling ornaments about their feet, and their cauls, and their round tires like the moon" (Isaiah 3:18).

What happens when a person rejects the ways of God? They end up a captive among the unsaved heathens and there with their ornaments they forget God until the day of their calamity. Then, to get God's attention they will strip off their ornaments of bravery, put on sackcloth, and begin to wail.

The prophet Jeremiah tells of the continued wearing of ornaments despites God's objection. "And when thou art spoiled, what wilt thou do? Though thou clothest thyself with crimson, though thou deckest thee with ornaments of gold, though thou rentest thy face with painting, in vain shalt thou make thyself fair; thy lovers will despise thee, they will seek thy life" (Jeremiah 4:30).

We see in Jeremiah 4:30 that the daughters of Israel decked themselves again with ornaments of gold, painted their faces, made themselves beautiful

(fair), but God said even with all this her lovers would despise her.

Ornaments on the hands of a whore or harlot do not symbolize holiness or purity. These symbolize more the spirit of a witch, a woman who uses all available powers to seduce her victim to lust after her. Such fornication and adultery profanes the sacrifice of purity and holiness.

The Israelites understood the language of ornaments, and using the same language God illustrates graphically the care he had put on Israel as a nation, yet they forsook God and worshipped other gods – committing spiritual fornication. We read this in Ezekiel 16:10-15 as follows:

“I clothed thee also with broidered work, and shod thee with badgers’ skin, and I girded thee about with fine linen, and I covered thee with silk. I decked thee also with ornaments, and I put bracelets upon thy hands, and a chain on thy neck. And I put a jewel on thy forehead, and earrings in thine ears, and a beautiful crown upon thine head. Thus wast thou decked with gold and silver; and thy raiment was of fine linen, and silk, and broidered work; thou didst eat fine flour, and honey, and oil: and thou wast exceeding beautiful, and thou didst prosper into a kingdom. And thy renown went forth among the

heathen for thy beauty: for it was perfect through my comeliness, which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord GOD. But thou didst trust in thine own beauty, and playedst the harlot because of thy renown, and pouredst out thy fornications on every one that passed by; his it was" (Ezekiel 16:10-15).

History records the result of wearing ornaments led to fornication, which was both physical and spiritual fornication. "And furthermore, that ye have sent for men to come from far, unto whom a messenger was sent; and, lo, they came: for whom thou didst wash thyself, paintedst thy eyes, and deckedst thyself with ornaments" (Ezekiel 23:40).

God in His wisdom precluded His people from wearing ornaments. God said to Satan, "every precious stone was thy covering ... thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness" (Ezekiel 28:13-17). So is man not capable of using liberty of ornaments to glorify God. Satan knows that wearing of ornaments would turn attention from God to man.

Many a woman decks herself with rings and bracelets, thinking to gain admiration, but she refuses to accept the pearl of great price, which would secure for her sanctification, honor, and eternal riches. What an infatuation is upon the

minds of many! They are more charmed with earthly baubles, which glitter and shine, than with the crown of immortal life, God's reward for loyalty. "Can a maid forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire? yet my people have forgotten me days without number" (Jeremiah 2:32).

Ornaments in the New Testament

Turning to the New Testament, the picture comes into even sharper focus. John, in the book of Revelation, describes the scarlet woman of sin (symbolising the false church) as "decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication" (Revelation 17:4).

In contrast the true church is depicted in Revelation 12:1 as a beautiful woman clothed with the glory of the sun. This woman is called the bride of Christ in Revelation 21:9. Notice that the bride of Christ wears no ornaments.

These types of the true and the false religious systems also point up the estimate God places upon the use of artificial adornment. Paul wrote, "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety;

not with braided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works" (1 Timothy 2:9, 10).

This forbids display in dress, gaudy colors, and profuse ornamentation. Any device designed to attract attention to the wearer or to excite admiration, is excluded from the modest apparel, which God's word enjoins.

The apostle Peter cautions faithful Christians about outward adornment. "Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel" (1 Peter 3:3).

Outward adornment is an index of the inner character, whether a person be a faithful Christian or not. Jesus says, "By their fruits ye shall know them" (Matthew 7:20). The inward adorning of a meek and quiet spirit is priceless. In the life of the true Christian the outward adorning is always in harmony with the inward peace and holiness.

The apostle Peter admonishes the faithful Christian to have a renewed heart. "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" (1 Peter 3:4).

The most beautiful adornment the apostle Peter bids us wear upon the soul. No outward adorning can compare in value or loveliness with that “meek and quiet spirit” which in His sight is “of great price” (1 Peter 3:4).

The apostle Peter presents the inward adorning, in contrast with the outward, and tells us what the great God values. The outward is corruptible. But the meek and quiet spirit, the development of a beautifully symmetrical character, will never decay. It is an adornment which is not perishable. In the sight of the Creator of everything that is valuable, lovely, and beautiful, it is declared to be of great price.

We should reflect self-denial. “If any man will come after Me,” Christ said, “let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me” (Matthew 16:24). Self-denial and sacrifice will mark the Christian’s life. Evidence that the taste is converted will be seen in the dress of all who walk in the path cast up for the ransomed of the Lord.

Even the wearing of “crosses” is still objectionable. Clearly Jesus did not mean we wear ornaments of crosses when He said we deny self and take up our cross “and follow me” (Matthew

16:24). What the Lord requires is not display of crosses on our bodies, but the inward self-denial.

The love of ornaments endangers the morals and makes woman the opposite of the Christian lady characterized by modesty and sobriety. These ornaments and showy, extravagant dress too often encourages lust in the heart of the wearer and awakens base passions in the heart of the beholder. God sees that the ruin of the character is frequently preceded by the indulgence of pride and vanity in outward adornment. He sees that the costly apparel stifles the desire to do good, attracting self instead of self-denial required in His word.

Faithful Christians will not follow the customs of the world to put on ornaments to war against the working of the Spirit of God. As peculiar people purchased by the blood of Jesus, they will obey the command: "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, . . . and touch not the unclean thing." And to them will be fulfilled the promise: "I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (2 Corinthians 6: 17, 18).

Ornaments and idolatry

A woman who loves ornaments endanger her morals, as ornaments tend to make a woman the opposite of the Christian lady, characterised by modesty and sobriety. Showy decking with ornaments often encourages lust in the heart of the wearer and awakens base passions in the heart of the beholder. The wearing of ornaments tends to create I spirit of self-loving than God loving. God sees that the ruin of the character is frequently preceded by the indulgence of pride and vanity in dressing with ornaments. God desires that His daughters will appreciate the value of their price paid at Calvary and abstain from all corrupting influence of dress.

Looking at our very time, the apostle prophesied: "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, high minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away" (2 Timothy 3:1-5).

Perilous times are upon us. We must decidedly show whether we are of God or the world. Every true child of God will be sifted as wheat, and in the sifting process every cherished pleasure which diverts the mind from God must be sacrificed. For many women the mantel tables are filled with ornaments. Thus the thoughts, which should be upon God and heavenly interests, are brought down to common things. Is not this a species of idolatry? Should not the money thus spent have been used to bless humanity, to relieve the suffering, to clothe the naked, and to feed the hungry? Should it not be placed in the Lord's treasury to advance His cause and build up His kingdom in the earth?

The aged apostle wrote as to his own children, "Little children, keep yourselves from idols" (1 John 5:21). The effect of ornaments on morals is a matter great importance, and it is urged upon you to save you from the sin of idolatry. Blessing would come to your souls if you would obey the word spoken by the Holy One of Israel, "Thou shalt have no other Gods before me" (Exodus 20:3). But many are creating unnecessary cares and anxieties for themselves by devoting time and thought to the unnecessary ornaments with which their tables are filled. The

power of God is needed to arouse them from this devotion; for to all intents and purposes it is idolatry.

God who searches the heart, desires to win His people from every species of idolatry. Let the Word of God, the blessed book of life, occupy the tables now filled with ornaments. Spend your money in buying books that will be the means of enlightening the mind in regard to present truth. Spend time in writing a few lines to your friends, in sending papers or leaflets or little books to someone who knows not the truth. Grasp the Word of the Lord as the treasure of infinite wisdom and love. The Word of God points out the path to heaven. It points us to the sin-pardoning Saviour, saying, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

There is urgent need for developing new attitudes to fit us for heaven. But many spend much for things that are mere idols, things that engross the thoughts and affections, little ornaments that require attention to be kept free from dust and placed in order. The moments spent in arranging these little idols might be spent in speaking a word in season to some soul, awakening an interest to inquire, "What shall I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30). These little things take the

time that should be devoted to prayer, seeking the Lord, and grasping by faith the promises of God.

Many are spiritually overburdened with the idols of style and fashion. Adornment is the norm in the society we live in today, and Christians are caught up in these gods of fashion. Christ, looking down the ages, saw the state of things, which now exists, and to these overburdened souls He gives the blessed invitation, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls" (Matthew 11:28, 29).

In humbleness, search the Scriptures with prayerful hearts, and a spirit of surrender to God. In meekness, search your hearts as with a lighted candle, and discover and break the finest thread that binds you to worldly habits, which divert the mind from God.

In humbleness, plead with God to show you every practice that draws your thoughts and affections from Him. God has given His holy law to man as His measure of character. By this law you may see and overcome every defect in your character. You may sever yourself from every idol, and link yourself to

the throne of God by the golden chain of grace and truth.

Imperishable Ornaments

There is an ornament that will never perish, that will promote the happiness of all around us in this life, and will shine with undimmed lustre in the immortal future. It is the adorning of a meek and lowly spirit. God has bidden us wear the richest dress upon the soul. Instead of seeking golden ornaments for the exterior, an earnest effort would be put forth to secure that wisdom which is of more value than fine gold.

Of how little value are gold or pearls or costly array in comparison with the loveliness of Christ. Natural loveliness consists in symmetry, or the harmonious proportion of parts, each with the other; but spiritual loveliness consists in the harmony or likeness of our souls to Jesus. This will make its possessor more precious than fine gold, even the golden wedge of Ophir. The grace of Christ is indeed a priceless adornment. It elevates and ennobles its possessor and reflects beams of glory upon others, attracting them also to the Source of light and blessing.

Christ our example, came “not with observation” (Luke 17:20) – that is not with outward show. To world-loving hearts there was “no beauty that we should desire him” (Isaiah 53:2). He was born in a rude manger, lived in poverty, and followed a lowly occupation. His attire was plain and simple – a “coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout” (John 19:23). The Jews had refused to receive Christ, whose garments, coarse and often travel-stained, covered a heart of divine love. If we submit ourselves to Jesus’ wise guidance and love, and casting ourselves on His mercy cry, “Lord, save us: we perish” (Matthew 8:25), He will help and save us from rejecting Him for His appearance.

No true professed Christian can see Jesus and His simple life and choose to follow Him, and at the same time desire to make a show of himself by displaying body, attire, ornaments, talents or any other thing. “My soul shall make her boast in the LORD: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad” (Psalm 34:2). The spirit of Christ and the spirit of pride and display are direct opposites.

Our only boast should be of God and His precious truth. “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made

himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Philippians 2:5-8). If we fail to have the same spirit, we are not His. "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His" (Romans 8:9).

When we walk into His presence we instinctively feel that pride is out of place. Only humility is appropriate. When we live as in His presence by faith, we will feel our sin and degradation. Ornaments will be seen and felt as totally inappropriate. Beholding Jesus will take the love of these things out of our hearts. All things that are not like Him must be given up and willingly surrendered. Our attitude toward vanity shows to what extent we have comprehended our sinful condition and how far we have gone in accepting Christ.

When you spend precious time trimming and embellishing your apparel, remember that the King of Glory wore a plain seamless robe. You who weary yourselves in primping, perming, painting, powdering and decorating yourselves to please the eye, please bear in mind that Jesus spent whole nights praying for you. He felt the weaknesses of

your natures to resist the temptations of the enemy upon the very points upon which you have been overcome.

Conclusion

The sad aspect of wearing ornaments is the experience that these things are often not the problem but rather merely the symptom of a much more serious problem – the lack of full surrender.

But the world's standards of personal rights and freedom often conflict with Christianity. The path to eternal life is not a soft, flowery way of ease. Jesus laid such emphasis upon this in so many texts that we cannot be blind to it. He said, "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matthew 7:14).

One of the very first principles of being a Christian is self-denial. Christ said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me" (Luke 9:23). To be a Christian requires complete surrender of self.

Satan knows that once he has gained a foothold in a Christian with a small ornament, the soul can be pushed into other forms of indulgences that displease God. With one compromise that

displeases God, the spiritual senses are beclouded and the soul is led into all sorts of sins such as a little lies, a little fornication, indifference to sin, reclassification of sin, and eventual total backsliding.

When the heart is yielded, and God is made first in the life, no convert will allow a little band or ring or any other ornament to stand in the way of uniting with our loved God who is displeased by this outward adornment. When love of Christ is stronger than love of self, then nothing will stand in the way, least of all a wedding ring or any type of ornament.

If a Christian is moved by love for God and love for others, one will be sensitive to the slightest indication of God's will, and seek to please God than self. Such will hear the voice of God clearly say, "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye. Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding; whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee" (Psalms 32:8, 9).

In a world where wearing of ornaments is the norm, as was in Egypt of old, only God's people will be the exception. To God's people, the command is heard "now put off thy ornaments from thee, that I may know what to do unto thee" (Exodus 33:5), and

God's people will heed the command by stripping "themselves of their ornaments" (Exodus 33:6), and "by their fruits ye shall know them" (Matthew 7:20).

When you devote precious time and money decking yourself with ornaments, remember that Christ the King of glory wore a plain seamless coat – His "coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout" (John 19:23). A Christian who "saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked" (1 John 2:6) without ornaments.

Harlots tend to put on ornaments. The woman representing false churches is referred to as "the mother of harlots" decked with ornaments of "gold and precious stones and pearls" (Revelation 17:4-5), whilst the pure woman is clothed in light (Revelation 12:1). Why must you, a daughter of God, dress as a harlot? At the very least, you must "Abstain from all appearance of evil" (1 Thessalonians 5:22). As a child of God, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 5:16). The "light" here is of the inner Christ-like character, not of your external ornaments.

Finally, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man" (Ecclesiastes 12:13).

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