

JACK'S CORNER

QUESTION: My parents are always criticizing the way I dress. They say some of my tops are not proper. I'm almost 14 years old, what's the big deal anyway?

ANSWER: **How you dress can say a lot about who you are.** I'm sure you have looked at enough magazines and seen enough movies to know this. I want to congratulate your parents for being brave enough and involved enough to take this stand for you! **They are not trying to ruin your life; they are trying to protect you.**

Most Christian parents know the importance of **modesty**. Modesty in the way a person dresses has to do with choosing clothes that do not reveal too much. Modesty means that you are not trying to draw sexual attention to your body by the way you dress. Modesty has to do with sending a godly message about your character, and what standards you believe in.

Think about the way most of the female "stars" dress at Hollywood parties, awards and in magazines. Certainly, they dress to be noticed, but more than that, they dress so that people notice their bodies. What do you think young men are thinking when they see a young woman with her breasts practically falling out of a dress, or when they see her in a dress so short that they can almost look up it, or when a dress reveals so much of her body that she is almost naked? If YOU want boys to look at you and think those thoughts, I have a great deal of sadness for you. Those kinds of looks are not "I love you" looks, or "I want to be your friend" looks; they are "I want to use you" looks.

Why do you think prostitutes often dress the way they do? It is an advertisement about what they are offering to do. In a perfect world, it wouldn't be this way, but in this world, **how you dress will often help determine how you are treated by young men.** When men look at prostitutes, they are not thinking: "I want to be your friend."

I'm going to choose an offensive word, but I want you to really understand. If you dress like a whore, you might just get treated that way. I know that sounds offensive, but I want you to think carefully about this whole subject. Your parents' concern for the way you dress is concern for YOU. They care about the message you send. They know what the world is like. They want to protect you. "Your beauty should not come from the outside..." 1 Peter 3 says; it should be from your "inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit." You don't have to flaunt your body to be noticed.

Be careful that the way you dress does not make it easy for young men to have sinful, lustful thoughts about you. Young men struggle enough in this area already without young women making it even harder for them by dressing provocatively (look that word up). Your parents understand this. I believe you can be stylish and beautiful without looking promiscuous.

It is my sincere prayer that you will someday thank your parents for their courage and godliness.

P.S. (I know that young women want to be beautiful. I believe this desire comes from a longing to be valued and honored by others...in essence, to be "beautiful on the inside". **Many women believe they will never be valued for who they are on the inside so they try to make up for it on the outside.** They settle for so much less. When guys tell them they are beautiful, women would like to believe the guys are talking about the inside too. Women often settle for a **counterfeit** when it comes to being valued and honored. **Having someone love your body feels something like having someone love your inner self....but it is NOT the same.** Your longing to be valued and honored is good. Find a godly young man who will give you that value and honor. Find a godly young man who will look beyond the outside.)

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