IS THERE ANYTHING LIKE "CHRISTIAN DRESSING"?

Dressing is the subject of this article. Please stop now and get a Bible. You must prove these things personally. Read each scripture and remember you will be asked about this too on judgement day. Don't let anyone deceive you to think otherwise. So read up the passages. I hope to say that which I have learnt and where my own opinions are stated, I will point them out, as opposed to what God says directly which I will state without apology.

Purpose always reveals the proper way a thing is to be used. If you need to sip tea a little at a time, it only makes sense that you look for a spoon and not a fork. A fork was not made for the purpose of doing things like that. Gloves were not made to be worn on the feet neither are cars made to be driven around inside houses. Everything has a purpose and when it is not used correctly, it is called ***abuse*** (from **ab**normal **use**).

The devil (which means '***deceiver***' while 'satan' means '***adversary/enemy/opponent***') fights Gods plans by making us humans abuse the things He (God) has given us. A man wanting to sleep with another man is an abnormal use of a man. So is a person killing another to eat i.e. for food (cannibalism). It was never meant to be that another human serve as part of our dish! But it happens. In the professional world, a lawyers wig and gown are not to be worn in a hospital theatre, and neither should a doctor's coat be worn in court. Doing it would be considered outrageous and non permissible. As a matter of fact, people will consider us mad. (A mad man is one who uses things in an abnormal way or in a way that most would be too embarrassed to, especially in the open: think about it.) To keep from abuse of things therefore, we must understand what they were made for! Always.

What were **clothes** originally made for? – As a covering for nakedness. God first introduced clothes for his image i.e. man.(Gen.3:21)If satan can make us forget what clothes are for, he has won another battle against us.

Clothes that don't cover nakedness but rather expose it, are not serving God's purposes. If it is too tight, it is exposing nakedness. The same goes for when it is too low, short, flimsy or transparent, clingy, etc. The big deal is not whether we wear trousers or skirts; the scriptures have no problem with that. From when trousers where introduced around the 6th century BC (before Jesus was born), men and women have been known to wear them. Trousers were always feminine wear in China and the Ottoman Empire where Turkey now is. And in other places too; it was only in Europe that it was associated with men. But before then, everyone wore a skirt-like dress or gown; male and female. Even in the time of the Old Testament, men wore clothes that were like skirts or gowns. As a matter of fact, the words used in Deut.22:5 for men and women dress, are different words! ***"The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the LORD thy God."***

That "*which pertains to a man*" is the Hebrew word " kelee" while "*woman's garment*" is "simlaw". "Kelee" refers to armour, instrument, weapon, etc; while "simlaw" simply refers to a cover, cloth, raiment.

I believe the point made in Deuteronomy 22:5 was to prevent a confusion of gender and the cross-dressing that is common among homosexuals. (Homosexuals like to try to appear like what they act like. E.g. in gay clubs and bars or relationships, one man usually tends to act like a woman with the other man so he will dress up like a woman. It is called transvestism. Women also do it). My opinion, based on what I believe to be the "spirit of the law", is that God knew that since the nations that he was moving the Israelites into practiced things like this, His people would also be tempted to do the same so he wished to prevent it and warned them not to do any such thing. What I mean by the spirit of the law may be seen by looking at 1 Cor. 9:9-10. Then see Dt.25:4 where the law was given. Now the main point of that law in Deut. was being revealed here by the Spirit to be referring to ministers! The ox there referred to the labouring minister (oxen represent hard work) who was to find his sustenance in his vineyard. That was the spirit of *that* law. Looking at Dt.22:9-11 also would make no sense if you don't see the *spirit* or *real intentio*n of why God gave it.

The law was a shadow of things to come. The real substance is revealed under the New Covenant/Testament. People miss the point of trousers because they miss the spirit of the

law. Apart from that, ignorance also contributes because if trousers are the cultural dressing of women in some parts of the world, why do we call it men's wear? Some say it is not "our" culture here in Nigeria. The problem with that argument is, neither is the shirt or blouse or skirt or *trousers* that we all wear! The cultures of the world are all mixed up! Today we dress like the English, Indians, Chinese, Russians, Thai, Scottish, etc,. We speak their languages, watch their programmes, read their books, etc.
Some clear scriptures on dressing are found in **1Timothy 2:9-10** (Paul), **1 Peter 3:1-5** (Peter), **Isaiah 3:16-24** (Isaiah). You have at least 3 witnesses in these three men. Between them and other scripture like **Exodus 3:22, Genesis 24:22, 30, 53 and Hosea 2:13** (***read them carefully first!)*** we can come to certain obvious conclusions:

1. The God who made gold, silver, and clothes, does not hate beautiful things on His people. He loves beauty. Just look around you at nature in its most pristine (untampered-with) state and you'll see His love for beauty in everything from the sunrise and sunset to the birds, flowers, animals, etc,. Man was made to be like God and will naturally like beauty also but satan's work is to destroy Gods work so if he can't remove man's love for beauty completely, he tries to twist and pervert it by redefining it. And he mostly twists it by making us use it out of time or context.**(Rev.4:11; Eccl.3:11)** *E.g. why would someone scrape off a perfectly shaped eyebrow and draw in one instead? I mean naturally well shaped eyebrows. Or why would naturally lovely and red lips be covered with a grey unnatural looking lipstick? If the lips are discoloured or colourless, by all means redden it-no problem. But I mean, what of when God made it nice and reddish already? If you are already fair as an albino, do you use bleaching cream again? Or does someone that has paid school fees, pay a second time? We should only do what we need to. Make up was often used by older women as their beauty faded, so they "made up" for the loss. Most young women hardly need a thing because they are at the zenith of their beauty but they just follow the crowd and the world.
2. God directed or allowed His people to take and use gold, silver, and clothes. (**Ex.3:21-22**)
3. He gets offended when those things become an idol (**Ex. 32:2-4; Gen. 35:2, 4; Isa 3:16-24; Hosea. 2:13**) and so He takes it and destroys it while punishing His people for idolatry. [We are not to use what He gives us to please ourselves but rather as He pleases! Moses was up on the mountain getting instructions for how to build the dwelling place of God while the carnal people down there where using the temple material for their own pleasure. This is wrong but sadly what we do.] (What are we to do with idols? Get rid of them. Read the passages again.)
4. God wants us to use the gold, etc, to build HIM a (glorious house/temple/dwelling place. (**Ex. 35:4-22**) It is not for US AND OUR SELFISH INCLINATION TO USE ALL WE CAN ON OURSELVES! [Let me explain this a bit: the money and wealth that gold and stuff represent, is to be used to bring people into His house i.e. the church. WE are the temple (not one person but all of us together) and as we each bring of our substance and gifts, we ensure that God's kingdom is established in the earth.]
5. Clothes were made for a covering. The ornamental, decorative part of clothes is therefore to be of secondary, not primary, consideration. The first (covering) is more important than the second (ornament). The things that we use to cover ourselves and decorate ourselves are to be used modestly and always in an effort to please God. And we must remember that the Old Testament contained the shadow of what was to come. We must understand the spirit of what was being said! Today our focus should be on putting gold and silver (**Ps.19:7-10; Ps.12:6**) on our spirits and our children's spirits! THE WORD OF GOD is the treasure. **Prov. 2:1-6; 3:13-15, 22**. Where a man's treasure is, there also will his heart be.(**Lk.12:34**) Is the word of God our greatest pursuit or is it money and how we appear to people? Many would not dress the way they do if not that they are trying to impress others. We should stay clean and pleasant but not in opposition to God's word.

Back to clothes specifically. This is a greater problem for ladies because of the fact that beauty is a bigger thing for them. (That is why Paul, after speaking to the men in 1 Tim.2:8, now spoke to the women in verse 9.) There are other reasons too which we may discuss another day. But a simple rule in deciding what you may or may not wear as a

Christian is***: if it exposes what should be covered, don't wear it***. A *low neckline* or loosened buttons usually do nothing other than expose some part of the breast. A *short skirt* exposes the thighs when walking and exposes more than that when sitting while *short blouses* expose the stomach, back or underwear. A *see-through* dress shows the underwear of its wearer and a *tight* cloth whether blouse, (e.g. a body hug), skirt (e.g.Lycra material), trousers (including jeans and tight skirt suit pants!) or dress, expose the shape and figure so much sometimes it just appears that they are naked with skin the colour of the cloth. And exposed shoulders or backs (depending on how much material is missing) show a lot bare flesh.

In some countries of the world, a lady may wear nothing at all under their blouse. In others, they wear only underwear and walk on the streets. Some go topless if they choose e.g. a city in Canada passed a law permitting that. Sometimes many wear nothing at all (male and female) and do parades or bike races in thousands! (e.g. in England). Why should we note all this? Because it can happen here too since all those people were once like us. I thank God we have not totally arrived there yet but we soon will if the ladies of the church do not change! Our difference is a rebuke to the world but when we are just like them, then they feel no shame at all.

The question is, **why should Christians act like this at all?** The world does it to appear sexy and seductive to men. The fashion designers of this world say this openly. Are Christian girls also supposed to do that? Are "sisters" supposed to seduce their "brothers" or any man they are not married to? Only with their husbands may women act just as they please. Dress crazily for him but in your bedroom! But before the rest of the world, we should maintain the attitude of royalty. We are children of the Great King; we ought to have a dignity that distinguishes us in all things including dressing!

The eyes are one of the senses of the human being just like our sense of smell or touch. When we smell something tasty, depending on just how hungry (or greedy!) we are, our salivary glands react. When we touch something, our nerves endings give us some message e.g. "hot-stay away", "soft-rub fingers across" or whatever; and we now act on that message. When men's eyes see seductively dressed women, their brain tells them something too! (Except they are blind!) Now, I know that what they do with what their eyes tell them is a function of how "hungry" or "greedy" they are, but, there is some reaction. Some turn away, others look hard i.e. some move on away from the "smell" of "food" while others plan on taking a "bite" as soon as possible. If I were talking to a man, I would advise him accordingly on how to save himself because we can overcome in all things. But I'm speaking to a lady.

A man may see a seductively dressed Christian girl in the day and go rape someone at night when his lust is full grown and the opportunity exists to "take a bite". I would not for a second want to be the girl he saw during the day that kick-started him! But the truth is that, these are how things happen sometimes.

Child of God, do you know what it means to be a stumbling block? That illustration is a perfect example. An acquaintance once told me how that when he got born again and joined the church, he met all the enemies he ran from especially in the way the women dressed and the temptation it presented to him. He would therefore have to constantly look away or even change seats. Sadly, at the time he was saying this, obviously he had fallen away from the faith (possibly due to that very issue!)

I'll end with an illustration. Ladies are like plants in a garden. Some have very beautiful flowers and also emit a lovely smell. They however belong to the gardener alone and passers-by are not supposed to pluck them. They are too precious for every Tom, Dick and Harry to pick them and could be abused. A good gardener (father, brother, uncle, husband) puts a fence around his garden. However, some plants want every passer-by to appreciate and admire their flowers. Maybe they have been told all their life that they are ugly. Or have felt unloved and abandoned. Whatever the reason, the pretty face or splendid shape is allowed to become an idol. The send out their perfume and wave their petals and even push themselves out between the fence. Sexy clothes, much makeup, coquettishness (seductive mannerisms), are all adopted. They use their blessings for their

own pleasure. Some men pick some of them forcefully: we call that rape. Others are plucked even though they were trying to stay hidden away. How come? – Maybe they were not protected by their gardener well enough, or they thief had desire (lust) stirred in him by another plant that flaunted her flowers and now breaks through a fence to take an innocent flower. The reasons are endless.

Proper dressing may serve as a fence, showing reserved behaviour among males, and just practicing general good sense. Good works also remove peoples focus from our external appearance more to our inward appearance. This is how the Christian lady should be according to scriptures. When people are drawn to this “gold” adorning us, like the husband in 1 Pet. 3:1, let them see that you used it to build a dwelling place for God in your life. Let them be attracted to the God in you rather than the external beauty. I do not think those scriptures in the New Testament mean you may never use gold or plait your hair or wear costly clothes. (Economically, gold, plaited hair and costly clothes will likely save you more money in the long run. The cheaper or fake things usually last only briefly and you may end up spending more because you have to replace it many times. But if you are a covetous person, this does not apply because you will keep buying to satisfy your desires and not for the need.) However, if you have a few good things, you can use your other money to help others that need help for this is God’s will for all Christians.(Eph.4:28) But at every stage of your life, use what you have. Do not beg to beautify yourself. Or lie or cheat or steal or use your feeding money. External beauty is not a priority in God’s purpose for your life. It doesn’t matter how many Christian leaders give that impression. No one will be judged harshly for not dressing well on earth. Or Elijah and John the Baptist would be in trouble. (See **1 Tim.6:6-11; Phil.4:11-13**)

In conclusion, all the above means that you should not be known for your external appearance but for the inner attractiveness you have from hearing, obeying and living the Word of God out in your daily life. The kind of people God will commend at the end may be known from **Hebrews 11:32-38**. But above all, let **1 Corinthians 13** be our motto. Verse 4 says in the Amplified Version ***“Love endures long and is…kind; love never is envious nor boils over with jealousy, is not boastful or vainglorious, does not display itself haughtily.”*** We don’t enjoy it when people show off their wealth, or educational achievements or ability to speak. Neither should we flaunt our God given beauty. Just appreciate God for whatever you have, keep it low key, and use it to bless others. And God will bless you.