

Warped Senses

Some of us have been accused, and probably justifiably so, of having a “warped sense of humor.” Perhaps we just have an ability to see humor in things most people miss... or maybe the accusation is just plain accurate. But it strikes me (not “as funny” this time) that the human sense of “humor” isn’t the only sense that can be “warped.” What about our **Sense of:**

Modesty? My warped sense of humor may be showing, but one of the truest and funniest things I ever heard a woman say about another woman’s attire was that “She looks like a busted can of biscuits!” (sic). And she did. She was “hanging out of her clothes” just about everywhere it was possible to do so. “Modesty,” for females and males, includes “*proper clothing*,” 1Timothy 2:9. Surely that means “enough of it” to cover ourselves adequately. Consider this general rule of thumb (which is a part of the body that can be exposed) for what ever its worth: If it would be improper, or make you uncomfortable, for someone else to stare at or touch that part of your body, cover it adequate clothes. If we’re truly seeking to *learn and be “pleasing to the Lord”* (Ephesians 5:10), we simply cannot let *the world* pick our clothes, or set the standards of how to *properly* wear them. But, the problem is not just over-exposure caused by too little clothing...

Decency? Some folks seem to have no problem going out in public with their “underwear” (men and women) exposed. While I’m glad to they’re wearing “underwear,” the portion of the world whose sense of decency isn’t warped doesn’t need to see it for verification. Doesn’t the very name imply something that is obviously escaping notice in these regards? You don’t have to be linguist to know that “underwear” is to be “worn under,” and thus covered and concealed by, your “outer/over” clothes. Additionally, while pajamas may indeed be warm and cozy attire for bed or at least at home, they are not “*proper*” and “*discrete*” for those “*making a claim to godliness*” to wear out, 1Timothy 2:9-10. It may also be “fashionable” to a world with a warped sense of decency to wear attire that may “cover” but doesn’t actually “conceal” anything, but please put some real clothes on. If what you’re wearing doesn’t “conceal” more than paint would, please put some real clothes on. And finally on this point and passage, remember that “*proper clothing, modestly and discretely*” doesn’t just mean “too little,” the verse also includes “too much”! While some would never *expose* themselves with “too little” clothing, they have no problem flaunting excessively “*braided hair and gold or pearls or costly garments*.” Surely, these are as much a violation as “too little,” and we can and should have a better sense of decency.

Honor? One of the definitions of “honor” is “a keen sense of ethical conduct” (Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary; p.545). This is how I use the word here. As we’ve noted above, we cannot allow “the world” to define for us what is “ethical.” Honorable and ethical conduct, apart from knowledge of and adherence to standards given by God in the Bible, can and has come to mean almost anything. Is it actually “honorable” to disregard vows made to a husband or wife (cf. Malachi 2:14)? Is it “honorable” to neglect duties to provide and care for our children or parents (cf. 1Timothy 5:8; Mark 7:8-13)? Is it “honorable” to abuse and mistreat other human beings (cf. Romans 12:17-18; 13:8-10), or animals (Proverbs 12:10)? Please remember that “*the world through its knowledge did not come to know God*” (1Corinthians 1:21). Nor will it come to “know” what is “honorable” apart from Him. Without His inspired Word, our “sense of honor” will never be anything but “warped.”

Right and Wrong? Is it “right” for those willing work (hard) to provide for their families and/or themselves to be forced to provide for those who are “unwilling” to work to do the same? While it is entirely “right” to “*share with him who has need*” (Ephesians 4:28), it

is another matter entirely to force those who have and do work to provide for those who “*will not work*,” 2Thessalonians 3:10. And certainly, only a warped sense of “right and wrong” allows one to excuse, legalize, or justify taking the life of innocent preborn children! Yes, “children” is the right word. Please understand that the same word (*brephos*) is used in Luke 1:41 to describe the *pre-born “baby”* John that is used in Luke 2:12,16 of the *post-born “baby”* Jesus. Only a warped sense of “right and wrong” fails to see these things.

We might also need to consider the warped sense of “justice” that seems to currently prevail in the world, but that will have to wait for another time. So, what does all this mean? Among other things, primarily it means that our “senses” must be “*trained to discern good and evil*,” Hebrews 5:14. And that “*training*” doesn’t come from what is “popular” or even “socially acceptable.” Instead, it is the God-given responsibility of parents, and is to be done “in the home” rather than “in school(s)” or “in the church,” and certainly not “in/by *the village* of society,” Ephesians 6:4. Now, are your senses “*trained*” or “*warped*”? (Philip C. Strong; Southport Church of Christ; 7202 Madison Ave, Indianapolis, IN 46227; online at southportcofc.org; email to mrpcstrong@hotmail.com)