

How to Allow God to Clothe You in This Time of Quarantine and Beyond

How do I look?

We aren't asking ourselves that question or caring much about our looks since the COVID-19 outbreak has confined us to our homes. I saw a news reporter do a story from his home computer with a jacket and tie on and then get up to reveal his pajama bottoms. Before the pandemic, I spent hours traveling on airplanes to conferences and events to speak and teach (I had been scheduled for eight countries before the pandemic), so being able to stay in my pajamas a bit longer each day has been a nice vacation.

With Easter approaching, our Easter bonnets will be Easter pajamas for most of us this year as we watch Easter services online. Under normal circumstances, the answer to the question "How do I look?" can either elevate us or plummet us into depression. Many times, all it takes is just a look. Research tells us that in today's digital culture, we evaluate others in less than eight seconds.

The 1960s and '70s had wild and memorable fashions. There were those required accessories—platform heels, gold chains, scarves and floppy hippy hats. You had to have them to be taken seriously. Accessories were the add-ons to show you were groovy. Today, fashions are all over the place, but designers and fashion experts will tell you it's essential to find your personal look and be true to it. Dressing up in something that doesn't reflect who you are is the worst fashion faux pas. And if you can't afford the cost of designer clothes, just show up with the right accessory, because accessories divert our attention, at least initially.

Have you accessorized your faith? Has God's design become too costly to buy into?

Dressing as a believer is more than wearing a Christian concert T-shirt, a WWJD bracelet or a cross necklace. It should be His truth revealed through us. Today's trendy churchgoers look great on the outside, but are we serious about our faith and pursuing God when we aren't around the church crowd? Do we know how to lift our hands and sing worship songs but fail to spend time reading our Bible? Are our choices having an effect on our families and those observing our lives? Titus 1:1-16 describes the church in Crete and the reason Paul was writing to Titus. They were putting on accessories and not God's clothing. Jesus warned us in Matthew 7:21-23 that many will call Him "Lord, Lord," but unfortunately, He will discard them, having never *known* them. They never bought the clothes, only window shopped.

Does God know you, and do you know the designer?

How to Allow God to Clothe You in This Time of Quarantine and Beyond

Here are some thoughts to consider if you are serious about letting God clothe you.

First, examine yourself. Fashionistas tell us to stand in front of a mirror naked and *really* look at our body. There are many kinds of body shapes and knowing what kinds of designs fit our body structure is the first step. Next comes our personality. Where do you live, what do you do for a living and what are your individual needs? God is a Creator God and knows us better than we know ourselves. He knows what fits us best.

See yourself through His reflecting mirror. If you are in a vibrant relationship with Him, He will direct you to see yourself as He sees you and perfectly clothe you. The Bible is full of Scriptures on how God sees us and wants to be our

personal designer. Search the Bible for what He will reveal to you. Put on His full armor in Ephesians 6:11-18, and when it comes to style, Paul tells us what we should be known for in Galatians 5:22-23: the fruit of the Spirit.

Then, strip off your pride and courageously discard the clothing that is encumbering your life and keeping you from God's joy and contentment. God knows our hearts, minds and the choices we have taken throughout life. The Bible tells us to repent, which means to change direction and make new choices. Putting on religious accessories won't make you into the person God wants you known by.

Outsiders view accessory Christians as wannabes, and nobody wants designer rip-offs. You represent God's body of believers. When you fake it and choose to be a nominal Christian, it damages the entire kingdom, the people who have suffered and sacrificed for thousands of years so that God's label might be known. The apostle John's vision from God in Revelation 3:14-16 was written for those believers in Laodicea. Laodicea means "self-righteousness." God confronts them and says, "I know all that you do, and I know that you are neither frozen in apathy nor fervent with passion. How I wish you were either one or the other! But because you are neither cold nor hot, but lukewarm, I am about to spit you from my mouth" (Rev. 3:15-16, TPT). God told them they were a mere accessory, and they never wore His label.

Finally, write down what God reveals. Often, His thoughts are not what we want to hear because we like our old, comfortable, smelly rags. We have to trust His design choices, even if they seem odd at first. Writing down His clothing choices allows us to see clearly and to ponder them over time, making needed changes. God's recommendations can remind us what not to buy into as well and are also something that others can learn from as He deals with many of the same fashion faux pas in all of us. His designer label never will lose its value and always turns heads.

As we continue to be under the stay-at-home mandate, let's reexamine our wardrobe—our spiritual wardrobe. We will be returning to the ever-so-watchful world's eyes soon, and when we do, let's have on new designer clothes. Hebrews 11:6 tells us that when we believe in Him, and *diligently seek* His thoughts, ways and directions, He reveals them to us. When God is your exclusive designer, His radiance is seen through you—and it's captivating. {eoa}

Kathleen Cooke's *devotional Hope 4 Today: Stay Connected to God in a Distracted Culture encourages readers to engage with God. As co-founder of Cooke Media Group and The Influence Lab, she publishes a bimonthly journal. Find out more at or on Twitter @KathleenCookeLA.*