119 MINISTRIES

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Jewelry and Make-up

"Only prostitutes and vain people wear make-up and jewelry. If you wear them, you're a sinner."

Have you ever heard someone say something like this? Or maybe you have been made to feel guilty for wearing rings, earrings, make-up, or necklaces? If so, you're not alone.

In our blog on our website you will find a short post titled "Modesty and Lust, Who's Responsible?" There has been a big push in some Christian circles against women wearing make-up and jewelry. Today we want to take a look at that subject to find what Scripture says about it, but we're going to examine do it using the whole of Scripture and not just a few verses.

So, then, what do the Scriptures have to say about these topics? Are jewelry and make-up really forbidden by YHWH?"

WHY SOME SAY JEWELRY SHOULD NOT BE WORN

There are many reasons people argue that the Bible prohibits jewelry and make-up, we'll be reviewing five of the more common ones and Scriptures some use to argue their point.

1. Pagans wore jewelry and make-up.

The claims relating to pagans wearing jewelry and make-up often go something like this:

"We know the pagans wore jewelry; we know the pagans wear make-up. We know that God says not to do what the pagans do. Therefore, we should **not** wear jewelry or make-up."

That's some pretty sound logic, right? Two premises followed by a conclusion. Unfortunately, what this type of statement does is it removes the context of what YHWH commanded. Let's take a look at the verses where those who object to jewelry and make-up may be pulling this from.

Deuteronomy 12:4

> You shall not worship the LORD [YHWH] your God in that way.

Deuteronomy 12:31

> You shall not worship the LORD [YHWH] your God in that way, for every abominable thing the LORD [YHWH] hates they have done for their gods, for they even burn their sons and their daughters in the fire to their gods.

And finally, Jeremiah 10, which has, perhaps, their strongest support.

Jeremiah 10:2

> Thus says the LORD [YHWH]:
>
> "Learn not the way of the nations,
>
> nor be dismayed at the signs of the heavens
>
> because the nations are dismayed at them,

pretty easy to explain why the verses in Deuteronomy have nothing to do with jewelry. These verses are saying that we should not worship YHWH the same way that the Canaanites worshiped their gods. This is referring to things like making idols, engaging in cult prostitution, and sacrificing children, not to everyday, ordinary things like wearing jewelry.

So that leaves us with Jeremiah 10 which seems pretty straightforward. If the nations are wearing jewelry, then we should not. However, we continue reading the same passage we see this is again relating to worshipping YHWH and idol worship. The preceding chapter is about what will happen to Israel because they have gone after other gods and were not living according to the word of YHWH. It has nothing to do with non-religious practices such as what jewelry they wear.

None of these verses, when taken in context, support the idea that YHWH's people cannot wear jewelry or make-up. For more on YHWH's people and what exactly is pagan, please see our teachings titled, "What is Pagan?" and "The Lost Sheep".

2. **Moses made the Israelites drink the water with gold dust in it.**

Two verses cited to prove that YHWH is against jewelry are found in Exodus 32 & 33. In those passages, Moses ground the golden calf into dust and made the Israelites drink it. He also had them remove their jewelry. For some, this proves that wearing jewelry is bad. Let's look at those passages.

Exodus 32:20

> He took the calf that they had made and burned it with fire and ground it to powder and scattered it on the water and made the people of Israel drink it.

and

Exodus 33:5

> For the LORD [YHWH] had said to Moses, "Say to the people of Israel, 'You are a stiff-necked people; if for a single moment I should go up among you, I would consume you. So now take off your ornaments, that I may know what to do with you.'"

As with all testing, we need to first determine the context of these passages. In Exodus 32 and 33 we find ourselves at the golden calf incident and immediately after it. These events occur not too long after Israel has left Egypt and Moses has gone up the mountain to speak with YHWH

Remember, the Israelites had plundered the Egyptians when they left, so they had a lot of gold, jewelry, etc. The wealth they took from Egypt was a blessing, but they used some of that blessing to create the golden calf after Moses had been gone for 40 days.

When Moses comes down he's understandably upset with them, not because they were wearing jewelry, but because they had disobeyed YHWH, made an idol were using it as a way to worship him. This is why Moses melted down the calf and ground the gold to dust, which is what he then made them drink.

This, along with YHWH telling them to remove the jewelry was for the punishment for their actions. They were commanded to remove their jewelry as a temporary punishment, as a sign that they had misused their blessings. This was not a permanent prohibition against wearing jewelry.

The context tells us the prohibition was not permanent, and we can also see from the rest of the scriptures that jewelry is not a bad thing at all. We will cover the places that the scriptures speak positively of jewelry later on.

3. Jewelry and wearing make-up is vanity, it only serves the sinful flesh.

Jeremiah 4:30 is one verse used to defend the position against wearing jewelry and make-up.

Jeremiah 4:30

> And you, O desolate one,
> what do you mean that you dress in scarlet,
> **that you adorn yourself with ornaments of gold,**
> **that you enlarge your eyes with paint?**
> **In vain you beautify yourself.**
> Your lovers despise you;
> they seek your life.

As you can see from these verses, there is something to the idea that wearing jewelry and make-up can feed our flesh, especially our vanity. However, there is a difference between wearing jewelry or make-up to feel pretty and being vain, desiring to flaunt your wealth or beauty.

What is vanity?
According to the Random House Dictionary, vanity can be defined as:

> "excessive pride in one's appearance, qualities, abilities, achievements, etc.; character or quality of being vain; conceit".
> *("vanity." Dictionary.com 2023. https://www.dictionary.com/browse/vanity (4 May 2023))*

Vanity for the sake of vanity shows a heart, a desire, that is not following YHWH. It is about pleasing your flesh and being beautiful for the sake of beauty. With vanity comes pride and arrogance; these are born out of self-love, not the love of the Creator.

A bride makes herself beautiful to shine on the day she weds; she makes herself beautiful for herself and for her groom. This is different than one who lives to serve themselves and is haughty because of their beauty. Even have YHWH gave jewelry to be worn, look at this!

Exodus 3:21-22

> And **I will give** this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians; and when you go, you shall not go empty, but each woman shall ask of her neighbor, and any woman who lives in her house, **for silver and gold jewelry, and for clothing. You shall put them on your sons and on your daughters**. So you shall plunder the Egyptians.

Ezekiel 16:10-12

> **And I clothed you with beautiful finished cloth, and I put sandals on you of fine leather, and I bound you in fine linen, and I covered you with costly fabric. And I adorned you with ornaments, and I put a bracelet on your arms and a necklace on your neck. And I put an ornamental ring on your nose and earrings on your ears and a beautiful crown on your head.**

Read about the extravagant adornment YHWH required or the High Priest in Exodus 28. It's full of fine linen, gold, and gemstones. There is nothing wrong with someone wearing beautiful clothing or jewelry.

Having beauty or making yourself look nice, even if using make-up or jewelry, is not a sin.

It is the heart and desire behind it that dictates whether or not something is sinful.

Look at Queen Esther? Was she showing excessive pride in her appearance when she dressed nicely and wore make-up to meet the king?

Not likely.

In Jeremiah the context of the whole of chapter 4 is about Israel needing to turn from their ways lest they be destroyed. Judgment was coming upon Israel, it would be laid to waste; it would become desolate. No amount of beautifying would make the land and people more desirable. This is the context of Jeremiah 4:30. It is not about wearing a ring, a necklace, or make-up. It's about when you try to make yourself look good on the outside but remain filthy on the inside, something our Messiah echoed.

Matthew 23:25-28

> "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees—hypocrites!—because you cleanse the outside of the cup and the dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence! Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and the dish, so that the outside of it may become clean also.
>
> "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees—hypocrites!—because you are like whitewashed tombs which on the outside appear beautiful, but on the inside are full of the bones of the dead and of everything unclean! In the same way, on the outside you also appear righteous to people, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

This brings us to the next statement and verse.

4. **Jewelry and make-up is only for prostitutes and others seeking the wrong kind of attention.**

It's true that prostitutes seek the wrong kind of attention and wear both make-up and jewelry to help them get it, however, does that mean *anyone* who wears make-up and jewelry is a prostitute or seeking the wrong type of attention? Of course not. Let's look at the verse often referenced for this.

Ezekiel 23:40

> They even sent for men to come from afar, to whom a messenger was sent; and behold, they came. For them you bathed yourself, painted your eyes, and adorned yourself with ornaments.

The context of this verse in Ezekiel is in the midst of YHWH speaking about how Israel had been playing the harlot, they had turned from their God and turned to the nations instead. During this period YHWH does speak about how He will take away their jewels and tear their clothing. In essence He is taking away their beauty because they have defiled themselves.

He is not condemning the wearing of jewelry and make-up, he is not condemning their beauty. He is removing some of what helps to make them beautiful to the world.

What about the prostitute or harlot aspect of things here?

We agree that while playing the harlot they dressed up, but they are not the only ones who get dressed up. Look at Queen Esther who was adorned with make-up and royal robes to be pleasing.

Esther 2:9

> And the young woman pleased him and won his favor. And he quickly provided her with her cosmetics and her portion of food, and with seven chosen young women from the king's palace, and advanced her and her young women to the best place in the harem.

Did that make Esther a harlot? A prostitute? Of course not, because context matters.

Esther was dressed up in order to be attractive to the king, in hopes of being found pleasing. Esther was given make-up to wear, but we see no mention of this being a sin, we never see any place where she is condemned for this behavior, not even by Mordecai. Why? Because wearing make-up is not against the Torah.

Was she trying to get the wrong type of attention? Not at all; she was applying to be the wife of the king.

In Scripture, being a prostitute or harlot is not just about what someone wears. It has more to do with their behaviors than their appearance. If we apply the same logic regarding the clothing to other things related to the harlot then it's likely we all have some changes to make.

Proverbs 7 speaks of a harlot who is also an adulteress. Verse 10 shows us she's dressed like a prostitute, verses 16-17 show us other things she has done, yet we do not see any condemnation of her dress, wearing make-up, or jewelry.

Proverbs 7:10

> And behold, the woman meets him,
> dressed as a prostitute, wily of heart.

Proverbs 7:16-17

I have spread my couch with coverings,
colored linens from Egyptian linen;
I have perfumed my bed with myrrh,
aloes, and cinnamon.

If the verses from Ezekiel imply that we shouldn't wear makeup or jewelry, then wouldn't these verses from Proverbs imply that we shouldn't use perfumes or have linens on our beds? Clearly these passages do not imply these things. The point of these Scriptures is that we should not engage in physical or spiritual prostitution.

Proverbs 5 speaks of another harlot; note what we are being warned to look for.

Proverbs 5:3-6

For the lips of a forbidden woman drip honey,
and her speech is smoother than oil,
but in the end she is bitter as wormwood,
sharp as a two-edged sword.
Her feet go down to death;
her steps follow the path to Sheol;
she does not ponder the path of life;
her ways wander, and she does not know it.

We are warned about her words, her actions, and her thoughts.

Did you notice what is absent? A warning against her wearing jewelry and make-up.

This is the pattern in Scripture whenever harlots or prostitutes are mentioned. We are to beware of them because of their actions and where following them will lead us. We are never warned against wearing make-up or jewelry because harlots wear it.

Later in the teaching we will cover additional passages where jewelry is worn by others that are not harlots to further illustrate the futility of that argument.

A final thought on this topic. If a 5 year old girl is playing dress-up or wants to wear to make-up to look pretty, does that mean she has the wrong intentions there? Is she seeking the wrong kind of attention? If a grown woman puts on some base and eyeliner, does that mean she's seeking the wrong attention?

If a wife puts on make-up so that she feels pretty or to look pretty for her husband, does that automatically mean she is doing so only for the wrong kind of attention?

Hopefully you answered no to all of those questions, if nothing else, just based upon what we have covered prior to this point in the teaching.

Wearing jewelry or make-up does not mean a woman is looking for inappropriate attention, context matters.

This leads us to the last argument we'll cover that is used against wearing jewelry.

5. Our beauty should come from the inside, not from what we put on.

We do agree that beauty should be something found be an internal thing, however, it does not have to be an "either/or" choice between internal and external beauty.

To support the statement that beauty should only come from the inside, Paul and Peter are often quoted.

1 Timothy 2:9-10

> likewise also that women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire, but with what is proper for women who profess godliness—with good works.

and

1 Peter 3:3-5

> Do not let your adorning be external—the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear—but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious. For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their own husbands

Both of these statements indicate that a woman's beauty should not be based upon what adorns her. We agree, and as indicated in our blog post titled "Modesty and Lust, Who's Responsible?" feel a everyone's adornment, whether male or female, should be modest and not flashy. What these verses are saying is that the only adornment a woman should be concerned about is what's to be in her heart and spirit, in her actions and attitude, not what she's wearing. This is true of everyone, the Father looks at our hearts and judges our hearts, it's man that looks at a person's outward appearance (1 Samuel 16:7). It doesn't mean, however, that Paul, Peter, or YHWH are forbidding the wearing of jewelry and make-up.

The focus of the person should not be on the jewelry or appearing beautiful; the focus should remain on being a person following the Word.

Physical beauty is temporary as all bodies deteriorate over time and eventually die; but living a life according to the Torah, full of love for YHWH and people, is the greater beauty that does not fade. That is the beauty that should be striven for more than any external beauty.

When we look for the context of these passages instead just picking out a couple of verses that suit our need, we find a larger pattern. Paul and Peter are both addressing how we should be living our lives before YHWH and the world. The focus is on the behavior of YHWH's people and interpersonal relationships, not outward appearance. We are to care more about how we interact with one another than our appearance, how we are to live in this world as members of the Body.

It doesn't matter if a woman could be the most outwardly beautiful person who ever lived, if her conduct is not respectful and pure, then she is not truly beautiful. If her heart is not gentle and her spirit not quiet, then she is not living as she should be. Again, the focus and purpose of these passages and

preceding ones are focused on behaviors, not appearances. Just as Paul indicated, we need to care more about having a heart for YHWH and less about our outward appearance. This is really the same discussion we had near the beginning of this teaching relating to the subject of vanity.

JEWELRY AND/OR MAKE-UP CAN BE POSITIVE

So far, we've addressed the most popular scriptures that are used to claim that jewelry and make-up are forbidden. Hopefully you can see that, in context, these verses are not prohibiting jewelry or make-up at all.

Now we'd like to touch briefly on verses in Scripture where the giving, receiving, or wearing of jewelry, make-up, or nice clothes are viewed in a positive light.

Isaiah 61:10

> I will greatly rejoice in the LORD [YHWH]; my soul shall exult in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation; he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself like a priest with a beautiful headdress, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

Here we see that both a bridegroom and a bride are dressed up. The bride is even adorned with jewels. In fact it says that YHWH clothed Isaiah with the garments of salvation and a robe of righteousness that are likened to the beauty of those getting married. The garments and robe must be beautiful and wonderful indeed.

Ezekiel 16:11-13

> And I adorned you with ornaments and put bracelets on your wrists and a chain on your neck. And I put a ring on your nose and earrings in your ears and a beautiful crown on your head. Thus you were adorned with gold and silver, and your clothing was of fine linen and silk and embroidered cloth. You ate fine flour and honey and oil. You grew exceedingly beautiful and advanced to royalty.

Once again we see YHWH adorning with ornaments, bracelets, a necklace, a nose ring, earrings, and a crown. Then, in addition to those, He gave them wonderfully rich clothing. While this is metaphorical, it is only to a point when we consider what Solomon was given when he followed YHWH; great wealth and extravagance.

Just listen to some of what Solomon was given by YHWH.

2 Chronicles 1:14-15

> Solomon gathered together chariots and horsemen. He had 1,400 chariots and 12,000 horsemen, whom he stationed in the chariot cities and with the king in Jerusalem. And the king made silver and gold as common in Jerusalem as stone, and he made cedar as plentiful as the sycamore of the Shephelah.

2 Chronicles 9:13-21

> Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was 666 talents of gold, besides that which the explorers and merchants brought. And all the kings of Arabia and the governors of the land brought gold and silver to Solomon. King Solomon made 200 large shields of beaten gold;

600 shekels of beaten gold went into each shield. And he made 300 shields of beaten gold; 300 shekels of gold went into each shield; and the king put them in the House of the Forest of Lebanon. The king also made a great ivory throne and overlaid it with pure gold. The throne had six steps and a footstool of gold, which were attached to the throne, and on each side of the seat were armrests and two lions standing beside the armrests, while twelve lions stood there, one on each end of a step on the six steps. Nothing like it was ever made for any kingdom. All King Solomon's drinking vessels were of gold, and all the vessels of the House of the Forest of Lebanon were of pure gold. Silver was not considered as anything in the days of Solomon. For the king's ships went to Tarshish with the servants of Hiram. Once every three years the ships of Tarshish used to come bringing gold, silver, ivory, apes, and peacocks.

1 Kings 10:4-5

And when the queen of Sheba had seen all the wisdom of Solomon, the house that he had built, the food of his table, the seating of his officials, and the attendance of his servants, their clothing, his cupbearers, and his burnt offerings that he offered at the house of the LORD [YHWH], there was no more breath in her.

Solomon had such riches and so many fine things, gold and silver were as common as stone; there was probably a lot of fine jewelry as well even if it wasn't stated specifically. Remember the argument that Peter said women shouldn't wear fine clothing? Well, even Solomon's servants had it, so much that it took the queen of Sheba's breath away.

Look at the coverings of one of YHWH's creations, a cherub. He was covered in precious jewels and gold. YHWH adorned him this way as a good thing, not a bad thing.

Ezekiel 28:13-17

You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering, sardius, topaz, and diamond, beryl, onyx, and jasper, sapphire, emerald, and carbuncle; and crafted in gold were your settings and your engravings. On the day that you were created they were prepared. You were an anointed guardian cherub

Or consider what was done for the prodigal son in the parable.

Luke 15:22

But the father said to his servants, '**Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand**, and shoes on his feet.

The best robe and a ring on his finger, signs of wealth and favor being given to the prodigal son who has returned home. These are favorable things, not sinful ones.

Genesis 24:53

And **the servant brought out jewelry of silver and of gold, and garments, and gave them to Rebekah**. He also gave to her brother and to her mother costly ornaments.

Here we see Abraham's servant giving jewelry and beautiful garments to Rebekah as a sign of favor, a gift. These items were not given to Rebekah because she was a prostitute or an immoral person; on the contrary, they were given to Rebekah because she had outstanding moral character and was a fitting wife for Isaac.

And finally,
Proverbs 25:12

> **Like a gold ring or an ornament of gold is a wise reprover** to a listening ear.

Here, wisdom is being likened to a golden ring. This is a good thing, not something sinful. Why would YHWH use something that is sinful as a metaphor for something that is good?

The simple answer is, He wouldn't.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the idea that we should not wear jewelry or make-up is nothing more than man's misguided understanding of Scripture. We have reviewed the five primary reasons why many believe jewelry and make-up are to be avoided.

In reviewing those reasons and their supporting Scriptures we have found that many times it is a misapplication of Scripture because the context was not taken into account. We were unable to find anywhere in the Torah that the wearing of jewelry and make-up is forbidden by the Creator and made a sin forever.

Instead, what we find are a couple of select instances where Israel was being punished for disobeying YHWH.

We also saw numerous examples where jewelry and fine clothes were considered a blessing from YHWH or were used to indicate the favor bestowed upon individuals. We even saw how metaphorically (and in Solomon's case literally) YHWH bestowed such gifts upon His people when they were obedient to Him.

Even YHWH's high priest was richly attired with gold and jewels. To say that YHWH is against jewelry is not only silly but just plain wrong. The wearing of jewelry or make-up is not something forbidden by the Torah, nor is it something that only pagans and prostitutes wear.

There is nothing wrong with adorning oneself with such things to enhance beauty; the problem arises when it becomes your focus and intent, or vanity. When we keep our eyes on the outer physical beauty we see only what is fading and worthless in the end.

Remember, there is no Torah commandment from YHWH forbidding jewelry or make-up. If we claim that YHWH forbids such things, then we add to the Torah. It is true that jewelry and makeup can be worn because of vanity, when a person values their physical appearance more than they value the things of God. But they can also be worn in order to please one's husband, just like YHWH clothes Israel with beautiful garments and stones. Jewelry and make-up can be used for evil purposes or for good ones. They are not inherently evil, and they are not forbidden by the scriptures.

We must strive to keep our eyes focused on the Creator and His ways; by doing so we will become beautiful people with hearts seeking after YHWH. A heart after YHWH is where true beauty is found; a heart after YHWH will be full of love for Him and for people.

Nothing is quite as beautiful as a person who exudes love and genuine concern for those around them.

A beautiful person on the outside may soon fade away into ugliness if they are not properly attired with a beautiful heart and spirit.

We hope that this teaching has blessed you.

And remember, continue to test everything.

Shalom

For more on this and other teachings, please visit us at www.testeverything.net

Shalom, and may Yahweh bless you in walking in the whole Word of God.

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