

Response to UPC Bible study on Make-up

*Response to a Bible study written by Rev. M.G. Blankenship.
Found at
<http://www.apostolic.edu/biblestudy/files/bwahrpt3.htm>.
Accessed 12/21/06.*

I am not going to reprint the entire study because it would take too much space. What I will do is show a piece from the Bible study and then respond to it. I do recommend that you read the entire Bible study and form your own conclusions.

Spelling and editing errors in the italicized errors are the mistake of the author of the Bible study that I am responding to. Spelling and editing errors in the rest of the article are my mistake.

Rev. Blankenship writes:

This is an issue of association: Without exception, every example of makeup in the Bible is associated with wicked women. Queen Jezebel when trying to seduce Jehu: (who was a VERY WICKED WOMAN)

II Kings 9:30 "And when Jehu was come to Jezreel, Jezebel heard [of it]; and she painted her face, and tired her head, and looked out at a window."

**** Let's be honest: we would have to recognize that what we call makeup is really nothing more than painting your face. THEREFORE, I could say I am going to Builder's Square and buy a five gallon bucket of makeup for my house. The only difference between normal & a clown is the amount. Somehow, paint sounds cheap, but makeup is "cultural." – but it's the same thing. Even the world acknowledges someone "overdone" as**

a "Jezebel"

Eye makeup started in Egypt about 3000BC . Egypt is a type of sin and bondage throughout the Bible. (it sure didn't start in Israel among God's people)

My Response:

Just because something started in Egypt, and Egypt is traditionally a type of sin, does not make something inherently evil. Egypt was one of the first civilizations to use irrigation, so is irrigation inherently evil? Of course not! The fact is that Egypt existed for thousands of years before the Hebrews were called out, so they had plenty of ideas. Just because they did something does not make it wrong. Egypt is a type of sin because the Israelites were held in bondage there. It was not a type of sin because of any particular thing that they did.

Now let's look at Jezebel. Jezebel was a Phoenician princess who married King Ahab (note that she was not Egyptian). Jezebel was definitely an evil woman, but she was not evil because she painted her face. That has nothing to do with it. She was evil because she persecuted the prophets of God and things like that.

The point is this: If we cannot wear make-up because Jezebel painted her face, then we also cannot "adorn" our hair or look out a window.

See the logic here? Just because an evil person happened to do something does not mean that the action is evil.

Also, for what it's worth, the only time Jezebel is mentioned in the NT is when a prophetess is called a "Jezebel" by Jesus. The reason? She was leading Christians to commit acts of immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols. Nothing about make-up there.

Rev. Blankenship writes:

Look at Solomon's advice to young men:

Proverbs 6:25 "Lust not after her beauty in thine heart; neither let her take thee with her eyelids."

Painting the face is direct, simple pride & vanity at its rawest form . It is simply designed for sex appeal; it has no other purpose.

My Response:

The commandment in Proverbs 6:25 is to not lust after adulteresses. The statement, "Neither let her take thee with her eyelids" may or may not have anything to do with eye paint. The Keil & Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament (one of the better Old Testament commentaries) has this to say about the subject: "The warning, 'let her not catch thee with her eyelids,' refers to her (the adulteress's) coquettish ogling and amorous winking ((Keil & Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament, Johann (C.F.) Keil (1807-1888) & Franz Delitzsch (1813-1890), Prov. 6:25))." Of course, other commentaries (such as JFB and Clarke) think that the verse is talking about eye shadow ((A Commentary on the Old and New Testaments by Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown, Prov. 6:25)). We just don't know for sure. Either way, the debate about whether or not "take thee with her eyelids" refers to eye shadow is pointless. The passage does not command women to not wear eye shadow, it only commands men to not lust after adulteresses. Men will lust over women whether or not they're wearing eye shadow.

I also do not think it's fair or right to say that make-up is "simply designed for sex appeal." (Note that this is the same view that the UPCI takes in their doctrinal section when they say, "Since the primary effect of makeup is to highlight sex appeal, we reject makeup as immodest (([United Pentecostal](#)

[Church International – Modesty](#), Accessed 2006-12-21 20:02:31))")

This is not right.

Just because a woman uses make-up to enhance her physical appearance does not mean that she's out looking for sex. If we follow this logic than anything that we do to enhance our physical appearance is "immodest."

Is it wrong to put on deoderant? Is trying to smell nice enhancing our sex appeal? What about brushing our hair, or wearing matching socks? See where this is heading? Everyone wants to look nice, and there's nothing wrong with that! The problem only comes when someone is obsessed with their physical appearance to the point of neglecting modesty or inward holiness.

Rev. Blankenship writes:

In the scripture: it always denoted boldness, seduction, ostentation and even prostitution.

NOTICE THESE TYPES OF GOD SPEAKING TO BACKSLIDING ISRAEL..

*Jeremiah 4:30 "And [when] thou [art] spoiled, what wilt thou do? Though thou clothest thyself with crimson, though thou deckest thee with ornaments of gold, though thou rentest thy face with painting, in vain shalt thou make thyself fair; [thy] lovers will despise thee, they will seek thy life."
Ezekiel 23:38-40 "Moreover this they have done unto me; they have defiled my sanctuary in the same day, and have profaned my sabbaths. For when they had slain their children to their idols, then they came the same day into my sanctuary to profane it; and, lo, thus have they done in the midst of mine house. And furthermore, that ye have sent for men to come from far, unto whom a messenger [was] sent; and, lo, they came: for whom thou didst wash thyself, paintedst thy eyes, and deckedst thyself with ornaments."*

My Response:

Jer. 4:30 is not even hinting that women should not wear make-up. It only says, "In vain you make yourself beautiful." I will reverse the argument by making this point: If this Scripture teaches that we can't wear make-up to make ourselves look beautiful then it also means that we can't wear scarlet or any gold. (Of course, there are some extremely fundamental churches that teach against wearing red or any gold, but they are the minority).

If Ezekiel 23:40 is associating make-up with harlotry, then it's also associating taking a bath with harlotry. (I haven't showered yet this morning, so I don't suppose I'm a harlot yet today...but that will change before I go out this afternoon.) Please forgive the sarcasm, but you see how ludicrous this train of thought is!

Rev. Blankenship writes:

Esther 2:13 "Then thus came every maiden unto the king; whatsoever she desired was given her to go with her out of the house of the women unto the king's house. 14 In the evening she went, and on the morrow she returned into the second house of the women, to the custody of Shaashgaz, the king's chamberlain, which kept the concubines: she came in unto the king no more, except the king delighted in her, and that she were called by name. 15 Now when the turn of Esther, the daughter of Abihail the uncle of Mordecai, who had taken her for his daughter, was come to go in unto the king, she required nothing but what Hegai the king's chamberlain, the keeper of the women, appointed. And Esther obtained favour in the sight of all them that looked upon her."

The royal courts of the king used cosmetics & jewelry. SHE RELIED ON INNER BEAUTY RATHER THAN MAKEUP TO WIN THE KING All she used was oil of myrrh perfume, and preparations to beautify the skin: (IE: perfumes, lotions, skin care, etc...)

Esther 2:12 "Now when every maid's turn was come to go in to king Ahasuerus, after that she had been twelve months, according to the manner of the women, (for so were the days of their purifications accomplished, to wit, six months with oil of myrrh, and six months with sweet odours, and with other things for the purifying of the women"

My Response:

I do not mean to offend anyone, but this is possibly one of the worst examples of taking a Scripture out of context that I have ever seen! Esther was purified for six months with oil of myrrh and six months with spices and "things" (KJV) or "cosmetics" (NASB). (In reality the word that the KJV translates "things" and the NASB translates "cosmetics" refers to "ritual purification following menstruation ((The Complete Word Study Dictionary, © 1992 By AMG International, Inc., H8562))"; it is a difficult word to translate into English). Anyway, this is the point: The Bible never says Esther only used "lotions" and what-not...she was PURIFIED with them for one year. When she went into King Ahasuerus she could request whatever she wanted (verse 13), but the SECOND time that she was summoned to the King she only took what "Hegai, the king's eunuch...advised" (verse 15).

Follow the pattern? Read the verses again: Esther goes into see the king, and she wears whatever she wants (13). Now she waits to see if the king calls her again (14). The king did call her again, and this time she goes with only what Hegai (who was the king's eunuch, and who knew what the king liked) advised. The Bible says nothing about what Esther wore, only that she wore what Hegai advised the second time she went to see the king .

The girl could have been painted hot pink for all we know. If that's what Hegai advised, then that's what she did. The Bible just doesn't say either way.

Also, let me make another point. The author of this Bible study is comparing Esther to Jezebel, like Esther is good and Jezebel is bad. Think about Esther for a second. Was she really that good?

The Babylonian diaspora (captivity) was over, and the Jews had been freed to return to their homeland, but Esther had stayed in Persia. When Esther was summoned to the king she hid her Jewish heritage. When the king selected her she married him, which was a cross-racial marriage—a direct violation of the Mosaic Law. Not only did she marry him, but she continued to keep her heritage a secret. We do not know what all she had to do to accomplish that, but it certainly involved breaking at least some of the ceremonial law (I.E. with the foods she ate, etc). THEN when she finds out that all her people are going to die, she's still not sure what to do! Esther basically told Mordecai that she could not do anything because she had not been summoned to the king (Esther 4:11). Boo-hoo! In other words, Esther is so scared for her own skin that she's debating whether or not to even help the Jews.

Esther finally got her act together, and it all turned out for the good. Now we view Esther as a heroine because of what she did, but the fact is that she was a backslidden, apostate Hebrew who only got her act together when the going got rough. Up until then she was hardly the role model that we make her out to be.

Rev. Blankenship writes:

*DID YOU KNOW? American colonies between 1700-1800 makeup was outlawed? *** up until 1945-1950, it was considered sin by most churches*

My Response:

It was considered sin for hundreds of years to defy the Roman Catholic church and to not take the sacraments. That doesn't mean they were right. Man-made laws do not define what is

Scripturally correct or incorrect.

Rev. Blankenship writes:

DO WE FOLLOW SOCIETY, OR THE SCRIPTURE?

Acts 5:29 "Then Peter and the [other] apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men."

**** These are issues that do not always have specific scriptures of complete prohibition. *** (Rather these are issues of Biblical Association)*

PRINCIPLE OF INTEREST TO CONSIDER...

EXO 38: 8 "And he made the laver of brass, and the foot of it of brass, of the lookingglasses of the women assembling, which assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation."

The Laver of water was a piece of furniture that gained them access to the Holy Place! It was made of the mirrors of the woman...

My Response:

Are mirrors a sin? Either they are or they aren't. Nowhere does the Bible command women to give up their mirrors or their make-up.

I agree that we should follow God and not society. The fact remains, though, that God never said anything about not wearing make-up.

Rev. Blankenship writes:

Bro. Wayne Huntley one time said..."Revival will come when we get the mirrors out of the women's hands!" His point: (symbolically) Our woman must get over this self conscious hurdle of the world.

My Response:

If Bro. Wayne Huntley means that women [and men] need to be more concerned with inward beauty and holiness than they do outward beauty, then I agree with him (cf. 1 Tim. 2:9-10) (although I'm not sure that will alone bring revival).

Furthermore, I don't think it's right that the UPC picks on women so much about their appearance. I spent my whole life in Oneness Pentecostal churches, and I promise you that there are just as many vain men as there are vain women. The same goes for the rest of society.

My Conclusion:

Here's the point, folks: The New Testament repeatedly makes it clear that God wants inner purity and holiness. On at least one occasion (1 Tim. 2:9-10) Paul instructs women to be more concerned with that than with outward beauty. However, the New Testament never dictates any rules of apparel—whether it be clothing, jewelry, or make-up. For that matter, the OLD TESTAMENT never taught against make-up either. It's just not there.

Folks, holiness is necessary, but it works from the inside out. The Bible never gave any church the right to dictate standards of dress (such as no make-up). The Bible is the rule of authority, not us. If a woman has a problem with vanity and she feels that she needs to give up wearing make-up, then that's between her and God. We have no right to create a universal rule that says make-up is inherently sinful, and women should not wear it. When we do that we are trying to force holiness into a person from the outside, and that just doesn't work.

Response to UPC Bible study on Jewelry

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Something to think about :

I think that this Bible study is a prime example of how the UPC takes Scripture and twists it to make their point. Almost anything (including genocide) can be justified through the Bible...if you're willing to twist Scripture to do it. Please keep that in mind as you go through this Bible study. What Rev. Blankenship writes looks really good on the surface, but when you delve in a little deeper you find that it's all smoke and mirrors. Of course, I am not bashing him or his ministry in any way (I don't even know the man, and I certainly have nothing against him). I believe he is very sincere in what he writes, but being sincere does not make someone correct.

We must always work *up* from the Bible. This means that we look at what the Bible says and we take our beliefs from it. We must never take our beliefs and then work *down* by trying to find Scriptures to justify what we already believe to be true.

With that in mind, let's begin.

Rev. Blankenship writes:

The scripture often associates "excessive" jewelry with Pride & Idolatry. – look how consistently the association is made. When Jacob went back to Bethel to renew his relationship with God, he disposed of all the idols & earrings owned by his family.

Genesis 35:2 "Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that [were] with him, Put away the strange gods that [are] among you, and be clean, and change your garments: (Verse :4) And they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods which [were] in their hand, and [all their] earrings which [were] in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the oak which [was] by Shechem."

My Response:

The earrings that Jacob's family was wearing were almost certainly related to idolatry, but this does not mean that anyone who was wearing earrings is practicing idolatry. Also, there is nothing at all in the text that says that Jacob's family was wearing "excessive jewelry." This is what the JFB commentary has to say:

[T]hey gave unto Jacob all the strange gods ... and earrings – Strange gods, the "seraphim" (compare Gen. 31:30), as well, perhaps, as other idols acquired among the Shechemite spoil – earrings of various forms, sizes, and materials, which are universally worn in the East, and, then as now, connected with incantation and idolatry (compare Hos. 2:13). The decided tone which Jacob now assumed was the probable cause of the alacrity with which those favorite objects of superstition were surrendered ((A Commentary on the Old and New Testaments by Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown, Gen. 35:4)).

The JFB interpretation—which appears to be the majority interpretation by OT scholars—makes sense. Jacob was obviously cleaning his house of anything relating to false gods. However, it is my opinion that it is rather ridiculous to assume that anyone who wears earrings today is practicing idolatry just because Jacob's family did it several thousand years ago.

Thousands of years ago people built altars to false gods and sacrificed things such as bread, fruit, and meat to them. Does this mean that it is wrong to cook over a campfire today? Are we practicing idolatry just because someone did something similar 5,500 years ago when they practiced idolatry?

Almost everything that we do today can in some way, shape, or form be associated with a pagan custom. This does not mean that these same things descended from pagan customs.

Rev. Blankenship writes:

Look at God's response to Israel after they made the golden calf out of their jewelry.

Exodus 33:4-6 "And when the people heard these evil tidings, they mourned: and no man did put on him his ornaments. For the LORD had said unto Moses, Say unto the children of Israel, Ye [are] a stiffnecked people: I will come up into the midst of thee in a moment, and consume thee: therefore now put off thy ornaments from thee, that I may know what to do unto thee. And the children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments by the mount Horeb. " – (stiffnecked had to do with the long gold neck collars)

Where did God's people get the jewelry anyway?—Exodus 11:2—God told them to borrow it from the Egyptian neighbors prior to the exodus: His intent was to use it for his use, not their personal ornamentation. It was due to its value, not vanity!

My Response:

When reading this passage it is important to remember that the sin was the false calf, not the jewelry. It is also important to do some basic Bible study before drawing a conclusion—especially when trying to draw a doctrinal conclusion from a narrative text. Old Testament Christian commentators as well as Jewish commentators agree that removing jewelry was a sign of mourning or sorrow in the Near East. Clarke points out that the custom was still observed when he wrote his commentary in the 18th century ((Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible, Ex. 33:5)).

I am not an Old Testament scholar so I will not attempt to interpret this passage. Instead, I recommend that you read Adam Clarke's comments on this passage. You can find them [here](#).

Clarke explains the historical context of the passage, but the K&D commentary succinctly sums up what was going on:

That this good beginning of repentance might lead to a true and permanent change of heart, Jehovah repeated His threat in a most emphatic manner: "Thou art a stiff-necked people; if I go a moment in the midst of thee, I destroy thee:" i.e., if I were to go up in the midst of thee for only a single moment, I should be compelled to destroy thee because of thine obduracy. He then issued this command: "Throw thine ornament away from thee, and I shall know (by that) what to do to thee ((Keil & Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament, Ex. 33:5)).

Finally, it is worth pointing out that the word "stiffnecked" has absolutely nothing to do with "long gold neck collars." The Hebrew word that the KJV translates "stiffnecked" is actually two words—H7186 and H6203. The best equivalent word in English is probably "obstantant," which is just how the NASB translates it (I.E. "You are an obstinate people"...etc.).

Rev. Blankenship writes:

Another time Israel received gold from the Midianites, they offered it to God. (which is the proper response)

Numbers 31:50-51 "We have therefore brought an oblation for the LORD, what every man hath gotten, of jewels of gold, chains, and bracelets, rings, earrings, and tablets, to make an atonement for our souls before the LORD. And Moses and Eleazar the priest took the gold of them, [even] all wrought jewels."

My Response:

The only comment that I will make on this passage is that one should back up and [read the whole chapter](#) before drawing any conclusion. If one reads the chapter they will find that the men of Israel won a battle, and a certain amount of the spoil was given to them. They voluntarily chose to give all of the jewelry as an offering to God. No one asked them to do it, they did it of their own free will.

It is sad that Blankenship chose this Scripture as an illustration of "pride & idolatry" (as he puts it). This is actually a beautiful example of a group of people giving a free-will offering to God out of their abundance.

Rev. Blankenship writes:

In Gideon's day, Ishmaelites & Midianites were distinguished from the Israelites by their use of Jewelry & earrings.

Judges 8:24 "And Gideon said unto them, I would desire a request of you, that ye would give me every man the earrings of his prey. (For they had golden earrings, because they were Ishmaelites.) 25 And they answered, We will willingly give them. And they spread a garment, and did cast therein every man the earrings of his prey. 26 And the weight of the golden earrings that he requested was a thousand and seven hundred

shekels of gold; beside ornaments, and collars, and purple raiment that was on the kings of Midian, and beside the chains that were about their camels' necks. "

My Response:

There are two important things to note about this passage:

1. The translation of "earrings" is debatable. JFB commentary claims that it should be "earring" (singular) ((A Commentary on the Old and New Testaments by Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown, Judges 8:24)). The NASB translates it "earring" as well: "Gideon said..."I would request of you, that each of you give me an earring from his spoil"" (Judg. 8:24 NASB).
2. Even if it does say "earrings" and not "earring," it is very dangerous to read too much into this passage. Frankly, we do not know why Gideon asked for the earrings. We must remember that jewelry was not always worn for the same purposes that we wear it today. It was often worn for idolatrous purposes (as in Gen. 35:2-4) or even for amulets and charms ((Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible, Gen. 35:4)). There were many, many different reasons to wear jewelry in the ancient Near East. It is extremely dangerous to read a passage like Judges 8:24, see that Gideon asked for the earrings from his fallen enemies, and then make a general inference (such as, "It's a sin to wear jewelry").

Rev. Blankenship writes:

REMEMBER: ISRAEL IS A TYPE OF THE CHURCH

My Response:

I do not see the connection between not wearing jewelry and Israel being a type of the church. Remember, Israel was never commanded to not wear jewelry. It was not in the Mosaic Law. (It is important to remember that the Mosaic Law defines sin,

like Paul said in Romans 7:7).

The point that I am making is this: If wearing jewelry is such a horrible sin, then why is it not once mentioned in the Mosaic Law or the New Testament? Why do we have to go searching through stories in the Bible, piecing together stories that involve jewelry, and try to form a doctrine out of it? Don't we think that it would have popped up just once in the Pauline Epistles if it was a sin? Wouldn't it have been a problem in at least one of the early churches? I know that this is an "argument from absence," but it is still powerful.

Rev. Blankenship writes:

LISTEN TO GOD'S JUDGMENT UPON THE PROUD, HAUGHTY WOMEN OF ISRAEL

Isa 3:16 "Moreover the LORD saith, Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet: 17 Therefore the Lord will smite with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, and the LORD will discover their secret parts. 18 In that day the Lord will take away the bravery of their tinkling ornaments about their feet, and their cauls, and their round tires like the moon, 19 The chains, and the bracelets, and the mufflers, 20 The bonnets, and the ornaments of the legs, and the headbands, and the tablets, and the earrings, 21 The rings, and nose jewels, 22 The changeable suits of apparel, and the mantles, and the wimples, and the crisping pins, 23 The glasses, and the fine linen, and the hoods, and the veils."

Even the articles of clothing that can be worn innocently, are judged here because of the spirit of pride. The same could be true for our generation.

My Response:

I'm going to repeat the passage from the NASB for clarity's sake (the wording of the KJV is very archaic in this passage):

Isa 3:16-23 NASB

(16) Moreover, the LORD said, "Because the daughters of Zion are proud And walk with heads held high and seductive eyes, And go along with mincing steps And tinkle the bangles on their feet,

(17) Therefore the Lord will afflict the scalp of the daughters of Zion with scabs, And the LORD will make their foreheads bare."

(18) In that day the Lord will take away the beauty of their anklets, headbands, crescent ornaments,

(19) dangling earrings, bracelets, veils,

(20) headdresses, ankle chains, sashes, perfume boxes, amulets,

(21) finger rings, nose rings,

(22) festal robes, outer tunics, cloaks, money purses,

(23) hand mirrors, undergarments, turbans and veils.

Now, let's look at this passage and find a list of things that women can't do (according to Blankenship) because they're a sign of pride:

1. No wearing headbands
2. No wearing veils (sorry to all you girls getting married soon)
3. No wearing headdresses
4. No wearing sashes
5. No wearing perfume
6. No wearing festal robes (no more dressing up for special occasions)
7. No wearing outer tunics (ouch!)
8. No carrying money purses
9. No using hand mirrors

10. No wearing underwear (hey, the Bible said it, not me!
It's in verse 23)

See a double standard here? If this passage is saying that we can't wear jewelry because it's a sign of pride, then it's also saying that we can't do the 10 things I just listed.

It can be one way or the other, it can't be both.

Needless to say, God doesn't have a problem with you wearing underwear (He wants you to, I promise). The issue in this passage is pride. Pride can manifest itself in a lot of different ways, and God will deal with it as necessary, on an individual basis.

You see, God dealt with Israel nationally, but He deals with us individually.

He dealt with the women of Israel on a national level because of the sins of the nation. He deals with women today on an individual basis. Instead of dealing with the symptoms, He deals with the cause. Pride can manifest itself in jewelry, sure, but it can also be manifested in hundreds of other ways—and that applies to both males and females. A fancy hair-do (ladies) or a fancy car (guys) can be just as much a symbol of pride as wearing 100 pounds of jewelry. You see, these things aren't inherently evil on their own; They only become a problem when they're a symptom of pride. In the Old Testament God dealt with the symptoms, in the New Testament He deals with the cause.

Rev. Blankenship writes:

**** SOMETHING TO THINK about : If pride & vanity is not the reason for wearing jewelry, then it should be no problem to dispose of it for the sake of your Christianity.*

My Response:

This argument could be made for anything (a car, a house, a

pet rabbit—anything). The fact of the matter is that God will tell you if He wants you to get rid of something. That's between Him and you. The New Testament lays down no other pattern. Let me repeat that: The New Testament lays no foundation for the idea that we should give up jewelry because it's "a sign of pride"!

(I should also point out that the argument that Blankenship makes here is probably the most common argument made for "holiness standards." Whenever I have discussed holiness standards with a UPC minister they retreat very rapidly to this argument. (I am talking about discussing it with them when I was still a member of the UPC! Even when I agreed with what they taught, they still had to retreat to this argument whenever I played devil's advocate.) They back-peddle and say things like, "Don't you want to get as close to God as you can? Why do people fight against these standards so much? They must be rebellious!" My answer is, "Yes, I do want to get as close to God as I can, but not wearing jewelry or make-up has nothing to do with whether or not a person is close to God. The only time a woman should have to give up these things is if she feels God has personally told her to for some reason.")

Rev. Blankenship writes:

If we want the glory of God in our life, in our homes, and our church, let's deliver ourselves of our symbols of our vanity. Take these things into consideration when choosing your dress & appearance, etc. Some good advice for our local church is the following...

Philippians 4:5 "Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord [is] at hand." (Excessive jewelry is improper for a child of God)

My Response:

The word that the KJV translates "moderation" in Phil 4:5

actually means "gentleness" or "unassertiveness ((The Complete Word Study Dictionary, G1933))." Of course, temperance in all things is a good practice for a Christian to have; but that hardly justifies Blankenship's conclusion (he concludes farther down in this article that no ornamental jewelry should be worn at all). That's not temperance or moderation, that's abstinence, and the Bible does not support that conclusion!

Rev. Blankenship writes:

What about the New Testament? (subject here is wives:)

I Peter 3:3-4 "Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But [let it be] the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, [even the ornament] of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price"

REMEMBER BALANCE: It is obvious that a total prohibition of gold was not the point. For if that verse was an instruction to not wear any gold, then we would have to submit to not wearing any apparel either. Surely that is not the point! (smile)

My Response:

Finally, Rev. Blankenship and I agree! The point of this passage is not to say that women should not wear gold any more than it is to say that women should not wear clothes!! The point of this passage is that women's concern should be about inward holiness more than outward looks!

Rev. Blankenship writes:

For us a good rule is : Let's not wear things that have no value or use, other than ornamentation. Example of things that do have use beside ornamentation: wedding rings, tie tacks, watches, glasses, etc....

My Response:

Unfortunately, Blankenship and I must leave our new-found agreement behind, for I cannot agree with what he just said. When he instructs people to not wear anything that has "no value or use, other than ornamentation." He steps out of the Bible and starts laying arbitrary rules (stumbling-blocks) that have no Scriptural basis.

Rev. Blankenship writes:

LISTEN FOLKS... IF YOU WANT TO GROW IN GOD LOOK FOR PRINCIPLES AND NOT JUST LAWS IN THIS BIBLE. Therein lies real growth material!

My Response:

This is absolutely right! So why is he doing the Bible study? First, the "Laws" about jewelry don't exist in the first place, and second, he should be dealing with the source of the problem (pride) and not the outward symptoms!

Rev. Blankenship writes:

Here is one of those principles... (recall the story of Esther)

Esther 2:12 " Now when every maid's turn was come to go in to king Ahasuerus, after that she had been twelve months, according to the manner of the women, (for so were the days of their purifications accomplished, to wit, six months with oil of myrrh, and six months with sweet odours, and with other things for the purifying of the women;) 13 Then thus came every maiden unto the king; whatsoever she desired was given her to go with her out of the house of the women unto the king's house. 14 In the evening she went, and on the morrow she returned into the second house of the women, to the custody of Shaashgaz, the king's chamberlain, which kept the concubines: she came in unto the king no more, except the king delighted in her, and that she were called by name. 15 Now when the turn of Esther, the daughter of Abihail the

uncle of Mordecai, who had taken her for his daughter, was come to go in unto the king, she required nothing but what Hegai the king's chamberlain, the keeper of the women, appointed. And Esther obtained favour in the sight of all them that looked upon her. 16 So Esther was taken unto king Ahasuerus into his house royal in the tenth month, which is the month Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign. 17 And the king loved Esther above all the women, and she obtained grace and favour in his sight more than all the virgins; so that he set the royal crown upon her head, and made her queen instead of Vashti."

LADIES: You do not need to endeavor to be overly trendy in the worlds eyes... Listen to the chamberlain... (pastoral ministry) God is pleased with woman and men that will concentrate on holiness.

My Response:

I commented on this passage in my [response to Blankenship's study on Make-up](#), so I am not going to do so again here. Suffice it to say that this phrase—"[S]he did not request anything except what Hegai, the king's eunuch...advised"—does not mean that she did not wear make-up or jewelry!

Also—this is off-topic—I think it's funny that he compared the "chamberlain" to the pastoral ministry. I'm not sure why the KJV translators translated "eunuch" as "chamberlain," and "harem" as "house," but they did. I'm going to cite part of the passage from the NASB so you can see what the text really says:

Est 2:14-15 NASB

(14) In the evening she would go in and in the morning she would return to the second harem, to the custody of Shaashgaz, the king's eunuch who was in charge of the concubines. She would not again go in to the king unless the king delighted in her and she was summoned by name.

(15) Now when the turn of Esther, the daughter of Abihail the uncle of Mordecai who had taken her as his daughter, came to go in to the king, she did not request anything except what Hegai, the king's eunuch who was in charge of the women, advised. And Esther found favor in the eyes of all who saw her.

I wonder what my pastor would think if I told him that his role is illustrated by the eunuchs who were in charge of the harems in the Old Testament? Now that would be an interesting conversation!

Rev. Blankenship writes:

SO WHAT SHOULD YOU DO WITH OUR JEWELRY THEN?

Exo 25:1 "And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2 Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an offering: of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart ye shall take my offering. 3 And this is the offering which ye shall take of them; gold, and silver, and brass, 4 And blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats' hair, 5 And rams' skins dyed red, and badgers' skins, and shittim wood, 6 Oil for the light, spices for anointing oil, and for sweet incense, 7 Onyx stones, and stones to be set in the ephod, and in the breastplate. 8 And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them. 9 According to all that I show thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it."

Take an offering – AND BUILD GOD A CHURCH!

My Response:

I think his conclusion is stretching it a bit. Go ahead and take an offering of everyone's jewelry, but be sure to tell them to skin their pet badgers first. Oh, and to give all of their blue, purple, scarlet, and fine linen. And if they raise

livestock then they need to give all their goats' hair too.

See where this is going? It's like Isaiah 3:16-23; it can be one way or the other, it can't be both ways. If God put this passage in the Bible because He wants us to give up all of our jewelry, then He also wants us to give up all of the other things listed here.

My Conclusion:

Blankenship's selection of Scriptures is very one-sided, and they were often taken out of context. What he did is called "proof texting"—I.e., searching the Bible for Scriptures to verify what you already believe to be true. Proof texting is the opposite of what we should do—search the Scriptures to find out what God says is true.

Allow me to cite a few other Scriptures dealing with jewelry in the Bible, and you can tell me whether or not God hates it:

Isa 61:10 NASB

(10) I will rejoice greatly in the LORD, My soul will exult in my God; For He has clothed me with garments of salvation, He has wrapped me with a robe of righteousness, As a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, And as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

Psa 45:6-9 NASB

(6) Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; A scepter of uprightness is the scepter of Your kingdom.

(7) You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You With the oil of joy above Your fellows.

(8) All Your garments are fragrant with myrrh and aloes and cassia; Out of ivory palaces stringed instruments have made You glad.

(9) Kings' daughters are among Your noble ladies; At Your right hand stands the queen in gold from Ophir.

Isa 49:18 NASB

(18) "Lift up your eyes and look around; All of them gather together, they come to you. As I live," declares the LORD, "You will surely put on all of them as jewels and bind them on as a bride.

Eze 16:8-14 NASB

(8) "Then I passed by you and saw you, and behold, you were at the time for love; so I spread My skirt over you and covered your nakedness. I also swore to you and entered into a covenant with you so that you became Mine," declares the Lord GOD.

(9) "Then I bathed you with water, washed off your blood from you and anointed you with oil.

(10) "I also clothed you with embroidered cloth and put sandals of porpoise skin on your feet; and I wrapped you with fine linen and covered you with silk.

(11) "I adorned you with ornaments, put bracelets on your hands and a necklace around your neck.

(12) "I also put a ring in your nostril, earrings in your ears and a beautiful crown on your head.

(13) "Thus you were adorned with gold and silver, and your dress was of fine linen, silk and embroidered cloth. You ate fine flour, honey and oil; so you were exceedingly beautiful and advanced to royalty.

(14) "Then your fame went forth among the nations on account of your beauty, for it was perfect because of My splendor which I bestowed on you," declares the Lord GOD.

Am I reading this correctly? Did God just tell Israel that He covered her with jewels, gold, silver, bracelets, and even gave her earrings and a nose ring? Hmmm. Doesn't sound like God hates jewelry to me!

So, what does God hate? Pride! Read the next three verses...

Eze 16:15-17 NASB

(15) "But you trusted in your beauty and played the harlot because of your fame, and you poured out your harlotries on every passer-by who might be willing.

(16) "You took some of your clothes, made for yourself high places of various colors and played the harlot on them, which should never come about nor happen.

(17) "You also took your beautiful jewels made of My gold and of My silver, which I had given you, and made for yourself male images that you might play the harlot with them.

See? God has no problem with jewelry. He does have a problem with pride! No matter how the pride manifests itself—whether it be through a fancy car today or fancy underwear in Isaiah—God hates it. Jewelry's just not the issue. It never was, and it never will be.

Response to UPC Bible study on women wearing pants

*Response to a Bible study written by Rev. M.G. Blankenship.
Found at
<http://www.apostolic.edu/biblestudy/files/bwahrpt2.htm>.
Accessed 4/28/2007.*

I am not going to reprint the entire study because it would take too much space. What I will do is show a piece from the Bible study and then respond to it. I do recommend that you read the entire Bible study and form your own conclusions.

Spelling and editing errors in the italicized errors are the mistake of the author of the Bible study that I am responding

to. Spelling and editing errors in the rest of the article are my mistake.

Rev. Blankenship writes:

Deut 22:5 "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."

One thing for sure: The "unisex" styles of our day are an abomination to God. It is a perverse hostility to God's creation order! It is driven by spirits that wish to put humanity into rebellion.

My Response:

Rev. Blankenship starts his Bible study with a critical mistake: He assumes that Deu. 22:5 is talking about cross-dressing. Deuteronomy 22:5 could be talking about cross-dressing, but it is actually a very difficult verse to translate. Scholars are divided on the exact meaning. The careful reader will notice that Deu. 22:5 in the KJV says, "The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment." See the difference?

Literally in the Hebrew it says, "There shall not be the thing of a man on a woman, nor shall a man put on a woman's garment" (LITV). To complicate matters, the Hebrew word used for "garment" actually means the outer cloak that women wore during the day ((John C. Maxwell and Lloyd J. Ogilvie, The Preacher's Commentary Series, Volume 5 : Deuteronomy, The Preacher's Commentary series (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson Inc, 1987). 241.)) and (if they were poor) used as a blanket at night. The word for "garment" can also mean "clothing" in a general sense, so scholars are divided on how it is meant to be used in this passage. They are also divided on what exactly "the thing of a man" refers to.

The Preacher's Commentary lists the four dominant views on this passage, and I will cite them here. I have put the citations in numbered form for easier reading, but I have not changed the wording:

1. "One explanation is that this practice was associated with the religion of Canaan....Apparently women appeared in male garments and men in women's clothes when they worshiped their pagan deities. Yahweh wanted His people to be unique and to do nothing that was in any way connected with foreign religions.
2. Another theory is that this verse could refer to war. A woman was not to put on the trappings of a soldier or dress like a man in order to try to gain admission into the army. Nor were men to attempt to avoid military obligation by dressing as women.
3. Another explanation often given for this ban is that it obscured the distinction between the sexes and therefore violated an essential part of the created order of life (Gen. 1:27). The Hebrew phrase for "pertains to" is used elsewhere in referring to decorations or utensils used by the opposite sex. During the days of Moses, garments worn by men and women were very similar (robes); so this command was designed to keep a woman from appearing as a man for purposes of licentiousness. The major difference between male and female robes was their decoration or ornamentation. This passage does not teach against women's wearing slacks, hats, shoes, gloves, or other items that are now worn by both sexes, but rather against the wearing of any item specifically intended for the opposite sex. The distinctives of each sex should be maintained and protected in regard to outward appearance. The New Testament instruction in Galatians 3:28 that "there is neither male or female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" applied to status in God's sight and not to dress. While we realize that we are one in Christ, recognition of the differences between the

sexes is a principle worth safeguarding.

4. Still another explanation is that this verse refers to the practice of transvestism, a deviant form of sexual behavior which is often characterized by cross-dressing. The verse says women should not wear things "pertaining to" the male. This phrase includes not only clothing, but also ornaments, weapons, and other items normally associated with men. In the second clause, women's clothing is explicitly forbidden men ((Ibid.))."

These four explanations, while lengthy, serve to illustrate the fact that the translation of Deuteronomy 22:5 is highly debatable. The mistake that Rev. Blankenship makes is that he assumes that it must be talking about cross-dressing (he doesn't even acknowledge the possibility of any other interpretation), and then he leaps to the conclusion that anything that could be considered "unisex" is an "abomination."

Rev. Blankenship writes:

Men & Women are different: Both Physically & Emotionally by creation. And God has placed certain social methods into place to maintain this difference. To guard against homosexuality & the decline of the family. Today we have women that look masculine & men that look feminine.

I Cor 6:9 "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, "-> (webster's: unsuitably womanish)

My Response:

First, I agree with Rev. Blankenship that acts of homosexuality are sin (cf. Rom. 1:26-27; 1 Tim. 1:10). Unfortunately, Rev. Blankenship makes two tremendous errors when he jumps from Deu. 22:5 to the subject of homosexuality.

First, he is still assuming that Deu. 22:5 is talking about cross-dressing, when the meaning of the Scripture is debated. Second, he assumes that anyone who cross-dresses must be a homosexual! Anyone who has basic training in sexual deviancy knows that cross-dressing is not always (or even often) associated with homosexuality. I'm not an expert in this area, though, so I'll quote the experts:

[Transvestitism is the] practice of wearing the clothes of the opposite sex (cross-dressing), generally to derive some kind of sexual pleasure. It is often mistakenly associated with homosexuality; in fact, however, transvestites may be either heterosexual or homosexual, and the practice of cross-dressing is sometimes even ridiculed among homosexuals. The transvestite must also be distinguished from the transsexual, who desires to become a functioning member of the opposite sex; most transvestites are men who comfortably fill male roles in society and are satisfied with their biological sex. Transsexuals, both male and female, are uncomfortable with their sex and are usually required to cross-dress for an extended period before they undergo surgery. That most transvestites are men is at least in part a result of the role of fashion in Western culture; in the mid-to-late 20th century Western women wearing trousers and other clothes once considered to be exclusively men's clothes are not seen as deviant ("transvestism." Encyclopædia Britannica. 2007. Encyclopædia Britannica Online. 28 Apr. 2007)).

So the mistake that Rev. Blankenship makes here is that he continues his line of faulty reasoning. He first claimed that Deu. 22:5 must be talking about cross-dressing, so his conclusion was that "the 'unisex' styles of our day are an abomination to God." He then goes on to assume that anyone who engages in cross-dressing is a homosexual. While I agree with Rev. Blankenship that cross-dressing for the purpose of deriving sexual pleasure is a sin, I find it ridiculous to assume that anyone who wears an article of unisex clothing

(such a woman wearing slacks) is a homosexual. The very idea is absurd! If that's the case then either men or women are being an abomination to God every time that they wear any of these articles of clothing:

- Jackets (don't most coats and jackets look the same for men and women?)
- Shoes (do men and women need to have separate shoe styles so that they won't be considered unisex?)
- Watches (many men's dress watches look like women's watches, and vice versa)
- Glasses (shouldn't we have glasses that are designed specifically for men and women? I'd hate for someone to look at my shades and think that I was a transvestite)
- Isn't this kind of absurd?

The point here is that the UPC has taken slacks and created a huge issue out of them, and left every other article of clothing on the sidelines. If the UPC would apply their rules consistently then I could respect their views, even though I disagree with them. But when I see UPC pastors preach against women wearing slacks from the pulpit, and then I go visit them in their homes and see their wives and daughters walking around in pajama pants, then I see hypocrisy, not holiness.

Rev. Blankenship writes:

[Rev. Blankenship spends the next few paragraphs in his study arguing that Deuteronomy is part of the moral law of God, not the ceremonial law. I am not going to discuss that here for two reasons: 1) As I have already said, the translation of Deu. 22:5 is debated, so until we know exactly what God was talking about then it's pointless to discuss whether the law was moral or ceremonial; and 2) If Deu. 22:5 is talking about transvestitism (cross-dressing for sexual pleasure or other deviant reasons) then I agree with him that it is against the moral law, however, that does not lead to the conclusion that it is wrong for women to wear slacks today. Even if Deu. 22:5

is talking about transvestitism, and even if it is a moral law that still applies to us today, I still do not think that slacks are "men's apparel." Also, we have to remember that the prohibition in Deu. 22:5 was against any article that could apply to a man, so if it is a moral law that still applies to us today then we have to create a whole list of things that women cannot wear (I.e., their husband's t-shirt, their husband's tools (those are traditionally men's items), etc.).]

Rev. Blankenship writes:

I Peter 3:5 "For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands:"

THE POINT: << HOLY WOMEN OF OLD LIVED BY DEUT 22:5>>

My Response:

1 Pet. 3:6 uses Sarah as an example of a "holy woman." She lived over 600 years before Deuteronomy 22:5 was written, so it is obvious that Peter's point was not that "holy women of old lived by Deut 22:5." To see his point we must back up to 1 Pet. 3:1 and read the entire passage:

1Pe 3:1-6 NASB

(1) In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if [any of them] are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives,

(2) as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior.

(3) Your adornment must not be [merely] external—braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses;

(4) but [let it be] the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God.

(5) For in this way in former times the holy women also, who hoped in God, used to adorn themselves, being submissive to

their own husbands;

(6) just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, and you have become her children if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear.

The focus in the above passage is on inward holiness, not outward appearance. If Peter is talking about outward appearance in this passage then he is saying that women cannot braid their hair or wear dresses. He is obviously not saying that—his point is clearly that a woman's focus should be on inward holiness, not on impressing people with her outward appearance. (This applies to men as well.)

Rev. Blankenship writes:

NOW TO PRACTICAL APPLICATION

Part of our DAILY attire should be for gender distinction. Unmistakable, visual, identification of the sexes.

IN OUR CULTURE:— (which is all we need to worry about)

Man's attire: = pants, trousers, slacks

My Response:

Again, I agree with Rev. Blankenship that a person should not deliberately try to appear like they are of the opposite sex (cross-dressing). However, I strongly disagree with him that pants, trousers, and slacks are not women's attire. Has he looked around lately? Pants on women are completely acceptable in Western culture. The fact is that styles and apparel change with time.

Rev. Blankenship writes:

EVEN THE PICTURES ON PUBLIC REST ROOMS TELLS THIS CULTURAL TRUTH. This could even change from culture to culture but Deut 22 covers ALL CULTURES! and all times.

My Response:

I'm not sure what point Rev. Blankenship is trying to make here. In the same paragraph he says that apparel can change from culture to culture and that Deu. 22:5 covers all cultures. If he is admitting that men and women's apparel changes from culture to culture, then why does he have such a problem with women wearing slacks? 100 years ago women did not wear slacks, now they do. Big deal! Culture changed! If he admits that dress codes change over time and from culture to culture (which they obviously do) then I don't see why he has such a problem with women wearing slacks.

Rev. Blankenship writes:

"Pertaineth to" = things traditionally associated with, or patterned after a man. (slacks have indeed been masculine in our culture)

My Response:

So have any number of other things. That's what makes Deu. 22:5 so difficult to translate. No one alive today is sure exactly what Moses meant when he wrote that a woman should not put on that which "pertaineth to a man." My point is that we should not limit Deu. 22:5 to clothing. If we're going to say that it is applicable today then we need to come up with a definitive list of things that "pertaineth to a man," and then we need to forbid Christian women to use those things.

Rev. Blankenship writes:

Historically: WWII factories were the first time slacks started being worn by women. At the same time: short hair, cigarettes, swearing became acceptable feminine behavior. Now that path has come to Abortion, Divorce, Single Parent homes, extreme feminism: You've come a long way baby??

My Response:

I don't mean to be sarcastic, but I'm not sure I follow the connection between women wearing slacks and abortion, divorce, single parent homes, and extreme feminism. I'm not a sociologist, but I'd be willing to take a stab in the dark and guess that sociologists would identify more causes for these things than women wearing slacks.

Rev. Blankenship writes:

Two things should always govern your decisions:

*GOOD TASTE & COMMON SENSE == R e m e m b e r i n g * w h o * y o u * a r e !*

God visibly separated Israel: food /dress /farming /worship /Sabbath.. You could tell a Jew by his dress/Actions. The Jews survived 1,900 years without a home land. It's the only existing ancient culture! GOD'S LAWS PRESERVED THEIR IDENTITY! God wants to preserve His church in this day in the same manner!

-->>> Outer actions bring a GREATER CHRISTIAN COMMITMENT in your life!

My Response:

There are several things that must be said about the comments that Rev. Blankenship made in the preceding paragraph.

First, God did visibly separate Israel in dress, farming, worship, and the Sabbath. It was called the Mosaic Law, and Jesus fulfilled it. When Rev. Blankenship says that "God wants to preserve His church in this day in the same manner" he is saying the exact opposite of what God wants to do! The whole point of Jesus coming was to set us free from slavery to sin (cf. Rom. 6) and to the Mosaic Law (cf. Gal. 4-5).

Second, the Jews are not the only ancient culture that is still around today. Take a look at Japan, India, Nepal, China, Sri Lanka, and almost any Middle Eastern nation for an example

of an ancient culture that still exists.

Third, Rev. Blankenship's statement that "Outer actions bring a GREATER CHRISTIAN COMMITMENT in your life" could not be farther from the truth! If anything, external rules and regulations push us farther away from God, not closer to Him! In the book of Galatians Paul is writing to a church that was starting to return to the Mosaic Law. One of the things that they were returning to was the practice of demanding that people be circumcised. Did Paul commend them, saying that "Outer actions bring a greater Christian commitment in [their] life"? Far from it! Paul actually told them, "You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by the law; you have fallen from grace" (Gal. 5:4).

Wow! That's some pretty harsh language! It seems that a return to the Mosaic Law is the exact opposite of what God wants us to do! This does not mean that a Christian can just do whatever they want, of course, because Paul also wrote that we are set free from slavery to sin so that we can be slaves to righteousness (Rom. 6). The point is that we were set free from the Mosaic Law and that God "wrote His laws upon our heart" (cf. Heb. 8:10; 10:16). Now we are able to have direct communication with Him and directly know what is pleasing to Him and what is not. What a beautiful concept!

Rev. Blankenship writes:

Even Joan Rivers (on her syndicated talk show) stated "Everybody knows women wear dresses and men wear pants.". If worldly people know it to be a simple truth, we does God's church act so stubborn about it?

My Response:

I looked for the Joan Rivers quote but was unable to find it. If anyone can verify that she actually said that then please [let me know](#). Even if she did say that it makes no difference. Joan Rivers is one of the last people that I would listen to

when deciding what is pleasing to God and what is not.

Rev. Blankenship writes:

Let us remember who we are and be proud to carry his banner in these last days!

My Response:

I'm incredibly proud of who I am. I am a child of the King, and I want everyone to know it! That's why I now wear a necklace with a cross on it! (I don't wear dresses though, just in case anyone is wondering.)