

The Value of Modesty

By [Wayne Jackson](#)

Louis L'Amour was a premier novelist. His fascinating stories of the old west have been bestsellers.

L'Amour had a vast personal library dealing with American frontier lore. He was meticulous in producing works that are fastidiously accurate in terms of the culture of the 1800s.

Some years ago a national magazine published an article by L'Amour that addressed how women were viewed in the Old West. He observed that almost uniformly, they were treated with great respect even by the roughest of men.

He noted that, as a rule, females could travel alone hundreds of miles by stagecoach and feel quite secure, because men regarded them so highly and were extremely protective of the fairer sex.

Those days are gone and have been for quite a while.

Now, a woman can hardly walk unescorted down a crowded street without being verbally assaulted or in some fashion sexually harassed. Most men in large cities don't want their wives driving alone at night.

One recent author believes she knows, at least in part, one cause for this dramatic shift in attitude toward women. She says it involves the "loss of modesty."

Modesty Abandoned

Wendy Shalit, a young Jewish writer, created a considerable stir in the media with the publication of her book, [A Return to Modesty: Discovering the Lost Virtue](#).

This volume has been hailed by some as a work that will "change society." Others — especially feminists — vehemently denounce it. Some are even suggesting it should be banned. Libertines are always vocal against censorship except when their own ox is being gored.

Ms. Shalit says that her initial exposure to our grossly immodest culture commenced when she was in the fourth grade. She was introduced to a "sex education" course, from which her parents presently removed her. She argues that such classes should be completely abolished because they erode one's natural sense of modesty.

She contends that modesty is an innate, psychological barrier which protects youngsters as their personalities are developing.

Later, as a student at Williams College in Massachusetts, Shalit was appalled by coed restrooms and other on-campus, sex-related problems. She wrote a piece about these practices that was eventually published in *Reader's Digest*.

The thesis of [A Return to Modesty](#) is that the so-called "sexual revolution" has robbed society of many of its most valuable virtues—for one thing, a sense of **self-worth**.

She contends that the breakdown of modesty among young girls has led to an exploding level of promiscuity. Every single study of this moral degeneracy has revealed that "low self-esteem is correlated with early intercourse for girls."

Shalit argues that the modern loss of modesty has spawned a host of serious problems that have robbed women of genuine happiness. She cites early feminists, like Simone de Beauvoir, who believed that if women abandoned their natural instincts toward modesty, devastating consequences would eventually result.

The author unhesitatingly charges that modern feminists, together with women's magazines, and the so-called "mental health industry," have contributed to the numerous difficulties women now are encountering.

She cites, for example, feminists like Naomi Wolf, who has suggested that there is a "shadow slut" lurking somewhere in every woman's personality just waiting to be liberated.

Ms. Shalit contends that modesty is not a disease of which women need to be cured! “It’s high time sexual modesty came out of the closet,” she writes. “Not only can you not get AIDS from it, not only is it morally right, but ... modesty is really much more exciting than promiscuity.”

[*A Return to Modesty*](#) is a valuable resource for analyzing the decline of the feminine mystique in modern society.

My own conviction is this. If many women would learn to be women again, instead of trying to emulate the conduct of crude and profane men; if they would learn to speak, dress, and act like ladies again, instead of portraying the image of foul-mouthed, street-corner prostitutes; if they would return to the **biblical norm of femininity**, whole new vistas would open to them, which they would discover as wonderful, exciting, and fulfilling.

Modern immodesty has not liberated women. Rather, it has enslaved them to lifestyles that have only degraded them and marred the glorious image their Creator intended them to enjoy.

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Works Cited

Shalit, Wendy. 1999. [*A Return to Modesty*](#). New York, NY: Free Press.

Scripture References

1 Thessalonians 5

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