

What are manufacturers thinking nowadays? What are they trying to do to our daughters?

Unfortunately, the third wave of feminism has ushered in what is probably the most immodest dress in history, and definitely in the history of the United States, which makes it a challenge for those of us who want to teach our daughters to dress modestly. After all, our culture has equated modern femininity with provocativeness, which means we have to try harder than ever to teach our daughters what God truly meant when he created femininity.

This is not so hard when your daughters are small. Most little girls inherently want to dress femininely. I remember as a little girl all I wanted to wear were dresses, the frillier the better. My mother had to make me wear pants to school on gym days. It is when little girls get school aged and conscious of style that they start to imitate culture in the way they dress.

If you homeschool, you may be able to escape this for several years, IF your daughters doesn't watch a lot of television and has friends whose mothers are interested in modesty as well. But once culture catches up with you, you might have a battle on your hands.

I am a firm believer that kids (especially preteens and teenagers) will tell you what you want to hear and then go out and do what they want to do. My children have had friends, both homeschooled and public schooled alike, whose parents are convinced their daughters are little angels (because of what they're saying and how they're behaving at home) when in fact, they are putting on makeup and changing their clothing the moment they get out of sight of their parents. Regardless of what they're saying or doing at home, if your daughters do not have modest values in their own hearts, you have little chance of getting them to adhere to them. Shaping these values is a delicate balance of parental authority, parental compromise, and parental teaching.

It is great if you can start early shaping their beliefs on feminine and modest dress. You might sparingly point out immodestly dressed females on television or in the shopping malls. I say "sparingly" because if you overdo it, you start to sound like a nag or a broken record. And be careful how you point out the problem so that you don't teach your daughter a hateful, judging attitude. You might say something along the lines of "I'm sure she doesn't realize it, but..." or "We should pray for that woman so that God will show her that she's beautiful without all those revealing clothes."

Buying clothing for your daughter is a HUGE challenge nowadays. We've spent countless hours looking for clothing that both myself and my daughter can feel good about. I have had to compromise several times, and she has had to compromise as well. We went through a couple of years where I would just cringe whenever she wore a spaghetti strap top (one of our parental compromises) or where she would pout for an hour because she wasn't permitted to buy that strapless top (one of those things we wouldn't compromise on).

Thankfully she's now coming out of that and showing signs of making more modest

choices. I was elated a few days ago when she was horrified at some of the suggestive costume patterns for little girls in the catalogs.

"Mom, they're trying to make these little girls look like hoes (harlots)!" she said, shaking her head in disbelief.

She recently decided her bust has grown too large for spaghetti strap tops (hallelujah!) and asked me to buy her some new tops (I happily complied). I am thankful as well that her shorts have steadily grown longer, and she rarely wears that mini skirt that used to be long enough and then drew up in the dryer so that we argued over it time and time again. She has even started to police her younger cousin's clothing choices... lol.

Never underestimate, by the way, the value (or hindrance) of having the influence of older kids helping your daughter choose how she will dress. Thankfully my daughter has older brothers she looks up to who threw a fit every time she put on a spaghetti strap top and who threatened to not let her out of the house in her mini skirt. And my older son's fiance' (who my daughter loves like a sister) was great in helping me to point out the outrageousness of the way some little girls are permitted to dress.

We still have a ways to go. I never want to give the impression that our family has arrived (we are SO far from it), but I feel we are on the right track, at least as far as modesty is concerned, and I thank the good Lord for it.

(Side Note: I have never required my daughter to dress in all dresses since I do not feel it is a commandment of God. Though she loves pretty, feminine things, she does not have the desire to do so at this time. She is ultra-feminine in other ways, however. By her own choice her hair has grown halfway down her back, and she loves the womanly arts, especially cooking. I am in high hopes that one day both my daughter and my daughter-in-love-to-be will make the choice to emphasize their femininity to the maximum, but until that time I do not plan to nag or badger them as I feel it would be counterproductive.)