

# Is it wrong for women to wear jewelry?

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## Part I

Ducia: Is Jewelry condemned by God and is it a sin for mankind to wear it?

## Part II

Joe: If Jewelry were sin in God's eyes, then heaven is filled with sin. For more read Joe Keim's answer below.

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## Part I

Dear J. Keim,

I am assuming that since you were Amish, you may have some thoughts on the wedding ring tradition that is prevalent in society. I am hoping you can help me.

My husband James and I have a business where we deal with the public - many are people who do not know us personally. Most do not realize I am James's wife, assuming the other lady who works there is his wife. It took me all of these years to finally grasp why I was usually assumed divorced or a single mother with children when out of our acquaintance group. I finally realized it was because in general society, if you do not wear a wedding ring, one assumes you are not married. I was raised Apostolic (my husband was not) so was not accustomed to rings associated with meaning someone is married.

I could tell you of so many uncomfortable situations I have been in due to that assumption. James and I have discussed this and my mind tells me I should begin to wear my wedding ring we put aside when we joined the AC church. James prefers not to do so because of our line of work and his hobbies, both of which do not lend themselves to a ring. He says he would feel awkward to put one on again after not wearing one for all but about 1 year of our 32 years of marriage. It is not as uncommon for a man who is married to be ringless as it is for a women.

My one daughter and her husband - still members in the Apostolic church - are professionals in the business world. They decided that the wedding ring saves those who may have approached them interested in a relationship - much embarrassment. Also for them to be living together in a large condominium complex without visible marriage rings gives the appearance/approval of living in sin. We had not thought of that before either.

I can think of many scripture verses that would indicate that we should assimilate ourselves in society to be a witness for Christ. The "appearance of sin" or the appearance of evil comment from them really convicted me. I always found it annoying to have unappreciated attention from men who did not know me, and found it unsettling and a bit embarrassing to be assumed divorced or a single mother so often, but never realized that it was because society assumes married women wear wedding rings. In the Old Testament, jewelry is widely mentioned, never negatively. When the servant sought a wife for Isaac, he took rings and presented her with them. There is an acceptance/assumption throughout the Bible of the desirability of gold and the uses for it.

The Apostolic Church disregards those examples and bases their position for banning rings on these two verses found in the New Testament, 1 Tim 2:9 ...women adorn themselves...not with braided hair, or gold... and 1 Peter 3:3 Whose adorning let it not be... and of wearing of gold... I do not think that is what the Apostle Paul intended when he wrote those letters. Rather he was conveying the importance and emphasis be on an inner heart to be pleasing in God's sight and to be clearly evident to those who encounter them. That the most important and desirable beauty is an inner one.

Most likely you do not have time nor the inclination to answer such individual questions like this. Do you have any general information available that might help us with this and many other related seemingly small issues that become potential stumbling blocks in our lives.

Your thoughts and experiences are greatly appreciated.

With Christian love,

Anna Hawkins

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## Part II

Dear Anna,

Your wedding ring story reminded me of a situation that happened in my life. The story goes that my wife Esther and I were married in the Amish culture, and much like the AC church, the Amish do not allow the exchange of wedding rings, or for that matter, any type of jewelry. And as you might guess, their reasoning comes from the very same scriptures that you pointed out. In any case, when we left the Amish church in 1987, we never gave it any thought that in order to fit into our new culture; we should start wearing wedding rings. Matter of fact, wedding rings to us had very little significance.

We were 15 years into our new culture, and one day, a lady in our home church came walking up to me after a church service, and while shaking her index finger at me, she said, "Joe, sit down, I want to talk to you about something that really bothers me about you." As you might guess, she had my full attention. My first thoughts were, wow! This must be very, very serious. She went on to say, "Joe, how can you be in ministry and travel all over the country, speaking in churches, and not wear a wedding ring?" Why, she said, "it shows a very bad example to others." Needless to say, Esther and I eventually went out, bit our teeth, and forked over \$200 for a set of wedding rings.

Several years later, I was invited to preach at a Mennonite church in another state. As I got up to preach that morning, I never once thought about the wedding ring on my finger. However, the members in that church house saw it right away and were very disturbed that I was in their church house, behind their pulpit, and preaching the Bible to them. Over the next five days, I received phone calls on a daily basis, from different church members, warning me that some of their church members were very upset that I was wearing jewelry. Matter of fact, I was told that some members were so upset that they almost got up and walked out.

So you see, Anna, how the very same situation brought the roof down in both church houses. I could tell you many similar stories that have taken place in my travels. A pastor once told me how he had just finished preaching a 4-week series on how wrong drums are in the church; however, I don't have to walk too far before I will find another church family worshipping and praising the Lord with many

instruments, including drums. I have been in churches where a person is considered a legalist if he wears a tie and jacket, while the same denomination up the road looks down on you, if you preach without a jacket and tie. The same goes for dress codes, Bible versions, and many, many other things that Christians fight about.

**The apostle Paul wrote:**

**1 Corinthians 9:19-22**

For though I be free from all men, yet have I have made myself a servant to all, **that I might gain more;** and unto the Jews I became as a Jew, **that I might gain the Jews;** to them that are under the law, as under the law, **that I might gain them that are under the law;** to them that are without law, as without law (being not without law to God, but under law to Christ), **that I might gain them that are without law;** to the weak I became as weak, **that I might gain the weak.** I am made all things to all men, **that I might by all means save some.**

With all this in mind, my advice to you, wear the wedding ring, just be sensitive to those around you. If you know someone is going to be offended, put your hand in your pocket, or better yet, take it off and leave it out of sight. During the first 15 years of living in the outside culture, I never noticed wedding rings, however, since I wear one myself, I notice them on other people's hands a lot more. And since we live in a culture that puts great value on the wedding ring, let's wear it. If God were against gold, He would never have paved the streets of heaven with gold. And not just gold, but notice all the precious stones that we will see in heaven.

**Revelation 21:10-11 and 18-21**

And He carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.

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**And the building of the wall of it was like of jasper; and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass. The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with all manner of precious stones:** the first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, the fifth sardonyx, the sixth sardius, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. **And the twelve gates were twelve pearls: every several gate was of one pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.**

With this in mind, let's ask ourselves the obvious question. If God were against Gold and precious stones, why would He use them to build and an entire city? So what could the apostles have meant in 1st Tim and 1st Peter? Let's look at the scriptures.

**1 Timothy 2:8-10**

I will therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting; in like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and moderation, not with broided hair or gold or pearls or costly array, but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works.

I think in a nut shell, these verses explain the fact that it is more important to focus on the inward then it

is the outward. A woman's heart and mind is mirrored by her outward appearance. Paul uses words like modest, propriety (appropriate), moderation, and proper. Notice that he does not give great detail as to what is 'modest'. That is because modesty varies from culture to culture. The bottom line to this whole scripture portion is this: How a woman dresses shows whether she lives in prayer and devotion to God or has deep feelings and desires for the world and the gaping and lustful attention of men. The next scripture only reinforces what we just talked about.

#### **1 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 quite spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.

I like what the Preacher's Outline and Sermon Bible – Commentary has to say about this portion of scripture:

There is a strong reason why Christian women should focus upon adorning their hearts with a meek and quiet spirit. It was exactly what the holy women of history did, including Sarah who is the spiritual mother of every Christian woman. Note these facts.

1. This is not a new commandment. Holy women have always subjected themselves to their own husbands. Women who have loved and trusted God have subjected themselves to God and to their own husbands (1 Peter 3:5).
2. Holy women trusted in God, not in fashionable hairstyles, clothes, and jewelry (1 Peter 3:5).
3. Holy women, by trusting in God, sought inward beauty, not outward beauty. They adorned themselves with a meek and quiet spirit, not with the worldly concerns and cares of this life (1 Peter 3:5).
4. Holy women, including Sarah, the spiritual mother of all believers, obeyed their own husbands and acknowledged their leadership in the family (1 Peter 3:6).
5. Christian women, the holy women of today, are not to live in fear and terror of their husbands, even if they do not obey God's Word. They are to trust God and His care and strength and to do well; that is, they are to adorn their hearts with a meek and quiet spirit.
6. Christian women who truly trust God and who do well are the true daughters of Sarah. What is the significance of this? Sarah is the first great woman of belief. She stands as the spiritual mother of all women who believe. Every Christian woman who truly believes and adorns her heart with a quiet and meek spirit is a daughter of Sarah, a true daughter of God.

Anna, this ended up being a rather long article but hope it helps you.

God's best to you.

Joe Keim