



Links Players

Golf Attire

Additionally, the Israelites *So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the Lord came upon David in power. (1 Samuel 16:13, ESV)*

It's fun to go back and look at old photos of golfers from bygone days. Suitable attire used to be a coat and tie. This requirement has thankfully evolved, but I'm a bit concerned that, with sponsors' logos popping up on golfers' outfits like measles, this evolution is in the direction of NASCAR drivers' outfits. Rant over!

But golf is unique among sports in that the "uniform" is distinctly non-uniform and is pretty much at the discretion of the participant. This custom has resulted in such things as Payne Stewart's knickers, Ian Poulter's loud, plaid pants, John Daly's camo, and a host of other distinguishing outfits.

Clothing is a topic in today's text from Genesis. Here, we learn that Adam and Eve, having just violated God's prohibition, immediately realized they were naked and cobbled together some clothing made from fig leaves.

The usual take on this is that they had suddenly been afflicted with modesty. This notion is communicated in many of the depictions of this scene by artists from the pre-Renaissance onward. Adam and Eve often stand in a garden attired with a few strategically-placed leaves and a serpent lurking somewhere in the background.

I'm skeptical of this interpretation for a couple of reasons. First, why were they not embarrassed by nudity one minute then were the next? Second, I can't really picture these fig leaves accomplishing much in the realm of modesty anyway. Could they even reliably stay on? At least, they wouldn't stay in the way they are depicted in paintings.

I think the correct way to understand this scene relates more to another of the primary functions of clothing: protection.

Golf is a relatively safe sport. Checking, blocking, and tackling are generally discouraged. This understanding frees golfers and allows for all manner of choices when it comes to attire. Protection isn't a big issue—except for sun protection. One might need rain gear if a squall comes up.

But consider a sport that is a bit more violent—ice hockey for example. Clothing in hockey is directed more towards preserving shins and teeth than any kind of fashion statement. Thickly padded gloves, shin pads, shoulder pads, helmets, face shields, mouth guards, etc serve to protect a hockey player.

As a general rule, the more dangerous an environment is, the more clothing we tend to wear going into it. Think about what people wear for welding or beekeeping.

These reasons are also why very few of us wander around naked. It's just too risky. Bugs and poison ivy are out there. And, for sure, wear long pants and eye protection if you're weed eating!

This perspective explains the Genesis account. Prior to Adam and Eve's fall into sin, death didn't exist—likely not even any injury or the possibility of injury. Adam and Eve knew this truth, and dressed in a much more minimalistic way. But after sampling the fruit that God had assured them would lead to death, conditions changed.

They knew it immediately, and tried to dress accordingly, even though they were clearly novices in this new world of clothing. I doubt that clothing fashioned from fig leaves was any better at providing protection than it was at providing modesty. God knew this reality, as well, and provided them a better product, made from animal skins which, interestingly, would appear to have required a sacrifice.

So it's not so much that the lack of clothes made Adam and Eve immodest; it's more that it made them vulnerable.

And so are we, if we find ourselves in God's presence apart from the righteousness of Christ.

Prayer: Thank you, Lord, that you have clothed us in Jesus' righteousness.

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Peter Muller

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