

What Shall I Wear?



Karen Holford

Karen Holford is the wife of Bernie Holford, family life director of the South England Conference. Together they enjoy developing seminars on all aspects of family life. They have three children: Bethany, Nathan, and Joel. Karen has written several books, including *Please, God, Make My Mummy Nice!*, a warm and humorous look at mothering and what it can teach us about God's love for our families. She also enjoys crafts of all kinds.

There is a wonderful freedom in the twenty-first century. You can wear almost anything you like! Hems come in a variety of lengths, pants and skirts come in all shapes and sizes, and you can dress to suit your personality and lifestyle. You can be smart and chic, lacy and romantic, or cozy and comfortable. Sometimes, when I have the stamina, I shop with a friend who takes hours to choose one garment! It may be tedious, but when she's made her purchase, she knows it will see her through at least a decade! It will suit her wardrobe with no regrets, and she always avoids embarrassing or expensive blunders. These are some tips I have learned from her.

1. If you need a garment to last, don't buy the cheapest thing. Shop around and compare prices, but don't sacrifice quality.

2. Choose classic and traditional styles. They may seem more expensive at first, but you'll wear them for many years. I have had some things in my wardrobe for 13 years, and they are just as wearable today, because the styles are so timeless.

3. Learn which colors suit you best, and choose a small range of colors for your wardrobe. It can be fun to buy something bright and colorful, but if you keep your basic wardrobe in a limited range, you won't need so many jackets, shoes, purses, and accessories to match them.

4. Learn what to look for in well-made clothes. Are the seams smooth or puckered? Are the buttons sewn on well? If not, stitch them on securely from the start, to save last-minute panics. A drop of clear nail polish will help to strengthen the stitches. Is the hem straight and securely sewn? If you have to hem a garment, then every four inches, do a few stitches on top of each other. Then, if you ever rip your hem, it won't unravel enough to drop down and show. Does the garment need to be lined? Is it washable? Is the fabric comfortable to wear and easy to care for? Is there

plenty of room for movement? Kneel down, stand up, and stretch your arms over your head to check that the garment won't be restrictive. Lean forward in front of a mirror to check the modesty of the neckline. Rub a white candle up and down the zipper teeth to keep them running smoothly.

5. Ask yourself if you really need a new garment? Will it mean buying more accessories, or will it fit perfectly into your wardrobe? If you travel often, will it pack well and still look good?

6. Go to sales only if you know for sure what you really want, and go only for that item. Check out your favorite stores before sale time to see what might be available, and don't buy without a lot of careful thought. Make a list of your clothing needs and keep the list in your purse. If you find a bargain basement, you will know exactly what to look for. In sales, buy a year ahead. Winter coats are on sale in the spring, summer clothes in the fall, etc.

7. Keep your mending up to date, and make sure all your nylons are intact. Keep a spare pair in your purse or in the car, in case of accidents. Wash all your clothes according to the instructions on the label. Hang clothes on good-quality hangers of the correct size so that clothes are not stretched out of shape.

8. If you haven't worn an item for two or more years, ask yourself why. Was the color wrong or is it now outdated? Does it no longer fit well? Clear out your closets annually, and let ADRA or Dorcas benefit from your unwanted clothes.

9. Learn how to sew your own clothes well, so that you can make just what you want, to suit your budget.

10. Look forward to heaven when we won't have to worry about clothes anymore! No more shopping and laundry, just amazing robes of light, which never get dirty, and never, never go out of fashion!

