

## **COSPLAY: HARMLESS OR HARMFUL?**

What is "cosplay"? "Cosplay" is short for "costume play". Children and adults dress up in costumes to "play". This seems to be a harmless endeavour but like most worldly concoctions, there are hidden dangers in cosplay that every Christian must be wary of. When we consider most of the things of the world, what may appear harmless on the surface usually has a dark side.

The definition of cosplay taken from Wikipedia is that it, "is a type of performance art in which participants wear costumes and accessories to represent a specific character or idea. Cosplayers often interact to create a subculture centered on role play. A broader use of the term "cosplay" applies to any costumed role play in venues apart from the stage, regardless of the cultural context. Favorite sources include manga and anime, comic books, video games and films. Any entity from the real or virtual world that lends itself to dramatic interpretation may be taken up as a subject. Inanimate objects are given anthropomorphic forms and it is not unusual to see genders switched, with women playing male roles and vice versa. There is also a subset of cosplay culture centered around sex appeal, with cosplayers specifically choosing characters that are known for their attractiveness and/or revealing (even explicit) costumes. The Internet has enabled many cosplayers to create social networks and websites centred around cosplay activities, while forums allow them to share stories, photographs, news and tips. The exponential growth in the number of people picking up cosplay as a hobby since 1990 has made the phenomenon influential in popular culture. This is particularly the case in Asia where cosplay influences Japanese street fashion and popular culture." [Emphasis added]

Cosplay is different from Halloween dress-up: people dress up during Halloween to reflect the culture and symbolism of a holiday event; whereas cosplay replicates a specific character accurately. In cosplay, the person dresses and behaves like the character he portrays. Coloured wigs and body markings including tattoos may be used to be just like the specific character he is portraying. This may seem harmless to many people but the Christian is NOT to be like the "people of the world." Christians are the salt and light to a world in spiritual darkness and sin. His standards must be God's standards. He does not have the liberty to do whatever he wants. God's perfect and authoritative Word must be his sole guide.

**I. Cross Dressing Forbidden -- Deuteronomy 22:5 (KJV)** *"The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the LORD thy God."* – Cross dressing was expressly forbidden by the LORD in Old Testament times for the nation of Israel. Israel had to set the standard of God for the world to see. Israel's lifestyle was important to God because Israel was to reflect the nature and character of God. God is not feminine but masculine. God has revealed Himself to us in the masculine gender. This is a truth that has been constantly undermined by Satan throughout the ages, but never more so than in the 21st century. Sinful and corrupt man has tried their utmost to blur this distinction and to make God into their own image by saying that God is also

female. The many female deities throughout the ages attest to this distortion and the vain attempts of man to redefine God Almighty. Man would have more success redefining the sun as the moon and the moon as the sun than in his vain attempt to say that God is a female. God will always be God. He has revealed Himself to us as our Heavenly Father! It is one thing when the world redefines God but when professing believers follow the footsteps of the world, it carries a deadly deception that has deceived many today.

Man is made in the image of God. God made both male and female. The gender must be kept distinct. This image of God in man is in terms of the intangible such as man's ability to love, create, feel, to possess self determination, to show patience, and much more. The male and female gender that God created in mankind is for the purpose of re-creation in order to populate the earth. The prerogative to create the male and the female belongs to God alone. Therefore, when he made us male and female, it is God who did it and He wants us to fulfil our functions according to our respective genders. Sinful man will try their utmost to thwart the will and plan of God according to the will of the prince of this world, Satan! With modern science at his disposal, what was meant for good has been turned to evil. The skills that God gives to mankind to live on this earth with some semblance of comfort and enjoyment have morphed into something disgusting and heinous. Lies are presented as truth because man says so! Homosexuality is presented as something "beautiful" and "normal" when in fact it is an evil that is against nature and definitely a grave distortion of God's creation of mankind. From the spiritual perspective, the sin of homosexuality is an affront against God and a great sin. It is a sin so great that anyone who calls himself a Christian and remains a homosexual is deceiving himself! The Bible states very clearly in **1 Corinthians 6:9-10** (KJV) that a homosexual cannot enter into the kingdom of God. *"Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, 10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God."*

If a professing believer is really concerned for his friends and loved ones who are homosexuals, then he must share the truth with them and must not condone their sin of homosexuality. Love is always in truth and not in falsehood and lies. If a professing believer says that he cares for his friends, then he cannot cross-dress even in jest or fun or in play acting. To stumble a sinner and cause him to not receive Christ by cross-dressing is not a laughing matter and definitely not a joke!

**II. Abstinence Sought -- 1 Thessalonians 5:22** (KJV) *"Abstain from all appearance of evil."* – Can cosplay be categorised as "evil"? Grown men and women would dress as characters of man's imagination, much of which stems from idolatrous origins such as gods that are composed of good and evil beings that fight each other for dominion over the earth. The truth of one Creator who is the One and only living and true God is not only blurred but also categorically rejected through these fanciful but cleverly portrayed caricatures. True born again believers who dress like them, even for fun or because of a dare, bring shame to the Name of Christ that they profess

to bear. If a person is truly born again, he would know and be convicted that to take part in cosplay and to cross-dress are sins against God. Christ's name, which they claim to bear because they claim that He died on the cross of their sins, would be dragged into the sewer. How can any true child of God deliberately do such a shameful and sinful deed and not feel remorse? This is beyond human imagination! Could such a one be really born again then?

The command to abstain from all appearance of evil is to protect the Name of Christ that all believers carry with them everywhere they go. God commands all believers to keep on staying far away from anything that appears to be evil. If it is obviously evil, all believers will surely stay away. Here the Bible commands that all believers must consciously and wilfully take themselves far away from anything that has the appearance in any form, shape or size of evil! Those who participate in cosplay obviously do not consider it as evil. Those who belong to the "cosplay club" might even find it fun and entertaining. But the Bible's commands are not for unbelievers. Unbelievers do not know better because they are in sin and darkness. They do not have the light of Christ in them. They might even mock and make fun of those who consider cosplay as sinful and shameful. But if those who say they are Christians mock and make fun, it is much worse because they are supposed to know better. Their eyes are supposed to have been opened, to see this sin sick world with the eyes of God and the mind of Christ and be able to evaluate what is holy and pure and good that will glorify God. Don't these professing believers realize that participating in sinful activities like cosplay sends the message that God approves of what they are doing? The God of the Bible is never like anything that the world makes Him out to be through cosplay! Yet when a professing believer does that, this is the message he sends forth! How sad it is to send a false message to deceive family and friends who are without Christ and in sin! He is a stumbling block ushering many of his friends and loved ones to hell by his sinful practices and false messages.

Total abstinence from all forms of evil and any appearance of evil must be every believer's heartfelt desire at all times.

**III. Biblical Separation the Guide -- 2 Corinthians 6:17-18 (KJV)** *"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, **18** And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."* – The only way is to repent of the sin of cosplay. It is more than just saying sorry. To show forth genuine repentance, the sin of cosplay has to be denounced. If the professing believer has openly and publicly stated that he is for cosplay, now he must publicly and openly repudiate it as wrong and sinful. This is the only way to do damage control for the reputation of Christ that he has damaged. But like any other sin that a believer commits, it is not an unpardonable sin. It can be pardoned by God when the professing believer turns to Christ in humble repentance. When he cries to God for forgiveness, God will surely forgive him through Christ Jesus.

The professing believer has to stop taking part in any cosplay. He has to confess and admit that cosplay is sinful and wrong. God made that abundantly clear in the above verses of 2 Corinthians 6:17-18. He has to come out and be separate. He must stay away from such activities and from those who participate in cosplaying. "Touch not the unclean thing" is a very clear injunction from God to all believers against anything that is sinful. Our loving and merciful God will receive the repentant believer. He will be God's child again! The believer has to realize that he cannot love God and the world at the same time. The world and the one true living God are at odds. They have nothing in common. The Bible says in **1 John 2:15-17** (KJV), *"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. 17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."*

**SUMMARY** – Some may see cosplay as a way of being accepted, which is sad. It is sad because they should strive to be accepted by God and not the world. God will never have any concord with Belial. The Christian must not and cannot have anything to do with cosplay because the price he has to pay is too high. It could cost him the souls of his loved ones and friends who will surely be stumbled. Every true believer carries with him the wonderful Name of Christ. By his life, sinners are to see Christ. But when he commits sin, like cross-dressing, he shames the Name of Christ. He stumbles sinners into thinking that sin is fun and that God is like the idols of the world. Jesus says, *"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."* (Matthew 5:16) Will you let others see Christ in you and strive to let the light of Christ shine forth from your life? I pray so. Amen.