

## **The Clothes Make "The Man"**

Tiger Woods may pick his own clubs but he doesn't pick his own clothes. Tiger tells his caddy what he wants. The couturier tells Tiger what to wear. It isn't that the world's greatest golfer lacks fashion sense but that he abounds in dollars and cents. He not only gets the clothes for free, he gets paid to wear them.

Woods, like all top-tier professional golfers, has a contract with a major company, Nike in his case, whose marketing strategists arrange his wardrobe for every tournament over a year in advance. It isn't a one-way street: Tiger won't wear white pants and once eschewed dark green in Oklahoma in August. Sunday's round always means some version of the signature red shirt and black bags. Still, the sponsor likes to mix things up because the sight of Tiger holing out on eighteen wearing a new garment can boost sales by ten percent.

One wonders if middle-aged duffers with forty-two waists, bad comb-overs and forty-five handicaps really believe that a costume change can make them play like the pros. "Dress like Tiger, drive like Tiger" appears to be the fantasy mantra that fuels an industry. If a sports shirt could really slice strokes off your short game this mad dash for haberdashery might make a certain amount of sense. I suspect, however, that new clothes, like new clubs, don't do much to straighten out a sharp slice.

Jesus invites us to ponder our propensity to think that outer-wear can work inner transformation. "Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?" (Mt 6.25) Urban legend tells of a child's Superman costume that comes with the caveat, "Warning: Cape does not enable the wearer to fly." Or drive the green on a par five; whatever.

Maybe we would do well to put less energy into suiting up our bodies and more into using them in ways suitable to the Kingdom of Heaven. Tiger's fashionistas think months in advance to be sure he dresses well. Jesus urges us to project farther out – clean to eternity, in fact. He admonishes the runway starlets of Laodicia to stock up on "white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear" (Rev 3.18). Knowing that my closet is stocked for eternity frees me from preoccupation over keeping up with the latest trends.

Fore!

Doug