

Impressive Beauty

By Jennifer Brown

Don't be concerned about the outward beauty of fancy hairstyles, expensive jewelry, or beautiful clothes. You should clothe yourselves instead with the beauty that comes from within, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is so precious to God.

1 Peter 3:3-4

In preparing for a recent talk, I accidentally did a computer search of the New Testament for the word "why." I can't remember what I was searching for, but I only expected a few results, not the list of 152 passages that popped up. As I was leaving that screen to do the correct search, the entry at the top of the list caught my eye. It was a question from Jesus, "Why do you worry about clothes?"

He asked that question during the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus was teaching the people and helping them learn to think more like God. When He was teaching them not to worry, He asked them, "Why do you worry about clothes?" (Matthew 6:28)

Worry is at the heart of this passage, not clothes. But when Jesus taught about God's provision, He spoke about being dressed in splendor and clothed in beauty. He was encouraging us to trust in who God created us to be – to trust that being ourselves is what makes us beautiful.

So why do we worry about clothes? Why do we spend so much time thinking about what we are going to wear and how we look? Why does our outward appearance mean so much to us?

Because we want to impress people. We want them to think highly of us. We want to project a certain image.

To an extent, there is nothing wrong with wanting to look good. But when we are more concerned about what people think of us, rather than what God thinks of us, we have a problem.

God tells us that our outside is **not** what matters; "the Lord does NOT look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance but the Lord looks at the heart." (1 Samuel 16) But I wonder... when you go somewhere, what do you spend more time on: preparing your looks to impress people, or preparing your heart to impress God?

Too many of us are caught in this trap. We are so concerned with our outward appearance and fitting in and finding our place in this world that we forget to find our place with God. We are more worried about what people think than about what God thinks. Paul addressed this when he asked, "Am I now trying to win the approval of men, or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ." (Galatians 1:10)

God tells us, "Don't be concerned about the outward beauty of fancy hairstyles, expensive jewelry, or beautiful clothes. You should clothe yourselves instead with the beauty that comes from within, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is so precious to God." (1 Peter 3:3-4)

I have to think about that verse every Sunday morning when I am getting ready for church. As I'm putting on my make-up, doing my hair, and getting myself together so I look good on the outside, I have to stop and ask myself, "Have I really prepared my heart?" It is always more

important to get ready for God and please Him than it is to get ready for humans and please them.

Consider for a moment:

- Do you spend more time trying to win the approval of men and women, or of God?
- Do you dedicate more time to your appearance or your prayer and Bible?
- In what ways have you lost your ability to be who God created you to be because you are more focused on your outward appearance than on your inner beauty?
- How do you need to change your “beauty” routine to develop a the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is so precious to God?

Praying for all of us to be gorgeous in God’s sight,
Jennifer

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