

Captivating

By John and Stasi Eldredge

Thomas Nelson Publishing 2005, 2010

Book Review by Cindy Buntin

If you only have time to read one book this year, *Captivating* would be my recommendation. The language in this book is beautiful. Flowing like poetry, even though it is not written in a poetic style, it is a book about the heart of women and the fulfillment of our deepest desires.

The husband and wife co-authors take the reader back to the beginning of creation, after God created Adam. God said something was missing, something was not good. That something was Eve. Woman. Femininity. Man was not complete until God created Eve. They explain that “God endows Woman with certain qualities that are essential to relationships, qualities that speak of God. Tender and inviting, intimate and alluring, fiercely devoted.”

Captivating addresses every woman’s deepest question, *Am I lovely?* And the answer is absolutely yes! It shows us how we can live the life God intended for us to live, a life of beauty, fulfilling our purpose as women.

John and Stasi talk about what happened to Woman after the curse. “Woman is cursed with loneliness (relational heartache), with the urge to control (especially her man), and with dominance of men (which is not how things were meant to be.)” They share examples of women’s painful life experiences, and show that because of their pain, women make vows to themselves (either spoken or unspoken) that are very damaging, and most often shut down the heart.

The authors put women in one of three categories: a dominating woman, a desolate woman, or an arousing woman. They describe “the first two as what happens to Eve as a result of the Fall. The third is a woman whose femininity is being restored by God and who offers it to others.”

The book points out that woman’s greatest enemy is Satan. “Satan fell because of His beauty. Now his heart for revenge is to assault beauty.” Satan hates Eve because she is beautiful and he cannot be. If Satan can get women to not feel beautiful, he has won a victory.

The Eldredge’s purpose for writing the book is to “let you know that the healing of your feminine heart is available, and to help you find that healing. To help you find the restoration which we long for and which is central to Jesus’ mission.”

Captivating reads like a beautiful love story. Jesus, the Savior of the wounded heart, woos His love (that’s you) and invites her into a relationship with Him. Once she accepts His invitation, He rescues her from the enemy (Satan) and frees her to live her life the

way He intended for her to live it. He fills her lonely heart with a contentment only He can fill.

It sounds like a fairy tale. And don't we all love fairy tales with their "happily ever after" endings? This story does end with a "happily ever after" but it requires a willingness to be changed by God. "To possess true beauty, we must be willing to suffer." Some of us will have to come out of the shells we have hidden ourselves in and risk being hurt again. Some will have to conquer fear. Some will have to forgive.

My favorite quote from the book is "You are a woman. An image bearer of God. The Crown of Creation. You were chosen before time and space, and you are wholly and dearly loved. You are sought after, pursued, romanced, the passionate desire of your Fiance, Jesus. You are dangerous in your beauty and your life-giving power. And you are needed."

This book will show you how much you are loved and desired by your bridegroom, Christ. Let Him romance you and show you how beautiful you are to Him. Let Him woo you and unveil the beauty that is within you.