

Feminine Beauty

Mother's Day, 2021

“At the core of who we are, we are gendered. Our soul's center is alive with either masculinity or femininity. Our uniquely gendered style of relating is clearly visible in our interactions when it reflects something wonderful about the relational nature of our God.” -Larry Crabb

DAY 1: What is beauty? The beauty of the Lord.

1. The bible speaks of inner, feminine beauty. Where does beauty originate?

Psalm 27:4 One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to inquire in his temple.

2. When you think about the “beauty” of the Lord, what comes to your mind?

3. The beauty of the Lord is seen in creation.

PSALM 8:1 O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory in the heavens. ² Through the praise of children and infants you have established a stronghold against your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger.

³ When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, ⁴ what is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them? ^u ⁵ You have made them a little lower than the angels ^v and crowned them with glory and honor.

4. The beauty of the Lord is seen in His purposes to make everything beautiful.

Eccl. 3:11 He has made everything beautiful in its time.

5. His character is beautiful.

Isaiah 33:17 Your eyes will see the king in His beauty and view a land that stretches afar.

6. The greatest beauty of the Lord is seen at the cross. It is the glory of grace, where the innocent Jesus takes the sin of guilty man upon Himself for the sake of relationship with sinful man.

John 12:32 “And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.”

7. What is the height of God's beauty? Grace. God's Riches at Christ's Expense. Grace provides the blessing of looking bad in the presence of perfect goodness, and still being wanted!

8. What strikes you from today's devotional?

DAY 2: The invitational love of Jesus

Matthew 11:28 "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

1. Jesus is speaking to people who are "weary" and "burdened." The words speak of people who are tired, worn, discouraged, stressed, and trudging along. Their present experience of life is hard and wearing on them.

2. "Come to me" is an invitation.

3. For people who take Jesus up on His invitation, He promises to give them "rest." He is not talking about physical rest. He is talking about a rest in the heart, a rest of the soul. For those who are "weary" and "burdened" what does rest look like? What do you think He mean by rest?

4. Relational rest occurs in you when someone relates to who:

- Understands your struggles,
- Is not trying to fix your struggles,
- Allows you to speak of your struggles in a judgment-free atmosphere,
- Still enjoys you and your company in spite of your struggles, and
- Is more committed to you after hearing of your struggles.

5. What comes to your mind from this list?

6. Women are uniquely gendered to reflect this beauty of the Lord, this "rest." Women are alive with feminine beauty when they relate to burdened people like that.

7. People are drawn to physical beauty in nature and in an art museum. More importantly, they are drawn to people who exhibit the invitational love of Jesus.

8. The feminine gender is fully equipped to exhibit that kind of beauty when *they are relating in an other-centered way in the moment*. People like to be in your presence. They sense you enjoy their company, and are not trying to fix them or display something about yourself.

9. What strikes you from today's devotional?

DAY 3: Inner beauty, part 1: a gentle and quiet spirit

1 Peter 3:3 Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as elaborate hairstyles and the wearing of gold jewelry or fine clothes.

*1 Peter 3:4 Rather, it should be that of **your inner self**, the **unfading beauty** of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight.*

1. What observations does Peter make about inner beauty?

2. Whereas physical beauty loses its luster with time, time works in the opposite direction with inner beauty. As godly character is shaped and seen, inner beauty grows in luster!

3. A gentle spirit:

a. Jesus described Himself as gentle.

b. The Greek word is "praus" and means humble, meek, or gentle. The idea is not someone who is weak. Instead it is someone without an inflated sense of one's importance. This is not just true generically, but especially specifically. In the moment, in relationship with a "praus" person you sense they are more interested in you than they are interested in themselves.

c. They are treating you with gentleness instead of relating with you to come through for them. They are not trying to fix you, or pressure you to come through for them. They are thinking of the impact they are having on you, and should want to have.

4. A quiet spirit:

a. Peter is not talking about someone who is an introvert, who doesn't say much. He is talking about a character quality, a spirit that emanates from a woman that is seen as beautiful.

b. The Greek word is "hesuchios" has imagery which means "to keep your seat." It can be translated as undisturbed, unmoved, still or peaceable.

c. The root idea is to be calm in a crisis.

d. Things don't have to be the way you want them.

e. Proverbs 21:19 describes the opposite of a quiet spirit. The first is a quarrelsome wife, someone with whom it feels like she's arguing with you even when you agree on something. The second is a contentious wife. The idea is someone who is fretful, who rarely seems satisfied. You sense that whatever you do for her it's not going to be good enough.

5. What strikes you from today's devotional?

DAY 4: Inner beauty, part 2. What is submission?

1 Peter 3:5 For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to adorn themselves. They submitted themselves to their own husbands...

1. This is probably one of the most misunderstood verses in the bible. (1) People naturally think of the worst of scenarios, a dominant man towering over a “meek” and weak woman. (2) Our culture is more aware of abuse of women than ever before. This is obviously a good thing. (3) Our culture badly misunderstands what submission is. (4) Submission to another person makes little sense without the first part of verse 5, putting your hope in God and not man.

2. “...*holy women of the past **who put their hope in God**...*”

a. To “put your hope in God” means that you are trusting God to sovereignly work in your life, for your good no matter how life is treating you. You are expecting that only God can meet the deepest parts of your soul—to be loved, accepted, understood, appreciated, comforted and valued in ways that no husband or anyone else can do.

b. You are not expecting for a husband or anyone else to do for your heart and soul what only God can do.

3. Submission speaks to living in our secular **roles** and our God-given **roles** in life. Submission is **not** a statement of one’s **importance** or **value**.

a. In the business world it is expected that an employee will “submit” to the boss. This means that the boss gets to lead and expects you to follow instructions, to carry out the work. It does **not** mean the employee is **less important** than the boss. It is a statement of role.

b. In the military world it is expected that the enlisted man will follow orders. But this is not true just for the privates! All the way up military chain of command, everyone must follow orders right up to the Commander in Chief. It does **not** mean the privates are **less important** than generals. It is a statement of role.

c. In the relational world we also operate out of roles. If you volunteer at your child’s school, you make a contribution to the teacher, the class or school in line with the values of the school or teacher in mind. At home, it is expected that the child will operate within the values of home and parents. In marriage, both husband and wife are to submit to one another (Eph. 5:21), but a wife’s unique role also means that she is to submit to her husband.

d. Submission means “**to arrange under**.” It means to be **willing to adapt** yourself to the leader. Submission does **not** mean you don’t have an opinion, you can’t say something, you can’t offer an opinion. Submission is an *attitude*! What the leader senses is that you are on his or her team. You are united together. You desire the boss’ success, the company’s success, the family’s success, the church’s success, etc.

e. Someone with that *attitude* will find a growing freedom to offer differing opinions, speak up, raise a question, etc.

4. Peter tells us that submission comes across as someone beautiful. People are drawn. People want to hear what you have to say.

5. What strikes you from today’s devotional?

DAY 5: Beauty speaks

*Prov. 11:22 Like a gold ring in a pig's mouth is a beautiful woman without **discretion**.*

1. Inner beauty is an unspoken language to invisible hearts. It is God's silent messenger. Beauty has a power to affect others in the highest of ways.

- **Beauty says, "All Will Be Well."**

Proverbs 31:25 She is clothed with strength and dignity; she can laugh at the days to come.

Proverbs 31:26 She speaks with wisdom, and faithful instruction is on her tongue.

2. A woman who is rarely satisfied, no matter her physical beauty sends a message that "things will not be well."

- **Beauty Invites.**

3. You're drawn to relationship; you're captivated, pulled in. This invite tells you. "You are valued." This is what it's like to be with a woman who radiates a beauty of the heart. She is enjoyable to be with.

- **Beauty Comforts.**

4. Beauty is medicine for a wounded heart. Why else do we send flowers to people who are grieving? The color, the aroma, the texture of beauty is a healing balm to a hurting heart.

- **Beauty Inspires.**

5. Fourteen years ago our church lost Judy, one of our own to cancer. When I visited her in the hospital it was always inspiring. It was inspiring to watch her talk to nurses, maids, doctors, John, her sisters. You sensed her joy in her voice though she was toe-to-toe with cancer, there was NEVER a time when I didn't walk out of that hospital room more determined to be a better man. She radiated inner beauty to everyone she met.

- **Beauty is Transcendent.**

6. Beauty tells us there is more to life than what we see. What happens in you when you gaze at a beautiful sunset? Beauty paints a vision in our heart—of how life will one day be and what the life to come will be like!

7. Beauty says, "Glory is calling you." Beauty draws us to the One who made the beauty.

There is a radiance hidden in the feminine heart that the world desperately needs to see.

Proverbs 31:30 Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.

8. What strikes you from today's devotional?