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## **REAL BEAUTY**

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A recent article in the news was entitled "The Science of Beauty." It was interesting that the four factors that were necessary for beauty were physical. If you eat right, avoid stress, are physically fit, and sleep well you will be beautiful. They used a college coed as an example and had "experts" on the various subjects criticize what she was doing. The advice was, to be sure, that she stick to the nutritional pyramid and use olive oil in her salad dressing, to avoid stress she must manage her feelings when she was with people she did not like. She must walk 20 unbroken minutes a day, and sleep six or more hours. This would keep her beautiful.

Their advice was adequate in some respects and grossly inadequate in others. The young lady whose photos were part of the article had a fair degree of natural beauty. She is a redhead, tall and lithe with rather clean cut features. Being a college student we can assume that she is intelligent. But do these attributes make her beautiful? The article does not really address the issue. It assumes that everyone is beautiful or can be beautiful if the advice offered in the article is followed. Even so, I know that there is more to beauty than the physical attributes mentioned in the article. It was interesting that they quoted the old adage that "beauty is as beauty does," and also quoted another that "beauty is only skin deep." They addressed the skin deep adage, but did not address the fact that beauty does. Does what? From the article one got the idea that it was to be able to do assume various physical postures, since the lady was shown in three different postures. It is difficult to describe them, but I would say that most women I know could not contort their bodies to assume such positions.

What then constitutes real beauty? The Bible is fairly clear on the subject. In 1 Peter 3:3,4 (NIV) Peter said to wives that, "*Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and*

*fine clothes. Instead, 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."* I have to say that having spent over fifty years as a psychiatrist I have found that the beautiful women that I have known were women who had a gentle and quiet spirit. That gentleness and quietness came out of the love that lived within them, and it is the love that they radiate that really makes them beautiful. It is certainly not their outward adornment or their physical beauty that makes them attractive or beautiful; it is their inner being. All one has to do is remember a former religious TV person who was about as outwardly adorned as anyone could be and still she was not beautiful. She did have a pretty face and a nice figure, but in my observations she did not have inner beauty. She did not have a gentle and quiet spirit and that ruined everything.

It is also true that if we look at the lives of many movie stars today we find that they also do not have an inner beauty even though they may be quite physically attractive. I have personally met several stage and screen stars socially in my day and they did not possess inner beauty even though they were considered physically beautiful.

It is sad that our society has placed such a premium on physical appearance. One often sees girls who are quite cute as small children and grow up to be very attractive teenagers and young adults. If their parents have trained them to trade on their good looks it often stunts their personality and they never develop inner beauty. I knew of girl who was very beautiful. Her mother was obsessed with entering her in beauty contests, and it was her goal to see her daughter in the Miss America Pageant. She made it to the finals of her state contest but could go no further. Fortunately, there were ameliorating circumstances in her life and she did develop an inner beauty. After her mother could push her no further she married and has a successful marriage and a career in her community.

Other evidence of our obsession with outward appearance is the tremendous number of commercials on TV advertising exercise machines that give you

beautiful “abs,” buns, pectorals etc. It is true that we are a society that desperately needs exercise not for beauty but to get rid of the fat that pads our bodies. The people in the commercials are all young well proportioned physical specimens that are the exceptions and not the rule in our society. I worked out for 15 years and except for the employees of the wellness center no one else had a beautiful body. There were, though, many who were still beautiful in spite of their bodies.

How does one develop and inner beauty? The answer is both men and women can develop it if they are affirmed when they are children and are taught that it is their character and personality that make them really beautiful. To be reared in loving home where emotional control is taught, where proper values are taught and lived out in the family, where beauty is considered an asset, but not the most important asset will result in a person developing inner beauty. Nevertheless, the beauty will never be complete unless the person has a personal relationship with the living God. It is only when rivers of living water (love) flow from the person that they can have the most attractive of all characteristics that make them beautiful.

Men and women are beautiful if they radiate the love of God. It really does not matter what they look like physically, for their love makes them beautiful. Years ago I had a colleague who was to say the least physically unattractive. He did not date much, but he really was a loving person and soon found himself attracted to a woman who also was not attractive. She also was loving. In time they fell in love and married. Some people commented that they did not see what they saw in one another, but I could. They both had loving personalities. In time they had three daughters who turned out to be three of the most beautiful women you have ever seen. I never met them, but I am sure that they too had inner beauty.

Can men have inner beauty? The answer is yes. I have three friends who have inner beauty. I cannot say that they all have quiet spirits. There are times when

two of them can get rowdy, but never maliciously so. Their rowdiness is for the Lord. One of them, now deceased, had a quiet spirit and had a degree of gentleness that is hard to describe. What separated him from other men was his love for his fellow man. He, like Jesus, had great compassion, and was driven to bring comfort and healing to all he met. His relationship with Jesus was most unusual for he walked and talked with Him like no one I had ever known. God watched over him in the most unbelievable of circumstances. He kept him alive when persons around him were being wounded and killed. He used him to bring innumerable people into a personal relationship with the Lord and in spite of hardship and privation he gave him a long and abundant life. Now he has his final reward -- eternal life. I wish I had a gentle and quiet spirit all of the time like he had, but I don't. Some of us are not so blessed, but we can seek to have one and may get it if we inspect ourselves and absolutely surrender those parts of our lives that we have not released to the Lord.