

What makes a woman truly beautiful?

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Found in www.pastornotes.com

We live in a world that tries to convince us that beauty can be squeezed from a tube, poured from a bottle, or found in the latest diet or fashion... but no matter how the outer layers look, no matter the age or weight we may be, the Bible says beauty is not found in exterior applications, but in interior transformation.

Over the decades I have had the privilege of knowing and doing life with many wonderful godly women. They have been very different in personality, in age, race and culture, but they have all borne the fruit of a life set apart for God.

Yet there have been some distinctives from the ordinary that I have noticed in them... I notice that they have been with Jesus, for they bear his 'mark'.

In **Acts 4:13** we read, "When they saw the boldness of Peter and John and perceived that they were unlearned, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that they had been with Jesus."

This was not a self improvement programme the disciples had embarked on, but they were no longer those men who had deserted Jesus prior to the crucifixion. The transformation that had occurred with the coming of the Holy Spirit and His work of empowerment into the lives of the disciples, had been so radical that there came a distinctive change that noticeably set them apart from others.

God is looking for such women, not with beauty that draws others to herself, but those whose attractiveness draws them to Jesus, and His loveliness.

I have chosen three things I have observed over the years that have set these women apart.

1. Firstly she is a well digger. (This is expressed in her relationship with Christ.)

Psalm 1:1-3 "Blessed is the one who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, or stands in the way that sinners take, or sits in the seat of mockers, **but whose delight is in the law of the LORD, and who meditates on his law day and night.** That person is like a tree planted by rivers of water, which brings forth its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither— whatever they do prospers."

Psalm 36:9 *“For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light.”*

John 7:37 *“On the last great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, “If anyone is thirsty come to Me and drink. Whoever believes in Me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow out from within them.’ Jesus was meaning the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus had not yet been glorified.”*

In the OT the use of the word for ‘well’ and ‘spring’ is used interchangeably. When we think of a well we think of finding water at the level of the water table. Here it is stagnant because there is no force beneath it, no movement, no freshness. It is just there to be accessed by human effort and strength.

In **John 4:4-15** we see that the woman conversing with Jesus has only her own natural strength to draw water up from the well, and only in a finite vessel that she herself has been able to provide. It would surely meet her needs for that one day, but she would have to repeat the process all over again and again. Perhaps this is akin to being ‘religious’,

But Jesus speaks to her of ‘rivers of living water’ that *He* will provide - unlimited, fresh, satisfying rivers, able to meet the needs of both the believer and others too.

The words spoken by Jesus in **John 7:37-39** **were spoken at the moment** of the water pouring ceremony performed at the Feast of Tabernacles, where Jesus promises this life of the Spirit to all those who drink from the waters that He will provide.

Digging wells takes time, that is our part, yes it takes commitment of priorities, it takes sacrifice, yet what sacrifice can ever be too much,? **For the prize is always infinitely greater than the price!** The promise to fill us with the ‘living’ waters is our faithful God’s part, and He never fails to provide.

A woman who digs her wells to find those springs of living water,- the life of the Spirit; whose life is centred in the Word, whose heart has learned to desire nothing but that which His heart desires, whose faith has been refined in the fire of life’s deep challenges,

This is a woman who knows deep intimacy with Christ having laid down ‘other things’ which would rob her of the greatest prize, God Himself.

This is the woman that reflects the beauty of Jesus.

Psalm 1:1-3; 19:14; 26:1-8; 27:1-14; 42:1-7; 51:10; 73:26; 119: 139:23-24; Isaiah 12; Jeremiah 2:13;

2 Secondly she is a Table-Setter (This is her ministry within the Body)

2Tim 4:2, *be prepared in season and out of season; correct and reprove, rebuke and encourage—with constant patience and careful instruction from God’s Word.*

Correct, = *replace bad ideas with good ones* .This woman takes time with others to grow their faith. She listens - really listens, and prayerfully discerns the need of the heart without judgement. She is gentle and keeps in mind the goal is not to change someone but to speak God’s love and encouragement to see something another way.

Rebuke, = *speak the truth in love. We sometimes like to speak the truth, but God’s heart is to bring change and conviction, not condemnation, so she speaks the truth with a commitment to love the other person, and this brings Life, not death from her lips.*

Encourage. = “to give courage to... to strengthen...”

I have many ‘foodie’ friends, women who just love to produce wonderful tasty dishes to serve to family and those who gather at her table, and when I visit with them I go excitedly with the full anticipation that I will enjoy a time that nourishes all my senses, I know I will delight in the aromas coming through the door as I arrive, the visual wonders that will make my heart sing and my taste buds will begin to work overtime, and when we sit to enjoy coffee and sample the labour of love she has produced I know I will be satisfied.

In the same way, there are women in my life who provide such spiritual food. When I spend time with them I know I will hear rich delights from God’s Word, I will taste the good things of God as she shares of the One she loves, and it increases my appetite for more of Jesus. Her words challenge and inspire me to press in and press on. She feeds my spirit, she challenges complacency, urges me on to dig into the Word and immerse myself in the springs of the Spirit’s love.

She invests her life in others, and the riches in Christ she has found are set before me to encourage and inspire.

This is not a woman who puffs up, but one who truly builds up. Idle chatter and gossip are not forthcoming from her lips, neither do I hear desire for temporal things at the expense of the eternal. For her, the treasure is laid up in heaven and it is there she places her hope.

This is a truly beautiful woman!

Ecc 12:11; Prov 15:1-4; 16:24 17:17 27:6 31:26; 2 Corinthians 1:3-7;

3. Thirdly she is a Reservoir of life and Hope (This is her ministry to the world)

John 1:14 *The Word became flesh and He dwelt among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of God's only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

Ephesians 4:29,*living as the children of light (5:8)... 'Do not let any unwholesome words come out of your mouths, but only that which builds others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who hear.'*

1 Peter 3:15 ...*'But in your hearts glorify Christ as Lord. And be ready always to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. And do this with the gentleness of God's Spirit and with respect.'*

A beautiful woman is like **a thermostat**. She sets the moral temperature amongst the unbelieving world as much as she is able. She is not influenced to change her words or her behaviour. She does not change who she is, and what she believes, or indeed Who she loves, according to the people she is with. She is not ashamed of the gospel because she knows it to be the power of God for the salvation of all who believe. Romans 1:16.

She is **full of both grace and truth**, and looks for opportunities to speak blessing, to be a source of life and hope for those without it. Christ's compassion means she understands that those that walk in darkness are blind to moral right and wrong and are without a spiritual GPS. a (God Positioning System!)

She is a **safe place for the lost**. She is loyal, keeps confidences and is non- judgemental while at the same time recognising that both grace and truth must go together for there is no freedom without righteousness. This takes wisdom.

For so long we have lived in NZ in the culture with relative ease. But the day has come when to be a 'religious' Christian is no longer tolerated or wanted. Man demands, as the cultures in the OT did, to be like the peoples around them. They demand the freedom to live without restriction and yet in doing so become enslaved to their insatiable self desires.

And yet we are commanded to be salt and light in a lost and dying world. Our calling is to bring glory and praise and honour to His name before all else, and in doing so testify to men and women whose hearts are searching for an answer to emptiness and loneliness in their lives.

My deep prayer is that God will find us to be faithful women who bear His image and become as the disciples in the early church, ‘full of the Holy Spirit’ that others may notice that we have ‘been with Jesus’ and therefore be drawn to Him

Matthew 5:13-16; Romans 1:16; 2 Timothy 1:2-12

(Abridged from a message for women who desire to be beautiful!)

Outline:

Question: What makes a Woman Beautiful?

- 1- *She is a well digger*
- 2- *She is a table setter*
- 3- *She is a reservoir of life and hope*