

1 Peter 3 (4) – God is Attracted to Godliness

They say that beauty is in the eyes of the beholder. And this is true. Of course, lots of people are physically attractive. But the people you love have a beauty that goes beyond mere physical attractiveness. They may or may not be beautiful to others, but they are beautiful to you.

I am sure you know this. And it won't surprise you to know that I truly feel like my grandchildren are the most beautiful in the world. But my eyes see their most precious beauty because they are mine. And our family is doing our best to make sure that they grow in the kind of beauty that God says is most important, their character. We teach them about God. We try to model godliness. We make mistakes like anyone else. But our goal is to set an example and encourage them to be God's kind of beautiful.

Everyone has felt the power of being attracted to someone. And people want to be attractive to someone. Or everyone. But sometimes, someone we were once attracted to is no longer as attractive to us. Or someone who was once attracted to us no longer is. It's a part of life. But have you ever wished there was some way that a certain someone would always look attractive to you? Or that you would always look attractive to that certain someone?

What if I told you that this can be a reality for you? Even if you're not as beautiful as you used to be? Even if someone else isn't as beautiful as they used to be? Even when you get old? Well, if you learn how to really see, as God sees, then you can find that person. What's more, you can *become* that person. And you can help your partner become that person. God wants all of that for you. And God's word can help you to make this happen. No matter how long you've done it wrong, you can make it right.

We all know that physical beauty changes over time. And yet, I still see my wife as physically beautiful. Even more than I did before. Am I just lying, or is there something else going on? Well, there is something going on beyond all the physical things. And it affects how I see the physical things. As we

both get older, my wife gets even more beautiful to me, because I see in her more of what God calls beautiful in his eyes. This is powerful.

If you will learn how to see this, and how to *be* this, you will find that it will help your eyes from looking elsewhere. And it will help you see what you need to see about yourself. It will also help your partner to see beauty as God sees it. It will be a battle, and I'm still in it. But it is worth it! And the better I see, the more important this is to me. And everyone else. If everyone really got a hold of this, it would change the world, and it would change history. But if just you get hold of this, it will change your world, and your history.

So, what does God say is beautiful to him? 1 Peter 3:4 tells you the answer – *but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious.*

The Apostle Peter is speaking to wives here. And he is talking about being a submissive partner, as he says in vs.5 – *For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their own husbands.* In vs.2, Peter says it's about *respectful and pure conduct*. Godly women have their power under control, rather than being someone who is combative, loud, and obnoxious. And Peter says that godly women are more focused on character than clothes. They are more concerned with attitude than appearance. Godly character; that is what will speak the truth of Christ to a non-Christian partner. This is what God says is truly beautiful in his eyes.

However, there is more here than just advice for married women. What Peter says here about godly character has application to husbands also. And to people who are not yet married, both men and women. And to people who are looking at what God says they should be looking for in a marriage partner. When Peter mentions *a gentle and quiet spirit*, he is talking about your disposition, your attitude. He is saying that godly people are gentle and peaceful because they trust God. Gentleness and peace are both a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). And God says that a gentle and peaceful character is beautiful to him. That goes for both men and women.

So, this is for people who are already married, and people who are not married, and people who don't even know if they ever will be married. And even for people who aren't looking to be married, but who are looking to see beauty as God sees it, because they want to be the right kind of beautiful.

To show you what God sees as beautiful, Peter offers a contrast. In vs.3, he says – *Do not let your adorning be external – the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear.* This is not saying that you aren't allowed to braid your hair or wear gold jewelry. Otherwise, it would mean that you can't wear clothes, either! No, Peter isn't saying that. The Bible isn't teaching that. This is saying that when it comes to true beauty, as God sees it, external things aren't as important as internal things.

Those external things will be noticed by everyone, right away. And it's not necessarily wrong for you to have them, to make yourself up, and look nice, as long as it doesn't become your main focus. It isn't a sin to be pretty. It isn't a sin to dress up. But people are most often focused on the externals. So, lots of people will appreciate them, and be attracted by them. But those inner things are not as obvious. Peter says they come from *the hidden person of the heart*. Less people will notice them, because less people are looking for them. And less people have eyes that can truly see them. But people who can *see* this are people who can *be* this. The truly beautiful, in God's eyes, are attracted to those who are truly beautiful, in God's eyes. God is attracted to godliness. God's kind of beautiful has to do with your character.

Learning what Peter is saying here will help you be the right person, find the right person, and spot the wrong person. You don't have to worry about God putting you with someone you think is ugly. God will help you be attracted to someone who fits God's description of beautiful. Put God's standard first. And you'll find your eyes can see what you couldn't see before. And you will be physically attracted to someone who is God's kind of beautiful. Stop being foolish. Put your faith in God's plan. If you do this God's way, you'll find yourself attracted to the right people, and the right people will be attracted to you, and you'll know the difference. It will work.

There are lots of physically beautiful people out there. But even those especially beautiful people will have their looks begin to fade as they age. Oh, how people fight aging, and I get it. People want to be as good as they can be, for as long as they can be. But what if God told you there was a better way? What if God says that you can remain beautiful, and even become more beautiful as you age? And what if your partner can find you even more attractive than you were before? Well, it's true. If you don't believe that, you need to read vs.4 again. And have faith in God's word.

Oh, that we would see things as God sees them, so that we would do things as God would do them. Oh, that we would have faith in his word about what is really beautiful, and how it can make someone more attractive as they get older. We ask, God who do you want me to marry? Well, it starts right here. You have a lot of liberty in choosing your partner. But if you want God's opinion on where to start looking, here it is. Get your eyes on God's prize.

The Greek word translated as "adorning" in vs.3 is "kosmos", which you've probably heard as "cosmos". It is also translated as "world". Like John 3:16 – *For God so loved the world (kosmos), that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. Amen.* And the point I'm making is don't let your world be all about externals. Peter says that outer beauty is not as important as true, godly beauty. True beauty from the inside, flowing on the outside, this is what will magnify you in the eyes of those who can truly see beauty as God sees it.

What God says is *imperishable beauty* is more beautiful than mere "hotness". Someone's hotness will melt away if it is just on the outside. And maybe you should think about this: the hotter something is the more meltdowns you'll have. What good is a hottie when they're just a hot mess?

So, what does *a gentle and quiet spirit* mean? It means someone who is not coarse and loud. It means someone who is humble and peaceful. Gentleness doesn't mean acting weak. It means your strength is under control. Quiet

doesn't mean you never speak up. It means you know the role of submission as God sees it. You are a supportive person, not an obnoxious person.

A "hottie" who is abrasive and aggressive is not attractive to someone who is looking for what God says is beautiful. And perhaps that "hottie" won't be looking for inner qualities as much as a match for themselves in terms of externals, such as physical looks, money, fame, or whatever. It is not wrong to be good looking, or rich, or influential. But even if you are, the wrong person may miss the real you. Why would I want someone who can't see the real me? I'm more than my outside, and that's the part that's going to last and that's the part that God says holds my real beauty. And that's the part that going to make me look beautiful to you no matter what else happens to me. That is, if you can see beauty as God sees it. Otherwise, you're not the right person for me, and I'm not the right person for you.

Men and women, if you want to be more like God, then listen to what he says is beautiful and precious in his sight. Go for what you find beautiful, yes, of course. But allow God to define what is beautiful to you, yes, of course. Grow in that, and it will yield a lifelong benefit that mere sight cannot give. This is God's insight into beauty that will last.

The *hidden person of the heart* means the inner life. But it comes out in how a person lives their life, how they act, and react, and relate to other people. Someone with eyes to see as God sees will see that *gentle and quiet spirit*, that humble demeanor, that peaceful attitude, as a beautiful adorning, and see you having an *imperishable beauty* that God sees as *precious*. Hotness will melt away. But what God calls beautiful is imperishable. In other words, it will not melt away, but it will burn like no other fire can.

Let's apply this. If you're not married, then put this into practice now. Find the right fire in the first place. Ask the Lord to help you see attractiveness as he sees attractiveness. And then start the fire. If you are not married, you can make yourself attractive to the right person. How? By paying attention to what God says the right person is, and becoming one yourself.

If you are already married, this verse gives you a prescription to help you focus on your inner person and not simply on the outer person. And focusing on your spouse's inner person will help you show them that they are not just a body, they are a soul. If you are married, get yourself focused on becoming what you want your spouse to be.

You attract the right person by becoming the right person. And you stay attractive by staying focused on what God says is attractive. And you help someone become more attractive when you model attractiveness. You can be beautiful all the days of your life. Get your eyes on God's prize.

The right kind of beauty to want to be and to want to have as your spouse is the kind that God says is most beautiful. And that most beautiful person was Jesus. But did you know that Jesus wasn't physically beautiful? Isaiah 53:2 says that Jesus *had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him*. Isaiah 53:3 says – *He was despised and rejected by men...and we esteemed him not*. Jesus wasn't physically beautiful, but he was morally and spiritually beautiful. He was absolutely perfect, and the only one who ever really was or could be. That's the point.

It isn't about looking for someone who isn't attractive to you. It is about tuning your eyes to the spiritual and not only the physical. And the spiritual will affect the physical in your eyes if you are truly seeing right, as God sees things. Think about it: What kind of beautiful was Jesus? That's the kind of beauty you want to be, and the kind of beauty you want to be with. A kind of person who has got their power under control. A person who loves and serves others. A person who will be a team player. A person who will sacrifice for the sake of your good and God's glory. A person like Jesus.

God is attracted to godliness. That's God's kind of beauty. The right kind of beauty. The everlasting kind of beauty. The beauty you can be, and the beauty you can see. Start doing this God's way. You don't have to sacrifice looks on the altar of character. If you give God your heart in this area, he will change your heart to see as he sees. It will glorify God, and you will like it.