

Precious Beauty

May 13, 2012

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1 Peter 3.1-6

Primary Point of vs 1 to 6 is Submission of Wives to Husbands

- ❖ Peter first points out citizens submission to government (1 Pet 2.13)
- ❖ Next he points out a servant's submission to his master (1 Pet 2.18)
 - ✧ This direction applies equally to us present-day employees (read)
- ❖ Then comes our text where wives are subjects to husbands (1 Pet 3.1)
- ❖ A great message can be taught / learned from this perspective
 - ✧ But there is another ~ more profound lesson to be learned from this text
 - ✧ Peter alludes to it as the best motivator for women
 - ◇ It's better than that it may benefit her marriage . . .
 - ◇ Or that her unbelieving husband may be saved . . . (v1)
 - ◇ These are good – but not the best reason for her to practice submission
- ❖ I'll also share a surprising observation from this text . . . It surprised me . . .

Let's Begin at verse 3 ~ Adornment is Good

- ❖ III: Memory of high school girl bragging about using soap to wash her hair
 - ✧ My memory is horrible so why do I remember such things . . . ? ☺
- ❖ Throughout history Christians have misunderstood beauty
 - ✧ Sects of Christianity have always shunned beauty, color, adornment
 - ◇ Amish color only in quilts / inserted humility blocks (*destroy beauty*)
 - III: Joel's story of man kicking dent in his new \$50k pickup
 - III: Avoiding door dings by parking far away . . . (silly)
 - III: Psychologist's new car in LAIC parking lot (*door ding – mad*)
 - ◇ Shakers didn't even believe in marital sex (*movement died out quickly*)
 - ✧ *"How can people think this is what God wants?"*
 - ✧ Creation reflects God's personality – His likes and preferences
 - ◇ God adores adornment ~ Listen to:
 - Jesus describing creation – **Mt 6.28–30**
 - God describing priests clothing – **Ex 28.1–3** *"glory and beauty"*
 - Q-Barnes: *"God meant that this should be a beautiful world; that there should be something more than mere utility"*

Xition: Adornment is good ~ yet Peter warns us about it . . .

Three Examples of Outward Adornment Given

- ❖ Adornment is good – but . . .
- ❖ v3 ~ “Do not let your adornment be merely outward”
- ❖ Note the timeless nature of Peter’s examples c/women
 1. Arranging the hair
 2. Wearing gold
 3. Putting on fine apparel
- ❖ Hair – jewelry – clothing
- ❖ Perfumes are probably fourth ~ (*Body piercings and tattoos in top 10*)
- ❖ In Greek and Roman culture women decorated themselves lavishly
 - ❖ They’d weave thin lacy gold sheets into their hair in intricate braids
 - ❖ This practice must have crept into the churches ~ We see it still
- ❖ While this text speaks to women, a similar list could be created for men . . .

Adornment is Good ~ But not the Greatest Good

- ❖ v3 ~ “Do not let your adornment be merely outward”
 - ❖ III: Cars ~ Two extremes of car maintainers / inside & outside
 - ❖ Inside: Motorhead friend in Marines ~ cars never beautiful but ran well
 - ❖ Outside: Fremont – Waxed and polished ~ engine filthy and not maintained
- ❖ You can see the analogy here between cars and people
 - ❖ There is outward beauty and inward beauty
 - ❖ Both are desirable ~ But do you favor one over the other?
 - ❖ When a man looks at a woman does he look beyond outward appearance?
 - ❖ When a woman looks at a man does she look beyond outward appearance?
- ❖ Many marriages fall apart because husband and/or wife are too shallow

The Greater Good

- ❖ Peter now points us to the greater good ~ the inner beauty
- ❖ The wording here is just wonderful . . .
- ❖ v4 ~ “Rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.”
 - ❖ There are 4 phrases / thoughts to be developed from this verse
 - ❖ (*Emphasize each in turn . . .*)

Xition: What is the “hidden person of the heart” . . . ?

v4a ~ The “hidden person of the heart”

- ❖ This is the person being “conformed to the image” of Christ in **Rom 8.29**
- ❖ This is the inner man who “delights in the law of God” in **Rom 7.22**
- ❖ This is the new man of **Col 3** being “renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him”
- ❖ This is the new man of **Eph 4.24** “which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness”
- ❖ This hidden person is who you truly are if you are God’s child . . .
 - ✧ The “hidden person” is one who will one day emerge from the cocoon of this sin-filled world into a glorious sinless heaven, filled with indescribable beauty
 - ✧ Paul says in **1 Cor 2.9** ~ “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.”
 - ✧ This person, hidden inside your heart, rejoices at those words . . .

v4b ~ The “incorruptible beauty”

- ❖ This phrase is obviously a contrast to the adornments just mentioned
 - ✧ hair ~ jewelry ~ clothing
 - ✧ But it also subtly contrasts with that which we ornament – our bodies
- ❖ We are a beauty-obsessed culture ~ yet so few people are truly beautiful
 - ✧ 😊 ~ Among men, there’s me and maybe 3 or 4 other guys in this room . . .
 - ✧ But even the most beautiful people lose it before too long
 - ✧ “**Mirror, mirror on the wall, who’s the fairest one of all . . . ?**”
- ❖ The beauty Peter speaks of is incorruptible ~ and it is hidden
 - ✧ Hear how Isaiah describes God’s Word – **Is 40.6b, 8**
 - ◇ “All flesh is grass, and all its loveliness is like the flower of the field . . . The grass withers, the flower fades, but the Word of our God stands forever.”
- ❖ Our present corruptible flesh fades ~ but the hidden person grows more beautiful
- ❖ “**And what describes the beauty of the hidden person?**”

v4b ~ A “gentle and quiet spirit”

- ❖ “**Do you have a gentle and quiet spirit?**”
- ❖ “**Do you seek to have a gentle and quiet spirit?**” ~ “**Do you want this?**”
 - ✧ These questions apply to women ~ but can apply equally to us men . . .
 - ✧ Isaiah wrote of the Christ in **Isaiah 42.1-4** (**read**)

Xition: . . . continue . . .

v4b ~ The “gentle and quiet spirit” (. . . continued)

- ❖ What does it mean to have a meek and quiet spirit?
 1. A person of meek spirit will not needlessly provoke others
 2. A person of quiet spirit will not be easily provoked by others
- ✧ This describes a deep abiding peace with God ~ “Is this peace in you?”
- ✧ Do you reflect a sense of the deep abiding peace of God in your life?
- ✧ If so, wonderful! If not, why not? Are you seeking it?
- ❖ I don’t think all of us aspire to have gentle and quiet spirits . . .
 - ✧ Many of us are like Popeye: “I am what I am!”
 - ✧ Implied is “you’d better accept it” ~ “Arrive Alive – Don’t make me mad”
 - ✧ But hear an instruction from Matthew Henry: “A true Christian’s chief care lies in the right ordering and commanding of his own spirit. Where the hypocrite’s work ends, there the true Christian’s work begins.”

v4c ~ The “very precious in the sight of God”

- ❖ The word very occurs in the Bible only 280 times
 - ✧ If I wrote the Bible it would occur like 100,000 times
 - ✧ We tend to overuse adjectives . . . But God doesn’t seem to do this . . .
 - ✧ Very occurs in Genesis only 19 times yet each is helpful
 - ◆ **1.31** “Indeed it was very good” ~ **4.5** “Cain was very angry”
 - ✧ Peter says, that a gentle and quiet spirit is very precious to God
 - ✧ This brings us to the surprising observation I mentioned at the start

Surprising Observation

- ❖ **Read vs 1 to 2**
 - ✧ Peter specifically mentions the wives of unbelieving men
 - ✧ The same gentle and quiet spirit may win over unbelieving husbands
 - ✧ !!!: Unbelieving husband brings drunk friends home for wife to feed

“All the ornaments placed on the head and body of the most illustrious female, are, in the sight of God, of no worth; but a meek and quiet spirit are, in his sight, invaluable, proceeding from and leading to himself, being incorruptible, surviving the ruins of the body and the ruins of time, and enduring eternally.” -- Adams quote

May God make us all precious in His sight by granting us gentle and quiet spirits . . .