

### CAPTIVATING 3

Beauty is essential to God. It seems odd and foolish that we should have to remind ourselves of this, but in our earthly lives we have grown quite dull to this truth. The author of the book I'm referring to in these letters goes further. He states that, "Beauty is essence of God." He then points us to the first place we encounter this beauty, that's in nature. Even though it's God's, people often refer to it as "Mother Nature." Again, the undeniable beauty that God endowed her with is the reason. It is akin to womanhood.

Scripture says that the created world is filled with the glory of God. (Isa. 6:3) It shows forth His beauty through its own stunning brilliance. Who among us has not stood in awe of the fresh, wild flowers of spring, or the lush, verdant, magnificence of mid-summer? It is all the workmanship of the artisan of the universe, God Almighty.

As John writes in the book of Revelation he struggles to describe the grandness and perfect beauty of heaven and the abode of the Everlasting One. "The one sitting on the throne was as brilliant as gemstones—jasper and carnelian. And the glow of an emerald circled his throne like a rainbow...In front of the throne was a shiny sea of glass, sparkling like crystal." (Rev. 4:3, 6 NLT)

Notice how he keeps using the word "like", as if to compare what we know with what he has now seen. Many of the saints from ages past have described the highest pleasures of heaven as simply beholding the beauty of God, the "beatific vision." Someday we will see God as He truly is with our own two eyes if we trust in Him through our Savior, Jesus, who is the reason for this Christmas season, of course.

In another book written by our authors they describe...

"The reason a woman wants a beauty to unveil, the reason she asks, Do you delight in me? Is simply that God does as well. God is captivating beauty. As David prays, "One thing I ask of the Lord, this is what I seek...that I may...gaze upon the beauty of the Lord" (Ps. 27:4). Can there be any doubt that God wants to be worshipped? That He wants to be seen, and for us to be captivated by what we see?" (Wild at Heart)

In a very unique, crowning touch to all that He made God gave us the beauty of Eve. He created her with both a beautiful form and a beautiful spirit. As woman expresses the beauty of both parts of her being she reveals who she is. Like with God, it is the very essence of her being. No wonder she longs to reveal her beauty to the people, yes, the world around her. And every woman was made for this purpose. She may not realize it or fully appreciate the depth of her gift, but she is the genuine article of beauty, designed in the center of God's creative act.

A woman is the grace of this world, a man its strength. Femininity and masculinity are entirely separate and equally wonderful endowments of our God to enhance and develop the world we live in. Hans Urs von Balthasar is quoted in "Captivating" saying ... "Every experience of beauty points to [eternity]." Why does beauty so matter in our life experience? Because every vision of beauty turns our hearts back to God. God yearns to be sought after by those who know Him. He tells us, "You will seek me and find me when you seek me with your whole heart" (Jer. 29:13).

Eldridge presents a picture for us of a woman as an "ever-deepening pleasure and awe, something to be enjoyed." And yet she will not let someone know her intimately unless and until they take time to truly know the depths of her soul. Perhaps that is exactly why for the blessed union of husband and wife that foreplay precedes the act of love. It is crucial to her heart, the whispering, the loving and getting to know all about her, before the culmination. Someone put it simply, but well, when they offered this advice to women tempted to give their whole self to the one they love, or think they love, "If there ain't no ring, there ain't no thang!"

"It requires an unveiling. As she is sought after, she reveals more of her beauty. As she unveils her beauty, she draws us to know her more deeply." It is true that each and every woman has a beauty to unveil. And she doesn't have to fabricate it herself by going to a salon or spa, or by having reconstructive surgery on her face or bosom. "No, beauty is an essence that is given to every woman at her creation."

The authors make the point that a woman is not simply prized for her good looks. She is not here simply to complete a man, and therefore if she does not find "Mr Right" that she somehow has missed her destiny. No, in so many ways she is the crown of God's creation. Life is so much better and so much more beautiful for the inclusion of ladies! I marvel at the love and giving in the wonderful women that I know. Without them in our lives the gentleness and inner strength of the family unite, and of our churches, and of society would fail to be endowed with such rich blessings from God.

Someone once said, perhaps in a graduation ceremony speech to the students about to embark on life in the real world, "Aspire to inspire!" I am inspired by the Marys and Marthas that I have come to know in the time of my life experience. I have been immeasurably enriched by their grace and beauty in so many ways.

Let's appreciate women like Jesus our Lord did and still does. And if you happen to be a woman, may God grant you the time and willingness to discover the true beauty that you have been designed to be by Him who created all beauty and life itself, our good and gracious, loving God! And may you live to inspire others with the fadeless

Until next time!

Pastor Randy