

True Beauty

There is nothing wrong with physical beauty, or with enjoying physical beauty. There is everything wrong with basing your evaluation of a person on their physical appearance.

In the book of Esther, the Persian king Ahasuerus banished his queen, Vashti, because she refused to parade her beauty before the officials who served in his royal court. The wine had been flowing freely for a solid week of feasting. That the king would want Vashti to exhibit her beauty before a crowd of intoxicated men says something about his character, don't you think?

Nevertheless he now needed a new queen, and once again physical beauty was a major issue. All the candidates became part of the royal harem and went through a solid year of beauty treatments before being brought to the king. No doubt Esther had other positive qualities, but her physical attractiveness was one key characteristic that influenced Ahasuerus to select her as his new queen.

People have long shown favor toward those with fine appearance. Israel liked the fact that their first king, Saul, was taller than the average Israelite and quite handsome. At first he also had good character too, but later he went astray and the Lord had Samuel anoint David as Saul's successor. Samuel was surprised that David, being Jesse's youngest son, was selected rather than his older brothers. But God told him, "The Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart" (1 Sam. 16:7).

When Jesus walked on this earth, He was nothing special to look at. In fact, Isaiah prophesied that there would be nothing whatever in His physical appearance that would make someone think He was the Messiah.

One of the complaints some of Paul's detractors had was that "his bodily presence is weak" (2 Cor. 10:10). I heard of a preacher one time who was refused

even the opportunity to interview with a congregation because when they looked the photo he submitted with his resume, they said “he wouldn’t grace our pulpit.”

Peter cautioned Christian ladies in 1 Pet. 3:3-4, “Do not let your adornment be merely outward – arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel; 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.”

So again, there is no sin in being physically attractive, nor is it wrong to appreciate that characteristic when we see it. It is wrong, however, to value and respect people based their attractiveness or lack thereof. God looks at the heart, and so should we.