

You Can Be Beautiful

by Sue Crabtree

The world says we can be attractive by having good looks, athletic ability or intellectual superiority. It is true that people tend to look at our outward appearance first. God, however, looks at the heart (1 Samuel 16:7). That is because God made us unique, and He loves us. But there are attributes that can make us beautiful to others as well.

In order to be beautiful, we must first value who we are. Jesus taught that we should love our neighbors as we love ourselves (Matthew 22:37-39). But we cannot do that unless we truly appreciate the people we are. As Christians, we are children of the King. Do we not know that this makes us special and beautiful? Still, loving oneself is difficult for some. I want to suggest three steps that can help us learn to do that.

Develop Self-Esteem

Real self-esteem is built upon faith in God, and that means we recognize we have worth. Where does “worth” come from? It is a free gift from God that cannot be bought, earned, achieved or deserved. Satan will try to convince us at times that we are unworthy and unacceptable and that we will never amount to anything in God’s eyes. But that is wrong.

The children’s song “There’s No One Like Me” is so true. The next time you go to the hospital and look at all the babies in the nursery window, remember that each of them – and each of us – is special and beautiful because we all have worth in God’s sight.

Matthew 10:30 says the hairs of our heads are numbered. How many do you have? God knows. Doesn’t that make you feel special? The parable of the lost sheep emphasizes just how important each of us is.

We must also learn to think good things about ourselves. Proverbs 23:7 says, “As [a man] thinks in his heart, so is he” (NKJV). An unwritten rule in our society tells us that we should never admit to good things about ourselves or accept a compliment. Perhaps we are

afraid that we will get the “big head” or become conceited if we receive a compliment. If someone comments that we look nice, do we reject it by saying “Oh, no” or “This old thing?” or “I bought it at a yard sale”? Let’s set aside this rule and recognize that we do have worth.

Here are some things that can help us to appreciate ourselves more:

- Stop comparing yourself to others.
- Recognize some good things about yourself.



In order to be *beautiful,* we must first value *who we are.*



- Realize that you control your thoughts and actions.
- Read about and listen to positive things.
- Do things for others.
- Be wary of negative friends and associates who can pull you down.
- Change what you can, and accept what you cannot change.

Learn to Love Others

Loving others is a second step to becoming beautiful. Love is the

essence of all things good. “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples” (John 13:34-35). “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God” (1 John 4:7).

It is easy to love people who are lovable, but what about those who aren't? Often these people are selfish, greedy, envious and jealous. They may be our enemies, those who don't do their share, those who must have their way, or people who hold grudges. How do we love these people? The Bible says if we only love those who love us, we have no reward (Matthew 5:46-47).

Real love is unconditional. It doesn't love *because*; it doesn't love *when*; it doesn't love *as soon as*. It loves *in spite of* and *for no good reason*.

Here are some things that can help us love the unlovable:

- Realize you must work at it.
- Avoid becoming angry with them.
- Practice being patient. Forbear.
- Pray for them.
- Let them have their way sometimes.
- Remember that life is not fair.
- Remember that God is in control.

Be Gracious

A third way we can become beautiful is by being gracious and showing appreciation for what others do. Nothing is as sweet as a gracious woman. First Thessalonians 5:18 says, “In everything give thanks.” There are many scriptures where God tells us to express thanks.

In the story of the 10 lepers whom Jesus healed, only one came back to show appreciation. That prompted Jesus to ask, “Where are the nine?” (Luke 17:17). Paul wrote in Romans 1:18-21 that the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who know God but do not glorify Him as God nor are they thankful.

When was the last time you showed appreciation to your child's Bible school teacher or thanked a minister for all his work? Have you ever written a note to someone who invited you over for a meal? Young women, do you show appreciation to the ladies who host teas for graduations and weddings or baby showers? It is important that we all learn to say thank you for what others do, and we can do that in many ways. We can do that by talking to God in prayer. And we can do that by thanking people verbally or with gestures, hugs or notes.

God looks on the heart while others look at what we say and do. If we are children of the King, we have worth. That should prompt us to love others because they also have worth. When we practice being gracious and thankful, even to those who do not deserve it, people will see in us a beauty that is more than skin-deep. □

Sue Crabtree taught in the education and Bible departments at Faulkner University for 20 years. Now retired, she and her husband, James, work in inner city ministry in Montgomery, Ala.