

The Bulwark

7054 Winnetka Avenue, Winnetka, CA 91306 (818) 795-5566 www.winnetkachurchof christ.com

Bruce Evans, Minister (818) 795-5566 e-mail: wbe@wolfenet.com

August 20, 2023

“LET IT BE THE HIDDEN PERSON OF THE HEART”

By all accounts she would be described by most people as a beautiful woman. In her late 30's, yet she could pass for 25. Her face devoid of blemishes or wrinkles and she wore a minimal amount of make-up. Her hair was coiffed to fully accent her facial features. Her clothing and jewelry reflected the epitome of cultured decorum. Sitting on the sofa in a counselor's office, one couldn't help but think that *“charm is deceitful and beauty is vain”* (Proverbs 31:30) as she spoke.

Her beauty was only skin deep. She lamented that she didn't understand what more her husband could want from her! Going to great lengths she explained all that she did to maintain her looks and shape. The power walks every other day, the trips to the gym and hours spent on the Stairmaster and other exercise equipment. Then the facial cleansings, trips to the tanning salon and the round the clock dieting. Quite a regiment to say the least. What she had forgotten was that true beauty was seen from the inside out. She had done precious little to develop the hidden woman and conversely she was viewed by her husband and others who knew her as being, selfish, resentful, rude, unloving, unkind and demanding. In short it was a chore to be in her presence. The bulk of her efforts was directed at the “package”, but did precious to perfect the person.

“As a ring of gold in a swine's snout, so is a beautiful who lacks discretion.” (Proverbs 11:22) Scattered through out the book of Proverbs are any number of contrasts with respect to women. While space does not afford listing of all of them, the overall gist centers on the fact that the true radiant beauty of a woman is seen in her character, deportment. *“but a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised”* (Proverbs 31:30) Peter, writing in his first epistle expressed the following with regards to chaste and respectful behavior of women. *“And let not your adornment be external only-braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, and putting on dresses, but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in*

the sight of God.” (3:3-4)

There is no denying the fact that our society celebrates beauty, so it is little wonder then why some women (and some men) to be caught up in the ground swell of beauty enhancement. Thinking the panacea for all their problems can be solved by dropping a few pounds or looking ten years younger. Unfortunately, too many get caught up in the notion of image and lose their identity. The woman described in Proverbs 31, placed the greatest degree on identity rather than image. We don't know if she had physical beauty, we simply know her by the beauty of her life. *“The product of her hands.”* (Proverbs 31:31)



“A gracious woman attains honor...” (Proverbs 11:16) *“Her children rise up and bless her; her husband also, and he praises her, saying many daughters have done nobly, but you excel them all.”* (Proverbs 31:28-29) She has recognized the need to strengthen her character and resolve, while at the same time maintaining the qualities of femininity.

“An excellent wife is the crown of her husband, but she who shames him is as rottenness in his bones.” (Proverbs 12:4) Think back to the woman seated on the sofa in the counselor's office, the things she said and her demeanor made it clear she was as shallow as shallow could be. She was clue-less as to what should really be important to her, let alone her husband. She was under the misguided thinking that what her husband wanted was a “trophy wife”, when in reality he wanted a wife who was worthy of having a trophy presented to her. To echo the thoughts of the husband found in Proverbs 31. *“Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised. Give her the works of her hands, and let her works praise her in the gates.”* The teaching of the premium put on the hidden person of the heart is not just to women. Men as well need to step forward and embrace the directive that God has set forth. People of principle and spiritual character. (wbe)