

Living in a Society That Rewards Fake Beauty

Headlines in newspapers this week have focused on kids. "Mums lose time with their kids." "Hardcore music sparks alarm: Family group dismayed at festival's young targets." "We must act now to protect our kids." "Kids too young for waxing: Angry mums rally for beauty pageant protest." "Parents should be sued for plucking kids eyebrows, it's torture!"

With the death of a so-called 'beauty queen', Elizabeth Taylor, Christians have to ask themselves: "What is it that makes a woman beautiful?" Does beauty consist in the shape of one's eyebrows, body size, legs, skin tone, make-up, body weight, latest fashion, having a figure like _____? For men, is it having a muscle tone like Mr. Universe, being dishevelled and unkempt like an unshaven Fevola, sporting tattoos, having to wear brand name clothes?

Catherine Manning is quoted as saying: "Subjecting children to adult beauty procedures, such as waxing and spray tanning, verges on child abuse. Adultifying little girls, then setting them against each other in a contest based on beauty, has absolutely nothing to do with building confidence, ... but everything to do with exploitation."

We live in a culture that makes it very difficult to actually believe what the Bible says about beauty. Instead of imbibing the world's classification of beauty, the Christian is to operate out of a different set of criteria. Our beauty should not be superficial or merely an outward thing.

"What matters most is not your outer appearance—the styling of your hair, the jewellery you wear, the cut of your clothes— but your inner disposition. Instead, your beauty should consist of your true inner self, the ageless beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of the greatest value in God's sight. For the devout women of the past who placed their hope in God used to make themselves beautiful by submitting to their husbands" (1 Peter 3:3-5).

What about boys and men? The Christian man should be characterised by:

A disciplined temperament - "He will die for lack of self-control; he will be lost because of his incredible folly . . . To learn, you must love discipline; it is stupid to hate correction" (Proverbs 5:23; 6:23; 12:1).

Fearing the Lord - "Fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. Only fools despise wisdom and discipline" (Proverbs 1:7).

A good name - "Choose a good reputation over great riches, for being held in high esteem is better than having silver or gold. A good reputation is more valuable than the most expensive [aftershave]" (Proverbs 22:1; Eccles. 7:1).

Being honest - "The good soil represents honest, good-hearted people who hear God's message, cling to it, and steadily produce a huge harvest" (Lk. 8:15).

That's beauty worth pursuing.