



Seeking Spiritual Beauty



Sheila Keckler Butt



**Publishing Designs, Inc.
Huntsville, Alabama**





Publishing Designs, Inc.
P. O. Box 3241
Huntsville, Alabama 35810

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Second Printing, 2004
Third Printing, 2006
Fourth Printing, 2010
Fifth Printing, 2016

Publisher's Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Butt, Sheila
Seeking spiritual beauty./Sheila Butt
100 pp; 22.86 cm.
Includes Scripture text, beauty statistics, thought questions.
1. Women—Spiritual life. 2. Beauty
I. Butt, Sheila II. Title.
ISBN 0-929540-26-3
248.8

Printed in the United States of America



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Introduction

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“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they  
shall see God.” — Matthew 5:8  
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In recent years bookshelves have been replete with books for women on how to become one’s authentic self. There are books telling us how to live simply and abundantly. There are books telling us how to be content as women, wives, and mothers. There are books telling us how to find inner peace and spiritual renewal.

I have read many of these books and some of them offer a few helpful suggestions for simplifying one’s life. Many times, however, these books leave the astute reader with a sense of searching and insecurity because they offer no definite answers for eternity. I find myself consistently returning to the one Book that endows and empowers us as women with the virtues that will guarantee all of these things if we are willing to live lives of commitment and courage in Christ. The Bible tells us that in Christ we have been given “all things that pertain to life and godliness” (2 Peter 1:3).

When we get into Christ our *destination* changes. We know that we can go to Heaven for eternity. However, in this life, when Christ truly gets into us, our *destiny* changes. We want to be like Christ. Our choices change. Our goals change. Our relationships to our God, our family, and other Christians change because we choose to emulate Christ. Rahab and Esther, as well as many others, changed their destinies by the choices they made after listening to what God would have them to do.



If this book is studied with a pure heart, it will change your life. A pure heart is one that is true to God and has a genuine willingness to see oneself as He sees us. The Bible tells us that the pure in heart will see God. The pure in heart are simply those who read the Word of God in order to find out what He has to say to us instead of trying to justify our personal opinions by taking verses out of context.

The discoveries you will find in the pages of this book may make you wonder for the first time in your life if you look like a gold ring in a pig's snout to our Lord (Proverbs 11:22) or if you really are seeking to be a spiritually beautiful person.

A sports commentator was discussing the deaths of Mickey Mantle and Dale Earnhardt and asserted passionately to viewers that God truly does have a special place in Heaven reserved for heroes. I could not agree more. The Bible tells us that "precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints" (Psalm 116:15). He has gone to prepare a place for heroes. However, the heroes of this world and the heroes of faith have an entirely different agenda. The beautiful people of this world and the beautiful people of the Lord have an entirely different adornment. Ultimately, the heroes and the famous people of this world may not have their names written in the Book of Life.

It has been said that one can become so spiritually minded that she can be of no earthly value to the Lord. For many years, I wondered how that could be true. I know now. I understand that the most spiritual, most reconciling, most loving act ever committed on our behalf was also the most humble, humiliating, horrible experience that a person could ever endure. You see, the spiritual must be manifested in this physical world. If you want to know how to become a spiritually beautiful person, be prepared to learn some hard lessons. Whining women do not show the world the strength, character, and beauty of Christ. Each one of us has been put on this earth for such a time as this. As you begin the journey to spiritual beauty, be prepared to make some changes every day as you grow more into the likeness of Christ. Let's look into the mirror of His Word.



Chapter 1



The Eyes of the Beholder



“If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.” — Colossians 3:1–2



The most popular topic on which I have been asked to speak to Christian women over the past five years is *Seeking Spiritual Beauty*. This is not surprising in a culture that literally demands that women strive to be beautiful no matter what the cost physically, emotionally, or monetarily. I have a dear friend who has spent thousands of dollars on laser karitonomy, breast augmentation, phen fen diet pills, various surgeries, beauticians, expensive jewelry, and exercise equipment to make herself look beautiful. Her own mother told me recently that my friend would spend the rest of her life fighting her age and her weight. It saddens me to think that women in our society are so hopelessly obsessed. If beauty truly is in the eye of the beholder, then who are we really trying to impress?

The sincere desire to be spiritually beautiful in the sight of God will make you take a good long look into the mirror of your soul. You might be surprised by what you see. Are you spending more of your time and efforts looking into the mirror of the culture and trying to be beautiful and successful by the standards of the world, or are you looking into the mirror



of the Word of God and understanding and trying to be what God would have you to be?

A young preacher was visiting with an older gentleman. While they were talking on the front porch, two dogs started fighting in the front yard. The young preacher thought one of them was really going to hurt the other and asked the old gentleman if they should not break up the fight. The old gentleman replied, “No. They do it all the time. I even know which one is going to win.”

“Which one?” asked the young man.

“The one I feed the most!” laughed the old gentleman.

How true this is in our spiritual and physical lives. The life that shines through to the world and to our Father will be the one that we feed the most.

As you read this book, keep your eyes, as well as your heart, completely open to the possibility that some of the things you

“But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness . . .”

—Matthew 6:33

have always thought were important may be making you look like a “jewel in a pig’s snout” to the Lord (Proverbs 11:22). What you can expect to gain from this study is not an expensive facelift—but a

very precious “faithlift.” It may last for eternity.

We are a generation of seekers. We attend all kinds of workshops as we seek to learn new things, understand more things, or become something else. In the church today, we are very concerned about how to reach the “seekers” in the world with the Word of God, because we know that our culture is full of them. We are conditioned to believe that if we look long enough, pay enough money, make the necessary sacrifices, or invest enough time, we will get the things for which we are continually seeking.

A careful study of spirituality from the Scriptures will lead one to the conclusion that one cannot *find* spiritual beauty. It is not found at Weight Watchers or the Weigh Down Workshop. You can’t take a pill and achieve it. You can’t demand it. You can’t buy it. You can’t have a nice enough house or live in the right neighborhood to make you spiritually beautiful. You can’t



dress fashionably enough to command it. Spiritual beauty comes as a by-product of a Christian woman's life lived before the Lord in love and service to Him and to her fellow man. An ironic twist to spirituality (often defined in the dictionary as something unseen) is that it can be revealed only in the flesh. Our spiritual lives are not above the physical, but manifested by it.

The compelling evidence for this fact is made very clear in Matthew 25. Those people whom the Lord had separated to inherit the kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world asked Him,

When saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? Or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?

These people appear to be confused. They had been busy doing the Lord's work by taking care of those around them, regardless of the circumstances. They did not even realize that they were meeting the Lord and attending to Him every day while serving their fellow men. They were beautiful to our Lord. Taking care of the needs of others was a way of life for them and they were going to be rewarded for eternity.

I have seen spiritual beauty in the face of an 87-year-old woman who has spent her life serving others in the name of the Lord. I have seen spiritual beauty on the face of a dental assistant in Honduras who was sponging blood from patients' mouths as the dentist pulled almost a thousand teeth in five days. I have seen spiritual beauty on the faces of young teenagers who were joyfully scrubbing lice from hundreds of children's heads. I have seen spiritual beauty on the face of many Bible class teachers, and I have seen spiritual beauty sitting at the bedside of the terminally ill. I have seen spiritually beautiful women in every shape, size, form, and fashion. But they were all sisters bearing the likeness of Christ. They were all bought with the same blood: a blood that is spiritual and eternal—a blood that truly is "thicker than water." It is even more binding and precious than the physical blood we have inherited from our parents.



Christ's death on the cross was the most physical, painful, humiliating act imaginable, yet it was the most spiritual event that has ever taken place. Had Christ not suffered that physical anguish and cruel injustice, we could not be reconciled to God. When we try to become so spiritually minded that we cannot touch, cry with, or joyfully serve those around us, then spiritual beauty is beyond our reach. We are like salt which is never poured out of the container. Stagnant salt cannot add taste nor does it preserve anything. It does not make people thirsty. It is useless. Eventually it loses its savor and has to be discarded. So it is with the stagnant Christian life. It tends to lose its savor and eventually becomes useless.

The spiritually beautiful woman is salt and light and leaven. She makes an impact on the world through service. She leads by modeling Christ. She gives her head, her hands, and her heart to serving others. Just as Christ willingly gave His hands to the cross and then His heart to those who crucified Him by saying, "Father, forgive them," the spiritually beautiful woman wills herself to give her hands and her heart to the work of the Lord. She becomes one of God's glory goals. It is through her life, her actions, and her character that others see Christ, and God is glorified.



Questions for Discussion

1. How can we take a good long look into our soul? By what should we determine our own beauty?
2. Why have we become such a generation of seekers? What is the most important thing that we should be seeking?
3. Why can't we find spiritual beauty?
4. Tell how we can compare ourselves to the faithful servants in Matthew 25? How do you suppose the world perceived their spiritual beauty and success?
5. Have you seen true spiritual beauty? When? What was happening?
6. Why does the author say that Christ's death on the cross was a spiritual act? Was it physically beautiful?
7. What does it mean to give your head, your hands, and your heart to becoming a spiritually beautiful woman?
8. How is the spiritually beautiful woman salt, light, and leaven?
9. How was Pharaoh used as a glory goal for God in Exodus 14:17–18? In a more positive way, how can the life of a spiritually beautiful woman be used as a glory goal for God? Is it her choice? What do we learn in Isaiah 43:7 about why we were created?





Chapter 2



Our Adornment

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“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.” — 1 Peter 3:3–4  
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When we are striving to please our God and Father in Heaven, we will not let ourselves be duped by the standards of our secular culture which is ruled and motivated by the media and by the great Duper himself, Satan.

In a survey of 33,000 women by *Glamour Magazine* in the early 1990s, the majority of respondents said that they would rather lose 10–15 pounds than any other goal in life. How shallow have we become? How many times have you stepped on the scales this month? This week?

Today? Studies have shown that one of every four college-aged women has an eating disorder. In addition, a psychological study in 1995 found that three minutes spent looking at models in a fashion magazine caused 70 percent of women to feel depressed, guilty, and shameful.

When we spend more of our precious time on this earth dieting, exercising, and beautifying ourselves physically than

***“Charm is deceitful and
beauty is passing . . .”
— Proverbs 31:30***