

True Beauty

God’s Vision for Womanhood

Titus 2:3-5; 1 Timothy 2:9-10

Women’s Meeting – SGC – October 15, 2011

Introduction

A. Nancy Leigh DeMoss

Christian woman—no less than nonbelieving women—are in desperate need of the truth. The look of frustration, pain, or hollowness in so many eyes tells the story of women who are generally disappointed with life. They feel victimized—even traumatized—by circumstances that have fallen short of their hopes and dreams. As far as they are concerned, life just isn’t working.

*And the problem goes even deeper than what is obvious at first glance. I believe that this sense of confusion and distress among Christian women is because, by and large, we are profoundly disoriented about who God is and who we are, and about our calling and mission in life—as women. Almost en masse we have bought into a way of thinking about life and about womanhood, marriage, and family that is culturally accepted and politically correct but fundamentally flawed. For sure, it has not delivered what it promised. (qtd. in *Feminine Appeal*, 13)*

B. Our culture

1. Scanning a dozen or so women’s magazine covers at the library, striking...
 - a. About 2/3 of the headlines were articles connected to physical appearance – diets, flat abs, some type of beauty secret, or the best – “18 Potent Anti-agers”
 - b. Rest were some mix of sex tips, purpose in life or finding your true self, finding out the secret life of someone or other.
2. The NPR version – heroines are CEO’s, secretaries-of-state, published authors, entrepreneurs, etc.
3. The Martha Stewart version.
4. Result of all of this is an impossible standard—look perfect, be successful in the marketplace, have a home where everything matches and all the napkins capture the changing colors of fall because it’s...October. Oh yea, and your husband and

children, too. And you probably need to add fighting for world peace, endangered species, eating only organic foods, avoiding carbs, and...taking dance lessons.

5. You must look away from the world, and you must look to the Word of God.
 6. In other words, if you look to the culture to define for you what it means to be a woman, you will run yourself ragged. You will never know peace. You will be running away from the grace that God wants to give to you.
 7. Another caveat here—you have to be careful about elevating people you know and respect. Having models for being a Christian woman is a great means of grace. At times, however, we turn those models into another Bible. We can begin to feel guilty or convicted because we are not doing what they are doing.
 8. “She makes her own clothes and makes sure to read one novel a month just for fun.”
 9. Or maybe it’s something more obviously beneficial—her family reads the Bible together every night.
 10. Two mistakes here.
 - a. Appearance vs. reality.
 - b. The Bible vs. a wonderful person.
 11. Don’t fall off the other cliff here: *“I’m going to reinvent motherhood and womanhood. Just the Bible. Throw out everything I’ve seen and heard.”*
 12. Please don’t do that.
- C.** The point is—we need God’s TRUTH to see straight—we need His Word to guide us.
1. Without God’s truth you will be riddled with guilt.
 2. Without God’s truth contentment will be impossible.
 3. Without God’s truth you will always be chasing dreams that are not yours to chase.
- D.** Read Titus 2:1-5 and pray.

Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, ⁴and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, ⁵to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled. (Titus 2:3-5)

1. Important to grasp that Titus 2 is for the single and the married woman.
2. Lost in the English translations.
3. Paul says to “train the young women to be” something. In fact, they are to be trained to be three things—“husband-lovers,” “child-lovers,” and “homeworkers.” There are other attributes listed here, but these are three critical ones.
4. We will cover these three.
5. Our fourth topic comes out of 1 Timothy 2:9-10.
6. Why these four topics? They are part of discipling new women and women who are newly adults (or soon-to-be adults).

I. Being a Husband-Lover (Titus 2:4)

A. Literally, “to be a husband-lover”

1. The Greek - φιλνδρους (Tit 2:4)
2. BDAG (Greek Lexicon), “having affection/love for a husband.”
3. Greek compound for “love + husband.”
4. Less common word for “love,” but the one more often used in compounds. Same as “Philadelphia,” “brotherly love,” or in 2 Tim. 3:2-4, “self-lovers,” “pleasurelovers,” those who are “pleasure-lovers” and not “God-lovers.”
5. Clue to its meaning in four things: (1) Never the term for “love one another” as Christians, which is always from agape; (2) Can be translated as “kiss” (Matt 26:48); (3) Is connected to the word for “friend” (*philē*); and (4) Is found in John 11:3, 36 of Jesus’ love for Lazarus: “See how he loved him!” (v. 36).
6. Used in Titus as compound and as a verb: Twice in 1:8 where a pastor is to be hospitable (“love of the stranger”) and a “lover of the good”; in 3:4, God is described by His “loving kindness”; in 3:15, “Greet those who love us in the faith.” Agape is used only in 2:2 where “older men” are to be “sound in faith, in love.”
7. In contrast, in the texts that command husbands to love their wives, Paul *emphatically* uses the verb of agape. Closer to the self-sacrificing “one-another” Christian love, than the affectionate/friendly verb for *phileō*. Ephesians 5:25, “Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her....In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies” (nourish...cherish).

B. Something to do, but something to be

1. Something to do: love
2. Slightly different than the verb to “love,” though we are commanded to do that plenty.
3. “Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins” (1 Peter 4:8).
4. Not a different command than “submit to” (Eph. 5:21-22; 1 Peter 3:1) and “respect” (Eph. 5:33), but it flavors both of these.
5. Something to be: husband-lover
6. Yet, note that it is a noun, not a verb.
7. In other words, it is not a point about *doing* something, but about *being* something.
8. Not a woman who loves her husband, but a husband-lover.
9. Further, wives are to be a “helper fit” for the husband (Gen. 2:18).
10. All of these are flavored by the “affection” and “love” the wife has for the husband.
11. To build your life around your husband and his success.
12. Radically different from the cultural picture—The Cosby Show in my day, but the roles haven’t changed. Dufus husband, together/high-strung wife.
13. Barbara Hughes as helpmate to Kent

One night after the children were soundly sleeping, he began to reveal his misery to me. My attempts to console him were met with depressing responses....Finally I stopped offering advice and simply listened. The words he spoke that night were those of a man who had lost sight of what biblical ministry is all about....When we think back to that long-ago night, Kent tells me that if I had answered him in any other way than the way I did, it would have been all he needed to ‘hang it up.’ If I had joined him in bitter recriminations and complaints about our situation, he might have quit the ministry and spent the rest of his life attempting to prove his worth and God’s injustice.

But, thanks to God, my answer was full of hope in God. ‘I don’t know what you’re going to do, but for right now, for tonight, hang on to my faith, because I believe. I believe that God is good. I believe that He loves us and is going to work through this experience. So hang on to my faith. I have enough for both of us.

(Biblical Womanhood in the Home, 125)

C. For the single woman

*I was thinking of single men in three categories: Potentials, Just Buddies, and No Ways, with each meriting different treatment. That’s too many categories. There’s just one for believing single men: Brothers, and consequently they all deserve the same treatment. Maybe one day a Brother will initiate a relationship to find out if the Lord would be moving him into the Husband slot. But until the words ‘I do’ ring out from the wedding altar, he’s still my Brother and potentially someone else’s Husband. (McCulley, *Did I Kiss Marriage Goodbye?* 91)*

Carolyn offers three ways to serve men who are not your husband:

“Observe them” – Pay attention to him, his gifts, his weaknesses, his needs, not as an Interest, but as a Brother in Christ.

“Encourage them” – No expressing Interest, but encouraging them in the Lord. If you spread your encouragement around, and do it in public, it will not easily be misinterpreted.

“Seek to see them conformed to Christ” – When a Brother expresses inappropriate attention to you or another young woman, take some responsibility for his Christian character. Let him or the appropriate person know about it—not as a gossip, not because you are offended, but because you love him as a Brother in Christ and want him to grow. (Ibid.)

- D. Application Questions**
- 1.** In what ways have you been influenced by the culture of those around you in how you think about or treat your husband (or other men)?
 - 2.** What are ways that your words need to change?
 - 3.** What are ways that your actions need to change?
 - 4.** Would “affection” characterize your relationship to your husband? (To those who are single, would a proper warmth characterize your relationships with men—not flirtatious or demeaning or apathetic?)
 - 5.** How do you need to become more of a “helpmate” to your husband?

II. Being a Child-Lover (Titus 2:4)

- A.** Cultural picture of children: They are a pain. They interfere with things that are truly significant like careers, hobbies, dreams, retirement, etc.
- B.** Literally, “to be a child-lover”

1. φιλοτρικνους (Tit 2:4)
 2. Might seem obvious to tell a woman to love her children, but the point is slightly different: Not to “love your children,” but to be a “child-lover.”
 3. Be someone who loves children.
 4. What this means is that Paul is addressing those who have children, who will have children, *and* those who will never have children of their own.
 5. He is calling women to be a *mothering kind of person*, not to just fulfill the many duties that motherhood asks of you.
 6. As Barbara Hughes calls it, it means to have a “nurturing spirit.”
- C. Challenge of the word is that it means a heart that overflows into sacrificial care for children.
1. Not simply fulfilling the duties of motherhood, which are legion.
 2. Also means the ability to enjoy children, to take a real interest in their lives, to see them as a true blessing and not a burden, to rejoice when they rejoice and to weep when they weep.
 3. A heart for children.
 4. Barbara Hughes – “Nurturing the Nurturing Instinct” - Rooted in a woman’s body, which is able to give and sustain life in a unique way. Rooted in Eve called “the mother of all living.” I think there is also a greater emotional and psychological ability to do this in a woman.

Women, we must cultivate nurturing spirits whether single or married. This has nothing to do with whether or not I am a mother. Nurturing is my responsibility before God as a human being and in particular because I am female. The context for where and how I will care for others will be dictated by where God places me—in a home, in a school, in a hospital, in the inner city, wherever. (Disciplines of a Godly Woman, 160-161)
 5. One practical side of what this means is that mothering is not simply about activities for your children. Not simply the soccer team, music lessons, robotics class, ballet, tutors or private school, and a rented clown on their birthday. It means something harder—simply spending time with your children because you love them. In the end, that will have an impact on your children that far outlives any activity you can sign them up for.
 6. Dorothy Patterson

*Few women realize what great service they are doing for mankind and for the kingdom of Christ when they provide a shelter for the family and good mothering—the foundation on which all else is built. A mother builds something far more magnificent than any cathedral—the dwelling place for an immortal soul (both her child’s fleshly tabernacle and his earthly abode). No professional pursuit so uniquely combines the most menial tasks with the most meaningful opportunities. (“The High Calling of Wife and Mother in Biblical Perspective,” *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, 367)*

- D.** For those without children: Temptation is to think that children give you significance and validate you as a woman.
1. Certainly there is something deeply feminine about motherhood.
 2. Yet, motherhood is also a sovereign and miraculous act of God upon a woman. A woman cannot make herself a mother any more than a kid can make himself a professional baseball player.
 3. If you not being a mother represents some sin on your part, then you should deal with God about it.
 4. But, if it represents God’s difficult sovereignty in your life, then you must not think yourself less a woman. It is a desire unfulfilled, one of the hardest ones to go unfulfilled.
 5. But you are still a *complete* woman crafted in the image of God to accomplish glorious things during your short time on this earth!
 6. Part of that purpose is wrapped up in the nurturing spirit that He has given to you.
 7. How does God want you to live that out?
 8. It is true that life is very seasonal. Some things that are possible and fulfilling when we are younger become virtually undoable when we are older. The temptations are too great.
 9. I think you can trust God with that as well. Perhaps watching other people’s kids is too hard, but maybe there is a niece or nephew you could nurture. Or maybe for now you need to concentrate on other areas of ministry like your service at church or to your husband or even your career and friendships. Or perhaps even ministry in places of need around the city...or around the globe. The needs are infinite. Pray about where God wants you to get involved.
 10. I praise God for the women in our church who have been able to invest in others even in the midst of a childlessness brought to them by the hand of God.

11. This does not take away the sorrow, but it does mean that your life is being well lived and you, too, will earn the approval from God that awaits all those who live for the glory of God being built throughout the earth.
- E. The call is to live a life investing in others. Again Dorothy Patterson:

Homemaking—being a full-time wife and mother—is not a destructive drought of usefulness but an overflowing oasis of opportunity; it is not a dreary cell to contain one’s talents and skills but a brilliant catalyst to channel creativity and energies into meaningful work; it is not a rope for binding one’s productivity in the marketplace, but reins for guiding one’s posterity in the home; it is not oppressive restraint of intellectual prowess for the community, but a release of wise instruction to your own household; it is not the bitter assignment of inferiority to your person, but the bright assurance of the ingenuity of God’s plan for complementarity of the sexes, especially as worked out in God’s plan for marriage; it is neither limitation of gifts available nor stinginess in distributing the benefits of those gifts, but rather the multiplication of a mother’s legacy to the generations to come and the generous bestowal of all God meant a mother to give to those He entrusted to her care. (ibid, 377)

F. Application Questions

1. How is motherhood demeaned in our culture?
2. How are you tempted to see motherhood as anything other than a gift?
3. How are you tempted *not* to invest into the lives of others?
4. How have you observed in yourself this desire to “nurture” others?
5. Are there ways you could nurture others that you are not doing currently?

III. **Being a Home-Worker (Titus 2:5)**

A. As above, “home-worker”

1. οκουργος (Tit 2:5)
2. The third thing a woman is called *to be* and not simply *to do* is to be a homemaker.
3. BDAG, “pertains to carrying out household responsibilities, *busy at home, carrying out household duties.*”
4. There is some challenge here in the word used—“worker.”

5. This does not mean “slave.” It certainly does not mean “doormat.”
 6. Proverbs captures this well.
 - a. “The wisest of women builds her house, but folly with her own hands tears it down” (Prov. 14:1).
 - b. “She looks well to the ways of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness” (Prov. 31:27).
 7. Do you see the intentionality with the wise woman of Proverbs?
 - a. She is a builder.
 - b. She “looks well” after her household.
- B. What does this look like?**
1. Having a people-centered home – More than becoming a Christian version of Martha Stewart. It’s creating a home built around *people*, where *people* are welcomed, served, comfortable, talked to, cared for. If a 4-course meal is out of your reach, order pizza but take an interest in the people who come to your home.

They will not go away disappointed.
 2. Hospitality – Alexander Strauch

For the early Christians, the home was the most natural setting for proclaiming Christ to their families, neighbors, and friends. The same is true today. If you and/or your local church are looking for ways to evangelize, opening your home is one of the best methods for reaching the lost. Most of us, however, are not using our homes as we should to reach our neighbors, friends, and relatives. Tragically, many of us don’t even know our neighbors. Yet through hospitality, we can meet our neighbors and be a lighthouse in spiritually dark neighborhoods. (The Hospitality Commands, 22)
 3. Making Things Beautiful – home décor, gardens, cooking, crafts.
 4. Yet, it is important not to miss the point here. While there is something honoring to God with any act of creativity, our “home-working” needs to have *people* in view. Blessing them is the real goal. If they are apathetic or indifferent about it, then of course, we remember that even beyond them our goal is to please the Lord. He sees and knows all things. Our efforts are worthy to Him.
- C. Does being a “home-worker” imply that a woman cannot work outside the home?**

1. Here we step into the realm of *wisdom* and out of any clear commandment.
2. Working outside of the home is not a sin in itself. It might be sinful for you, but it might not. That depends upon other things than the simple fact of whether or not you are working outside the home.
3. A place to start: *Is it necessary?* (single woman, husband unable to find work or physically to work)
4. A second question: *Is it helpful?*
5. Paul speaks in a couple of places in ways helpful for this issue:
“All things are lawful for me,” but not all things are helpful. “All things are lawful for me,” but I will not be enslaved by anything. (1 Cor. 6:12)
“All things are lawful,” but not all things are helpful. “All things are lawful,” but not all things build up. (1 Cor. 10:23)
6. Is working outside the home “helpful” for you? For your family? For others? Does it “build up” others? Does it rob your energy and creativity from your ministry at home or at church?

D. Application Questions

1. Do you see your home as a place of ministry?
2. How could you change to make it more a place of ministry?
3. Are you tempted to see work outside the home as more significant or meaningful than working in the home?
4. Are you a wise woman who “builds her house”?

IV. Being Modest to Be Beautiful (1 Tim. 2:9-10)

Women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire, ¹⁰but with what is proper for women who profess godliness--with good works. (1 Tim. 2:9-10)

A. “Respectable Apparel”

1. Dress “in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire.”

2. “Respectable, proper, decent apparel.”
3. Further defined by two nouns—“modesty” and “self-control.”

B. “Modesty”

1. BDAG, “This term expresses the opposite of considering or treating something in a common or ordinary manner; a respect for convention.” They use “modesty” as the gloss here.
2. Liddell and Scott define it as “a sense of shame, modesty, self-respect.”

C. “Self-control”

1. Yet, there is modesty. Not only dressing because people are looking at you.
2. BDAG, “practice of prudence, *good judgment, moderation, self-control* as [the] exercise of care and intelligence appropriate to circumstances.”
3. Used often in the pastoral epistles.
4. Elders again to be “self-controlled” (1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:8); as well as older men (Titus 2:2); women (2:5); younger men (2:6).
5. The gospel has appeared to train us to “live **sensibly**, righteously, and godly in the present age” (2:12).

D. Summarizing these terms: *Wear what is proper*

1. A lot in these terms is captured by the old-fashioned word, “proper.”
2. Not a word that will make headlines and might not inspire us, but it does capture what Paul is teaching—what God is teaching!
3. A hard word to get your mind around, isn’t it?
4. We get a hint from Paul and Peter about what was proper in their day: “Not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire” (1 Timothy 2:9).
5. 1 Peter 3:3, “Do not let your adorning be external—the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear.”
 - a. Status symbol of the day was to have towering, elaborate hairstyles.
 - b. Jewelry then, as now, is a status symbol.
6. Stott explores the cultural implications of the passage and summarizes it by saying, “What Paul is emphasizing is that Christian women should adorn themselves with

clothing, hairstyles and jewelry which *in their culture* are inexpensive not extravagant, modest not vain, and chaste not suggestive” (*The Bible Speaks Today: The Message of 1 Timothy and Titus*, 84).

E. The key issues

1. What we wear matters. It affects others. Paul is saying to dress in a way that serves others. It is really “loving one another” with our dress.
2. Are we trying to impress others? (other women)
3. Okay to be in fashion and to wear attractive clothing. But, when the goal becomes impressing others, we have stopped loving others and are only loving ourselves.
4. Are we trying to attract others? (men)
5. A difficult issue for many reasons.
6. One is that you can’t help the sinful heart of someone else. You can do your absolute best and someone might sin in their hearts anyway.
7. Here you just can’t be naïve. Men are affected by what they see. Tight clothing or revealing clothing will not serve them.
8. Also a difficult issue because of the fashions of our day.
9. Hard to find stores and clothes that are truly modest.
10. Here you can’t make excuses.
11. Godliness takes effort. Just like reading your Bible first thing in the morning means you will sleep less, so wearing clothes that are modest will mean you have to work harder.
12. Please know that the effort is truly appreciated. It is a way of serving others when you make the effort.

F. Is Modesty a hemline?

1. Modesty is an issue of your heart first, but it is not *only* a heart issue. Like money: How we spend our money is primarily a heart issue, but if how we actually spend our money does not change, then it becomes impossible to show that we understand God’s call on our lives in this area.
2. We know it is not only a heart issue because Paul mentions “braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire” (1 Tim. 2:9). Peter mentions “the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry” (1 Peter 3:3).

3. Modesty is loving your neighbor as yourself through your dress.
 4. Modesty is not a hemline, but modesty must affect your hemline.
 5. Modesty is not a store where you shop, but modesty must affect where you shop.
 6. In other words, modesty checklists can serve a purpose, but they cannot and must not be the whole issue.
- G.** Your inner beauty will be more important than your outer beauty.
1. You will not learn this by looking at the covers of *Cosmopolitan* or *Vogue* or *Glamour*.
 2. You will only learn this by looking at your Bible.

Do not let your adorning be external—the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear—⁴but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious. (1 Peter 3:3-4)

“Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised. Give her the fruit of her hands, and let her works praise her in the gates.” (Prov. 31:30-31)

3. Carolyn Mahaney, “True Beauty” (from *Biblical Womanhood in the Home*)

Our culture puts forth a standard of beauty that is unattainable by most. God puts forth a standard of beauty to which we can all attain if we just respond to His work of grace in our lives.

Our culture encourages women to cultivate a beauty that is skin deep. God tells us to pursue an inner beauty of great worth.

Our culture encourages women to cultivate a beauty that will only last for a brief time. God encourages women to cultivate a beauty that will never fade and that will only grow more attractive with the passing of time.

Our culture calls us to cultivate a beauty that impresses others. God summons us to cultivate a beauty that is first and foremost for His eyes.

Our culture entices us to aspire to the beauty of the latest glamorous model or this season’s most popular actress. God bids us to aspire to the beauty of the holy women in the past who put their hope in God. (37-38)

H. Application Questions

1. Why is it important to remember the “heart” of modesty first?

2. What are some of the challenges to dressing modestly in our culture?
3. What is the unattainable standard of beauty in our culture?
4. How do you personally struggle with dressing modestly?

V. Conclusion: *Why Bother?*

- A. The goal of biblical womanhood is not passing along traditional values. It is much grander than that.
- B. Titus 2:5, “That the word of God may not be reviled.”
- C. Titus 2:10, “so that in everything they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior.”
- D. In other words, God is seen more clearly and His Bible is understood more accurately when women live out the “sound doctrine” of the Bible.

VI. The Small Groups

- A. This year’s Ladies Small Groups will meet on October 15, 2011, and February 18, April 28, & June 9, 2012.
- B. Remember, these meetings will not be held at the church, but rather at the home of your Ladies Small Group Leader.
- C. If you did not sign up to attend these Ladies Small Group meetings and you would like to attend, please Register now (via the Registration link on the Women’s Ministry page on our website) so you can be added to a small group near you. Once you’ve been added to a Ladies Small Group, you will be contacted with the location of your small group meeting.

“We shouldn’t wait until marriage is on the horizon to cultivate domesticity. In Titus 2:5 we find that older women are to train younger women to be ‘working at home.’ This is one of Scripture’s commands to *women*. Period. Granted, this passage does assume that most women will be wives, but it also assumes that we need instruction to prepare for that role. We need training to love our husbands and love our children. We need to be taught how to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, and kind, as well as how to be submissive to our husbands. Single women are included in that training. We are to be trained in all aspects even though we may not be called by God to fill those roles, immediately or ever. In that light, we’re no less exempt from the charge to be working at home than we are from the

commands to be self-controlled, pure, or kind” (McCulley, *Did I Kiss Marriage Goodbye?* 107).