

“Being Attractive Without Having to Look Good”

God’s Extreme Makeover - Part 1

Galatians 5:16-23

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Over the past decade, television networks have stumbled onto the profitable phenomenon known as the reality show. And it seems that most of the world has become addicted to them. All the way from American Idol to John and Kate Plus Eight. Major news programs even report on them. I don’t watch reality shows, but I am aware of them. And it is a reality show that has fueled this sermon series - Extreme Makeover. The original Makeover had everything to do with personal appearances. The more enduring Makeover has involved housing for those who desperately need it. But all the Makeover shows have dealt with the external and not the internal.

One reality that these shows point out is that many of us are dissatisfied with who we are and how we are. We want to be different people. And we want to be better people. But to be better people, we need to change the inside. We change the outside because it is easier, and we begin to think that if our appearance is different, it will change who we are. But it doesn’t. Botox will not be the blessing you want it to be. To become better people we need to change the inside. For when we change the inside we can be better, more attractive people, without actually having to look good. And trust me, I know something about not looking good.

Why do we need to examine this topic? Because many of us don’t realize that God has this picture of us, this picture for us of living a very attractive life. I mean, partly, we want to be better people because we know that God wants us to live a better life, to be better people than we currently are. We are called to live a life that reflects God and you can’t get more attractive than that. And as we begin to reflect God, we will point others toward Him.

God’s Extreme Makeover can be found in the fifth chapter of Galatians. There we see the picture of the makeover, the problem we face, and the plan God has for us. And today we are going to take a look at all of that. Let’s start with the picture.

Galatians 5:22 *“When the Holy Spirit controls our lives He will produce this kind of fruit in us: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control. Here there is no conflict with the law.”* Understand that Paul is writing to a church that has been focusing on the law, that is, the laws of the Old Testament. There were 613 written laws, plus hundreds of human traditions. Paul said that what is really important are concepts like love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. If we focus on those, the law will be cared for.

In your notes is a picture of the fruits of the Spirit, of God’s Extreme Makeover. Is there anything there that you don’t want in your life? But more importantly, what do you see there that is not yet a part of your life. Take a moment and mark the three that you feel that you need the most right now. Know that we can have those things when we allow God’s Spirit to invade our life. But you say, *“I am open to the Holy Spirit, and I still don’t have these fruits in my life? Why aren’t I producing*

them?” Good question and it leads us to the PROBLEM.

Galatians 5:17: *The old sinful nature loves to do evil which is just opposite to what the Holy Spirit wants. The Spirit gives us desires that are opposite to what the sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other. And your choices are never free from this conflict.*” That’s the problem. And it points out a couple of things. For one, if we are not producing fruit of the Spirit, maybe the Spirit isn’t in us. And I am not saying that as a condemnation. There are many who believe that they accepted Christ simply by coming to church and living a good life. But it is more personal than that. It is a matter of saying, “Lord Jesus, I cannot make it on my own. I want to turn my life around. I want You and need You to come into my heart, to come into my life. I want to be the person You have created and called me to be.” Unless we begin there, the Holy Spirit will not be a part of us, and neither will these fruits.

For many of us here today, we have accepted Christ, and yet we are missing some of the Fruits of the Spirit. That’s because there is a constant conflict going on in our midst. We want to satisfy all the desires of our heart. Left on our own, our tendency is to satisfy our old sinful nature. It happens every day, all the time throughout the day. For instance, you see someone at the side of the road, hood up, and you know they need help. What to do? In just that one stop you could display all nine fruits of the Spirit. We can take God’s route. But what happens? All of a sudden my old sinful nature kicks in. “I really don’t want to stop. I’m hungry. I want to get to lunch.” We begin to rationalize. “It might be dangerous. I don’t know who that is. They might attack me, take my car, whatever. Besides, they probably have a cell phone, and if they don’t, there’s a lot of other people who can stop.” And so we drive on. And that usually includes me.

There is a conflict within us. Over time we have raised the bitter fruit of a selfish spirit. Of that Paul writes, *“When you follow the desires of your sinful nature Your lives will produce these evil results. Impure thoughts, sexual immorality, eagerness for lustful pleasure, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, divisions, the feeling that everyone is wrong except those in your own little group, envy, drunkenness, wild parties and other kinds of sin.”* (Galatians 5:19) That is a graphic image of what happens when we don’t allow God’s Spirit to control our life. If I didn’t allow God’s Spirit to control my life, who knows where I would be now. Because I am capable of doing some evil, ugly stuff. And so are you. That’s why we need a makeover. Thankfully we don’t have to live with this problem forever. God has a PLAN.

Verse 16 *“So I advise you to live according to your new life in the Holy Spirit. Then you won’t be doing what your sinful nature craves. If we’re living now by the Holy Spirit let us follow the Holy Spirit’s leading in every part of our lives.”* That’s the plan. But what does that mean and how do we follow God’s PLAN. It’s tough, and yet it’s as easy as A, B, C.

A B Act as If God Has Given You These Gifts.

If we have a relationship with God and He’s filled us with His Spirit, all these fruits of the Spirit are available to us. What that means is that God has the power to produce love in my life that I’ve never felt before; that God has the ability to bring joy into my life in the midst of sorrow and chaos; that

even in the midst of a fast paced, stress filled world, God’s Spirit can give me a sense of peace. Act as if, as if what God says is true, that these are the fruits of My Spirit. We can assist the makeover process by acting as if the fruit has already been given to us.

But what does that mean, act as if the fruits have already been given? When Joe was still pretty young, he would watch we drive the lawn tractor, and he wanted so badly to drive it, too. So I would let him. Not on his own, of course. He would sit on my lap and drive. Was he really driving? No. I was driving. He was acting. But while sitting on my lap and acting like he was driving, taking hold of the steering wheel for a little bit, he began to feel what it would be like. He was gaining confidence. It was becoming more natural to him, so that when the time came, he could take over. In the mean time, he was acting as if that ability was already his.

Or suppose there is a neighbor who you just don’t like, and that neighbor knows you are a Christian, that you worship here. Now one of the fruits of the Spirit is kindness, but you have no desire to express kindness to them, and yet you want to be a good person. Goodness is an internal characteristic. It’s part of our character. And kindness is an expression of that goodness. So even though we don’t feel kind, still we go against our natural inclination and show kindness because it is a reflection of our character. God’s Spirit has touched us so that we can act kind even though we do not feel any kindness. It is God’s Spirit working in us. We act as if the kindness is already a part of us. And by acting, we are following God’s plan.

B B Believe That God Is the Only Source for a True Makeover.

If I don’t believe that God is the only source for a true makeover, all the Aact” is just that, an act. But if I believe that while I’m taking these action steps, I believe that God is the only true source, that empowers me to keep taking those steps. And until I believe that, I will keep hedging my bet. I will look for other things to change appearances. And in that, there is no substance. No power. No other source will deliver what we need.

A man lived in Minnesota, but when he retired he moved to Florida. He was living the retired American dream. Going to the golf course and the beach. All sorts of things in the sun. He did that for six months, and then he died. The body was shipped back to Minnesota for services. At the viewing an old friend looked down to see his old friend with a great tan, and he said, AWow! Florida sure did him good!” No! He had had a Florida makeover, but he was still dead. Florida is not a source for a true makeover. We can believe that Florida is the source; that surgery is the answer. A bigger home, a better job, a better spouse. Whatever it is you think you need, if you don’t have God’s Spirit in you, you’re going to be dead. And love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control will allude your life.

Jesus speaks about a true makeover in John 15. *AJesus said, >Remain in Me and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine. And you cannot be fruitful apart from Me. Yes, I am the vine and you are the branches. Those who remain in Me and I in them will produce much fruit. For apart from Me you can do nothing.’*” Jesus said, I am the vine, the only source that is going to help you produce this fruit.

What vine are you connected to right now? Are you connected to the vine of Christ? Or are you connected to the vine of the world? Because the type of vine we are connected to will determine what kind of fruit we are going to produce. If we’re connected to the vine of the world, we’re going to produce bitter fruit that comes from our old selfish, sinful nature. Or are we going to produce fruit that comes from being connected to the Spirit of God.

If we want to have love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control in our life, if we want the fruit of the Spirit, we need to act as if God has already given us these gifts. And we have to believe that God, that Christ is the only source of a true makeover. And ultimately, we have to ...

C B Choose God’s Way at Every Encounter

That’s what it means to live in the Spirit; to walk in the Spirit. It’s choosing God’s way at every encounter. It’s not a matter of once forever, but of choosing God’s way every minute of every day. A lot of those choices are not conscious decisions. So it is a matter of changing our nature, of maturing in Christ. And that’s what makes someone attractive, when they naturally choose God’s way.

So here’s a question: why wouldn’t everybody choose God’s way all the time. Because they don’t know God’s way. They don’t choose God’s way, and sometimes we don’t choose God’s way because we don’t know what His way is. If I go into a restaurant and I don’t know what’s on the menu and the guy says, "What do you want?" I say, "I don’t know. I don’t know what you’ve got. I can’t choose until I know what you’ve got." In the same way, if we don’t know God’s way, we don’t know what to do, where to go. So we need to learn, to memorize what we will produce if we are connected to Christ and choosing to go God’s way. And God’s way is marked with love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

We need to memorize just what the fruit of the Spirit is? Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Why memorize it? So it’s a part of me. And it’s really not that difficult. We memorize all sorts of useless stuff, like when our favorite reality show is on. We memorize what’s on a Big Mac - "Two all-beef patties, special sauce, lettuce, cheese, pickles, onions on a sesame seed bun." This is absolutely useless information and yet we have memorized it. Maybe it’s time to memorize something truly important - the fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. If we memorize it, it becomes a part of us. And once it’s in our head, it will begin to come out in our vocabulary. It will seep into our hearts and leak into our actions. So when we begin to choose the way to go, we will naturally, always, choose to go the way of God. And in a life, that is very attractive.

The most attractive people I know are not the ones that have the coolest cars, the biggest houses, the perfect bodies or whatever. That may be attractive in the eyes of the world. But in the eyes of our hearts, in our inner world, the real beauty we seek is life filled with love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. God created us to be attractive; to be spiritually attractive. We were created to be good people, and that is, people living and walking in the

Spirit of God. People who produce the fruit of the Spirit. And so God’s plan for an extreme makeover is an inside job that promises to make us look good, by transforming us into the character we were intended to be from the very beginning. So act, believe and choose God’s way. Seek the fruit of the Spirit. And in your life, may it be so. Amen.