



May, 2000

In the Spring, a young man's fancy lightly turns to... Well, what else is new? That's kind of where the lady's thoughts have been dwelling for some time too, and who said anything about Spring even being in the loop, aside from it just being a good condition to blame things on? I only refer to the residual state of mankind as a prelude to a question I intend to pursue this month,

What makes a person attractive?

That's always relevant as we go through life for when it comes right down to it most of our frustrations center about our separation from other people and inability to establish and maintain relationships. It's at the bottom of most of our other quirks and compulsions. So, what is it that makes one person attractive and another not?

External appearances are a starting point. Real estate men use the phrase *curb appeal*, meaning that if a potential buyer were to drive by would they want to stop and see more or keep right on driving? (*This, I don't need- trouble I got already!*) We tell the world a lot by the way we allow ourselves to appear. Sometimes evaluation is in order.

One example would be the man who hasn't changed his clothing style and philosophy since high school. Might even have some of the original threads, worn regularly too. By the time he's middle aged it aint cool no more and he's labeled himself as someone who's out of mainstream society, telling potential friends that he's basically a loser.

After all, a man who's not conforming his lifestyle, which includes appearance, to a stream of society that has some movement and flow to it will be on the sidelines. Usually he'll be working an entry level, minimum wage type job for the rest of his life. Don't try for the fast track, for that's destructive, both personally and spiritually, but maintain some movement.

Bill Scheidler described one of his daughter's potential dates as a bus that wasn't going

anywhere. In the window that tells you where the bus is going, there wasn't anything written. End of relationship.

Women are more sensitive to this point than men. They tend to be much more bottom line practical, asking themselves early on whether such a man could support them in what they consider to be a reasonable lifestyle. If the answer is no, that's about the only answer a man will get out of them.

I could talk a lot about the appearance aspect of women too (perhaps a man's favorite subject), but angels fear to tread and I'm not that brave right now. However, the same principle applies here. Who are you really inside, and is that consistent with what's going on outside?

Of course, that presupposes that we're up to speed on the inside. Are we? The generalized man I referred to previously had a certain appearance on the outside, but it was an outward indicator of something lacking on the inside. Are we talking spiritual matters yet? Maybe...

Physical and outward attraction only gets us the initial contact with another person. A skilled deceiver can put up a good act for a while but eventually it gets down to who are we really? Is there anything inside that another person would desire? Is there anything inside we can live with ourselves?

My first rule of relationship is to be at peace with yourself and your God before attempting to add another person to the equation. Don't expect another to clean up your mess because invariably they will bring theirs with them and now the problem's growing exponentially.

That all being said, we find that imperfect people are getting themselves married all the time, some of them a hundred pounds overweight and not near as rich or beautiful as one could ask for. So let's ask ourselves again, What makes a person attractive? The best answer I can give is what the Bible lists as

The Fruit of The Spirit.

Sound a little old fashioned? It is, but it works! The most beautiful and desirable thing about any person is the combination of what God created them to be and the liberation by the Spirit of God

that can be had by those who seek for it. If you really consider those qualities, you find everything one could desire in another person.

Love The first fruit listed must be kept defined by God's Word. Biblical love is the decision to put aside personal pleasure and self-interest for the sake of another. Compare that to worldly love, which seeks primarily to exploit and consume. *For God so loved, He gave...* How could I not be attracted to one who so loved me?

Joy- A person filled with joy is wonderful to be around. Their words lift you up and make you glad you took the time to say hello. Others launch immediately into the sad story of their last few days, the continuing saga of what a trial their entire life is. Gimme a break! If your well's empty, go to God and get it filled up (Is 12:3). Save the recital for your music teacher.

Peace- Did you notice that talking with some people is a nerve fraying experience? Whatever is currently the matter (usually very little) is constantly to the forefront of their breathless conversation. On the other hand, you'll meet those in very deep water whose conversation is a well of peace. They not only have faith for their own problems but some to impart to you as well. I want to be around those people!

Longsuffering- What are we like to be around when we don't get our way? Are we bossy, demanding, or pouty? Crafty and manipulative? Think about it.

Gentleness- Our world is a world of force, political power, and advantage taken. Strength is coveted and weakness exploited. How refreshing to find someone with the opposite value, who without being weak or passive is very careful concerning the rights and feelings of those who could in no way benefit him. That is unbelievably attractive!

Goodness- It's wonderful to be around someone you can feel safe with. We can relax a bit without worrying that we're being drawn into any type of impropriety or taken advantage of in some way. Such people are all too rare in our world.

Faith- It takes faith to be the kind of person we need to be, both with God and those in our lives. There's nothing that can build the respect and

admiration of others for us like seeing God working within us. It's one thing to hear us talk our spiritual line but when they can see for themselves what God does for us and see our prayers answered, that's attractive.

A placard on the wall at Hillcrest reform school lists three keys for a better life: *Work for what you get; Ask for what you want; Follow through with what you say.* I don't have time to pursue the connection of these three to faith right now, but it's there. Faith works within such channels. Each represents things we'll either leave undone or only partially and half-heartedly do because of unbelief. Sparse sowing = sparse reaping!

Temperance- Also known as self control, this is one of the most desirable traits of all. It affects all areas of our life, from spending, to eating, to sexual appetites, to our use of time. Does our mouth flap constantly, or do we stop it long before we wear out our listener? Is our life a rolley-coaster of bingeing followed by self-condemnation? Who's really in charge of my checkbook?

For the long term, this one trait has more to say about whether a relationship will grow or die than any other. Lord, take charge of my life, and manage what I cannot, for I know that I need you...

Events

Looks like we have a few fun things coming up for May. One of our yearly traditions has been attending the Cinco de Mayo celebration at the waterfront. Meet at Gateway Transit Center by 11 AM on the 6th and we'll ride down together. Bring enough money for a lunch and to have a bit of fun for the day

Promise Keepers Men: Since we finished the 'Seven Promises' book we won't have a chapter assignment this month, but we could spend a bit of time talking about what we learned over the last series of months, and work on a strategy to go through the same material and get more out of it next time. After all, we aint got it 'till we're doing it.

We haven't been out on a Friday night for a bit, not to town anyway, so how about a movie? We'll try for one of the McMenamins' theatre's,

but we can't make the final planning because they don't announce their movie choices very far ahead. If nothing good is available there is always a plan "B" too. What would that be? Call and find out.

Don't forget prayer on the 8th. God keeps moving on us, so we keep seeking Him. The closer we get the better He likes it. Lord, let that heart of intercession take hold of our entire group! Amen!

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