

Ornaments on a Masterpiece?

(written by Sis. Linda Poitras)

“I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well”
(Psalm 139:14).

INTRODUCTION – *(Use demonstration of flower wearing earrings and necklace. Thanks to Bro. David Reynolds for the idea.)*

- ✓ Show flower in its original God-given design.
- ✓ Poke holes in the petals and add earrings.
- ✓ Drape necklace around flower petals.
- ✓ Ask students if this makes the flower more beautiful.
- ✓ Call for volunteer to read Matthew 6:28-30.
- ✓ Call for a different volunteer to read Matthew 6:28-30 from a different translation (*NLT* or *NIV*).
- ✓ Ask students why they feel a need to wear jewelry.
- ✓ Where did the idea come from that women need help to be beautiful?
- ✓ Why are ornaments needed on God’s special creation?
- ✓ Call for volunteer to read Genesis 1:27.
- ✓ Why do women, made in the image of God, need ornaments to be beautiful?

BIBLE LESSON

Holiness is defined basically as “separation.” This separation was away from sin and unto God.

- 1) In the Old Testament, God’s chosen people were:
 - Different from other nations – Exodus 23:24
 - Different from other religions – Jeremiah 51:45
 - Holy unto God
- 2) In the New Testament, God’s chosen people were:
 - Separated from sin and lack of repentance – 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15
 - Separated from compromise and worldly things – 2 Timothy 3:1-5
 - Separated from false doctrines – Galatians 1:8-10; Matthew 7:15-20
- 3) God’s way involves separation, but also many blessings.
- 4) 2 Corinthians 6:16-18 – “And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.”

- 5) 2 Corinthians 7:1 – “Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”

The story is told of a man who died and went to heaven. As St. Peter was showing him around, he noticed an extremely large building, something like a warehouse. “What is that?” the man asked. Peter replied, “You do not want to know.” “Yes I do,” replied the man. “No you don’t,” said Peter. This went on for some time until finally Peter said, “Okay, I will show you.” He took the man inside where there were rows upon rows of shelves, all full of boxes, stacked so high you could not see the top. As they walked down the aisles, the man noticed there were names written on each box. “Is my name here?” he asked excitedly. “Yes,” said Peter, “but you do not want to see inside that box.” “Oh yes I do!” exclaimed the man. He hurried to find his name in the alphabetical order of shelves and boxes. When he took down his box and opened it, there was a list so long he could not read it all of many wonderful things. “What is this? He asked. Peter replied, “I told you not to look. This is a list of all the good things God wanted to give you, but couldn’t.” “Why not,” Asked the man. “Because you would not allow Him to work His will in your life,” said Peter. “You just wouldn’t let Him do for you what He wanted to. You had to do it all your way.”

If we want to claim God’s promises, we have a job to do. A life of separation and holiness is required to draw closer to God. God will not force us to separate ourselves, but we will give up these things if we choose to remain like the world:

- ✓ Our Christian joy – John 15:11
- ✓ God’s divine protection – John 17:12, 14-15
- ✓ Answered prayers – John 15:7, 16; Proverbs 28:9
- ✓ Our sense of the fatherly presence of God – John 14:21, 23

CONCLUSION

Exodus 33:1-16 tells an interesting story. Chapter 32 gives the account of Israel’s great sin with the golden calf. Aaron took the golden earrings that were in their ears – men, women, boys, and girls (Exodus 32:1-3) – and made a graven image of a cow for them to worship.

When Moses came down the mountain, his anger was terrible. It was nothing, however, compared to God’s anger. These were the people He had just miraculously delivered from slavery and Pharaoh’s army. Now they are bowing down to something made with their own hands. God was so vexed, He called for anyone loyal to Him to slay everyone who did not want to follow Him. The Levites separated themselves, and killed thousands of their brothers and friends. On top of that, God sent a terrible plague and thousands more died.

Chapter 33 is a renewal of the covenant God made with Abraham years before. It required a special dedication to God's ways. God was deciding what to do with these stiffnecked people, and he demanded they remove their ornaments (Exodus 33:1-6). This was an outward sign of their dedication to God, and desire to please Him. According to Exodus 33:6, the Israelites did not wear ornaments again after this time.

There are several passages that mention ornaments after Exodus 33:6, but not in a positive way. The people of Israel were asked by God to remove them to prove their loyalty to Him, and they never again put them back on – unless they were backslidden.

1) Two of the prophets refer to backslidden Israel like a woman who tries to make herself beautiful for lovers (idol gods):

- ✓ Jeremiah 4:30
- ✓ Ezekiel 23:40

2) Queen Jezebel is another great example of a painted face and ornaments – used for the purpose of enticing her enemies (2 Kings 9:30).

3) The Great Harlot of Revelation wears every possible ornamentation – Revelation 17:4

On the other hand, God's chosen people, His bride (the church) and women worthy of emulation in the Bible are described not wearing ornaments:

1) Esther 2:13-15

2) The Bride of Christ – Revelation 19:7-8

3) Godly Women – 1 Timothy 2:9-10

4) Godly Wives – 1 Peter 3:1-6

Solomon, that wisest of men (next to Jesus) described the most special woman of all. She is a "virtuous woman" and her qualities are many. One thing is never mentioned, however, and that is ornaments. She does not require them. They would, in fact, take away from her true beauty which comes from the inside: *"Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised"* (Proverbs 31:30).

God made everything beautiful in His time (Ecclesiastes 3:11), and there is no need for ornamentation and paint to enhance His work. We only need to take care of what God has blessed us with, keep it clean and allow His beauty to shine forth from within (Psalm 149:4). The beauty that comes from closeness to God, is a reflection of His holiness. You cannot buy that beauty in a bottle or with all the gold in the world.

"Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness"
(Psalm 29:2).

“Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come into his courts. O worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth”
(Psalm 96:8-9).

Study Questions

1. Write Matthew 6:28-30 on the lines provided. _____

2. What is the basic definition of “holiness?” _____

3. As related to “holiness” what three (3) things were distinctive to God’s chosen people in the Old Testament? (Support with Scripture when possible.)
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2) _____
3) _____
4. As related to “holiness” what three (3) things were distinctive to God’s chosen people in the New Testament? (Support with Scripture when possible.)
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
5. What four (4) things will we give up if we choose to remain like the world? (Support your answers with Scripture.)
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____
6. List two (2) of the terrible consequences of Israel’s sin with the worship of the golden calf.
1) _____

2) _____

7. Give a brief explanation of Exodus 33:1-6 as a renewal of the covenant God made with Abraham years before. _____
