



Sermon Transcription • Abbotsford

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True Beauty- (Proverbs 31:30)

[Please Note: This transcript has been lightly edited for ease of reading. Also, some headings have been added in square brackets to aid the reader in locating portions of the sermon.]

Joe Stowell is the name of a man who is the President of a Bible college a number of years ago and, in the mid-1980s, he actually wrote a book called Fan the Flame. It's a pretty good little book. In it he tells a story about his experience in Africa, he writes,

“I was in West Africa- Timbuktu to be exact- and the missionaries were telling me that in that culture the larger a women is, the more beautiful she is thought to be. In fact, a young missionary who had a small, trim wife said that the nationals told him she was a bad reflection on him- he obviously wasn't providing well enough for her. A proverb in that part of Africa says that if your wife is on a camel and the camel cannot stand up, she is a truly beautiful wife.” [laughter]

He judged the beauty of your bride by whether or not the camel sinks to the ground when she sits on her.

Beauty is a culturally conditioned thing. Those of you who have lived long enough know that it's also a generationally conditioned thing. The beauty of today is not the beauty of yesteryear. Marilyn Monroe was a size 12 and she was thought to be the most beautiful woman around. You probably remember old movies where they said, “Oh, she's a hourglass shape.” That was the thing. They said, “You got to have good hips on you to be a beautiful woman” in the days gone by, but nowadays models don't look like that. You're not allowed to have hips, you have to be a size 0 or a size 2. Similarly, across the world, there are different definitions of beauty. You might know Ezra Okoti, he's our campus pastor up in Mission, and Ezra has lost about 20-25 pounds in the last little while and people have been coming up to him and saying to him, “Oh, you look so good, Ezra! It's so great. You're trim, fit.” Ezra doesn't know how to respond to that because, being from Africa, he's thinking to himself, “Now, if I go back to Africa and I show up in this condition before my mother, she will say, ‘What's wrong with you?’” Like, you're supposed to show up and she's supposed to say, “Oh, you look so fat!” and that's a good thing. In fact, Ezra told me, that on one occasion, he brought a girl home to the house and that was the first thing his mother said to the girl, “Oh, you're so fat!” [laughter] If you're a mother-in-law here, don't do that, it's not a good idea. When I was living in New Zealand, we had Singaporean friends and my first son was born and the wife of this couple- we were over for dinner at their house- the wife of the couple could not stop staring at his eyes. “He's got such beautiful eyelids!” she said. I have never heard anyone say that. “They're double eyelids!” she said. Now, apparently, in Singapore, for one to



have double eyelids was the mark of beauty and he had it, as do most people with my DNA, have double eyelids. Brazilian women, these days, will do implants in their rear ends so that they look more voluptuous. Here, I have a wife, I have a daughter, I have two sisters and a mother and I have been asked repeatedly, in my life, while I've gone shopping with them, "Do these jeans make my butt look big?" And I'm like, "I don't see anything," right, "I don't know." It's different, right? I suppose if you're in Brazil, you're like, "Ya, huge. Makes them look huge," right? It's culturally conditioned, it's generationally conditioned, but, even though we have all of these difference of opinion regarding what beauty is and how we should define it, however we define it, it is something we seek after. Like, with a lot of our money and time and energy, it's something we want. We want to be rich, we want to be famous, we want to be beautiful. I want to be the kind of person who walks in the room and has people notice. I don't want my nose to be the wrong shape, I want to fit into 'beautiful' categories in my culture and I'll do whatever is necessary to make that happen.

This proverb, Proverbs 31:30, is actually about beauty. It's written about a women, but it's written to a man. So, proverbs, in general, are written by Solomon, in most cases, to his son. So, he's instructing his son, who is just coming of age, on what the good life looks like, and so, all the stuff he says in here is written to a boy, but, in this case, it's written about a women. So, it has application across the board here. What I want to do in the next few minutes is take two big steps in the process of studying this passage.

1. I want to show you the proverb in three parts. There are three lines in it and I want to just tear each one of them apart and explain to you what they mean.
2. The points for three people or three kinds of people. Let's just apply it to different people who are here in the room.

Okay? Proverb in three parts, points for three people. Here we go.

[The Proverbs 31:30]

Here's the proverb.

"Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised."

You can see the three parts there, right?

"Charm is deceptive, [one] and beauty is fleeting; [two], but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised."

Charm is deceptive. That word charm in Hebrew, which is the original language here, it actually means allure. It's used all over the place to talk about how a prostitute uses her allure to get a client. So, it's the way she *stands* on the street corners, the way she *looks* in the eyes of a potential client, it's the way she dresses herself up to bring him in. The word in our culture that probably is the best translation here is sex appeal. I don't think they'd want to put that in the Bible, but that's right, it's sex appeal.



You know, of course, these days that if you add the word “sexy” to any it sells better, right? Like carpet. It’s actually carpet, right? You want to buy bathroom fixtures, “Ooh, it’s a sexy faucet,” right?

I was in the grocery store and I was looking at the women’s magazines, as I do. You know, you walk through the checker line and you’re standing there waiting for them to scan your items and there they have all of these magazines. So, I wrote down, this week, a few of the things that were written. “Strong is sexy.” “Sexy easy hair.” “The sexiest dresses of the year.” “How to have your sexiest summer.” Apparently seasons of the year now are sexy. [laughter] I think summer is the sexiest one. We want sex appeal, we want charm, we want to be thought of as charming. When you go to a party and someone sees you, “Oh, they’re charming.” You want people to take note. We will do whatever we can to make sure that they take note. The problem is, though, is that sex appeal, that charm, is deceptive. By that I mean that it shows outwardly something that might not be true inwardly. It’s not always deceptive, but in many cases it is. It’s advertising something publicly that may not be true inside of you.

I was in Beijing prior to the Olympics in 2007, so the Olympics were in 2008, the summer Olympics, and I was in Beijing in 2007, downtown area. They have these new buildings that were being built for the Olympics, and then, next to those new buildings, they had these false fronts. So, from a distance, it honestly looked like a beautiful a new building, Lynden’s Front Street, and then another beautiful building. But, when you got closer, you realized it was just a painting on the wall. It was done in sections and you could peek through the little cracks between the sections and behind it were all of these slums and they were cleaning those slums out. I actually talk to a guy, I said, “What are they doing down here?” He said, “Well, look, the news cameras from around the world are going to be here soon. So, they want everyone to see how beautiful Beijing is and that we have the right kinds of people we live here and, so, when all the people come, they are going to see this sort of thing and not the slums that are in behind. In fact, the people who are in the slums are being moved out to the edge of the city so, even though they are there and hidden behind these walls, they might not creep out through the cracks and actually be seen. You might remember the opening ceremonies of those Olympics. They spent more money of the Beijing Olympics in 2008 than anyone had ever spent on anything. Like, it was amazing how much they spent on these Olympics. You might remember that they had a little girl who was singing in those Olympics in the opening ceremony. She was the cutest little thing. Well, apparently, after the Olympics opening ceremonies were over, it came out a couple weeks later, that the little girl, who was singing in the Olympics, was actually not singing, she was lip syncing because a month prior they did the dry run and the girl who actually sang and had the beautiful voice was kind of homely. So, they said, “Get here out, find the cutest little girl you can, teach her how to lip sync the song, and put her in.” So, even though they were presenting to the world this cute little girl who was singing, what was actually going on was that charm, that charming little girl, was deceiving all of us, or the government through her. Charm is like that. It doesn’t always match what you see. It can be deceptive that way.

I sometimes watch news bloopers on Youtube, it’s actually one of my favourite things to watch on Youtube. You know what I mean by news bloopers? You have the people who are doing their news and their doing their presentation “Now we’re over here by this flood and I want want to get real close



to the flood,” and then they fall in, in these bloopers, and I howl and laugh. I tell my wife, “Look, she fell in!” It’s hysterical, good stuff. The reason I like it... or they cut to the person prior to the person being ready, or they’re going to give their report on the side of the road and there they have the microphone and there is some bug and they are trying to smack the bug . They go live, “Let’s go live to Susan out there by the creek,” and she doing this [waving his hand madly through the air] ...I just love that sort of... So, the reason I like it is because it’s the introduction of real life into the persona, into the charming persona... they want to present themselves as always having it all together and “I have a professional persona,” but the real person is behind there and sometimes those two don’t match. Charm can be deceptive that way.

I was watching a TV show a few years ago about these single women who were travelling around New York City. They followed these people, it’s like a reality show. They chose out these women, beautiful women by all the world’s standards, beautiful women, who would go to these clubs and all the men wanted to be with them and they would leave the club. They were considered just *gorgeous* women in the clubs, the most desirable women around, charming beyond measure, but then they would leave the club, go back to their apartments, and there was nothing charming about them. Charm can be deceptive that way.

And, beauty can be fleeting. In fact, it often is. Reader’s Digest, a number of years ago—some of you are young enough to know that Reader’s Digest... you don’t know what Reader’s Digest is— It was a little book, it was like the early internet, it was a little book that people used to send in their little stories and they would publish it, okay? So, contributions from all over the place, these little stories. Reader’s Digest had this little story, it went this way.

“My wife was grading a science test at home that she had given to her elementary school class and was reading some of the results to me. The subject was ‘The Human Body,’ and the first question was: ‘Name one of the major functions of the skin.’ One child wrote: ‘To keep people who look at you from throwing up.’” [laughter]

Which is likely true, right? I mean, if I saw you with no skin on your face, I’d be like, “Eww.” So, skin serves a basic function, but we give more attention to it than just that, right? What our skin looks like is something, as nations, that we spend billions of dollars on. What our hair looks like. In fact, we are often obsessed with our skin and what it says about us. So much so that the statistics regarding plastic surgery or cosmetic surgery have just skyrocketed in the last number of years. In 2009, so probably eight years ago, they did a study to try to show how much they had skyrocketed over the last 15 years. So, they compared the rates of cosmetic surgery in 1994 to the rates in 2009 and here were some of the results: The frequency of liposuction surgery in the United States increased 900% in 15 years. The frequency of breast augmentation surgery in the United States increased 1200% in 15 years. So, you can go on and on regarding... so the percentages were all like that, 800%, 900%, 2000%. Why are so many people getting face lifts? Why are so many people having breast augmentation? Why is this happening? The answer that the researchers came up with is actually if you compare those statistics to the responses people give regarding their feelings about plastics surgery or cosmetic surgery, meaning is it good, is it bad, are you indifferent to it, you see a correlation. You



realize that they reason people are doing it more is because it is no longer seen as being vain. Now, don't misunderstand me. I am in no way making some judgment call about this. All I am trying to say is that we are going to *great lengths, surgical lengths* now, to try to preserve our beauty for as long as we possibly can. *Forever 21.*

My wife and I were watching this movie the other day and we were talking about it. Many of you wouldn't remember Renee Zellweger, some of you will. In the 1990s, she was like the most popular Hollywood actress. She was in almost of the... almost all, she and Meg Ryan were in almost all of the romantic comedies. I was watching this movie, the other day, and I stopped it. It was on Netflix and I was like, "That is Renee Zellweger," and my wife said, "It is not." I said, "It is. Just listen to her voice. Back up, play her voice again, that's Renee Zellweger." She said, "No, no, no." So I opened the computer up, I typed it in, the IMDB, and that's... yup, she's in this movie, that's her character, that's her. It didn't look a thing like her. In fact, I found out, of course, that she has gone through some significant cosmetic surgery on her face because she had a number of wrinkles and they weren't hiring her anymore in Hollywood. So, here she is on this movie. There's a scene in the movie where she actually has to cry and she's like, she can't do it, her face won't move. Now, listen. When I'm watching this, you have to understand, I'm feeling for her, not just because of the crying, but I'm feeling for her because I'm thinking, "Okay, you live in a world where you can't get a job unless you look thirty and even that is pushing it. You're actually a mid-forties woman, but you can't look mid-forties and get a job in Hollywood because you've got to always look 25, 26." It's not going to get any better either.

I was talking to a bioethicist in Southern California a number of years ago. He was talking about the different kinds of technological advances that we've had and the things that are kind of coming around the corner that are going to create all sorts of questions regarding the future of what it means to be human. He mentioned a bunch to me and then the one that really caught my attention was he said that one of the things that's really going to change the way we live is the artificial womb. I said, "What?" The artificial womb. It's gotten to the point, in fact, that they can take the genetic material from a man and a woman and they can combine it and they can make it into an actual baby in the lab. Then, instead of implanting that into the wife, so that she carries the baby, they can take that and put it into what's called the artificial womb. The child can grow for nine months in the lab and be born in the lab and be handed to mom and dad. Now, they made this initially, what was driving it was they were trying to solve the problem of infertility, so that you could actually have your own baby *without* adoption and you could actually have your own genetic material to be a part of it. So, it's good news for infertile couples, but what they found out is, when the news came out regarding the production of these artificial wombs, is that most of the people who were writing in and requesting it and saying "When's it going to be out?," were not infertile couples, they were normal couples. So, the wife could have the baby, but she just didn't want to give her body over to the process. So, this bioethicist is telling me there is a real possibility that many of the kids around us are the offspring of a woman who didn't actually go through the process of pregnancy because she doesn't want her body to look like it does after you're pregnant. It's not beautiful, at least according to the standards of our society.

We do everything for beauty, but here's the problem: This is a losing battle. The proverb is right. Beauty is fleeting. I have a cartoon I want to show you. You can post it up there on the screen. On the



bottom it says, "In 2055, retirement village residents play game of 'Guess What the Tattoo Used to be.'" [laughter] A little thought bubble says, "A heart, an eagle, a mermaid? I don't—" I mean, at some point you're not going to be able to recognize it at all. We advertise sometimes the services and what we're doing on the weekend on social media. So, the guy who runs our Facebook account sent me a picture of a meme and it said "Beauty is fleeting" on the bottom and it was a picture of me from ten years ago and me from now. [laughter] When I came from New Zealand ten years ago, I was, and svelte and awesome looking, and now it looks like someone pumped me up like a balloon and I was like, "What the... oh my goodness." He said, "Should I post this?" Umm, no! [laughter] Even I have my limits. I mean the other day, seriously, felt something on my ear, it was this long thing. I was like, "There's a hair over there!" So, I'm pulling it and my ear starts going with it, and I'm pulling this thing... it's been growing for years. I have hair on my ears! I said to my wife, "What is that?" She says, "It's hair on your ear." I used to make fun of old guys with hair on their ears. Right, I had a teacher who had massive hair. My kids are laughing, "Ha ha, you have hair on your ears." I said, "It's funny now, but look at me closely. This, son, is your future, right here." [laughter] Fleeting! You know that. At some point, you're going to be old and fat. You might not like me saying that. "Oh, I'm offended now." Well, you know what? Father Time is undefeated.

"Charm is deceptive and beauty is fleeting, but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised."

I need to clarify something for you. The Hebrews, when they wrote their poetry- which is what the proverbs are, poetry— they would compare two things often, this thing and that thing. You can compare two things and your point being none of the first one, and all of the second one. That's one way you can compare things, you juxtapose them and say, "This first one is horrible and you should have *nothing* to do with it and this second one is the *only* one you should have to do with." That's one way. But the Hebrews often times would say, "No, no, no. We're not comparing these things so that you have nothing to do with the first one and only everything to do with the second. Sometimes it's not so much of the first one, but more of the second." That's what's going on here. So what you have in this proverb is a verse that's *not* saying that beauty and charm are stupid. There are other proverbs, in fact, that seem to say that beauty is something that should be valued. In Proverbs 5, there is even a phrase that says to the young man that, when you get married, your wife's breast should satisfy you always. There is a value in beauty throughout the Scriptures. God made beautiful things. To be a beautiful person and care about physical beauty is not a bad thing. It's just that compared to fear of the Lord, it's *nothing*. That in God's economy, physical beauty is *nothing* compared to the fear of the Lord. *That* is where true beauty lies.

What does that mean though? "Fear of the Lord". In Proverbs, what does it mean to fear the Lord? One of the enduring images that I want to give to you, is one that I gave a number of weeks ago. When you think about Proverbs, what you've got to think about is the image that I gave you of when I was talking about the Bible study I used to do at the camp I was a counsellor at. Right? I blindfolded one of the kids and I told him, "Look, you're going to have to walk this path, but, in order to help you walk this particular path around these cones, you've got your friend and you need to follow his voice. He can't touch you, but you just have to follow the voice. But, there's going to be another person who also can not touch you, but they're going to be calling out to you, so that you don't complete the mission



around the cones, but instead walk and follow them off the edge of the deck. You need to choose one, or ones, you are going to listen to." I would sometimes add several other voices into the mix. There was one voice that you need to listen to and all the others that are trying to lead you astray.

This is really what Solomon is doing in Proverbs. He's saying, "Look, there is the way of wisdom and there is the way of the fool. You need to listen! Your life in this present time will be greatly helped by listening to the way of wisdom and it will end you in eternal bliss. But...there are all these other voices that are calling out to you saying, 'No, no, no. Come this way,' and they're foolish, the way of the sluggard. They might seem right to you in the moment, but, in the long run, it is just going to kill you, here, and in the life to come. Choose the right voice to hear." The fear of the Lord is listening to the voice that is echoing the things of the Lord. To fear the Lord is to hear Him and to follow his way, to be convinced deep in your spirit that His ways are right and that culture's ways, although they might seem right in the moment, aren't always. You don't, in other words, need to take your cues from the culture, you can take your cues from God. The fear of the Lord is what's truly beautiful.

Now, if I say that to a bunch of Christians, which is most of the people in the room, you nod, "Oh, yeah. That's right. That's right." And yet, we walk out the door and we don't do it. Why? Here's what I think is the answer to that: The power of a repeated message. Let's just think about it. Let's count up how much time you sit listening and being inundated with the Word of God during your week. You might come to church, an hour there. You might be in a community group, there's an hour or an hour and a half. You might do your devotions. Even if you did it every day, sit down and spend time in the Word of God every day, what are we counting up? Maybe five, five hours a week, maybe? So, you're being preached to with the worldview of Heaven five hours a week or so, but all of the rest of your waking time, you are listening to the world preach to you a value system that might be at odds with that system, that worldview of Heaven. After a while, just the repetition of it, over and over and over again, seeing the billboard "This is the good life," listening to the radio "This is the good life," reading the paper "This is the good life," social media "This is the good life." You hear it so often repeated that, even if it's not true- and in many cases it's not- you believe it's true because it is just said so often and so loudly.

My son, when he was a little guy, wanted desperately a Spike the Dinosaur toy for Christmas. It was this little electric dinosaur that you could push a button and his head would go up. I didn't know why, I didn't know where he got the idea, so we bought him a Spike the Dinosaur because I'm a father and I'm like itching to see him excited on Christmas morning. It's what you do. You buy them the gift they really want and it's wrapped up and he opens it up and he sees it and he's like, "Yay!" It gets assembled and he sits there, looks at it for a couple minutes, pushes a couple buttons and goes "Meh." He played with it that morning and one more time and the rest of the time it just sat there. After a while I said to my wife, "Where did he get this idea?" So she asked him, and he said, "Do you remember that TV show that I watch every morning, mommy? Well there's a commercial in the middle and it's Spike the Dinosaur." Every week, while we let that TV show babysit our kids, every week they would show this and, after a while, it just... "I have to have it. I have to have it." In other words, his desires were affected by the advertising and the repetition of it. Man, there is a power in a repeated message.



My wife was listening this week to the radio and she said they were interviewing these girls who had eating disorders. The researchers that have been studying and helping these girls have noticed a consistency in their stories, and that is bulimia and anorexia and a number of other eating disorders. These girls, all of them, were avid readers of teen magazines when they were fourteen/thirteen years old. The researchers have said, "Look, seems to be more than a correlation there. It seems to be some kind of causation between the mind that is formed, the definitions of beauty that are formed by the airbrushed images and the eating disorder because you're not going to be the airbrushed images. Even the images aren't like that, that is why they are airbrushed." It is a standard that it set and you'll never meet it and so you think, "Well the only way for me to remain as thin as those ladies are is I don't eat or I just throw it up after I do." It's the power of a repeated message and again you have those voices calling over and over again, but there is the Word of Lord calling you to say, "Change your mind about what real beauty looks like."

"Charm is deceptive and beauty is fleeting, but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised."

[The Points]

Right, so in the last few minutes here, just a quick three applications for three different kinds of people. I just want to talk to particular folks who are listening to me now.

Here's the first, if you are a single man. Like I said before, this actually is written directly to you about women. So, here is the application that I think you need to take home. You need to look for a *truly* beautiful woman and have that definition of beauty formed by what the Scriptures say. There is nothing wrong, everything right, for wanting to find an attractive girl who meets certain physical beauty standards in our culture. Nothing wrong with that. But if that's the standard that you elevate above all others, man you are just so off base when it comes to the Bible because in your deepest, darkest moments, later on in your life where everything is going wrong, you want a woman who fears the Lord. What her eyebrows look like, in that moment, don't matter. [laughter]

Ken Hughes was a pastor in Southern California. He actually ended up being a pastor in Wheaton, Illinois at a very popular church called College Church. Prior to that, he had a very interesting experience in ministry. He first got going... He was like the chosen son of church planting in Southern California. Like, if we're going to plant a church in Southern California, we are going to get Ken Hughes to do it and he is going to be the best church planter and this church is going to grow and everyone is going to be reached with the Gospel. They gave him money and backing and support, the likes of which most church planters never see. They launched this church, it was going well for a year and the second year and the numbers plateaued and after the numbers plateaued they started to dwindle and they started to dwindle and they started to dwindle. It started becoming evident that he actually might have to close the church. All this promise invested in this man, his own views of himself of being the guy who can make it work, were just destroyed. He comes home from the meeting, where he and other leaders of the church decided that they were going to close their doors, and the whole thing in his mind, at that moment, was for not. He drives home, he comes to his house, which he is now going to have to sell and do something else, he walks inside and he's livid with God. Because, look, "The



Lord wants healthy churches in His world, I'm planting a healthy church, and the Lord doesn't want to fulfill what he seem to want to happen. What?! I don't know if I want to follow or preach about a God like that!" Devastated, he walks through the door of his house, he sits down, and his wife sees him. He sits down on the couch, she sits next to him, puts her hand on his hand, and she said these words:

"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."

An excellent wife is hard to find and you just read about one. I'm telling you, young men, that the days of despair are around the corner in this life and, in that moment, you need a woman who is going to hold your hand and help you see the light in the midst of darkness. You need a woman who will fear the Lord. So pursue that.

The second group, married men. What do you praise the girls in your life for? Now, please don't misunderstand me here. Every morning my daughter comes to me and she walks in the room and my first words to her are "Hello Gorgeous!" I praise her for her physical beauty all the time and, yes, your mother, your sisters, praise them for their physical beauty. But... if that's the sum total of what you are praising them for, they will live up to those words. The thing that they will want to please you in, more than anything else, is that. They love you, your wife, your daughter, they love you and they want to become what it is you praise them for. If you never say anything about their character, if you never say, "Oh, I see the Spirit of God working in your life," then it's likely they don't often think about it except at the exclusion of you. I mean, praise them for character traits. When you see what they're doing that really shows the beauty of Christ in their life, say it! Sit them down, look them in the eyes, and say, "Man, when you love our kids and you give of your time and in the middle of the night you are up and I'm sleeping because I'm lazy... I think you're amazing. I see God working in you." It's a *thousand* times more valuable than saying, "Your jeans look good." Make it a practice. Look for ways to praise the women in your life for the fear of the Lord.

Last one, ladies. Consider what kind of beauty you should spend your time on. Can I just... I'm going to be really blunt here. You got to stop drinking the culture's Kool-Aid here. Like, I know, even as a man who is getting older, that I look in the mirror sometimes and go "Man, this is not going well." [laughter] There is something though, especially as a woman, that you feel depressed because of that. I feel sometimes depressed because of it. You feel depressed, but I'm telling you that you are rooting your value in the wrong place. You're defining beauty the culture's way. "My nose is too big. My ears are two big. My hair is not what it used to be. I'm bigger than I once was." You know what? If the Spirit of God is producing His fruit in your life and the fear of the Lord marks you, you are gorgeous in His eyes. So, define it that way! Seek that! It's great to be beautiful by the world's standards. It's great for you to love your hair and nails and all the other... it's great! Don't forsake that necessarily, but, man, there is a better beauty. 1 Peter 3:3-4,



“Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as elaborate hairstyles and the wearing of gold jewelry or fine clothes. Rather, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God’s sight.”

Or, maybe better said,

“Charm is deceptive and beauty is fleeting, but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.”

Let me pray for us. Lord, I love Proverbs. I’m so thankful for the practicality of it and how it addresses the issues in our lives and some of the ways that we think that we hide away from the rest around us. I want to freely admit, Lord, that my mind has not conformed to Your mind when it comes to stuff like this. I want to confess, Lord, that I often do not listen to the right voice. For that, Father, I am a sinner in need of a Saviour. You have provided that Saviour who loves us. So God, I’m thankful, Lord, that you don’t have to walk out of the room today feeling like we just have to work harder. Instead, Father, we can walk out as redeemed sinners, but whose mind now must be reoriented around our King and His kingdom. So, Lord, would you help us to hear you well, to think well, and to adjust our lives in light of those things. We ask, in Jesus’ name, Amen.