

CLOTHE YOURSELVES INSTEAD WITH THE BEAUTY THAT COMES FROM WITHIN

Text 1 Peter 3:3-4

Bro Chris Afekolu (Bishop)

Let your beauty be not just the outward adorning of braiding the hair, and of wearing jewels of gold, or of putting on fine clothing; but in the hidden person of the heart, in the incorruptible adornment of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God very precious. (1 Peter 3:3-4 WEB)

We spend a lot of time focusing on our outward appearance such as perfecting our hairstyle, improving our physique, pedicure, selecting the right clothes, shoes and bags. In all, a lot of thought goes into creating just the right look. Do we spend the same amount of time cultivating our inner beauty? “As warri will say do spend time packaging our inner self”? We know what inner beauty looks like...patience, generosity, peace-loving, fearless, demeanor (manner, behavior) disposition, composure (self-control, calmness, serenity) etc.... or we are filled with a silent strength. **Are we spending more time worrying about the color of our teeth instead of the kind of words that come out of our mouth?**

Ultimately our words are a reflection of our hearts. ***“A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks. (Luke 6:45 NKJV)”***. Above paints a vivid picture of the state of a good or an evil heart. An evil heart brings forth evil from the mouth. The Bible strongly condemns gossiping, murmuring, talebearers, backbiting, wrongful accusations, slanderers and the likes.

The one involve in such activities is tapping from the evil treasure of a heart that is sick spiritually and not being adequately nurtured or refused to be nurtured with the living word of God. The Psalmist presents it this way; ***“For there is no faithfulness in their mouth; Their inward part is destruction; Their throat is an open tomb; They flatter with their tongue”***. (Psalms 5:9 NKJV) This underscores the need for us to build or nurture our inner man with the divine word of God.

First, Children of God should take care that all their external behaviour be answerable to their profession of Christianity: We must be holy in all manner of conversation. ***“But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation;” (1 Peter 1:15 KJV) {did not say some, but all}.***

Secondly, The outward adorning of the body is very often sensual and excessive; for instance, when it is immoderate (extreme or extravagant), and above your degree and station in the world, when you are proud of it and puffed up with it, when you dress with design to allure and tempt others, when your apparel is too rich, curious, or superfluous, when your fashions are fantastical (weird), imitating the levity and vanity of the worst people, and when they are immodest and wanton -1Timothy 2:9. The attire of a harlot can never become a chaste Christian matron. Religion promotes neatness, and cleanliness, and a proper attention to our external appearance according to our circumstances in life, as certainly as it does to the internal virtue of the soul. This passage instructs us - Instead of the outward adorning of the body, he directs Christian wives, by extension Brethren to put on much more excellent and beautiful ornaments, v. 4. Here note, First, the part to be adorned: **The hidden man of the heart; that is, the soul; the hidden, the inner man. Take care to adorn and beautify your souls rather than your bodies.**

Secondly, the ornament prescribed. It must, in general, be something that is not corruptible, but should be that, which beautifies the soul, that is, the graces and virtues of God's Holy Spirit. The ornaments of the body are destroyed by the moth and perish in the using; **but the grace of God, the longer we wear it, the brighter and better it is.** More especially, the finest ornament of Christian women is a meek and quiet spirit, a tractable (easily managed) easy temper of mind, void of passion (intensely emotional), pride, and immoderate anger, discovering itself in a quiet obliging behavior towards their husbands and families.

If the husband be harsh, and averse to religion ‘i.e. strongly oppose to religion, (which was the case of these good wives to whom the apostle gives this direction), there is no way so likely to win him as a prudent meek behaviour. At least, a quiet spirit will make a good woman easy to herself, which, being visible to others becomes an amiable ornament to a person in the eyes of the world. Thirdly, the Excellency of it; Meekness and calmness of spirit are, in the sight of God, of great price - amiable in the sight of men, and precious in the sight of God. Learn,

1. A true Believer's topmost care lies in the right ordering and commanding of his own spirit – self-control. Where the hypocrite's work ends, there the true Christian's work begins.

2. **The endowments of the inner man are the chief ornaments of a Christian;** but especially a composed, calm, and quiet spirit, renders either man or woman beautiful and lovely. Whatever pertains to our outward decoration, however beautiful and costly, is fading; but that which pertains to the soul is enduring. As the soul is immortal, so all that tends to adorn that will be immortal too; as the body is mortal, so all with which it can be invested is decaying and will soon be destroyed.

HOW CAN YOU NURTURE THE INNER MAN?

- The power to change lives is not in our eloquence – it is on God’s word. We are encouraged, whatever circumstances we face, we must continue to preach the word faithfully.
- Make a deliberate effort to study the word of God. This can challenge us to know more about the God we serve. Many still do not know why they are called Christians. Many just walk into the Lord’s assembly sarcastically. To be talking of oppression, tribalism, playing politics and the likes in the household of God shows the extent the inner man has being ruin.
- We must give earnest heed to the scripture to improve the richness of the soul; many are haggard, yawning for spiritual nourishment.
- Taking out time from your busy schedules to study the Bible may help you understand more about our Creator. You will have a better understanding how He relates with mankind.
- Has He changed? 1) Consider God speaking through the clouds and the thunderous voice – **Exodus 20:18-20**. 2) what happened to those that murmured against Aaron and Moses – **Number 16:2-36**, Korah and his cohorts were swallowed by the ground and 250 consumed by fire. 3) Maybe we think, these happened in old time before grace, what of Ananias and Sapphira - **Acts 5:1-11**. 4) When we slander the children of God through our gossips and murmuring; the wrath of God could be provoked!
- There is common a saying that “knowledge is power”. Knowledge in the word of God is a great tool for us to be better disciples. Current bible study by sisters is very commendable. Things we learn on our own hardly fade out and attempting to practice them makes it easier. The Berean Christians were commended for this – **Acts 17:10-11**. I will also encourage those who finds it difficult to read and write, to pick up training program to improve on this considering the importance of God’s word to our salvation

TAKEAWAY

- **Take care to adorn and beautify your souls rather than your bodies. We should** focus on something that is not corruptible, but should be that, which beautifies the soul, that is, the graces and virtues of God's Holy Spirit.
- **Be careful with idle talk;** "But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. (*Matthew 12:35-36* NKJV). Many are saying things they ought not to say – *1 Timothy 5:13*
- **Make deliberate effort to study the word of God.** Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. (*2 Timothy 2:15 KJV*) *see also Hebrew 2:1 -3*