

Very Precious In The Sight Of God

Franklin Church of Christ
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PM Worship

Introduction:

What does it mean to be precious? We may speak of precious stones or jewels. We mean that they are valuable. We might talk about an heirloom that is precious to us. We mean that it has sentimental value. We talk about our children being precious. We mean they are important to us. Notice that calling something precious is not a remark about innate value; it describes our feelings toward it. Because it is precious, we desire it. We want to protect it. It holds a special place in our hearts and minds. What is precious to God? What does He hold dear? What does He view as important? What does He want to protect and preserve? Do you realize that you could be the answer to these questions? While **I Peter 3:1-6** is specifically about the wife's role in the home, each of us can learn from it some general principles that will make us very precious in the sight of God.

Discussion:

- I. If you want to be precious to God, do not focus on outward appearances.
 - A. Let's face it. We live in a society that focuses on outward appearance. The focus of our culture is on style, fashion, labels and flesh. In reference to beauty, wealth and sex appeal, we are told, "If you got it, flaunt it." This focus is designed to get people to notice us, to make people look twice. If you want people to notice how prestigious you are, choose from a line of power clothes. If you want people to know how wealthy you are, choose from a line of name brand designer clothes. If you want people to know how trendy you are, choose from a line of the latest fashions and hairstyles. If you want people to know how sexy you are, choose from a line of skimpy and skin tight clothes. Do these things and men and women of the world love it. They will pay attention to you. They will be drawn to you. You will stand out in a crowd.
 - B. Those things may be precious to the world. But they are not precious to God. **Luke 16:15** is clear, what is precious to the world is abominable to God. Peter's point is not that we must look as ugly, poor and unfashionable as possible. Those who take this approach, while trying to display their righteousness, are actually violating the very same principle. They are focusing on the outer man just as the Pharisees did (**Matthew 23:5, 25-28**). They are doing so to be seen by men. Instead, we are to behave in such a way that when people see us, they do not see us, but see God and glorify Him (**Matthew 5:16**).
- II. If you want to be precious to God, focus on the unseen person of the heart.
 - A. As Jesus said in **Luke 6:43-45**, a good tree will produce good fruit. Just so, a good heart will produce a good life. As you focus on the hidden person of the heart, you need to develop a gentle and quiet spirit. Here, "spirit" is used to denote "the disposition or influence which fills and governs the soul of any one" (**Strong's Enhanced Lexicon**). Our disposition is to be gentle and quiet. Peter calls this incorruptible beauty. That is, its beauty never fades, falters or fails. Jewelry tarnishes. Clothes fade and fall apart. Fashion and style are temporary. Hair turns grey. Bodies and faces grow old. Skin wrinkles and sags. Billions of dollars are spent every year to try to hang on to corruptible beauty. However, a gentle and quiet spirit is a lasting, incorruptible beauty, not just here, but throughout eternity.
 - B. In this context, Peter provides a specific illustration of a meek and quiet spirit. Women exemplify this spirit by being submissive to their husbands. Contrast this with the woman in **Proverbs 7:10-11**. The harlot was not meek and quiet, submitting to her husband. Rather, she was loud and rebellious, having feet that would not stay at home. What do we learn from this contrast? Having a meek and quiet spirit means accepting the role God has allotted for you without argument, rebellion or contention. It means you are not constantly trying to make your own way or draw attention to yourself and how great you are. It means you simply want what God wants.
 - C. Having a meek and quiet spirit does not mean a weak spirit that cannot help but be walked on and pushed around. Rather, it refers to a strength, power or ability held in check. Consider Peter's illustration again, every single one of those holy women of old could have stepped out to be like the proverbial harlot. They had that ability. They could have focused on self-indulgence and self-promotion. But they did not. They held that in check and were submissive. Just so, each of us has the ability to act however we want. We are not forced to be what God wants us

to be. But if we want to be precious in God's sight, then we must hold that self-indulgence and self-promotion in check. As **James 1:19** commands, we will be swift to hear what God says and slow to speak against it or display our anger with it.

- D. What is your life about? Is it about self-indulgence? Is it about self-promotion? Is it about self-assertion? Is your life governed by demanding your rights and whining about your wants? Is your time spent defending why you get to do whatever you want to do? Or is your life about self-sacrifice? Is it about submission to God's will, quietly and meekly accepting His role for you and what that means about your relationship with others? Our great example is Jesus. In **Matthew 21:5**, Jesus' meekness is highlighted. His quietness even in the face of opposition is demonstrated by the prophecy of **Isaiah 53:7**.

III. If you want to be precious to God, have chaste conduct.

- A. When Paul wrote to Timothy, making a similar point, he said that our adornment should be good works (**I Timothy 2:10**). If we want to be precious to God, we should spend more time focused on being good and doing good than on looking good.
- B. We must conduct ourselves with chastity. This means more than "going to church." We must do nothing, whether in word, dress, mannerism or conduct, that calls into question our purity. Conducting yourself with chastity means you do not wear clothes designed to entice sexual attention. It means you are not a flirt. You keep your conversation clean. You refrain from inappropriate situations that provide for the lusts of the flesh. Chastity means conducting yourself in such a way that not only will you be pure, but also those with whom you come in contact are not tempted to stray from their purity because of you.
- C. Chaste conduct is not just an issue for women. It is also for men. Tight clothes to accentuate physique, lewd and suggestive comments, whistling at women, walking down a path in such a way as to make sure you get to touch a woman, etc. are all unchaste behaviors.
- D. The term translated "chaste" is also found in **I John 3:3**. There it is translated "pure" and provides a standard. Are you behaving as Jesus would behave? If Jesus were actually standing next to you, would you change the way you were talking? Would you change the way you act? Would you try to cover up some part of your body that is now exposed? Would you look for a way to get away from Him so you would not feel so uncomfortable? Those who have hope of heaven purify themselves as Jesus is pure. Be chaste in your conduct. It is precious to God.

IV. If you want to be precious to God, trust Him.

- A. As we deal with issues of modesty and chastity, we can make the mistake of trying to draw lines where God has not done so. We might do this just to be able to come up with a standard. That would certainly make issues of congregational fellowship and discipline easier to deal with. However, that will never get to the heart of solving a modesty or chastity problem. Please notice that Peter actually highlights what is really the issue. In fact, it is somewhat frightening when you discover that these issues are not opinion issues regarding hemlines, jewelry and style.
- B. Why did these holy women of former times fulfill these instructions by submitting to their husbands (**I Peter 3:5**)? Because they trusted God. God did not put this passage here so we could argue over externals. He put it here so we would be challenged to examine ourselves. Do we really trust God? Do we think His way is best? Or do we fear that submitting to God means we will miss out on something important? Do we think the ways of the world have more to offer?
- C. Do not deceive yourself. The way you dress, talk and behave is a demonstration of your faith. When you trust God, you will develop a gentle and quiet spirit, dress modestly and behave with purity. If you are not, you can argue all day long, but what it means is you do not trust God.

Conclusion:

Do you want to be precious to God? Then just trust Him. Don't argue with Him. Don't try to step out away from His will. Don't try to set yourself up before the world as something special because of your wealth, beauty or style. Do things God's way. The world may never view you as a highly successful individual. It may never consider you fashionable or believe you are a sex symbol. But you will be precious to God. On the judgment day, which would you prefer?