

Mirror, Mirror on the Wall—Lie to Me!

Jim Elliff

It is an exercise in reluctant self-abnegation for me to show my driver's license. I long for somebody to say, "But that's not you!" Sadly, it is. As Popeye declares, "I yam what I yam." And what I "yam" is looking fairly pathetic.

Paul had this to say about the way we look: "Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day" (2 Cor. 4:16).

The Outer

Though wrinkle cream options have never been more abundant (and, not surprisingly, even men have their own brands), nothing can reverse the process of the decay of the human body. We might as well get used to it. All of us are going downhill—*fast!*



Add to the folds, those unsightly knots, age spots, and permanent furrows. Add to that the graying of the hair. Add to the graying of the hair, the disappearance of it. I once knew a man who had lost almost all his hair, except for what he could fertilize on the sides. He let that rim grow out several inches and then, with the help of some industrial strength hairspray, draped the collected strands across the great expanse. Needless to say, wind and rain were his two great nemeses.

And who can control the bulge and the sag? When one older woman directed her choir, the hanging skin on her arms kept such a different beat than her hands that the singers were left in constant confusion.

There is no hope for us. Face lifts, tummy tucks, and liposuction may tighten things up temporarily, but more is coming that will frighten you. Decay is insidious and unforgiving.

The Inner

There is hope, however, for Paul says of the true believer, "our inner man is being renewed day by day."

The older the believer's body, the more vibrant and young his spirit may become. This is a different kind of beauty. In fact, though some may never

be alluring in the body and facial structure, with this new beauty secret any believer may grow more radiant through the years. Sarah had this attractiveness even as an old woman (1 Peter 3:1-5). More importantly, this beauty draws people not only to you, but to Christ.

Note that Paul speaks of this as a process. You are "*being* renewed day by day." As the believer meditates on God's words, gazes on His character and nature, addicts himself to His love, he is changed. Paul, in another place, reveals the pattern:

But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit" (2 Cor. 3:18).

I heard the fictitious story of a woman who was told in a dream that she would meet Christ at a specific time that afternoon. Sure enough, in her dream the doorbell rang at the precise time anticipated. But on the other side of the threshold stood a man of such frightening ugliness that she could hardly look at him.

"You're not Jesus," she exclaimed. "No," he said, "but I'm the Jesus other people see in *you*."

I'll admit that "a little paint on an old barn cannot hurt." Do something for the outward appearance out of love for your family and mankind in general, but don't overdo it. You can't reverse the human process of decay.

You can, however, speed up the beautification of the inner person. And real beauty may actually be more attractive as it shines through a decaying body. If done right, people who see you will see more of Jesus. Until we become fully like Him in another world, we'll find in this the best possible beauty tip for believers.

Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared a yet what we shall be. We know that, when he appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is.

1 John 3:2

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