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The Beauty of a Quiet & Gentle Spirit

Hidden in the Heart

We are quickly discovering the source of beauty arises from our hearts. Proverbs 14:30 declares, “A *sound heart is life to the body.*” Sound in this context is defined as the following:

- Free from injury or disease
- Free from flaw, defect, or decay
- Solid or firm
- Stable
- Free from *error, fallacy, or misapprehension*

The first two definitions can apply to our standing in Christ. Before we believe in Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord, our hearts are injured—diseased from sin which corrupts our thoughts in *all areas* of our lives. Our hearts are injured by others whose sin against us causes heartache and possible trauma—physical and emotional trauma, both have spiritual ramifications.

When we realize Jesus substituted himself on the cross to redeem us from sin and we decide to submit ourselves to His Lordship, He begins to heal our hearts from the effects of “sin-disease:” self-inflicted injuries and injuries received from others. He frees us from the flaws of lies we have believed and begins to clean up the decaying ideas that have guided our lives.

He sets our feet onto solid stable ground so that we no longer stumble in errors and fallacies. He gives us the ability to walk in truth and illuminates our path and eliminates fears. He gives us a sound heart from which beauty is illuminated. And remember...this beauty is INCORRUPTIBLE! Yes, yes, YES!!!

WARNING!!!

As we continue exploring God's recipe for beauty in women, do not be surprised when opposition arises from within and without. **From within:** our flesh is going to be pulling out all stops against the spirit especially as we examine Beauty Busters! In fact, it would not be surprising to have the very Beauty Busters under examination to be rising their ugliness within your heart. Ask the Holy Spirit to strengthen you against the onslaught and to enable you to respond not "in the flesh" but "in the spirit."

From without: We have an enemy, Satan, whose stated purpose as a thief is to "kill, steal and destroy" (John 10:10). Resist his temptations and ask the Lord to help you discern the enemy's lies. Also ask the Lord to deliver you from evil and lead you in His ways of righteousness.



That Which is Very Precious. . .

*Let it (your beauty) be the hidden person of the heart,
with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit,
which is very precious in the sight of God.*

1 Peter 3:4

This verse tells us the incorruptible beauty has to do with our spirit—specifically a spirit that is gentle and quiet. This kind of spirit is "*very precious in the sight of God.*"

Therefore, it is imperative for us to know how a gentle and quiet spirit is defined and what it looks like lived out in our lives. If we do not know these truths, we can be easily misled and misunderstand what is "*very precious in the sight of God.*"

Gentle Spirit

This character trait should be growing in us as we grow in our relationship with Jesus. Gentleness is part of Jesus' character and was seen throughout His ministry in His interactions with others. Gentleness is synonymous with meekness and is closely associated with humility.

Jesus challenges us to come to Him and learn from Him this character trait. Look up Matthew 11:28-29. What does He encourage us to do and what is the result?

What further discoveries are uncovered in the following verses?

General Info About Gentle/Gentleness

- 2 Samuel 22:36
- Galatians 5:22-23
- Philippians 4:2
- James 3:17

How Gentleness is Exhibited

- I Thessalonians 2:7-8 (...also the motive behind gentleness)
- Proverbs 25:15
- Think of Examples of Jesus' Gentleness & How it Was Exhibited.

Benefits of Gentleness/Meekness

- Psalms 37:11
- Zephaniah 2:3

In these verses on gentleness and meekness, what have you observed? What has God shown you through them? Write down your observations and pray about what you have learned.

Gentleness and Meekness often are considered negative—especially meekness. Meek rhymes with weak and is often associated with being a doormat thus allowing people to “walk all over” the meek person. However, this could not be further from the truth: **Meekness is power under control.** We will return to this statement!

Quiet Spirit

The very first definition of quiet as a noun on merriam-webster.com is *free from noise or uproar: STILL*. As a verb, quiet is defined as CALM. Therefore, a quiet spirit is a spirit that is not in uproar and clanging like a gong. It is still and exhibits calmness. . .

An excellent example is to think of water—rapids vs. calm waters. Jesus, as our Shepherd leads us to still waters (Psalm 23). A sheep will not drink from turbulent waters because they could get swept up in the current. They will go without refreshment rather than risking their lives.

It is also safe to sail in calm waters, but if the wind stirs up the water into a storm those waters can quickly become treacherous—just ask the disciples. They were in a boat a few times and encountered waves tossing them to-and-fro. They cried out to Jesus and he rebuked the turbulent seas bringing peace. Jesus can do the same for us.

What further discoveries are uncovered in the following verses?

General Information about a quiet (calm) spirit.

- Psalm 107:27-30 (What’s happening? What does God Do? And What’s the result?)

- Psalm 131:1-3 (Why is the psalmist able to have a calmed and quieted soul?)

- Psalm 62:1-2, 7 (Again, why is the psalmist soul silently or quietly waiting for God?)

How a quiet, calm spirit is exhibited.

- Proverbs 17:27
- Ecclesiastes 9:17

Benefits of a quiet spirit.

- Isaiah 30:15
- Isaiah 32:17 (How is quietness obtained and its result?)

How a quiet spirit is obtained.

- 2 Corinthians 10:3-5
- Philippians 4:6-7

In these verses on a quiet, calm spirit, what has stood out to you? What has God shown you about yourself? Write down your observations and pray about what you have learned.



The Gentle & Quiet Beauty Busters!



Let us consider the description a woman who does not have the characteristics of a gentle and quiet spirit. This woman is the example we have in our world today. **I AM woman! Hear me ROAR!** (...and get out of my way!)

She is antagonistic, aggravating, brazen, brash, contentious, divisive, agitates and ruffles feathers. She is unsettled and stirs up emotions. This woman's life is characterized with drama and her mouth does not bring peace. She is a tornado of swirling emotions that causes relationships to wither and destroys many in her path.

The Contentious Woman

Unfortunately, King Solomon knew women—a LOT of women. The man had 700 wives and 300 concubines! All 700 wives were of royal birth. Can you imagine living in that situation? Yikes!

God had explicitly told the Israelites, "You must not intermarry (women from other nations) because they will surely turn your hearts after their gods." (1 Kings 11:1-4) In this area Solomon was NOT wise because as he grew older his heart did turn to other gods and he was not fully devoted to the Lord his God. However, Solomon did have a whole lot of personal experience in writing Proverbs where women are concerned.

The Contentious Woman

- Proverbs 19:13
- Proverbs 21:9
- Proverbs 21:19

Note the progression in the relationship and the end result. Who can we drive away if we are contentious, critical and carping?

General Information about Contention & Its Associates

- Proverbs 17:14
- Proverbs 18:6-7
- James 4:1-2
- Proverbs 26:20-22

What Happened, or Should Happen to the Contentious Woman?

- Titus 3:9-11
- Galatians 5:15
- Galatians 5:19-21

What Should a Contentious Woman Do?

- Proverbs 15:18 & 17:14
- Matthew 18:15-17
- Romans 15:5-6

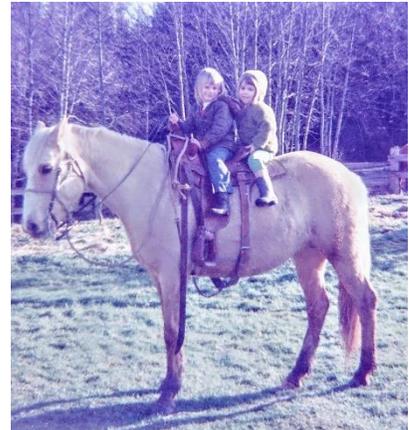
Contention is often good friends with arguing, gossip, slander and meddling. Proverbs is filled with pithy wisdom in these areas. Hmmmm. . . Solomon and ALL those women come to mind. However, we can easily fall into these sins or worse. They can be a pattern in our lives that must be broken. So, as you consider the following questions, also have contention's "friends" in mind.

In these verses on contentiousness and its associates what caught your attention? What has God shown you? Do you need to take action to restore relationships or pray for the Lord to do some spiritual surgery?

Horse Stories!

To help illustrate gentle and quiet and the opposites, let me share with you stories of two of the horses my family had when I was growing up.

Lady was a lady in every sense of the word. She was a gorgeous palomino and had a wonderful temperament. When I was 2 or 3 years old, I scrambled up on her back when she was lying down in the pasture. My mom freaked out as she saw Lady preparing to stand! Lady gently stood to her feet and snacked on some clover and I was warm and safe. As we learned to ride, she sensed when we were losing our balance and slowed down or stopped gently.



However, she also knew how to have a good time, loved to prance and dance lightly on her feet and was always up for a good gallop and jumping. We started using her for dressage lessons when she was an old lady because she was willing to learn and wanted to please. She was completely trustworthy on the ground (uh, unless she was in heat...) and in the saddle. Lady was a delight to ride and be around.

And we also had Prince. . .

Prince could have been a thoroughbred of a horse, but he was stubborn and all 16-plus hands of him wanted to do his own thing. His days became numbered when my sister Jenny and I were having lessons and Jenny cued him to move forward, but like a block of wood he stood his ground. She exerted more force with heels and legs, then added the riding crop to no avail. This was not a high-level dressage move, but a simple “let’s get it going forward, boy!”

Before the entertainment was over, the instructor got on his back and our dad rather forcefully applied a whip to his hindquarters. Prince attempted to rear over backwards and received the loaded end of the riding quirt in between his ears to bring him down safely to all four-legs.

This animal was a stubborn, independent, and untrustworthy and he did NOT learn when he was trained (disciplined). We could never turn our back on him because he might decide to take a bite from our backside. He had absolutely no desire to please even when he was well-fed and well-treated. He was completely ornery. He became the symbol of a great potential that was never realized and a disappointing waste of time and effort. Although he actually was a thoroughbred and athletic, we sold him at an auction and his new owner made him a packhorse.

Lessons Learned

Lady and Prince have become good illustrations of what we can be as women. Their temperaments were vastly different as are our memories of them.

So...what is your tendency?

Are you a pigheaded Prince or a loving Lady? What lessons can you learn from my "Horse Stories"?

Final Thought & Questions

We have incredible power in relationships to either build up or destroy. The Lord spoke this truth into my heart and I REALLY needed to hear Him because, at the time, I was unknowingly undermining my husband as the leader of our home and in his work—Yikes!

Proverbs 14:1 is my reminder of power under control. . .

*Every wise woman builds her house,
But the foolish pulls it down with her hands.*
And I have added: . . . **or with her own mouth!**
(ESV: Erica's Standard Version)

Consider your own house. Specifically examine your relationships starting with those closest to you. Do you build up or tear down? Become aware of the tone of your voice and the words of your mouth. Listen and observe people's responses.

If you have a tendency to snarky snide comments, ask yourself if these are encouraging to those on the receiving end or if they are little darts to the heart. If you communicate with sarcasm, be aware the definition of sarcasm is *"a sharp and often satirical or ironic utterance designed to cut or give pain"* (merriam-webster.com). Ironically, a synonym of sarcasm is "dart." We may think our cutting comments are cute or showcasing a quick wit but, whether we realize it or not, we are damaging those around us with our lips and it is very, very foolish.

The following questions are intended to be diagnostic in nature in order to help us understand areas in which we need the help of the Holy Spirit to change each of us and work out in us God's incorruptible ornament in our hearts—a gentle and quiet spirit.



Questions to ask yourself:

- ◆ Is it safe to be around me OR am I stirring up emotions, problems, stewing, etc. ?
- ◆ Do I want conversations to revolve around me?
- ◆ Do I find it necessary to put myself forward?
- ◆ What is the tone of my conversations with my friends? If married—my husband?
- ◆ If married, do I allow my husband to answer questions OR do I answer for him? With friends, do I answer for them OR let them answer?
- ◆ How do I influence those around me? Do I stir up trouble OR Do I stir up and interest in the things of the Lord in those around me?
- ◆ Do I encourage those around me to hold unswervingly to the hope we profess because Jesus is faithful?
- ◆ Do I encourage friends to persevere, even in trials, which burn off the garbage in our lives and purify our faith?
- ◆ Am I allowing the Lord to examine my heart OR do I avoid accountability?

I have fallen on both sides of these questions. It is good to ask ourselves questions like these although it may reveal some painful truths about us. On the other hand, we may be encouraged as we see changes in our lives from becoming a quieter and gentler lady. Remember, that unless we KNOW we have an issue, we cannot possibly ask God to change and train us in THAT area.

Let us not be like the women of the world in their ways or in their thinking but let us be transformed, a metamorphosis into an exquisite S.H.W.O.G., by the renewing of our minds. (Romans 12:2) This transformation happens only when we come to Jesus and learn of Him and His character and allow the Holy Spirit to take out the ugly Beauty Busters in our hearts and replace them with this beautiful spirit.

Verses to memorize:

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with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit,
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1 Peter 3:4

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