

Beauty

By Dave DeWitt

I would like to do four things. First, I will attempt to define the concept of beauty. Second, I will make some general observations about it. Third, I will explore what the Bible says about beauty. Finally, I will make some conclusions and applications from all of that.

Definition

Let's look at some definitions of "beauty" and descriptions of its impact:

New Oxford American Dictionary

noun (pl. beauties)

a combination of qualities, such as shape, color, or form, that pleases the aesthetic senses, esp. the sight: *I was struck by her beauty* | *an area of outstanding natural beauty*.

Wikipedia

Beauty is a characteristic of a person, animal, place, object, or idea that provides a perceptual experience of pleasure or satisfaction. Beauty is studied as part of aesthetics, sociology, social psychology, and culture. An 'ideal beauty' is an entity which is admired, or possesses features widely attributed to beauty in a particular culture, for perfection. The experience of 'beauty' often involves an interpretation of some entity as being in balance and harmony with nature, which may lead to feelings of attraction and emotional well-being. Because this can be a subjective experience, it is often said that 'beauty is in the eye of the beholder.'

Psychology Today

Now there's evidence that beauty and intelligence (and other positive characteristics) go hand in hand ... Clinical psychologists observe that men and women alike appear more concerned than ever with attractiveness and perceived physical imperfections.

As a working definition, I shall say,

Beauty is a combination of qualities that pleases the senses.

To be a bit more complete, we might say,

Beauty is a combination of qualities, such as shape, color, or form, which pleases the aesthetics of our sense of sight, taste, touch, smell and hearing.

So, for example, descriptively, there is no such thing as "a beautiful mind." Beauty might be used all kinds of ways metaphorically, but descriptively, beauty must be pleasing to the senses.

Some General Observations about Beauty

Beauty is NOT just "In the eyes of the beholder." Beauty is absolute, not relative.

The secularists, such as atheists and evolutionists insist, "beauty is in the eyes of the beholder," meaning it is relative to the perspective of each individual. Shakespeare expressed this sentiment in *Love's Labour's Lost*, 1588, with the statement, "Beauty is bought by judgment of the eye." David Hume's *Essays, Moral and Political*, 1742, include the statement, "Beauty in things exists merely in the mind which

contemplates them.” And in 1878, Margaret Wolfe Hungerford used the line “Beauty is in the eye of the beholder.” Atheists and evolutionists believe man evolved by random chance, therefore, beauty as an absolute cannot exist. There is no way everyone could, by chance, evolve into a common identification of beauty, therefore, it can only be in the eyes of the beholder.

This, of course, must be the case if there is no God or no God involved in creation. In that case, there should be no agreement at all as to what is beautiful. There might be some culturally learned pleasures we commonly adhere to, but, for the atheist, beauty is strictly “in the eyes of the beholder.”

In this material, I will make the point, as boldly as I can, that Beauty is NOT just “in the eyes of the beholder,” if that means beauty is subjective. Consider the following pictures. Suppose you had to put the label of “**Beautiful**” or “**Ugly**” on each.



I suspect you would have no trouble at all labeling each as either beautiful or ugly. I further suspect that the vast majority of us would have the same photos labeled the same way. I also suspect that if we showed these photos to anyone anywhere in the world at any time in history, the vast majority, if not everyone, would label all the photos the same as everybody else. Actually, you don't even want to look at the ugly ones. They are repulsive. But you want to look longer at the beautiful ones. Therefore, we not only recognize beauty but we long for it.

Of course, there would be some spider-lover somewhere who would think the spider is beautiful, but that's because he sees some value in spiders the rest of us don't know, or want to know. Anyone who mislabeled a photo would do it for some reason that is not actually related to beauty.

The universal recognition of beauty is not restricted to sight. The vast majority of all mankind would think the smell of a rose is more beautiful than the smell of a chicken coop, the sound of the music of Mozart is more beautiful than that of a police siren, the touch of a velvet cloth is more beautiful than sandpaper, and the taste of chocolate is more beautiful than cod liver oil (or maybe anything).

Beauty Judges the Beholder

Anyone who misjudged the six photos above would be revealing their own sense of perversion. Of course, if we blended the beauty and the ugly things together in the same photo, then there would be different opinions, but not because we disagree on what is beautiful or ugly, but only because we are focused on different aspects of beauty.

It's also true that ancient artistic creations depict things as representing beauty that we would not all label as beautiful. But that's because they are a mixture of beautiful and ugly. We are all a mixture of beauty and ugly, that's where the beholder comes in. We all focus on different aspects of beauty. But that does not mean beauty is relative.

I have no idea how anyone could think of the portrait of Mona Lisa (1517) as beautiful. She's plain, round-faced, and unappealing. I'm not sure Leonardo da Vinci was attempting to portray beauty, anyway. For example, his depictions of *The Vitruvian Man* in 1485 and "The Lord's Supper" in 1489 were not an attempt to portray beauty. If we bring the test of beauty to the Mona Lisa, the Mona Lisa is found lacking. If we wanted the Mona Lisa to be a portrait of beauty, some changes would be in order.



For example, here are a few improvements that have been suggested for the Mona Lisa. Consider changes in her face, hairstyle, posture, or better yet, change the lady altogether. Da Vinci was more after impressions than accurate portrayals, but if we look for beauty we must look elsewhere.



Beauty is Beauty Everywhere

Of course, there are differences in style that vary from age-to-age and culture-to-culture, but those are just different ways to depict beauty, not a contradiction between what is beautiful and ugly.

Consider the Old Testament depictions of beauty given between 3,000 and 4,000 years ago and in a completely different culture. The descriptions we have of, say, Joseph, Saul, David, Rachel, Esther, and Solomon's Shulammitte bride sound like the depiction of the same beauty we would recognize today.

- **Genesis 39:6**—Now **Joseph** was handsome in form and appearance.
- **1 Samuel 9:2**—He had a son whose name was **Saul**, a choice and handsome man, and there was not a more handsome person than he among the sons of Israel; from his shoulders and up he was taller than any of the people.
- **1 Samuel 16:12**—Now he [**David**] was ruddy, with beautiful eyes and a handsome appearance. And the LORD said, "Arise, anoint him; for this is he."
- **Genesis 29:17**—And Leah's eyes were weak, but **Rachel** was beautiful of form and face.
- **Esther 2:7**—He was bringing up Hadassah, that is **Esther**, his uncle's daughter, for she had no father or mother. Now the young lady was beautiful of form and face,
- **Song of Solomon 4:1ff**—"How beautiful you are, my [**Shulammitte**] darling, How beautiful you are! Your eyes are like doves behind your veil; Your hair...teeth...lips...mouth...temples... neck... breasts...



Eastern and western cultures are extremely different in many ways. Yet we seem to have no trouble identifying beauty in each other's cultures. The Taj Mahal of India was built in the 1600s and the Kinkaku-ji, (Golden Pavilion) of Japan, was originally built in 1397. It is clear that we westerners, living in the 21st

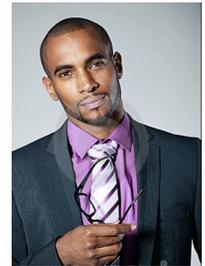


century, can look at ancient oriental architecture and immediately identify beauty, even though it has never been part of our culture. So the Wikipedia statement quoted above, that "ideal beauty is an entity which is admired, or possesses features **widely attributed to beauty in a particular culture**" is misleading. Beauty is clearly transcultural.

But what about some of the isolated cultures that think beauty is depicted by what we would call ugly? What about tribal people who wear very little clothes and put bones in their ears and stretch their skin with certain devices? Don't those people think that is beautiful?



Consider the two gentlemen pictured here. I suspect you would have no trouble putting the title of "handsome" (male beauty) and "ugly" under one of the pictures. The revealing question is not *What does an isolated group think is beauty?* but what do people, in general, think? If the man on the left is an example of beauty, then why do developing people, who are educated and exposed to what is available throughout the world, choose to look like the man on the right rather than the one on the left? Why is there not



a movement among businessmen, professionals, models, and movies stars to look like the man on the left? I'd suggest it's because we universally recognize the difference between beauty and ugly.

When you isolate people and leave them to their perversions, they can become perverted into thinking ugly is beauty. There are ugly things that go on in prisons that are considered pleasing under those circumstances. The same thing could be said about people living in certain ghettos and in religious isolation. But also consider that much of this sort of thing is not meant as a depiction of beauty. Much of it depicts power or rank or wealth, or some other kind of importance. Sometimes, it is just an attempt to draw attention to one's self. Some of those also become fads among the less mature, such as excessive tattoos and body rings. But those are usually more about getting attention or being popular with a certain (equally immature) group. Beauty is usually depicted by moderation rather than excess. Excess fads seem like a big deal, and then pass away in a relatively short amount of time.

"Ugly" Is a Lack of "Beauty"

The dictionary has the following definition for "ugly":

- adjective (uglier , ugliest)
- unpleasant or repulsive, esp. in appearance

Notice that "ugly" is not just the opposite of beauty. Ugly is also an adjective, whereas beauty is a noun. So beauty is something, and ugly is a modifier of that something. Like bad is a perversion of good, "ugly" is an absence of "beauty." There is no noun that is the opposite of beauty. We can only label the absence of beauty. Ugly requires beauty for its existence. For example, the picture above of the rotting dead fish floating in the water is only possible because there were live fish swimming in the lake. A view of the

live fish would be beautiful and the deterioration of that is ugly. But the ugly could not exist if it were not for the beauty. Beauty is on one end of the spectrum and ugly on the other, and almost everything is in some state of beauty or the lack of it. When something lacks all or most of its potential beauty, it's ugly. But nothing can be ugly unless there is something beautiful.

This leads to the question: Then why is not everything in nature beautiful? If God is good and beauty is a creation of God and ugly is a lack of beauty, then why is not everything in nature beautiful? Why are there ugly things like sand burrs, poisonous thistles, mosquitoes, spiders, maggots, and crabs, since we know that God's attributes can be seen in nature?

Romans 1:20—*For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.*

Here are a couple of things to consider.

First, we see creation as it was cursed by the fall, not as it was originally created.

Romans 8:20—*For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it.*

Because of the original sin, God told Adam,

Genesis 3:17-18—*Cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you.*

The plants of the ground were originally beautiful and productive. But *thorns and thistles* are ugly things that are a curse of God upon His creation. The Bible repeatedly says that God destroys otherwise good and beautiful things because of judgment on sin. Through Isaiah, God said,

Isaiah 45:7—*The One forming light and creating darkness, Causing well-being and creating calamity; I am the LORD who does all these.*

The Hebrew word here for “calamity” is the very common and general word of all sorts of bad things.

עָרָא (ra) *evil, distress, misery, injury, calamity*:—adversity(7), calamity(4), disaster(2), evil(94), harm(2), harmful(1), hurt(1), ruin(3), surely(1), trouble(2), unpleasant(m)(1), wickedly(1), wickedness(1).

We can't always know how far that extends into nature (we don't know if it includes things like mosquitoes), but there is s עָרָא (ra) factor, which brought *calamity* to the original creation. This is not the Garden of Eden.

A **second** consideration is that God did not create everything with the same purpose. The attributes of God can be seen in nature (Romans 1), but God has more than one attribute. For example, the false doctrine of universal salvation is based upon focusing on only the love of God. True, God is love. But God is also holy, true, and just. The punishment of unrepentant sinners in the Lake of Fire is based on the fact that God is not only love, He is also holy, true, and just. God never violates His love, but neither does He violate His justice. God is compassionate, but He never compromises His holiness. So the acts of God are based on all His attributes and characteristics, not just one of them. The natural world tells us about *His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature*, not just one of His attributes functioning in disregard to all His other attributes. So God's beauty is displayed in His creation, but so are His other attributes.

Beauty Can Only Be Imitated, Not Created

When we look at the beauty of nature, say, in humans, animals, plants, flowers, trees and landscapes, we are looking at the depiction of the definition of beauty (a combination of qualities that please the senses). When we depict those things in our handiwork, we can do no better than to return to natural beauty. The

most beautiful humans, animals, plants, flowers, trees and landscapes, can only be imitated in, say, our cartoons, films, or paintings. We can make them more ugly, but not more beautiful. We can distort them into monsters, we can pollute, contaminate, adulterate, and taint them in various ways, but we cannot improve on the beauty depicted in nature. We can only imitate the beauty of nature or pervert it.

It is true that our depiction of beauty is better than it used to be, just like nearly everything else we do technologically is better than it used to be. We can improve our skills to more accurately depict beauty, but we cannot evolve it into something more beautiful. We can only isolate certain elements that we generally recognize as beautiful and emphasize those. Take, for example, the cartoon picture above of Disney's Sleeping Beauty. Probably no girl looks exactly like that, but each of her features are only depictions of features that do exist on actually pretty girls. None of them were an improvement on nature, only a depiction of it.

But what about something like architecture, which creates a form of beauty not seen in nature? Consider the two structures pictured here. Both are tall narrow buildings. Suppose you had



to put the label “beauty” or “ugly” with each. Which one would you call beautiful, and which one would you call ugly? Whenever we create a structure of beauty, we pattern it after beauty we recognize from nature and display what we know internally as beauty. Symmetry, straight lines, curves, and angles are all designed to reflect those aspects of a thing we recognize as beautiful. Of course, there are also perverts who think it's cool to create a perverted structure. And there are perverts who buy their perversions to prove they are just as cool (or whatever). But the vast majority of us recognize perversion.



Biblical Beauty

Beauty is a big deal in the Bible. The NASB records 36 uses of the word *beauty* plus 74 uses of *beautiful*. There are several different Hebrew and Greek words translated *beauty*, and we will not here distinguish between them. There are also other words that might be translated “beauty” or these same words might be, or should be, translated “beauty” in places where they are translated in other ways such as *good*, *glorious*, *fair*, *adorned*, or *decorative*. But the context of the NASB translations of these words justify using the words *beauty* and *beautiful*. So this study will be based on the NASB translation.

Let me take you on a quick trip through the Bible looking at the subject of beauty:

- **In Genesis**, there are seven uses of the word for “beauty,” and all but one describe beautiful women. For example, Genesis 12:14 says of Abraham's wife Sarah, *It came about when Abram came into Egypt, the Egyptians saw that the woman was very beautiful.*
- **In Exodus**, the baby Moses is described as beautiful (Exodus 2:2), and the holy garments made for the priests were *for glory and for beauty*.
— **28:40**—*For Aaron's sons you shall make tunics; you shall also make sashes for them, and you shall make caps for them, for glory and for beauty.*
- **Through the history of Israel** the word “beautiful” is used most often to describe the beauty of both men and women.

— **Esther 1:11**—... bring Queen Vashti before the king with her royal crown in order to display her **beauty** to the people and the princes, for she was **beautiful**

David used the word “beauty” to describe Saul, Jonathan, and the soldiers of Israel who died on Mount Gilboa:

— **2 Samuel 1:19**—Your **beauty**, O Israel, is slain on your high places! How have the mighty fallen!

But it is also used to describe nature, such as *the foliage of **beautiful** trees* (Leviticus 23:40).

- **In the Psalms**, the word is used to describe the character of God.
 - **27:4**—One thing I have asked from the LORD, that I shall seek: That I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, To behold the **beauty of the LORD** And to meditate in His temple.

Korah described Jerusalem as a beautiful city because it is the dwelling place of God.

— **1-3**—Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised, In the city of our God, His holy mountain. **Beautiful** in elevation, the joy of the whole earth, Is Mount Zion in the far north, The city of the great King. God, in her palaces, Has made Himself known as a stronghold.

- **Isaiah** used the words for beautiful in different ways, including to describe God as the Messiah:
 - **4:2**—In that day the Branch of the LORD will be **beautiful** and glorious...
 - **28:5**—In that day the LORD of hosts will become a **beautiful** crown, And a glorious diadem to the remnant of His people.
 - **33:17**—Your eyes will see the King in His **beauty**.

Although Isaiah describes the Messiah as beautiful at His Second Coming, he also describes the Messiah (although not ugly) as someone who was not physically beautiful at (what we would call) His first coming. The value of the Messiah had to be recognized by something other than physical beauty.

— **53:2-3**—He has no stately form or majesty That we should look upon Him, Nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him. He was despised and forsaken of men, A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; And like one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.

Isaiah also used a word for “beauty” to describe the righteousness of God and the rewards of God.

— **62:2-3**—The nations will see your righteousness, And all kings your glory; And you will be called by a new name Which the mouth of the LORD will designate. **You will also be a crown of beauty in the hand of the LORD**

And Isaiah described the temple as

— **64:11**—Our holy and **beautiful** house, Where our fathers praised You

But Isaiah also has an interesting negative use of beauty. God said He would destroy the beauty of Tyre, Ephraim, and Babylon because it led to their pride.

— **13:19**—And Babylon, the **beauty** of kingdoms, the glory of the Chaldeans’ pride,

— Will be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah

— **23:8-9**—Who has planned this against Tyre, the bestower of crowns, Whose merchants were princes, whose traders were the honored of the earth? **The LORD of hosts has planned it, to defile the pride of all beauty**, To despise all the honored of the earth.

— **28:1**—Woe to the proud crown of the drunkards of Ephraim, And to the fading flower of its glorious **beauty**, Which is at the head of the fertile valley

- **Ezekiel** uses beauty to describe what God did for Israel and how Israel perverted what God did.
 - **16:12-13 & 17**—*I also put a ring in your nostril, earrings in your ears and a **beautiful** crown on your head. Thus you were adorned with gold and silver, and your dress was of fine linen, silk and embroidered cloth. You ate fine flour, honey and oil; so you were exceedingly **beautiful** and advanced to royalty. You also took your **beautiful** jewels made of My gold and of My silver, which I had given you, and made for yourself male images that you might play the harlot with them.*

And Ezekiel uses beauty in reference to a sensual song and a singing voice.

- **33:32**—*Behold, you are to them like a sensual song by one who has a **beautiful** voice and plays well on an instrument.*

Ezekiel uses the word “beauty” in the same negative way that Isaiah does, as something that God provided, but because it led to their pride, God destroyed it.

- **7:20**—*They transformed the **beauty** of His ornaments into pride, and they made the images of their abominations and their detestable things with it; therefore I will make it an abhorrent thing to them.*

Ezekiel repeatedly talks about beauty being perverted by pride and turned into sin, and there is no more glaring example of this than the discussion of the King of Tyre, which appears also to be a description of **the fall of Satan**. Here beauty seems to be both a description of heaven and Satan before the Fall, and the reason for Satan’s fall.

- **28:12 & 17**—*Thus says the Lord GOD, You had the seal of perfection, Full of wisdom and perfect in **beauty** ... Your heart was lifted up because of your **beauty**; You corrupted your wisdom by reason of your splendor.*

- **In the New Testament** the word beauty is used to describe the stones of the temple and its *Beautiful Gate*. But there are several unique concepts in the New Testament related to beauty:

1. Beauty can be the false outward clean religious whitewashed look of Rabbinic Judaism.
 - Matthew 23:27**—*“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which on the outside appear **beautiful**, but inside they are full of dead men’s bones and all uncleanness.”*
2. Beauty can represent the temporary nature of the luxurious life style of the rich man.
 - James 1:11**—*For the sun rises with a scorching wind and withers the grass; and its flower falls off and the **beauty** of its appearance is destroyed; so too the rich man in the midst of his pursuits will fade away.*
3. Beauty metaphorically describes the feet of those who bring the Gospel to the lost.
 - Romans 10:15**—*How will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, “How **beautiful** are the feet of those who bring good news of good things!”*
4. The apostles defined adornment with moderation, but did not ignore beauty.
 - 1 Timothy 2:9-10**—*Likewise, I want women to adorn themselves with proper clothing, modestly and discreetly, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly garments, but rather by means of good works, as is proper for women making a claim to godliness. (See also 1 Peter 3:3-4.)*

Notice that Paul did not oppose adornment, rather he commanded it. If this were a command for women to wear no jewelry and do nothing with their hair, then it would also be a command to wear no clothes. Paul was not against the adornment which emphasizes physical beauty. Rather, he said that it is best accomplished with modesty. The principle seems to be that excesses hide

natural beauty and take the focus off of good works which make a claim to godliness. It is not beauty that opposes good works. It's excessive adornment that does that.

5. Both Peter and Paul had comments to make about hair. When it comes to hair, Paul has an interesting comment:

1 Corinthians 11:14-15—*Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him, but if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her? For her hair is given to her for a covering.*

There are several things to notice about this comment. **First**, it assumes that nature teaches us about beauty. **Second**, there is a natural beauty, which everyone should recognize. **Third**, long hair is a *glory* (declared value) to women and a *dishonor* (shame or disgrace) to a man. These comments have to do with the appearance, or beauty, of men and women. Therefore, beauty is preferable to ugly.

6. One other thing to notice about beauty in the New Testament is that it is part of the final reward given by God. Beauty surrounds the throne of God (Revelation 4–6), those rewarded by God (Revelation 19:7-8), and is the prominent description of the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21–22).

Five Principles and Applications about Beauty

Principle #1: Beauty is a combination of qualities that pleases the senses.

This is the basic definition of beauty. First, this means that beauty is recognized by all our senses. So we are made in such a way as to recognize beauty. Second, it means that the universe is made in such a way that there is beauty to be recognized. The third amazing thing about beauty is not only that it exists and we recognize it, but we also desire it. And since we can enjoy it, even long for it, we are created in such a way that we seem to be meant to do so.

Application #1: We should consider it natural and normal to desire beauty.

There is nothing wrong with desiring beauty. Beauty is good and should never be discouraged. Be it in our appearance, our clothing, our homes, our work place, or our children, beauty is good and should always be pursued and encouraged.

Principle #2: The Existence of beauty, strongly argues for the existence of God.

It could be said that the universe is filled with useless beauty. Not everything in the universe is functional, in the sense that it contributes to the ongoing mechanical operation of things. If the universe simply developed along functional line of blind mechanical viability, then there would be no need for the beauty or our desire for it. The tops of clouds, a rainbow, a butterfly, a flower, a forest, a waterfalls, the tail feathers of a peacock, and most furry animals have unnecessary beauty. Much of the beauty of nature is unneeded and, therefore, can only be explained as a creation of God for the sole purpose of being enjoyed.

Application #2: We should use the example of beauty to emphasize the existence of God.

For example, the theory of evolution is based upon the survival of the fittest, not the existence of the beautiful. The beauty of plants and animals has nothing to do with their survival or development. Ugly ones survive just as well. Beauty is never a product of randomness, and it is unnecessary for survival.

Principle #3: Beauty is absolute, not relative.

Beauty is an absolute because God is beauty and He created it. But we also tend to recognize it. We can all group together a set of sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and touches that normal people throughout the world would agree are beautiful. Therefore, we can conclude with confidence that beauty is an absolute.

Application #3: We should understand that beauty is not “in the eyes of the beholder.”

Beauty itself is an absolute. Any particular person, landscape, piece of artwork or architecture will contain relative amounts of beauty and the lack of it. Therefore, some particular person or thing may be considered beautiful in the eyes of one beholder and less so in the eyes of another. But that's because of the relative amount of beauty, not the relative nature of beauty.

Principle #4: Beauty is a characteristic of God, and a work of God.

— **Psalm 27:4**—*One thing I have asked from the LORD, that I shall seek: That I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, To behold the **beauty of the LORD***

— **Isaiah 33:17**—*Your eyes will see the King [the Messiah] in His **beauty***

Application #4: We should imitate the beauty of God.

When we depict beauty in our works of art (such as in music, literature, paintings, and sculpture), it should be consistent with the beauty of God. There is nothing wrong with depicting ugly things in our creativity, as long as it is not blasphemous or offensive to God, in and of itself. But we should never depict the ugly as beautiful, or the beautiful as ugly.

Principle #5: Beauty can be used sinfully.

There are several sinful uses of beauty in the Bible:

1. The most prominent and significant misuse of beauty is when it leads to **pride**. This is the basic sin of Satan. *Your heart was lifted up because of your **beauty**; You corrupted your wisdom by reason of your splendor* (Ezekiel 28:17). God also said He would destroy the beauty of Tyre, Ephraim, and Babylon because they turned their beauty into pride (Isaiah 13:19; 23:8-9; 28:1).

2. The desire for beauty becomes sinful when it is turned into **coveting**.

Exodus 20:17—*You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife or his male servant or his female servant or his ox or his donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbor.*"

Coveting is a yearning to possess something that belongs to someone else. It says God did not distribute His beauty in the right places, and I wish He had given more of it to me.

3. The desire for beauty becomes sinful when it becomes a perverted **lust**. Lust is a strong, intense or passionate desire. Lust becomes perverted when it desires to use beauty contrary to the commandments of God. To desire fornication or adultery (or for power, wealth, or luxury) is to desire a perverted application of beauty.

Matthew 5:28—*but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.*

4. The desire for beauty becomes sinful when it attracts us to **false values**.

Matthew 23:27—*"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like white-washed tombs which on the outside appear **beautiful**, but inside they are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness."*

James 1:11—*For the sun rises with a scorching wind and withers the grass; and its flower falls off and the **beauty** of its appearance is destroyed; so too the rich man in the midst of his pursuits will fade away.*

Application #5: We must not to turn beauty into pride, coveting, lust, or temporal values.

When beauty leads to pride, we see value in it apart from the character of God. When we want to possess it, it leads to coveting. When we desire to use it contrary to the commands of God, it becomes a perverted lust. When we are obsessed with temporary beauty, it keeps us from the beauty of the Kingdom of God.

Beauty is valuable and to be sought and enjoyed, but only in the context of it being dependent upon character of God as revealed in the Word of God.