

Melva's Corner

The Simplified Soul & The Beauty of Life

March 21, 2005

Bible Text: Matthew 7:7 | Samuel 16:16 Philippians 4:7

Central Truth: Each day comes bearing its own unique gifts. I certainly hope you enjoy unwrapping this one today.

Truthfully it has taken entering into retirement that has allowed me to see much of the beauty in life. But it doesn't take retirement to enjoy the beauty that surrounds you. There is a great deal of plainness and ugliness in all our lives. Yet we are also surrounded by beauty, much of which goes unnoticed because we are so busy scrambling from point A to point B.

We need beauty to pull us above the difficulties and drudgery of everyday existence. If we let it, beauty will touch our soul and lift our attitude, helping us feel more positive and less exhausted.

Jesus said, "Seek and you will find." This is true of many things, even beauty. If you don't seek it out, you may not find it, even when it's all around you. But if you are looking, it's amazing how much you can find. Suddenly life is not as dull or difficult as you thought.

Beauty needs to be seen to be appreciated, and as the old saying goes, "So many look, but so few see." Opening your eyes to what is lovely around you is a very practical way to reduce your weariness. Try to see with your spirit and let beauty touch your heart. Absorb it and let it soothe away your tension. Let it slow you down and soften the rough edges of your life. Beauty brings peace and pleasure. The longer you enjoy it, the less stress-out you will feel.

The Beauty of Nature

Nature has a different pace that draws you to it. As I use a note pad to write this message, I'm looking out of the window watching deer

graze in the back yard, their splendor captivates me. I could sit here all day.

God's awesome imagination is written all over nature. His natural creation changes from season to season and from region to region. The beauty of God's creation is inescapable - if we only open our eyes to appreciate it. More important, it's a reminder of God's amazing and ingenious provision for us, that He gives us not only basic food and shelter, but also a world overwhelming with spirit-lifting wonder.

The Beauty of Art, Music, and Literature

Enjoying artistic beauty is another way of healing all that is stressed-out in our spirits. Art in its purest sense is an attempt to duplicate or describe some aspect of God's creation. My dictionary defines it as "human works of beauty—from dance to drawing to drama to sculpture." In whatever form, artistic beauty lifts you above the ordinary and provides a break from the hectic.

Every weary person is unique, of course. Just as different aspects of nature draw us differently, we are drawn to different kinds of art.

Someone recently said that music provides the sound track of one's life. Whether it's, praise, gospel, folk, country, rock, or classical, music can provide a reminder of who we are and where we've been. It can also have a powerful effect on how we feel either energizing us or relaxing us.

The Bible tells of a time when King Saul became disturbed and out of control - perhaps overloaded with worries and work. But his servants asked David to play the harp for him, and Saul was able to relax. I know plenty of tense individuals who have found that soothing music is a good way to cover the stress-producing noises that so easily put us on edge. A headset filled with beautiful music can muffle the loudness of the outside world and return gentleness to your soul.

For many stressed out people, of course, nothing is more relaxing than a good book. Something that is well written and attractively designed can delight the mind and enchant the emotions. Tenderly written words carry a sweetness that wash away cares and

concerns. Beautiful words in beautiful books are treasures to which we can return time and time again.

While we are considering art, it's worth noting that the act of creating it can be as soothing or uplifting as the act of enjoying it. Being made in God's image means we are made to create beauty and many of you have found artistic pursuits can be fulfilling, uplifting, and therapeutic.

A More Beautiful Life - Some Simple Suggestions

- ◆ **Go outside! Just a daily walk in the park or the neighborhood can lower your stress levels.**
- ◆ **Bring natural beauty into your home with flowers and greenery or an easy-to-grow houseplant.**
- ◆ **If you live in an area you don't think is beautiful, ask God to refocus your eyes to appreciate subtle or hidden beauty around you - a flower in a crevice, a neatly plowed field, a carefully tended tree in an industrial park.**
- ◆ **Invest in a piece of artwork you really like, a picture, a small sculpture, a quilt. Put it in a spot where you will see it every day.**
- ◆ **Find a book about an artist, writer, or composer you admire and keep it at your bedside.**
- ◆ **Take a music break. Put on a favorite CD or tune the radio to a favorite station. Close your eyes and enjoy- or get up and dance.**
- ◆ **On the flip side take a silence break. Just sit quietly for fifteen minutes and try to identify the various sounds that reach your ears.**
- ◆ **Schedule an afternoon of browsing in a bookstore or flower shop.**
- ◆ **If your community has a local pond or lake, take a loaf of bread and feed the ducks.**
- ◆ **Visit a museum or art gallery near where you live.**

Surely beauty strengthens us through our hectic days. So seek it

wherever you can. Nurture its presence in your life. Cherish it as a refreshing gift from the Lord who loves you. As I write these last few lines, I am praying that you will discover that your path from stressed-out to peace and joy is paved with many moments of beauty.

Memory Text:

" And God's peace [shall be yours, that 'tranquil state of a soul assured of its salvation through Christ, and so fearing nothing from God and being content with its earthly lot of whatever sort that is, that peace] which transcends all understanding shall garrison *and* mount guard over your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:7) Amplified