

Judge not according to the appearance

by William MacDonald

Transcript

“Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.” (John 7:24)

One of the most deep-seated frailties of fallen humanity is the persistent tendency to judge according to appearance. We judge a person according to his looks. We judge a used car by its body. We judge a book by its cover. No matter how often we are disappointed and disillusioned, we stubbornly refuse to learn that “all is not gold that glitters.”

In his book *Hide or Seek*, Dr. James Dobson says that physical beauty is the most highly valued personal attribute in our culture. We have made it what he calls “the gold coin of human worth.” Thus a beautiful child is more favored by adults than a plain one. Teachers tend to give better grades to attractive children. Pretty children get less discipline than others. Homely children are more subject to blame for misdemeanors.

Samuel would have chosen the tall, good-looking Eliab to be king (1 Sam. 16:7), but the Lord corrected him, “Look not on his countenance or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.”

The greatest case of misjudgment in history occurred when the Lord Jesus visited our planet. Apparently He was not prepossessing as far as physical appearance was concerned. He had no form or comeliness, and when men saw Him, no beauty that they should desire Him (Isa. 53:2). They could see no beauty in the only truly beautiful Person who ever lived!

Yet He Himself never fell into this terrible trap of judging according to looks, for before His advent, it was prophesied of Him, “He shall not judge after the sight of His eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of His ears” (Isa. 11:3). To Him it was not the face but the character that counted. Not the cover but the contents. Not the physical but the spiritual.

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