Contemporary Comments on the Adult Sabbath School Lesson

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Blame it on Hollywood. Blame it on magazines. Blame it on billboards. Or blame it on Barbie. Americans are obsessed with cosmetic surgery. We’re not happy with the way we look. We want to look different. We want to change.

In the YWCA report, “Beauty at Any Cost,” the organization writes that, “Every woman in the United States participates in a daily beauty pageant, whether she likes it or not. Engulfed by a popular culture saturated with images of idealized, air-brushed and unattainable female physical beauty, women and girls cannot escape feeling judged on the basis of their appearance. As a result, many women feel chronically insecure, overweight and inadequate, as these beauty images apply to an ever-shrinking pool of women. Moreover, the diet, cosmetic and fashion industries are often too willing to exploit these narrow beauty standards so women and girls will become cradle-to-grave consumers of beauty products, cosmetic surgery and diet programs.”

Last year’s statistics prove this to be true. In 2010, a total of 1,352,477 women underwent a surgical cosmetic procedure. In addition to this, 10,159,631 underwent minimally-invasive procedures. This adds up to a shocking total of 11,512,108 women who wanted to change their appearance. Although some of these surgeries were necessary for health reasons, or understandably chosen by women who had reconstructive surgery after breast cancer, most procedures were simply done to change their looks.

Women aren’t the only ones who want to change. Cosmetic surgery is becoming popular among men, too. Statistics released this spring from the American Society of Plastic Surgeons show that male surgical procedures have increased significantly. In 2010, men spent more than 1.1 million dollars on both surgical and minimally-invasive cosmetic procedures.

“The growth in cosmetic surgical procedures for men may be a product of our aging baby boomers who are now ready to have plastic surgery,” speculates ASPS President Phillip Haeck. Cosmetic surgeon Steven Baker says that baby boomers are reaching retirement age and are the “new face” of the male plastic surgery trend. “They want to look good. So when they have the financial means to do it, they are ready to do it now.” Popular cosmetic procedures among men are a facelift, otoplasty (surgery that enhances the appearance of ears), liposuction (surgery that suctions excess fat from under skin), nose reduction and eyelid surgery.

So the question that comes to mind is this: Are we obsessed with how we look on the “outside” while ignoring the greater issue how we look on the “inside”? 

Throughout this quarter we have studied “Garments of Grace.” And probably the most important lesson we’ve learned is that the robe of Christ’s righteousness, given to us through grace, is the most important gift we will ever receive. It’s not an outer robe that will make us more beautiful or more handsome. But rather an inner robe that will make us more like Christ. It’s a robe that covers us because we are, in fact, ugly when it comes to the sin in our lives. And we are in need of a change. A change that will be complete at the second coming.
This garment that will change us is much more costly than cosmetic surgery—it cost Jesus' life. And it will change our appearance much more than any surgery could ever accomplish. 1 Corinthians 15:51, 52 promises this: "Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed." It is truly a garment of grace!

~nc

Additional resource: Vidiac

1. YWCA
2. Plastic Surgery
3. Plastic Surgery

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