

## Beauty of the Lord

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### This message covers

- The benefits of the blossoming or flowering stage.
- How to handle the season of beauty in the Holy Spirit.

### Information notice board

- 1) **About me.** Before I became a devoted Christian, I spent 20 years of my life being a hedonist – one who seeks pleasure for the sake of it. I was consumed by the outer beauty of life – my career! Since God humbled me to turn me into his servant and I got baptized in May 2017, he has now overhauled my life to seek eternal beauty and to live by the Holy Spirit. You can read my full testimony [here](#):
- 2) **About these series.** The Lord Jesus gave me a single word “Blossom” as I was praying for a word for this season and series. This word will define a series of 12 topics he has also given me to tell his church about and build Christian character in his Holy Spirit. This lesson is one of those messages, but what does it mean to blossom?
- 3) **Pray for us!** Without the Lord, our effort is in vain. Pray that we remain faithful, humble servants.
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## Part 1: Basics

So, we are in a series called “Blossom” in which the Holy Spirit is teaching us how to bear Fruit. To understand the process, in these series we use an example of an orange tree. For an orange tree to bear fruit, there is a period of about 5 years in which it goes through several stages:

1. Planting;
2. Sprouting;
3. Growing;
4. Blossoming (flowering);
5. Pollination; and
6. Bearing fruit.

Now thus far in the series, I have not told you this obvious fact, the season of flowering or blossoming is beautiful! Like the millions who flock to see the Japanese cherry blossoms in bloom or how the Chelsea Flower show is such a big deal the Queen Elizabeth visits it every year.





How many of us have flocked to flower gardens to see carnations, chrysanthemums, lavenders, roses and so on? Flowers are such a beauty to behold! Think of how the bible for example says this about flowers and their beauty:

*Consider how the wildflowers grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. Luke 12: 27 (NIV)*

So flowers according to God, wild ones at that, look much more splendid than King Solomon, the richest and wisest king!

The beauty of flowers is indeed a money maker! For example, Colombia supplies about 70% of the US flower market, this is at least \$1 billion in trade. <sup>1</sup>Not only that, flowers evoke strong emotions. They bring happiness. People fall in love and give others flowers as gifts. How about the sweet smell of flowers? The one which attracts the birds and the bees.

For a Christian, likewise, the time of flowering is a beautiful time, an exciting time!

- 1) **Money.** The beauty of flowers can be a money maker and likewise for you, this might be the season when people start paying money, loads of money for your singing, for your preaching, for your prophesy.
- 2) **Attention.** The season of flowering is the time of love! People just love what you do! Your diligent Christian service starts getting noticed by the Pastor. Your youth leader starts seeing your quiet hospitality of the saints. Your cell group leader sees your hard work in bible study.
- 3) **Influence** This is when you start getting many likes on YouTube, Facebook. People start seeing you and following you as an influencer.

So, what do you do during this season? How do you handle the fame? The lights, camera, and action?

## Handling the blossoming stage (Examples from the bible).

**Remember this season is temporary.**

*A voice was saying, "Cry out!" Another said, "What should I cry out?" "All humanity is grass, and all its goodness is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flowers fade when the breath of the Lord blows on them; indeed, the people are grass. The grass withers, the flowers fade, but the word of our God remains forever.""* Isaiah 40:6-8 CSB

The thing the bible shows about flowers is; beautiful as they are, they are temporary. So during your blossom season, enjoy it and celebrate what it brings, but don't forget, this goodness withers when God who is the Spirit starts blowing on you.

If you forget what your ultimate goal is, which is to bear fruit, you could become as unfruitful as this parable told by Jesus.

*Then he told this parable: "A man had a fig tree growing in his vineyard, and he went to look for fruit on it but did not find any. So he said to the man who took care of the vineyard, 'For three years now I've been coming to look for fruit on this fig tree and haven't found any. Cut it down! Why should it use up the soil?' " "Sir," the man replied, 'leave it alone for one more year, and I'll dig around it and fertilize it. If it bears fruit next year, fine! If not, then cut it down.'"*

Luke 13: 6-9 (NIV)

So, then, the purpose of the beauty you see is not supposed to be the end. So, lesson 1, remember that this is temporary, it is a season supposed to result in something else – fruit, which is permanent.

### **This is the season to watch out for the sin of pride**

Even more dangerous than forgetting that the season is temporary is when all the fame and glory of your beauty gets to you. The bible gives us a glimpse of someone else consumed by beauty. This is what it says:

*"Son of man sing this funeral song for the king of Tyre. Give him this message from the Sovereign Lord: "You were the model of perfection, full of wisdom and **exquisite in beauty**. You were in Eden, the garden of God. Your clothing was adorned with every precious stone — red carnelian, pale-green peridot, white moonstone, blue-green beryl, onyx, green jasper, blue lapis lazuli, turquoise, and emerald— all beautifully crafted for you and set in the finest gold. They were given to you on the day you were created. I ordained and anointed you as the mighty angelic guardian. You had access to the holy mountain of God and walked among the stones of fire. "You were blameless in all you did from the day you were created until the day evil was found in you. Your **heart was filled with pride because of all your beauty**. Your wisdom was corrupted by your love of splendor. So I threw you to the ground and exposed you to the curious gaze of kings."*

Ezekiel 28:12-15, 17 NLT

In case you don't know, these are verses which describe Lucifer, who we now know as Satan or the Devil, the ancient dragon who deceives the nations. They show us he had ornate beauty like every precious stone. Is it a coincidence that like a flower perhaps, he was planted in a garden – the garden of God – until he fell, consumed by pride on account of his beauty?

The flowering stage is the most visible stage - but this means it is also a delicate stage for you to watch out, you are still fragile and people can use you, and throw you into the fire. God can weigh you and have you cut down.

**Why does God create something so beautiful as a flower, yet so temporary?** So beautiful as us humans with all our gifts? He does it that we may look and see - and long for the bread that lasts forever, that we may look at the beauty about us and look beyond them to the one who clothes with beauty, the author of the beauty we see. He does this so that men might grasp and reach out for him, even if he is not far from any one of us.

If you wonder why there is so much beauty in the world, what it's purpose it. It is so you can see the one behind it all and reach out to him, for he is near to the one who seeks with all his heart.

**If your heart is filled with pride because of the beauty of who you are – your faithful service, your generosity, your wealth, your house, then you need to take the next step. First you repent. You repent from where you have fallen. Then you learn. How can you overcome pride from recurring?**

## The celebrity beholden generation: Overcoming the sin of beauty

Our generation loves celebrities, we want to be like them. To have their fame, beauty and wealth. We want it all. Yet, because we are also a generation that is more conscious of the injustice around the world, for example around racism, we hate the celebrities who show off! So instead we want to be celebrities, but those who are down to earth. What do Hollywood's most "down to earth celebrities" do to keep themselves grounded?

As an example, Tom Hanks goes onto social media like *Reddit* and helps answer everyday questions like what to do if you feel like you are coming down with a fever or the best luxury items you can buy for under \$150. Adele creates a normal life for herself by spending time at home and having people come over. <sup>ii</sup>

But how does the bible want us to act during this time of beauty?

### **This is the season for kings cultivate humility**

What do I mean?

It seems for the celebrities, who are our "kings" and "queens" remaining down to earth for them involves doing "normal things" that brings them back to humility. It seems that is the first step to overcome all the lights and cameras and glamour. You can therefore learn from this and in fact it seems then the first rule, like Pastor Rick Warren would say, is this: if you ever start feeling proud, "go home and wash the dishes", so to cultivate humility and overcome pride, the great sin of beauty start to do "normal things".

The next thing is the most important thing for a man or woman of God. It is the lesson that God told all future kings of Israel. This is what his word says:

*The king must not take many wives for himself, because they will turn his heart away from the Lord. And he must not accumulate large amounts of wealth in silver and gold for himself. "When he sits on the throne as king, he must copy for himself this body of instruction on a scroll in the presence of the Levitical priests. He must always keep that copy with him and **read it daily** as long as he lives. That way he **will learn to fear the Lord his God** by obeying all the terms of these instructions and decrees. This **regular reading will prevent him from becoming proud** and acting as if he is above his fellow citizens. It will also prevent him from turning away from these commands in the smallest way. And it will ensure that he and his descendants will reign for many generations in Israel."*

Deuteronomy 17:17-20 NLT

So, it seems there are two lessons we are seeing here from God for those who are in the limelight, like Kings, like Celebrities, like those famous during blossoming season:

1. Don't accumulate "things for yourself" (e.g women and wealth).
2. Instead, accumulate God knowledge for yourself (in this case reading the word daily).

It is this regular reading of the word that protects your heart from pride. That is therefore your antidote to looking at your own beauty. Spend time with God, you will never then focus on the temporary beauty.

### **Beauty for ashes: How God restores those who have fallen.**

If the beauty of it all has consumed, you and you have fallen. There is hope for you too. This is what the Lord says:

*The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me,  
because the LORD has anointed me  
to proclaim good news to the poor.  
He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,  
to proclaim freedom for the captives  
and release from darkness for the prisoners,<sup>[a]</sup>  
to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor  
and the day of vengeance of our God,  
to comfort all who mourn,  
and provide for those who grieve in Zion—  
to **bestow on them a crown of beauty  
instead of ashes,**  
the oil of joy  
instead of mourning,  
and a garment of praise  
instead of a spirit of despair.  
They will be called oaks of righteousness,  
a planting of the LORD  
for the display of his splendor.*

Isaiah 61: 1 – 3.

If you have read the new testament, you may recall that the first verse is how Jesus started his ministry. The bible says:

*....And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. And he began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.""*

Luke 4:16-21 ESV

So then, the starting point of restoration in order for God to "bestow on you a crown of beauty instead of ashes" is for you to return to the Holy Spirit's tutoring and there you will be restored – there it will be the year of God's favour, there it will be the time of blossoming again – where you again see the beauty of the Spirit rest on your head to enable you hold on to the true beauty until it comes to pass, that you may continue to bear all the true beauty of the fruit of the Spirit:

*"...love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law." Galatians 5: 22-23 (NIV). Amen!*

## Next steps

1. Examine the areas in your life where God has made you beautiful. Your unique talent that people just love you for! Thank God for it. Praise him for it.
2. Examine the areas in your life where the temporary nature of beauty has caused you to forget the One who gives you true beauty. Repent from where you have fallen and return to God.
3. Learn to cultivate humility to overcome the pride, the sin of beauty. This involves:
  - a. Doing “normal things”
  - b. Not accumulating things.
  - c. Reading the bible everyday.

## Notes

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<sup>i</sup> <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/travel/the-secrets-behind-your-flowers-53128/>

<sup>ii</sup> <https://www.thelist.com/141155/hollywoods-most-down-to-earth-celebrities/>