

How to Become More Loveable Torrey 1983 Conference

By Joseph Aldrich

Ron: Continuing his Ministry with us this week for the sake of those who perhaps are off campus guests or have just arrived later in the week as our speaker for the morning. Dr. Joe Aldrich, a Southern California transplant graduate of Dallas Seminary and now up in the beautiful Northwest, brought a great deal of the rain down with him, a good friend of ours, one who's very faithful to God's word, and we appreciate him. Let's welcome again Dr. Joe Aldrich.

Aldrich: Thank you Ron. How many of you have never heard me speak before? How many have heard me speak before? How many of you really don't care either way? You're all to be commended. I know that the mind can only assimilate as much as the seat can endure. And this time in the week, I'm sure some of you are past pain. And I must say that it's kind of an awesome thing to be sharing the platform with some of the theological heavies that Biola is able to pull here for this Torrey Memorial lectureship. And I, being an educator, like to kind of take the pulse of the student body to find out if anything's getting through, to kind of compare you all with my kids up at Melnoma, and I'm excited to say that things are getting through. I overheard some students talking, and they said after Wilkinson's session, I discovered the Deuteronomy wasn't a two hump Camel. Well, making progress. Someone else said, well, I discovered after listening to Dr. Boys that High Cholesterol was not a religious festival. And Tim Timmons convinced another student that a charismatic was not a transmission out of a 58 Mercury. So we're making progress. We're on our way.

And being here with the caliber speakers that you have kind of makes me feel like the chauffeur who had received the assignment of driving a scientist around the country on a lectureship. And it seems that this particular scientist hobby was studying the relationship between the Bible and modern science. And so for years, he kind of worked away quietly doing his research, but had never been really public about it. He was kind of a shy, reticent type of an individual. But he was asked to sit on a panel one day where they were discussing the relationship between science and religion. And it became very obvious that here was a man who had done his homework. And this led to another engagement and another until finally a group of businessmen said, hey, we need this guy to take a sabbatical and put him on the road, get him out speaking in the colleges and universities of our country, showing them that there is an alternative to the evolutionary hypothesis. So he accepted this, and they hired a chauffeur, and they leased a Cadillac and way they went. And they're about six months into this tour, and the chauffeur was sitting up front in the car with his little chauffeur's cap on in the chauffeur's uniform, driving to this nondescript little town out in the middle of nowhere on a rainy, cold, bluish street type of an evening.

And the scientist was sitting in the back seat by himself, just kind of doing whatever scientists do and they have time on their hands. And all of a sudden the chauffeur yelled out, It just isn't fair. And that kind of got the sign of his attention. Pardon me, what did you say? Well, just isn't fair. What isn't fair? He said, Well, I've been driving you around for six months from campus to campus, from lecture hall to lecture hall, and I've heard you give the same speech week after week after week. And you get up front, you get all the credit, you get all the glory. And I sit on the back seat with my chauffeur's cap in my lap and nobody even notices me. Well, the scientist was a fair man. And he said, well, all right, it isn't fair. What can we do about it? And he said,

well, nobody knows you in this next little town. They've never seen you before. How about let's trade in places, let me give the lecture and you'll be the chauffeur. Well, Sinus was kind of intrigued with this turn of events. And he said, well, why not?

Let's do it? So he put on the chauffeur's cap and the little chauffeur's uniform and the chauffeur got in the back seat of the Cadillac, dressed up in his sport coat, and away they went to the University campus. They pulled up, found the proper dignitaries, went to the auditorium, and the scientists sat on the very back row with a chauffeur's cap on his lap, watching this, which was about to come to pass. But surprisingly enough, the chauffeur got up there and gave it everything he had. And he did an incredible job, in fact, so effective that they gave him a standing ovation at the end of his lectureship. And the President of the University walked up to the podium and he looked at his wife. He said, we got time for some questions. And wouldn't you know, there was some little graduate student who had come prepared. And he had a question written on a card. And he stood up and he said, Sir, I'd like you to discuss the epistemological basis of Paul's bibliocentric cosmology with this Astral catastrophism. Compare it with the scientific principles of uniformitarianism and the first and second laws of thermodynamics and give two examples.

Well, the guy sucked there. They had him here. He didn't know what to do. And all of a sudden, with a flash of brilliance, he turned to this young man. He said, Young man, I've been touring the United States speaking on campus after campus, and I've been asking awful lot of stupid questions. And I want to tell you, young man, that's the most stupid question that I've ever been asked. And just to show you how stupid it is, I'm going to invite my chauffeur to come up from the backseat and answer it. Well, you've got some chauffeurs here this week, and that's neat.

A man is telling his friend why he's never married. Every girl I bring home, he says, my mother doesn't like they're either too tall or too short, too fat or too thin, too smart or too dumb, too loud or too quiet. I just can't seem to please her. Ever feel that way? Well, his friend reprise. I'll tell you what you do. Keep looking until you find a girl who closely resembles your mother herself. Then she can't find fault with her. The man agrees, and a month later, he meets his friend again.

I followed your advice, he said. I looked and looked until I found a girl who is just like my mother. The same height, the same weight, the same personality, the same mind. Yes, yes. And what happened? My father couldn't stand her. You ever kind of feel that way? Like last year's model? Let me read you another illustration of, I think, one of the great struggles that each one of us face. You're 16 years old and your name is Helen High School. To be very honest, you're not exactly gorgeous. Your shoulders are rounded, and you have trouble remembering to close your mouth when you're thinking. That seems to worry your folks a lot. There are pimples distributed at random over your forehead and chin, and your oversized ears keep peeking out from under the hair that should hide them. You think often about these flaws and have wondered with proper reference why God wasn't paying attention when you were being assembled. You've never had a real date in your life, except for that disaster last February. Your mom's friend, Mrs. Knows Good, arranged a blind date that almost signaled the end of the world. You knew it was risky to accept, but you were too excited to think rationally.

Charming Charlie arrived in high spirits, expecting to meet the girl of his dreams. You were not what he had in mind. Do you remember the disappointment on his face when you shuffled into the living room? He just sawped through the evening and brought you home 2 hours early. Mary

Lou couldn't wait to tell you the following afternoon how much Charlie hated you. Of course, he thought you were junk, and you lashed back in anger. You caught him in the hall and told him he wasn't too bright for a boy with a head shape like a light bulb. But the hurt went deep. You despised all males for at least six months and thought your hormones would never make a comeback. When you arrived home from school that afternoon, you went straight to your room without speaking to the family. You closed the door and sat on the bed. You thought about the injustice of it all, letting your mind play hopscotch over many little painful memories that refused to die. In fact, it seemed as though suddenly you're on trial to determine your value to the human race. The attorney for the prosecution stood before the jury and began presenting incriminating evidence as to your unworthiness.

He recall that fourth grade Valentine's Day party when your beautiful cousin aunt got 34 cards and two boxes of candy, most of them from lovesick boys. You got three cards, two from girls, and one from your Uncle Albert in San Antonio. The jury shook their heads in sorrow. The attorney then described the day the 6th grade boy shared his ice cream cone with Betty Brigden, but said he'd catch the uglies if you took a bite. You acted like you didn't hear him, but you went to the girl's restroom and cried until the recess was over.

Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, said the attorney, these are the unbiased opinions of Helen's own generation. The entire student body of Washington High School obviously agrees. They have no reason to lie. Their views represent truth itself. This homely girl simply does not deserve to be one of us. I urge you to find her guilty this day. Then the attorney for the defense arose. He was a frail, Meek little man who stuttered when he spoke. He presented a few witnesses on your

behalf, including your mom and dad and Uncle Albert, of course. Objection, Your Honor. Shout of the prosecutor. These are members of her family. They don't count. They're biased witnesses, and their opinions are untrustworthy. Objection sustained. Quote of the Judge Your attorney frustrated and disconcerted, then mentioned how you kept your room clean and he made a big deal about that. A you got on a geography test last month. You saw the Foreman of the jury suppress a yawn, and the other showed signs of complete boredom and solo. Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, I asked you to find this young lady innocent of the charges. The jury was gone for 37 seconds before bringing in a verdict. You stood before them and you recognized them all.

There was last year's homecoming Queen. There was the quarterback of the football team. There was the valedictorian of the senior class. There was the surgeon's handsome son. They all looked down at you with stern eyes and suddenly shouted in one voice, Guilty as charged, Your Honor. The judge then read your sentence. Helen High School, a jury of your peers has found you to be unacceptable to the human race. You're hereby sentenced to a life of loneliness. You'll probably fail in everything you do, and you'll go to your grave without a friend in the world.

Marriage is out of the question, and there'll never be a child in your home. You're a failure, Helen. You're a disappointment to your parents and must be considered excess baggage from this point onward. This case is hereby closed. The dream faded, but the decision of the jury remained real. Your parents wondered why you were so irritable and mean during the weeks that followed. They never knew. And you didn't tell them that you had been expelled from the world of beautiful people?

There's an old Arab proverb that says, if one-man calleth thee donkey, pay him no mind. But if two men calleth thee donkey, get the saddle. Napoleon made a very interesting observation. He said, a man becomes the man of his uniform. I had a great big strapping. Must have been six foot 5200 and 3240 pound seminary graduates. Pastor in my office here just a matter of a couple of months ago. And this guy didn't talk five minutes. But what? He broke down into tears saying, Joe, I'm going to fail. I continue to fail. Everything I do, I fail. And I probed a little bit and I discovered that his father had told him he would never amount to anything from the time he was a little child.

And all he was doing was replaying that record over and over and over again. And every time a challenge would come, he would hear that script being played in his heart and his mind saying, you're junk, you can't do it. And friend, there's a basic principle that runs all the way through life and that's this. If you believe you can or you believe you can't, for all practical purposes, you are right. The Bible says, as a man mentally conceives himself to be, so is he. Each one of you came into life with a bucket in each hand and in one bucket. We're putting all the positive comments has a great big plus on that bucket. All the kind things, all the affirmations that came to you from your parents and your peers. In the other bucket, we put all the minuses, the put downs, your junk type of comments. By the way, research indicates that for every time a parent says something positive about his kid, 15 times he says something negative. And what do you and I do? We reach into that bucket and often it's a negative. We get all this data and we sort this garbage.

And like Helen high School, we come to the conclusion that we're junk. We're of no value. We're of no worth. We can't accomplish anything. But friend, that message is not from God. Ethel Waters said it well, when she said, Honey, God don't sponsor no flops. And that's right. So how valuable are you? Does it depend on who I talk to? If we had all the world is your jury and the prosecuting attorney tried to convince the jury that you were junk and they were gone 7 seconds and came back and said, she's junk. Are you junk? Well, what difference does it make? It makes all the difference in the world. I was reading some writings of Jonathan Edwards and came across this statement, which in my mind is profound. He made the statement that the ultimate good is to treat something according to its true value. Wow, how valuable are you? That means that the ultimate good is to treat yourself according to your true value. The ultimate good is to treat someone else according to his or her true value. And I like to state things the other way. The ultimate evil is not to treat yourself according to your true value.

But the first person we have to respond to is God, because the ultimate good is to treat him according to his true value. And man throughout history has tried to change the value of God into something that's corruptible so he can live a lifestyle that grows out of his unredeemed, unregenerate nature. And man does the same thing. In Psalm 105, the writer says that Israel made a calf at Mount Horab and they exchanged their glory, their glory of being image bearers of God for the image of an Ox that eats grass. And let me tell you, friend, if you're buying the world's message that you're the product of time plus energy plus chance, that you're the naked ape, that you're the apex of the evolutionary hypothesis, then you're doing no different today than what Israel did when they exchanged their glory for the image of an Ox that eats grass. And then they started living that way. Turn with me to Matthew, chapter six. I think one of the most

encouraging, one of the most Dynamite passages in all of scripture. And let me just say a couple of things about the context here. The context is permeated with the concept of treasure and value. It underlies undergirds everything that our Lord is saying.

At this point. Notice, if you will, how often the word reward occurs in the context. For example, verse one, reward for the word reward, occurs into verse six. The word reward is involved. Verse 16 talks about reward. And at the end of verse 18, the concept of reward comes up again. And then notice how often the word treasure occurs in this context. Verse 19 don't store up for yourselves treasures on Earth. Verse 20 but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven. Verse 21 for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. Here's the principle God has designed you and me so that our hearts pursue value. We're value vacuum cleaners. We're kind of like those metal detectors that some people put their way through school by going down the beach and finding the quarters and nickels and dimes that fall out of people's pockets. Now the only problem is there's something putrid in Peru because sin has thrown all our circuit Breakers, Satan has changed all the price Tags, and many of us are going to pursue something we perceive to be valued throughout our lives and come to the end of our lives and discover we've been betrayed.

And my concern for you is not that you will fail. My concern for you is that you'll succeed at doing the wrong thing. That you'll climb that ladder of success is the word, you'll finally get to the top only to discover it's leaning against the wrong wall. There are two great worlds in conflict in this passage. There's the world of the temporal, the world of the flesh, the world of that which is carnal, the world of that which is immediate, which our Lord is contrasting to the world that's eternal where things last forever. And he's visualizing in the middle of that a heart in a mind that

has been darkened and degraded. And he's saying, look, you must seek first the Kingdom of God. And in the prayer where he tells him how to pray, he says, Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your Kingdom come. And what he's trying to do is to take the control center of our life and get it building momentum towards success by focusing it in the right direction. And he explains the mechanism in verse 21, 22 and 23. You and I are people who have three parts, basically rationality, sensibility will, the ability to think that's our intellect to get our emotions behind what we think. That's the key to making right decisions.

So it makes the statement first of all about the heart. The heart will pursue what it perceives to be valuable. Then he talks about the mind in verse 22. The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are bad, your whole body is going to be full of darkness. And he's saying here the perception, the wall view that we have, the information that we have accepted, is the starting point of the direction of our lives. But he's really saying here you got to get your heart behind your head because often our heart wants to go one direction and our head wants to go another direction. Then the third area is the will. And this is brought up in verse 24. No one can serve two Masters and he's pleading with them to seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness. And all these things will be taken care of. They'll be added to you. And he wants to get us thinking straight, he wants to get us feeling straight so that we'll make the proper choices.

The same pattern in Hebrews chapter eleven. Very interesting. Says all of these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised. But what did they do? They saw them intellect, they welcomed them emotion. And then they admitted that they were

strangers and pilgrims. They adopted a lifestyle that was totally contrary to the world around them. Abraham, it says, lived intense. Moses turned his back on the treasures of Egypt and he chose to be mistreated with his own people. Why? Because he saw him who was invisible. Abraham lived in tents. Why? Because he was looking forward into the future to that city built by God himself. That's what our Lord is trying to say here, don't store up treasures on Earth where moth and rust destroy and thieves break in and steal, but store them up in heaven.

Now, obviously, if we were sitting there listening, we'd say, now wait a minute, Lord. You're telling me to seek first your Kingdom. You're telling me not to worry about my daily life and so forth, but to commit myself to your purposes, to your person, to your power. But what about clothing and food and so forth? And the Lord takes this concept of the heart pursuing value from being simply a general principle. And he illustrates the fact that that is the very reason why God cares for you and me. So he's saying, this is a foundational principle, but it's operational with God.

Now notice how he illustrates this. And this is just beautiful. The Lord says, Therefore He's summarizing, now, don't worry about your life. He says, verse 27, who of you, by worrying can add a single hour to his life. Why do you worry about clothes? Verse 31, don't worry, saying, what are we going to eat? Or what are we going to drink then? Verse 34, don't worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Now, here's the important thing. There are some little birds flitting around the trees. The Lord looks over at these little birds up the north end to see a Galilee with his friends. Hey, look at those birds over there. They're pecking little pieces of grain out of the wild grain that's there. They don't store this away in barns. Your heavenly Father

feeds them. And of course, the question we have to ask immediately is, why does God feed birds? I'll tell you why. Because they're valuable to Him. The Bible tells us that not even a Sparrow hops a bottle on the ground, doesn't even fall to the ground. But what the heavenly Father is aware of it. And notice this little phrase underlying it put asterisk to buy it, jump up and down, shout glory, everything else, are you not much more valuable than they are? I bet you are. Now, what does this tell us? It tells us that God's heart pursues what he values. It also tells us that the heart not only pursues what it values, but it provides for what it values. And not only does it provide for what it values, but it protects what it values.

Now, I imagine some of you guys probably have your first car. I noticed a nice looking Camaro out there with big, beautiful Mag wheels and fat tires and probably very low gas mileage. And I imagine if I'd popped the hood on that car, I probably could have fried an egg on the manifold. The valve cover probably immaculate. I'll tell you why. Because our heart provides for it, protects it, pursues it, concentrates on what it values. Now, if you have a tired Toyota and a turbo 928 sitting in your garage, I'll guarantee you which one's going to get the most affection, which one's going to get the most interest?

Here's the scary part, friend. If you want the attention, the protection, and the provision of other people coming your way, you must be a valuable person. See, God has made the heart to pursue value and you and I have to operate on the same principle that God does. And if you and I expect other people to be loving and caring and kind toward us, we've got to take value seriously. I get concerned when I hear people talking about a gappy love. Well, I'm supposed to love you in spite of what you are and you're supposed to love me in spite of what I am. So I'm not going to think

value and you don't need to think value. We'll just kind of put up with each other's inadequacies. Well, friend, there's some truth to that, but that's not the whole truth. The fact of the matter is I'm supposed to love you in spite of what you are, but you're supposed to love me because of what I am, because of what I am.

Now, at this point, we need to distinguish clearly between objective value and subjective value. You with me? Let me illustrate it this way. Many of you have a little diamond. Some of you do on a ring. Some of you are hoping you will, some of you are glad you don't. For some reason, man has said, Boy, that diamond is valuable. And if you don't think it is, try and buy one. Boy, I had to hawk everything I owned when I bought my wife's diamond. We got married to \$50 in our pocket and the paid off 46 Chevrolet. That was about it. But supposing all the world came to the conclusion that diamonds were worthless. They would be worthless because their value is subjective. But supposing again, you're in front of that jury and that jury comes to the conclusion you are junk. They're wrong because your value is determined by God and the Incarnation is the great stamp of your value. The fact that an infinite God would take a human body and incarnate himself into that is one of the greatest affirmations of the wonder of what you and I are.

Please turn the tape two for the continuation of this session.

And the Incarnation is the great stamp of your value. The fact that an infinite God would take a human body and incarnate himself into that is one of the greatest affirmations of the wonder of what you and I are. Psalm 8 says it beautifully that God has made us just a little bit lower than the Angels and he's crowned us with glory and with honor. And when you and I experience the

wonders of redemptions and God reaches down and take that which is nothing and draws it to himself, that which is nothing is nothing no longer. You and I are the King's kids we have a divine pedigree. I remember when I was on the farm milking those cows, we had a registered Holstein we called Mooseler. We kept her around for fire protection. Then we had a Holstein. I mean, a Brown Swiss that gave good, rich, quality milk. Now, the Brown Swiss was named Cola. She was the daughter of the world's champion Brown Swiss. I mean, she was a blue blood moussler was just a run of the mill registered Holstein. But Mooser had no respect whatever for Cole's Pedigree. We let him out of the milking stall, bust some bales in the loafing shed, and they'd go running around there, and Mooser would run coal out into the rain every night. A lot of Christians are that way. And we built our whole self-image around what our parents put in that bucket, what our peers put in that bucket.

And our parents are psychological mirrors to us. We become what we see reflected in their faces. And you and I need to make a dramatic shift and get back to what this book says about us. Christ is not in the business of redeeming junk. You're not redeemed with silver and gold, but with a precious blood of the Lamb. How much are you worth? What someone will pay for you.

Depravity itself does not mean that we are junk. It means we have nothing we can bring of value to merit forgiveness. Now, the Bible says we're not to think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think. And that's true, too. But the converse is also true. So you and I need to be feeding our minds with biblical information because our actions are always controlled by our currently dominant thoughts and so are our attitudes. If you think you're junk, you're going to feel like junk. If you feel like junk, you're going to be treated like junk. If you're treated like junk, on and

on it goes. The ultimate good is to treat yourself according to your true value. Now let's talk about subjective value.

Subjective value is value that can be lost. And your goal is to remain in the treasure chest of somebody else's life. But don't assume you can take that for granted. 50% plus marriages aren't making it today. Only four out of 100 that are making it claim to be happy. Divorce is up 800% in the last 100 years. Let me mention a couple of areas. Potential value. Excuse me? Let's get to that one. Practical value. Now, you've heard it said the way to a man's heart is through his stomach. There's some truth to that. Now, most of us men fall in love with the package and not the contents. We really don't know a whole lot about what is there. But you gals don't either. And when you get married, you soon discover that everything in one person nobody's got. Getting married is like planning a trip to the Caribbean, getting your wardrobe all put together arriving in Switzerland in a snowstorm. And once you get a totally different set of expectations, a new wardrobe and everything else, you go to work and produce beauty. During courtship, it's fun to watch what happens. This period of ecstatic paralysis floating around this little cloud built for two.

My goodness, he's combing his hair. His mother has a cardiac arrest when she sees this thing that she sent out the door at 18, and he comes back and things are happening. Doors are being opened, notes are being sent. There's thoughtfulness, there's care. Gifts are being given, important dates are being remembered. And when a couple gets married, the guy fixes a screen door. He takes care of a whole lot of little practical things. And the Gal, she's sensitive to the fact that he wants one egg fried and the other scrambled and gets the right one fried and the right one

scrambled. And does all these things that have practical value. But let me tell you, friend, it often doesn't last long. And pretty soon, the partners in that relationship begin to feel that they're being taken advantage of, that they're not being appreciated, and that wife often begins to feel like a maid and a mother and a mistress. Now, one of the reasons I want you to become more valuable, because as you become more valuable, you become more lovable is because God wants to explode you out there in the non-Christian community. And God's strategy is that you move out first with practical value, to serve, using the skills, the gifts, and the abilities that God has given you to break up the rough soil of Matthew 13, to do the hard labor of John, chapter four so that reaping can take place down the road.

What does our Lord say in Paul says, One Corinthians nine. He says, Though I'm free and I belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone. What does that mean? It means if you're a mechanic and the next door neighbor is having a problem with this car, you get your Fanny over there and you help him fix the car. And you don't tape a four Law booklet to the manifold. It means if your neighbor is sick, you get out there in your kitchen in a practical way, start demonstrating the love of Jesus Christ. Well, I like to have a dollar for every meal my wife has taken over to my own Christians. We had a couple, the whole family got sick, all five of them. My wife took over meals for three days. And both my husband and the wife got on the telephone shortly after that and in tears, saying, We've been married 15 years and no one has ever done that. You know what the Mormons are doing? They're monitoring the maternity wards of hospitals. As soon as a baby is born, someone from the Mormon Church shows up, says, Congratulations, we'd love to have the privilege of bringing home meals to you for the first week when you come home from the hospital.

Friends. Those are people who understand what it means to increase in practical value. And as a result, emotions are drawn toward that organization and to those people because market well, friend. People will not receive Jesus Christ through you unless they'll receive you first. And there are a whole lot of Christians that are bad news, not good news, going around to act like they're weaned on dill pickles. That's not the message. So you and I need to make a firm commitment to be continually developing and maintaining practical value. Being ladies and gentlemen, I have more fun than my little kids, I'd say. I wish I could bring them here and show them to you. I'm my little daughter. I tell her every day, Kristen, the thing that excites about me, about you, is you're going to go and be a lady. And you know she is. And we talk a lot about what it means to be beautiful. And I've asked her dozens of times, what is a Lady, Kristen? And it's so exciting to have the opportunity to literally mold that little life and to see her developing some of that practical value. And I trust that will continue because I want her to be someone that's lovable, for God's sake.

Arnold Tiny made the tragic but true comment. Most people have not rejected Christianity but a caricature. And it's because we have thought that evangelism is throwing hamburger in the fan and hoping somebody opens his mouth instead of recognizing that we are the message that God wants you and me to go out and play the music of the gospel before we share the words practical value. Next one is one that most of you probably won't be too concerned about right now, but someday you will be. It. It's aesthetic value. Now, I think most of the guys are greater than me. I think that the beach is gorgeous. I love the waves, the sand, the palm trees, the fir trees, all of the mountains. They're all beautiful, but there is nothing on the face of the Earth as beautiful as a beautiful woman. Nothing in my mind, nothing even comes close. Now, I've seen a lot of gals on

the cover of Vogue magazine that I suppose if I knew them, they wouldn't be beautiful people. And I've seen some gals who may be a little bit homely, but you get to know them, and they are striking in their beauty. So I'm not talking just about the beauty of form. But beauty is important.

The first thing the non-Christian checks out is physical appearance. Now, you may be the number one Jock on campus, wear your big Letterman's jacket. I don't know if those things are still in or not, but you make the homecoming Princess or the whatever, and you get married. And, boy, she's a Gal who takes care of herself. She keeps her body in shape. She dresses well, looks sharp, and you go to pots. Five years later, you can't come close to buttoning that Letterman sweater around your stomach. And your idea of a big evening is to come home, get in your jeans and your sloppy T shirt, sit in front of the TV, burp your way through the evening. And the only time you want to see your wife is at commercial time with a chip and dips. Hey, friend, let me tell you something. You have become very hard to love. You see, if that one that you claim to love values something and you don't value it and you allow yourself to deteriorate, you become increasingly less lovable. And I think we got to hang in there. Gravity eventually wins, but there is an appropriate physical appearance, physical conditioning for every age.

Research has shown that clothes do make a man. You become the man of your uniform. You say, Well, I don't like to have to wear a three-piece suit and stuff to work. Well, then don't try and work for IBM. You say, I think that's old fashioned. They'll say, Fine, go work for some other company. If you're working for us, you're wearing a three piece suit every day. Because their research has shown it does make a difference. And boy, it does, for Christ's sake, too. But much more important than the aesthetics of physical appearance is the aesthetics of the spirit. And this

is where the erosion takes place. And this is my burden for you as you think forward to life and relationships.

We've all seen the bubbly, beautiful, spontaneous, gorgeous, lovable bride at the wedding altar, full of life and love. And we've seen her five years later. She's bitter, she's cynical, she's withdrawn. She's literally a different person. And beauty and life has been sucked right out of her. You know, I never knew a guy. And if you know somebody, come tell me. I've never known a man to court, to pursue, to chase a gretchy, complaining, nagging a woman, but I know a lot that are married to him. And on the other hand, I've never known a woman to pursue a guy who's indifferent and aloof and insensitive and uncaring. And yet I can point you to dozens of women who are married to those kinds of men. What happened? An erosion of spirit. They didn't maintain that walk with God and the souring took place. And let me tell you something, friend, if that's the way you relate to your peers, if that's the way you come across to the non-Christian, you're not very lovable. And as a result, you're not a very good representative of Jesus Christ. So I challenge you to hear what Peter says in 1 Peter 3. It's true for men and women that it's the spirit control, temperament that is in the mind of God, of great price. One last area of value, potential value. Some of you will die age 22, and you will be buried age 65. And if you're a guy and you hang it up, you quit growing, you quit learning, you quit reaching, you quit stretching when you're 22 and you're married to a spunky little Gal who's going for it. She wants to become all that she can possibly become and develop all the skills and the abilities and the talents and the gifts that God has given her. And you come home every night and fry your brain in front of that TV set. You never open a book.

You become increasingly difficult to love and to respect and Mark it well, friends, when you cease to learn, you cease to live. And I trust that you will see your mission if God blesses you with a husband or a wife, to provide the context in which they can become all that they can possibly become before God. The heart pursues value, but the heart is deceived. The heart often pursues rat poison disguised as bread. That's why we need this book. The heart provides for what it values. It protects what it values. That's what we all want. We want someone else who'll take and meet those needs. And the beautiful thing is, God has committed himself to us, to provide for us, to protect us, because we're so valuable. And our mission is to go out and do exactly what he's done. Never give up on developing practical value.

I was chatting with Cliff Barrel's wife here last week in Colorado. And as you know, Cliff Barrel has been with the Billy Graham team for years. And she told me, I asked her, well, what was it like to raise five kids with your husband gone most of the time? Well, Cliff had a very high level of commitment to his family. She said every single day when he was gone, he'd take one of you know what these things are, one of those old tape belts. It was before tape recorders where they were dictation belts. It kind of looked like a belt Sander deal. Every day he dictate to his family, drop it in the mail. And it was a devotional time. He'd say on the tape, all right, gang, get together, get your Bibles out. We're going to study such and such passage. And they'd study together. He'd ask them questions. He'd tell them he loved them. And they say, all right, kids, I want you to Scoot. I want to communicate with my sweetheart. And then in her words, she said, he'd make love to me on the tape. Hey, there's a guy who knew what it was to recognize the struggles of trying to raise five kids without dad being there, to accept the practical responsibility

of teaching those kids when he couldn't be there and to be expressing love and affection as much as he could long distance by Tate and boy, you see the spark in their marriage today.

And you know it's because he made a commitment in some areas of practical value, physical appearance. Keep it up gang. So many of the guys that come in for counseling as I take a look at the life. The bottom line problem in many cases is she's let herself go or vice versa. Do yourself a favor. Take care of yourself physically. But more than that, guard that spirit. Pray that God will make you God flavored. Read Matthew chapter five. Memorize those Beatitudes. Those are the characteristics of a God flavored person and then never give up. It's always too soon to quit. Go for gold.

I want to close by reading an illustration while walking through the forest one day a man found a young Eagle who had fallen out of his nest. He took it home and he put it in his barnyard, where it soon learned to eat and behave like the chickens. One day a naturalist passed by the farm and asked why it was that the King of all birds should be confined to live in the barnyard with the chickens. The farmer replied that since he'd given a chicken feed and trained it to be a chicken, it had never learned to fly.

Since it now behaved as the chickens, it was no longer an Eagle. Still, it has the heart of an Eagle, replied the naturalist, and can surely be taught to fly. He lifted the Eagle toward the sky and said, you belong to the sky and not to the Earth. Stretch forth your wings and fly. The Eagle, however, was confused. He didn't know who he was, and seeing the chickens eating their food, he jumped down to be with them. Again. The naturalist took the bird to the roof of the house and

urged him again, saying, you're an Eagle. Stretch forth your wings and fly. But the Eagle was afraid of his unknown self and world and jumped down once more for the chicken food. Finally, the naturalist took the Eagle out of the barnyard to a high mountain. Then there he held the King of the Birds high above him, and he encouraged him again, saying, you're an Eagle, you belong to the sky. Stretch forth your wings and fly. The Eagle looked around back towards the barnyard and up to the sky. Then the naturalist lifted him straight towards the sun, and it happened that the Eagle began to tremble.

Slowly he stretched his wings and with a triumphant cry soared away into the heavens. It may be that the Eagle still remembers the chickens with nostalgia. It may even be that he occasionally revisits the barnyard. But as far as anyone knows, he has never returned to live the life of a chicken. One-man calleth the a donkey. Pay him no mind. Two men callethhe a donkey. Don't put the saddle on you. Let God tell you who you are and you put his salon.

Let's pray, Father. We pray that the spirit of God would sort this all out and balance it. And then, Lord, may we leave you're encouraged because you're on our side. Because we're accepted in the beloved one. We were hand picked before the casting down of this universe were the King's kids. God, we'd ask that we could treat you according to your value. And then father that we could treat ourselves according to that objective intrinsic value that you've placed upon us. And then Father, reach out taking our subjective values seriously and becoming more lovable because we're committed to growing in value. And Father, we'd ask that you'd take us as good seed, beautiful seed and explode us throughout this world.

That the fragrance, the beauty, the wonder of Christ could be released from our lives as we pursue value. Thank you that your value and your valuation of us assures us your provision and your protection as we seek first your Kingdom and your righteousness help us to do that we pray in Christ's name. Amen. Thank you.