

Beauty

(INSTRUCTIONS for class: take turns, each person reading one paragraph or question. Then each one select one of the numbered questions paragraphs to answer, and for the group to discuss.)

In high school, I had a retired navy admiral for an algebra teacher. He had an unusually large head, a white face with many large freckles and lots of loose skin around his cheeks and jaw. He was about 60 years old. I didn't think he was very beautiful to look at. However, as I sat in his classroom for many months I changed my opinion. When he smiled his wide smile, I could see beauty in his face. After that, I decided that all people are beautiful when they smile.

QUESTIONS:

1. What is beautiful to you? Think about people, landscapes, art, woodwork, backyards, plants. Do you have the same idea of what is beautiful as your conversation partner? What makes a face beautiful, or a painting?
2. I remember praying for my daughter when she was a little girl. I asked God to make her "beautiful on the inside and on the outside." How do you value "inside" beauty and "outside" beauty? Is it better for a person to be beautiful only on the outside or beautiful only on the inside? When you watch television or read books in your native culture or in the American culture - what value is placed on beauty?
3. When you are looking for a boyfriend or girlfriend; or a husband or wife, what importance do you put on beauty (inside and outside) or other kinds of attributes?
4. In America, we feel busy. We say that we live our lives "in the fast lane." How can a busy person appreciate what is beautiful? What kinds of beauty do busy people miss or not notice? In your native culture, do people take time to find what is beautiful and appreciate it? Explain how.
5. What do you do to create beauty in your life or in the world? Is creating beauty a necessary or optional part of life? Is creating beauty only for artists or is it for everyone?
6. This is a simple Christian song about beauty. The "He" in the song is God.

Something beautiful, something good,
All my confusion He understood
All I had to offer Him was brokenness and strife
And He made something beautiful of my life.

Is there a part of your life that was not always beautiful, but has become beautiful? What caused the change?