

Seeing the Heart

Lesson 6

Unit Two: Self-Esteem

Scripture: 1 Samuel 16:1, 4-7; Proverbs 31:30

Life Focus: God considers inner beauty more important than physical attractiveness.



Today's Challenge

Face it. We all are attracted to good-looking people. That may bring us problems, however. This lesson will help us find a better way to choose those who are important in our lives.

Step 1

Setting the Stage

List qualities that make people attractive.

Step 2

Searching the Word

Explain why character is more important than appearance when choosing a leader or a spouse.

Step 3

Making It Real

Discuss attributes and actions that reveal the presence of godly character.

Step 4

Living It Out

Identify areas in which you need to build your character.

Hot Topic

A common topic of conversation during U.S. presidential campaigns is the amount of time and money a candidate spends to choose an appearance that appeals to the electorate. A popular website from a few years back encouraged men and women to post a photo of themselves that would be rated by the cyber community as "hot" or "not." What is the connection? Whether we are choosing a leader or a mate, we are often led to judge by appearance.

The Bible, however, offers quite different counsel. Whether we are choosing a *master* or a *mate*, we must value character over appearance.

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Hide It in Your Heart

But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

—1 Samuel 16:7

For a pre-session or take-home activity, lead kids in memorizing this key verse, using the puzzle found on your *Young Teen Resources* CD.

1 Samuel 16:1, 4-7

¹The LORD said to Samuel, "How long will you mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him as king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and be on your way; I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem. I have chosen one of his sons to be king."

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⁴Samuel did what the LORD said. When he arrived at Bethlehem, the elders of the town trembled when they met him. They asked, "Do you come in peace?"

⁵Samuel replied, "Yes, in peace; I have come to sacrifice to the LORD. Consecrate yourselves and come to the sacrifice with me." Then he consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.

⁶When they arrived, Samuel saw Eliab and thought, "Surely the LORD's anointed stands here before the LORD."

⁷But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

Proverbs 31:30

³⁰Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting;
but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised.

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Encountering God's Word

MASTER 1 Samuel 16:1, 4-7

Saul could have been a great king. He was an impressive young man without equal among the Israelites—"a head taller than anyone else" (1 Samuel 9:2). A mighty warrior as well, he began his reign by leading the army of Israel to a rout of the Ammonites (11:8-11).

But soon Saul disobeyed the Lord. When he was told to attack the Amalekites and utterly destroy everything, he decided to keep the best of the sheep and cattle (15:3, 9). Samuel confronted Saul and told him that because he had rejected the word of the Lord, God had rejected him as king. Until the day Samuel died, he did not go to see Saul again,

We must value character over appearance when choosing a leader.

though he mourned for Saul and what he could have been (v. 35).

But now the Lord had new instructions for Samuel. There was no use

for Samuel to mourn Saul any longer, because his kingship was a dead issue (16:1). Samuel was to fill his horn with oil and prepare to anoint another man to be the Lord's chosen leader. (Pouring oil on a leader's head was the equivalent of an inauguration ceremony.)

Samuel was to go to Bethlehem and seek out a man named Jesse, the grandson of Ruth and Boaz (Ruth 4:21, 22). Jesse had eight sons, and one of them was the Lord's choice to be the next king of Israel.

When Samuel arrived in Bethlehem, the elders of the town trembled with fear (1 Samuel 16:4). Aware that Samuel and King Saul were no longer on good terms, the elders surely did not want to get involved with anyone their king might consider an enemy. In addition, they may have feared the power Samuel held as a prophet and spokesman for God. But Samuel encouraged them to join him in the feast he was preparing, where he would consecrate Jesse and his sons and offer a sacrifice to the Lord (v. 5).

When Samuel saw Jesse and his sons, his attention was immediately drawn to Eliab, the oldest son. "Surely," Samuel thought, "the LORD's anointed stands here" (v. 6). But Samuel was about to learn an important lesson. People cannot be valued by external things, such as their appearance or height (v. 7). The things that people think are important do not impress God. Men look at the outward appearance, but God looks at the heart. One by one the older brothers passed by, but none was the one the Lord had chosen. Finally, Jesse had to send for David—such an unlikely candidate that he had been left with the sheep! (v. 11). David proved to be the one whom God had chosen, for David was

a man after God's own heart (13:14), the heart of a shepherd rather than a warrior (Psalm 23).

To consider this situation from another perspective, imagine these two candidates for leadership: Candidate one looks awkward, has a rather high, nasal voice, and does not appear overly sophisticated. Candidate two is a world traveler, a friend to royalty, and a multimillionaire. Given those résumés alone, which would you choose? How many rejected the choice for the leadership of Abraham Lincoln (candidate one) and chose that of Osama bin Laden (candidate two)?

MATE Proverbs 31:30

This contrast between people's physical appearance and their inner worth is clearly seen in Proverbs 31. In a passage extolling the ideal wife, the writer lists some of the things for which such a woman should be praised. She is of noble character and is hardworking, generous, and wise (vv. 10-29). Then the writer gives this keen insight: "Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting" (v. 30). Sometimes a man is beguiled by a charming and attractive woman, only to find out later what she is really like. (The same principle, of course, also holds for a woman who is beguiled by a man.) External beauty is "fleeting"; no amount of plastic surgery can permanently stop the ravages of time. What really matters—and is of eternal importance—is this: "A woman who fears the LORD is to be praised."

We must value character over appearance when choosing a spouse.

On April 18, 2003, in a case that made national headlines, Scott Peterson was arrested for the murder of his wife, Laci, and their unborn son. While imprisoned, Peterson was bombarded with letters from women proposing marriage to him! The then 30-year-old fertilizer salesman was handsome, but imagine what Solomon would say about using that criterion alone for choosing a spouse!

So what makes a person attractive? And is our attractiveness the basis of our self-esteem? If self-esteem is based on physical beauty, it is shallow and doomed to eventual collapse. Nothing so superficial could give us real worth. On the other hand, if our self-esteem is based on our relationship with God, it is deep and long lasting. When deceptive charms have been unmasked and skin-deep beauty has lost its bloom, only one thing really matters: do we fear and honor the Lord?

Life Focus: God considers inner beauty more important than physical attractiveness. Use one of the following activities to help your students list qualities that make people attractive.

QUICK STEP Beauty Contest

When all students arrive, instruct them to turn to page 24 in the student book. Tell them that the people pictured are in a beauty contest. They must decide as a class who is the winner and runner-up and then who would be cut in the first round. Allow your students to talk freely as you back away. But listen closely to their comments. They may be harsh and critical. Keep in mind the things you hear so you can bring them up in discussion. After a few minutes, tell them they must give you their decisions. Then discuss:

Why did you choose the winner, runner-up, and the losers? Whose standards did you go by? Did some of you disagree with the group's decisions? Explain. I heard some of the things you said as you discussed. Sometimes we are more critical than we think. Who or what has influenced your ideas of beauty? Are your standards of beauty more like our society's standards, or do you think your standards are what God would use to measure beauty?

Lead into Bible study by saying: **It's true that the world we live in measures people by what they look like on the outside. But we're going to see today that God cares about what people look like on the inside.**

"Beauty Products"

In the week before class, record three or four TV commercials that promote different health and beauty products.

After all students have arrived, play the commercials, asking students to listen for slogans that describe what makes a person beautiful. You may wish to show our "Beauty Products" montage of classic TV commercials from the CD instead of taping commercials yourself.

After playing either commercial montage, have students list the elements of beauty that those ads and slogans listed. Ask them to add more to the list from other commercials as they think of them. They may include shiny hair, the absence of fine lines and wrinkles in the skin, a slim body, whiter teeth, or full eyelashes. After making as complete a list as possible, lead into Bible study with these words: **We have seen what commercials say makes a person beautiful. But is this true beauty? It is true that the world we live in stresses what a person looks like on the outside, but we are going to learn that God cares about what a person looks like on the inside.**

The Scene

For an opening activity based on a current events, download The Scene online. Go to <http://www.21stcc.com/> and click on "Downloads." There you'll find a free article with discussion questions to begin this week's lesson.



Time
10 minutes

game

Materials

Young Teen Student



Time
10 minutes

video

Materials

recorded TV commercials (or *Young Teen Resources* CD), audiovisual equipment



news



Step 2 Searching the Word

Life Focus: God considers inner beauty more important than physical attractiveness. Use one of the following activities to help your students explain why character is more important than appearance when choosing a leader or a spouse.

Time
20 minutes

research

Materials

Young Teen Student, Bibles, pens

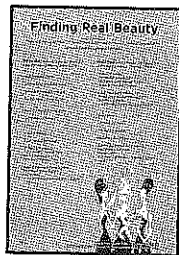


Time
20 minutes

creative writing

Materials

pens, paper, Bibles (optional: copies of p. 30 from this book)



QUICK STEP Heart Specialists

Divide the class into discussion groups of three to five students. Make sure each student has a student book, a Bible, and a pen. Have each group turn to page 25 in their student books and discuss the questions found there. As groups discuss, move among them to guide discussion as necessary. *Encountering God's Word* and the suggested responses below will help you.

1. Samuel saw a large, powerful man and assumed he would be a good king. He should have known better because Saul was not a good king despite having those characteristics.
2. God wants a leader who has a character similar to His own.
3. David and God both had the character of a shepherd. They both sought to nourish, protect, comfort, and guide those under their care.
4. We usually look for physical beauty and a charming personality.
5. The best test of whether or not someone would be a good spouse would be whether or not he or she respected God and His will.
6. A spouse who fears God works hard, provides for the needs of the family, helps those in need outside of the family, and teaches God's ways to others.

After groups finish with their discussion, review their responses all together. Comment as necessary to make sure all questions are answered completely and accurately.

Finding Real Beauty

Divide the class into two groups. Give each group paper and pens and one of these Scripture assignments:

- Group One: Value character over appearance when choosing a leader (1 Samuel 16:1-13).
- Group Two: Value character over appearance when choosing a spouse (Proverbs 31:10-31).

Groups should read their portion of the lesson text and create a song about it to a familiar tune. Help students with their task as groups work. Use *Encountering God's Word* as a resource (you can also use the sample verses on page 30 of this book as a guide).

After group work is completed, allow students to read or perform and explain their songs. Comment as necessary to make sure all points are made clearly and completely.

Lead into the next section of the lesson by saying: **Although we often judge by appearance, doing so is unwise. Whether we are talking about a leader or a future spouse, character is always more important than outer beauty. Let's look at how we can judge character over appearance.**

Life Focus: God considers inner beauty more important than physical attractiveness. Use one of the following activities to help your students discuss attributes and actions that reveal the presence of godly character.

QUICK STEP Invisible Beauty

Divide your students into two groups. Both groups will be making TV commercials. Give each group its assignment:

Group One: Come up with a fictional person and make a campaign ad explaining why this person would make a good political leader. Decide on what political role this person is running for (president, governor, mayor, etc.) and why the person is qualified, according to God's standards from today's Bible study. (Make sure to reveal inner beauty—godly character.)

Group Two: Come up with a fictional person and make a dating-service ad explaining why this person would make a good date. Prove why the person is qualified, according to God's standards from today's Bible study. (Make sure to reveal inner beauty—godly character.)

After the groups have prepared, allow each to perform its ad. Then have the students from the other group decide whether they would choose the person.

Lead into the final lesson step by saying: **What would a commercial about *you* look like? Does your life look good on the outside only, or does it reveal godly character within?**

Pick Me!

Divide your class into two groups. Say: **Now that we've seen what God sees as beautiful—godly character—let's see how that works today.** Give a copy of Sheet 7A to each group. Tell one group that the two candidates listed are applying for political leadership. The group must decide who appears to be better qualified for the job. Tell the second group that the two candidates are applicants in a dating service. The group should pick who is a better choice.

Allow the groups time to discuss. Then ask each group to tell what the candidates were applying for and which applicant was chosen. Finally, surprise them by revealing who the candidates really are. (Candidate One is Abraham Lincoln and Candidate Two is Osama bin Laden.) Ask if they are happy with their choices now that they know the candidates' identities.

Say, **Sometimes people look good on paper but don't quite measure up in person. Now that you know their identities, who would you pick? Obviously Abraham Lincoln! Why?** (Because it doesn't matter about their outward appearance or skills; we know Lincoln has more character.)

Lead into the final lesson step by saying: **Now let's think how we measure up. Do we look good just when our skills are written out on a résumé, or do we also have godly character inside to back it up?**

Time
20 minutes

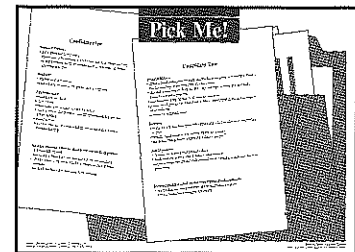
drama

Materials
none

Time
20 minutes

report

Materials
two copies of *Young Teen Resources*
Sheet 7A



Step 4 Living It Out

Life Focus: God considers inner beauty more important than physical attractiveness. Use one of the following activities to help your students identify areas in which they need to build character.

Time
10 minutes

self-evaluation

Materials
Young Teen Student



Time
10 minutes

prayer

Materials
ENCOUNTER—*The Digital Magazine*
for each student



QUICK STEP Building Character

Say: We're going to take some time now to evaluate our own lives and see if we have the inner qualities that God desires. Have students turn to page 26 in their student books and spend some time on their own, quietly reading the descriptions of the different tools listed there. Encourage students to really take a hard look at their lives and then determine which tool they need to use in order to build more godly character in their lives.

After several minutes of quiet time, allow volunteers to share what tools they chose and why. If you have time and are familiar with each student, go around the room and tell each person what characteristics you see in his or her life that demonstrate godly character. Tell each student why he or she has inner beauty. Close in a time of prayer.

Distribute ENCOUNTER—*The Digital Magazine*. You can either print these articles and hand them out or e-mail them to your students each week.

"How Do I Look?"

Distribute copies of this week's issue of ENCOUNTER—*The Digital Magazine* and have your students read the article titled "How Do I Look?" The author talks about reprogramming your brain to focus on inner qualities instead of outer beauty.

Lead in a directed prayer activity by saying:

Lord, you know I have felt self-conscious because of this aspect of my outward appearance . . . (Students will complete the statement in silent prayer.)

Lord, you know I have judged these people by their outward appearances . . . (Students will complete the statement in silent prayer.)

Lord, help me to build inner beauty by . . . (Students will complete the statement in silent prayer.)

Close with an audible prayer.

ENCOUNTER™

Here's what's in ENCOUNTER—*The Digital Magazine* this week:

- "Beauty for Guys?"
- "How Do I Look?"
- "What Is Beauty Anyway?"