

An Extreme Makeover

Posted by Dr. Gary H. Cote on February 25, 2005

Over the past several months a new TV show has overtaken several of the networks. Many are tuning in to watch with great interest the change that takes place when a team of experts gather together to tackle an “extreme makeover” project. I don’t know if I would necessarily like to be considered an extreme makeover target or nominee, but the thought of getting everything newly done seems inviting. Where you have fat, it’s gone; where a facial adjustment is deemed needed, boom, it’s done! With chisel and hammer, with vacuum, with diet, with scalpel, with workout, with hairstylists, with dentist, with whatever specialist is required, the end product eventually comes forth.

This new focus is also applied to a person’s car as it is completely reworked. The car is “overhauled” and it is unrecognizable as it was once known. One car company recently used this idea for its commercial. A woman’s car was taken and brought to a garage. She arrives and instead of her car there, overhauled to a new status, it is a brand new car from the car company. The woman is ecstatic and keeps saying with tearful joy, “it doesn’t even look like my car.” Quite Humorous! She drives away happy as can be while the old one sits in the back yard of the garage. The people who made it happen congratulate one another with great glee.

The new turn-around is also successful with old, beat-up homes. The family applies to the show’s producers requesting a change in their houses. The one making application states why they need it and states why they think deserve it. The applicants are considered and one is chosen to receive, “The Extreme Makeover.” As the team arrives, the family is whisked away and the house is totally redone. The end result is heart-felt and many emotions are displayed invoking favorable response from the viewers. Perhaps the happiest people on the show are those neighbors who cheer the makeover team on, who lived near the makeover mess for some time.

As I considered these shows and the enormous success they are having, I pondered on the idea of people loving to have something new. We easily get sick of the old and want the new. Whether it is a new body, a new car, or a new house, the recipient usually keeps saying things like, “O my God!” “O my God!” The makeover has filled them with awe. They are so happy they cannot help themselves but be filled with joy. The old is gone and the new has come!

Now these are man’s ideals of what a makeover is, but the whole idea of a makeover did not originate with some TV executive trying to cash in on a new idea. The thought of a “Total and Extreme Makeover” began with God Almighty long ago. He has always been focused on the utter and complete makeover of humanity and the creation. He says that a new heaven and a new earth are coming. He encourages the saints of God to walk in the Light as He is in the Light, and shun the darkness and the works of those in the dark. He states that those that are in Christ are new creations, the old has passed away, behold the new has come. God makes us new by

undertaking the task of an extreme makeover. Nothing will ever be the same! His team of specialists begin working on the new believer immediately. Nothing will go unnoticed!

Anyone who has experienced the Spirit of God working His makeover in their lives will attest to the pain it often times invokes. Why pain? The old man, the old ways, the old habits are at core most resilient. The old person that focused on everything that is not of God does not want to say, "Goodbye." There is pain, tears will be shed, whining results here and there, and how so often people will utter and mutter, "I don't understand." "Why does it have to be like this?" "Why won't God just fix it?" "What's going on in my life?" Behold the old is going and is deemed gone; behold, the new is coming and has come!" Praise be to God!

When we consider the makeovers of man versus the Great Makeover of the Holy Spirit, a wonderful distinction surfaces. When mankind makes something over that is greatly adored and appreciated it is an outward work. They can redo the car, but the same driver gets in it. They can redo the house, but the same family moves back in; they can redo the body, but the same heart, the same passions, the same motives, the same thoughts are still inside, where the heart and soul reside. A person may receive a new figure and say, "I have new-found confidence." But this is a shallow confidence; it is built on something grossly temporal and is easily destroyed by even just a few negative comments from someone else. These outward makeovers are a work from the outside-in; whereas God's make-over is a work from the inside-out!

God gives us a new heart that is no longer stone cold! He refashions our thoughts to be like Christ's. He renews our spirit to be one of joy, and peace, and love. He instills faith where fear once encamped. What He works on will result in outward change, but the outward changes often times do not show up for some time. Habits will begin to change; one's attire will change, the way one talks will be altered as the coarse words and foolish talk give way to the new man. The rage that resulted from anger and frustration will be replaced with peace and trust. Chewing fingernails from stress and nervousness will cease. Rather than going to bars, taverns and social clubs, the man will go home, to Church, and go visit others. The outward will follow the inward change that God works in each heart as He sets up His Kingdom in the heart of each believer. Regardless of circumstances, situations, or relational difficulties, the peace and trust and joy of God's presence remain. One's confidence will be steadfast as they trust God. Should this not be the case, then truly evidence of the old man is surfacing to stake an old claim. Beware of the works of the flesh that seeks opportunity to gain attention.

In all cases, "Rejoice" for you and I are undergoing an "Extreme Makeover." The Spirit of God is confronting our every thought, tradition, and value. Let us trust in Him for He will complete the work He has started!

May the Lord grant all wisdom and grace to receive this message and live out its purpose!