

December 1995

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SEEKING GOD'S WILL ABOUT MAKE-UP

Mr. Armstrong's November 16, 1981 WN article on make-up (and its follow-ups over the next couple of years) was probably the last time a leader in God's Church told the people of God something that was not going to be popular and that would show us our transgressions (Mr. Armstrong often quoted Isaiah 58:1). That hasn't happened very often in the last 14 years, has it? Do we no longer need our sins and faults pointed out to us in a way where it hurts ... or have we fallen asleep? Are there still leaders amongst the people of God today who are not afraid to make unpopular decisions?

I have felt that Mr. Tkach's reintroduction of make-up into the Church in 1988 did not have any biblical support; rather that it was nothing more than giving people what they want, like 2 Timothy chapter 4 indicates. However, while I have at times referred to this matter of make-up, I have thus far always made a point of avoiding any explanation of the subject. I felt that Mr. Armstrong had done that quite thoroughly in his WN article of Nov. 16, 1981.

I have in recent times been asked about this question of make-up several times, and so I feel that I should now address this subject in detail.

Over the years I have come across a whole range of different attitudes, different perceptions and different responses regarding the question of make-up. I too have thought about this subject. I have commented in some of my articles on this subject of make-up, but I have not really taken any time to explain it. I felt that Mr. Armstrong had done so already in his articles. But then just about any explanation of a question can be improved upon once there are specific responses to the original explanation. That is true for Mr. Armstrong's writings and that is certainly also true for all the things I have tried to explain ... those explanations can all still be improved upon, modified or corrected.

In response to the comments I have received, I have put together the following explanation. See if it makes this question clearer? So let's look at this whole question of make-up a little more closely.

THE ORIGINAL MOTIVATION BEHIND THE USE OF MAKE-UP.

This is what Mr. Armstrong looked at, but perhaps didn't really explain as fully as he could have. The original motivation was TO DECEIVE, to create an appearance that isn't true, something that has to be washed off afterwards. The original motivation was to impress someone and to appeal to someone in a seductive way.

There really is no question that THE MOTIVATION of the wicked queen Jezebel was to deceive and perhaps to seduce Jehu. You know 2 Kings 9:30.

And when Jehu was come to Jezreel, Jezebel heard [of it]; AND SHE PAINTED HER FACE, and tired her head, and looked out at a window. (2 Kings 9:30)

Jehu had just killed the son of Jezebel at the instruction of God (see verses 6-7,24). Jezebel knew this and saw her chance of survival in trying to impress and maybe even to seduce Jehu. Also, it was a common custom at the time for conquerors to claim for themselves the wives of the kings they had defeated. So Jezebel could have seen herself as in line for Jehu to claim for himself?

In the Bible God uses Jezebel as the consummate personification of evil and wickedness and fornication. "Jezebel" is synonymous with SEDUCTION AND IDOLATRY ...

Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest THAT WOMAN JEZEBEL, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and TO SEDUCE MY SERVANTS TO COMMIT FORNICATION, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. (Revelation 2:20)

The Bible is very brief on the details that are recorded for most events. I take it that there is always A REASON WHY some specific detail is recorded.

For example, it seems pretty obvious that the author of 2 Kings 9:30 (possibly Isaiah, see 2 Chronicles 32:32) was not present to actually SEE Jezebel apply the make-up to her face. She did this in private. Nor was the author present when she was subsequently thrown out of the window (verse 33) and then totally eaten up by dogs (verses 35-36). (This happened over 100 years before Isaiah's time.) In fact, the evidence of Jezebel having painted her face was visible for perhaps no more than a few minutes and only to a very few people ... from the time she looked out of the window until she was thrown out and had her skull smashed and her blood splattered on the walls and on the horses.

The chances are that Jehu could see that Jezebel was wearing make-up; he was the one person Jezebel was trying to impress. Possibly a few of the men around Jehu, who were also on their horses and who saw Jezebel leaning out of the window, also noticed that Jezebel had make-up on her face. However, it seems unlikely that this make-up stood out in their minds as something to take note of. So, while a number of men saw Jezebel look out of the window, and while a few of them may actually have consciously noted that she was wearing facial make-up, that was hardly a newsworthy thing for most men "to write home about". It is hardly the sort of comment that is diligently recorded in the annals of national histories.

So where does this statement "she painted her face" come from? Which eye-witness reported this to the author? Why, nobody told the author about this "make-up". Possibly it was a comment that was, after the event, recorded by some eye-witness in some form of record of the national history? But above all, it is a comment that God INSPIRED the author to either take note of or to simply know and to include in this book. Can you understand this?

The point I wish to make is that this comment "she painted her face" is recorded in the national history of the people of Israel for only one reason: BECAUSE GOD WANTED IT RECORDED! Apart from that, this action by Jezebel has no significance or importance. It is no more important, from a human perspective, than the colour of the dress she was wearing at the time.

So, when you realize how extremely brief and concise this whole account in 2 Kings is, WHY did God INSPIRE the author to INCLUDE this comment "she painted her face" in this account? Is this supposed to tell us something ... or is this just some incidental and largely irrelevant observation? All Scripture is given by inspiration of God (2 Timothy 3:16) and God surely included this detail about Jezebel (which only a few people, if any, would have made a mental note of!) for a specific reason.

When God inspired this comment in 2 Kings 9:30, did God already know that later He would use this woman Jezebel as an example of seduction (as per Rev. 2:20)? Or, when God came to the time of the Book of Revelation, was Jezebel just a convenient example that happened to be available? And when God inspired the comment in Revelation 2:20 about Jezebel "seducing His servants", did God not expect us to say: "Exactly what is there in the Old Testament about Jezebel's conduct and behaviour that God wants me to learn from? HOW did Jezebel of old try to seduce God's servant or servants? What did Jezebel DO in an attempt to seduce someone?"

Take some time to think through this whole situation with Jezebel in 2 Kings chapter 9. Just a few people would actually have visibly seen her make-up (which wasn't necessarily gaudy or outlandish or even blatantly obvious) and that fact wasn't necessarily important or significant to them. Jezebel's make-up simply wasn't "a big deal" to the men who might have noticed it. So can this comment be attributed to anything other than specific divine inspiration? WHY did God want this detail included in His Word? How and why is Jezebel an example of seduction?

I have no difficulty seeing that God included this specific detail about one of the most evil women spoken about in the whole Bible because the painting of the face is something that God abhors and something God assuredly disapproves of.

THE FACTS ABOUT HOW MAKE-UP BECAME ACCEPTED IN OUR TIME

It is a fact that 100 years ago make-up was not accepted by the overwhelming majority of women. As Mr. Armstrong mentioned in his article, it is a fact that "prostitutes" were the first ones to use make-up. It is an obvious fact that for prostitutes the motivation for using make-up was to seduce men. It is also a fact, as Mr. Armstrong stated, that amongst women, prostitutes were also the first ones to take up smoking. The motivation was also to appear more seductive to men. It is quite clear that "basic good grooming" had nothing to do with motivating prostitutes to either use make-up or to start smoking.

What Satan then did is persuade society as a whole to make these activities of prostitutes acceptable to society at large and then, going one step further, to turn the use of make-up into the standard by which the world will judge good grooming. He put pressure on women to conform in this matter of make-up, though many women have readily resisted this pressure.

TODAY the original motivation for using make-up has largely been forgotten and replaced by a different perspective. The fact that the original motivation for make-up has been replaced by something that has nothing to do with immorality doesn't really make it more acceptable before God.

TODAY painting the lips and the fingernails and the toenails and make-up around the eyes is pressured on us as THE standard of good grooming. But we have not consulted GOD in establishing this standard. We have not at any stage along the way asked:

"Yes, but does Almighty God actually WANT me to paint my lips and eyes and nails?"

We would like to have make-up evaluated from OUR perspective, which is totally different from that of the prostitutes who introduced the custom into our society. OUR motivation has nothing to do with wanting to seduce someone. Our perception has been changed to the point where we look upon the "judicious use" of make-up as elegant and refined.

But Mr. Armstrong's point was that our present perspective is not right!

God tells us very clearly ...

For MY THOUGHTS [ARE] NOT YOUR THOUGHTS, NEITHER [ARE] YOUR WAYS MY WAYS, saith the LORD. (Isaiah 55:8)

So are we prepared to genuinely seek out God's thoughts on this topic or not?

GOD'S PERSPECTIVE ON THIS QUESTION

It is a fact that painting the face and painting the body is a custom that is found in many primitive societies. It is a custom of nations that are cut off from God. But it is not a custom of the nations of Israel. It is something Israel has taken up from other nations. Yet God tells us very clearly ...

Thus saith the LORD, LEARN NOT THE WAY OF THE HEATHEN, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them. (Jeremiah 10:2)

While the next few verses in Jeremiah chapter 10 focus specifically on the pagan customs surrounding the christmas tree, the principle of "don't learn and copy the customs of the nations around you" applies to many other things as well. Painting the face and the body is not a custom that God ever gave to His people. By no stretch of the imagination could it be called a "godly custom". Rather, we would have to very clearly conclude with Paul that ... "WE HAVE NO SUCH CUSTOM, NEITHER THE CHURCHES OF GOD" (see 1 Corinthians 11:16).

All true Christians will strive with their whole hearts to live up to this statement by the Apostle John ...

And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because WE KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS, AND DO THOSE THINGS THAT ARE PLEASING IN HIS SIGHT. (1 John 3:22)

Not only will we try to sincerely live by all of God's laws and commandments; but we will also CONSTANTLY be asking ourselves this question:

"Yes, I understand that what I am contemplating doing is not strictly forbidden by the laws of God. BUT I WANT TO KNOW: IS IT ACTUALLY PLEASING TO GOD FOR ME TO DO THIS OR NOT? If something is NOT actually PLEASING to God, THEN I will simply not do it, even if God does not specifically forbid me to do so!

Are we agreed that this is the attitude of the converted Christian or not? ... Or do we take the approach of reasoning:

"Well, I don't see any evidence in the Bible where God specifically FORBIDS what I am contemplating doing, and THEREFORE, as far as I am concerned, it must be okay with God. THEREFORE I will approve the conduct I am contemplating."

These two approaches reflect two totally different attitudes. It should be easy to see that the second attitude is not that of a converted person who is zealously trying to live by 1 John 3:22.

Now let's look at a statement by Jesus Christ Himself.

Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, BECAUSE THOU CANST NOT MAKE ONE HAIR WHITE OR BLACK. (Matthew 5:36)

Think about this statement by our Creator! Didn't Christ know we would have hair cosmetics ... that we can change the colour of our hair to whatever colour of the rainbow that we may choose?

When we look at this verse we can ARGUE to get around it or we can sincerely try to understand the mind of God in this statement. Let's look at both approaches.

The arguing approach:

This has got nothing to do with using hair dyes to change the colour of our hair. When you dye your hair from grey to blond or to black, it only APPEARS to be blond or black ... but underneath the colouring it is still really grey. And the proof for that is that, as it continues to grow out of your head, it will continue to be grey. THEREFORE Jesus Christ's statement is basically correct, even if it appears that MILLIONS of people today seem to be proving Him wrong.

Seeking to understand the mind of God:

Jesus Christ KNEW that human beings would have dyes (and have had in the past!) to attempt to change the colour of their hair. And yes, Christ KNEW that the hair would continue to grow out of the head with the original colour in those cases where people did use or would use hair dyes. BUT this verse also very clearly shows that Jesus Christ did not really WANT people to attempt to prove Him wrong! This verse shows that Christ did not really WANT people to use dyes to change the colour of their hair.

Which line of reasoning do YOU go along with?

Let's face facts: IF a person regularly, for the last 30 years of his or her life DYES the colour of his or her hair on a weekly basis (i.e. with a regular coloured shampoo or dye), THEN that person really HAS changed the colour of his or her hair! No other colour is ever visible!

Note also that Jesus Christ focused in on ONE HAIR! That's getting down to a very trivial level. So let's now ask ourselves some questions, in an attempt to really understand the mind of God on this matter.

A) Is there ANY indication in this verse that Jesus Christ would be PLEASED by people trying to prove Him wrong, by dyeing their hair to a different colour?

NO, THERE IS NOT!

B) Is there any indication in this verse that God actually did not INTEND for people to attempt to change the colour of their hair?

YES, THERE IS!

C) IF God did not want us to change the colour of our hair, did He then really WANT us to change the colour of our FINGERNAILS?

NO, HE DID NOT!

D) IF God did not want us to change the colour of our hair, did He then really WANT us to change the colour of our LIPS?

NO, HE DID NOT!

E) IF God did not want us to change the colour of our hair, did He then really WANT us to change the colour of our EYEBROWS and our EYE LASHES?

NO, HE DID NOT!

Remember, I am not really interested in what God may "ALLOW"! I want to know: "yes, but is it really PLEASING in the sight of God?" And so should you be, if 1 John 3:22 has any meaning to you at all!

Without this attitude God Almighty will not answer our prayers. So don't allow your own heart to deceive you on this matter.

THE HEART [IS] DECEITFUL ABOVE ALL [THINGS], AND DESPERATELY WICKED: who can know it? (Jeremiah 17:9)

Let's look at Matthew 5:36 again very closely.

Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black.
(Matthew 5:36)

WHY did Christ say that we are not to swear by our heads? WHY did Christ refer to "ONE HAIR"? What was the whole point of Christ's statement? Do you know?

Changing the colour of ONE SINGLE HAIR ON OUR HEADS is the minutest and most insignificant way we could possibly attempt to alter our natural appearance! Do you understand this? So what Jesus Christ said in this verse is basically this:

"You are not to swear by your head because there is nothing in its REAL appearance that you can change ... you can't even CHANGE the colour of ONE SINGLE HAIR, let alone the colour of your lips and your eyebrows and your fingernails, etc.."

Can you understand THE PURPOSE behind Christ's reference to "one hair"? It is to focus on our INABILITY to change our real appearance, even at the insignificant level of "ONE HAIR". It should be plain that THE PRINCIPLE of this verse shows that THEREFORE God obviously also does not want us to attempt to change the colour of our lips, nails, eyebrows and eye lashes either.

Do we still have the ability to look at statements by God and to make SOUND deductions from those statements? Or do we need God to spell His mind out to us with specific lists of do's and don't's for every area of life? Are we able to use the Word of God skilfully to discern the mind of God ... can we discern good and evil?

But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age {i.e. mature!}, [even] those who by reason of use have their senses exercised TO DISCERN BOTH GOOD AND EVIL. (Hebrews 5:14)

SOME MORE QUESTIONS

We, both men and women, are created "in the image of God" (see Genesis 1:27). God INTENTIONALLY created us so that we look like He does. This present life is a training ground for a future existence with God, when we will look just like Christ.

Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, WE SHALL BE LIKE HIM; for we shall see him as he is. (1 John 3:2)

It is God's intention to change us into beings like Himself, to change us into spirit-born sons of God. So does God have any ideas or any preferences concerning what HE would like His children to look like? Does GOD have any preferences on what colour the fingernails of His children should have? Does GOD

have any preferences regarding the colour the lips of His children should have? Does GOD have any preferences regarding the colour the skin around the eyes of His children should have?

What are GOD'S preferences in all of these areas? Do we really want to know? Or do we simply want God's APPROVAL for OUR will? And can we see that "our will" on these matters is being terribly manipulated by an outside power, a power that controls and manipulates all human societies, a power God's Word refers to as "the god of this world"?

In whom THE GOD OF THIS WORLD HATH BLINDED THE MINDS of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. (2 Corinthians 4:4)

The minds of people in this world are "blinded". And when we follow the people of this world in their customs and ways and traditions, then we are accepting the ways of minds which Satan has blinded. So let's apply the principle of this verse to the matter of make-up:

"Is the use of make-up a custom that God put into His Church and which the world then copied from the Church and took over?"

OR

"Is make-up a custom that people whose minds are blinded by Satan came up with and which the people of God are being pressured to copy and to accept?"

What's your answer? 2 Corinthians 4:4 is a very pointed statement, which we cannot overlook in establishing a mode of conduct and behaviour for the people of God. This Scripture MUST be taken into account in deciding which of the customs and traditions and ways of this world are going to be acceptable for true Christians. We cannot simply acknowledge that God warns us that Satan is indeed the god of human societies in this age, and then happily accept all of the ways these societies pressure us to conform to.

2 Corinthians 4:4 places an accountability upon our shoulders!

So can we know what God's preferences are, as far as our looks are concerned? Can we know what colours God prefers for our nails and lips and the area surrounding our eyes? Can we know?

Yes, we can! God's creation reflects His will! Christ's statement regarding our inability to change the colour of a single hair reflects God's will and preferences! God "prefers" the colours He created us with for hair and lips and nails and eyes, etc.. Is that difficult to understand? [I am applying this to people with normal health and who are not suffering from any adverse physical conditions.]

THE MATTER OF "VANITY"

Perhaps one area that has been somewhat difficult for some people to understand was Mr. Armstrong's focus on "VANITY". When Mr. Armstrong wrote that the use of make-up ... "IS PURE AND SIMPLE VANITY" (his own capital letters, see WN article, Nov.2, 1981), this was difficult for many women to accept. This is probably because Mr. Armstrong's emphasis here was not particularly balanced. His statement simply does not apply to all women who do use make-up.

Being a man, I have never used make-up. But I don't have the slightest difficulty being just as vain as the most heavily made-up woman! Nor are we men in any way less prone to becoming vain than are women. A great many of the things we human beings say and do can be expressions of "vanity".

A more balanced and realistic approach is to recognize that vanity is a problem of ALL people. Satan was the first one who ever became vain (Ezekiel 28:17) and he does his utmost to instill an attitude of vanity into ALL human beings, an attitude of which he is "the father". Men and women are equally susceptible to this attitude of vanity. It is a HUMAN problem, not a gender problem!

Make-up is just one of many, many things that can be used in expressing our vanity. But things like smoking, drinking, the clothes we wear, the hair styles we choose, the way we speak, the cars we drive, the watches and the jewelry we wear, the areas we live in, etc., etc. can equally be expressions of our vanity. Vanity is not by any means limited to the use of make-up.

But for many women make-up IS an expression of their vanity ... an expression of the "IMAGE" they would like to present to other people. As David said in the Psalms ...

SURELY EVERY MAN WALKETH IN A VAIN SHEW: surely they are disquieted in vain: he heapeth up [riches], and knoweth not who shall gather them. (Psalm 39:6)

The words "a vain shew" are a translation of the one Hebrew word "tselem" and this word means "IMAGE". [This word is used to refer to "the IMAGE of God" (Genesis 1:27; 9:6).] We, men and women, all have a concept of self that is "an image", and we labour to uphold that image to the world around us.

I think we should acknowledge that for many women the use of make-up is an expression of vanity, wanting to appear "more attractive" or "more beautiful" than they really are. However, it is equally true that vanity is NOT the real motivation for why MANY other women wear make-up. There ARE other motivations!

I think we need to recognize that some women are motivated by FEAR! They are afraid to not conform to the standards society or their particular environment has imposed upon them. They don't necessarily feel that make-up makes them more attractive; they simply feel that it is REQUIRED of them to wear make-up.

Other women may not be motivated by fear. But they have simply allowed their minds to accept that make-up is a requirement of good grooming. Such women are not "afraid" ... but they are DECEIVED! The standard of "good grooming" that they IN SINCERITY (note!) try to practice has been imposed on a deceived humanity by the arch-deceiver, who hates the thought that humanity has been created "in the image of God" and who does his utmost to distort and to pervert that "image". They don't understand that the standard they sincerely try to live up to has not in any way originated with God. They are simply "deceived", even as Eve was deceived by Satan (see 1 Timothy 2:14).

There probably are some women who may be wanting to please another person (e.g. a husband or other close family member). If they think make-up will please the other person, they wear it; and if they think make-up will not please the other person then they don't use it. They themselves don't really have strong feelings one way or the other. While vanity may not be the motivation for using make-up with such a person, there is still a problem ... a desire to please someone else can cause us to compromise our commitment to please Almighty God.

So it is by no means true that all women who use make-up are motivated by vanity!

WHAT ABOUT "GOOD GROOMING"?

We understand that God does not judge by external appearances; God looks at our hearts, our motivations and our attitudes (see 1 Samuel 16:7; Hebrews 4:12; etc.). The most important adornment for women that is mentioned in the Bible is ... "the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit".

But [let it be] the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, [EVEN THE ORNAMENT] OF A MEEK AND QUIET SPIRIT, which is in the sight of God of great price. (1 Peter 3:4)

But notice the previous verse, where Peter said the following:

Whose ADORNING let it not be that outward [adorning] of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; (1 Peter 3:3)

Here is the transliterated Greek text of this verse:

hon esto ouch ho exothen emplokes trichon kai peritheseos chrusion he enduseos imation
KOSMOS (1 Peter 3:3)

The second word in the English text ("adorning") is intended as a translation of the very last word in the Greek text ("kosmos"). Here is a word-for-word translation of the Greek text:

"of whom let it not be the outward braiding of hairs and of putting around of gold (i.e. jewelry) or of clothing of garments ADORNING (i.e. kosmos)."

Let's look at this word "kosmos" more closely. This word is used 187 times in the New Testament. In 186 cases it is translated into the KJV as "world". Only here, in 1 Peter 3:3, is this word supposed to have a different meaning. Here it is suddenly supposed to mean "adorning". It is only because this word is used here in this verse by the Apostle Peter that dictionaries will tell you that "kosmos" ALSO means "adorning". There is no evidence anywhere else that "kosmos" means "adorning".

However, it is this supposed meaning of "adorning" that is responsible for why we refer to make-up as "COSMETICS"! The English word "cosmetics" comes from the Greek word "kosmos". So the word "cosmetics" is supposed to mean "adorning"; but in reality it means "OF THE WORLD", from the "kosmos".

Now let's put our word-for-word translated text into readable English. Even though "kosmos" is the last word in the verse, it is in the nominative case and therefore the subject of this sentence. So here is what this verse says:

"Whose WORLD let it not be the outward [show or appearance] of braiding the hair and of wearing jewelry or of items of clothing."

So what have we achieved by changing the word "adorning" for the correct word "world"? What did Peter mean by saying "whose world let it not be ..."? There are three categories of things Peter refers to in this verse ... hair, jewelry and clothing.

What did Peter mean?

Peter meant that when it comes to a woman's outward appearance (her hairstyle, the clothes and the jewelry she may wear), then her desire or her priority should not be to please the world! That is why he used the word "kosmos"! Her outward appearance should be a reflection of the inward attitude of a meek and quiet spirit, something that is pleasing "in the sight of God" (next verse). A careful comparison of verses 3 and 4 shows that Peter was clearly contrasting "the world" (kosmos) with "in the sight of God". This contrast is LOST when the word "kosmos" is translated as "adorning".

These verses establish a matter of priorities. They focus on THE INTENT of our actions. But they certainly don't speak against good grooming. Let's notice a statement by the Apostle Paul.

For ye are bought with a price: THEREFORE GLORIFY GOD IN YOUR BODY, and in your spirit, which are God's. (1 Corinthians 6:20)

We are made in the image of God and we are to "glorify" God by the way we look after the body He has given us. There is a godly way to look after our bodies, and there are godly principles of grooming. It is a matter of going about it God's way.

A few chapters later in the same epistle Paul mentioned two principles of right grooming, one for men and one for women. They are found in chapter 11.

Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, IF A MAN HAVE LONG HAIR, IT IS A SHAME UNTO HIM? BUT IF A WOMAN HAVE LONG HAIR, IT IS A GLORY TO HER: for [her] hair is given her for a covering. (1 Corinthians 11:14-15)

The two points Paul makes in these two verses are:

- A) For men godly grooming requires short hair;
- B) For women godly grooming entails long hair.

Now think about your hair for a moment. WHY did God create us so that we have this continuous supply of new hair to deal with all our lives? When we reach physical maturity, our bodies stop growing ... but our hair continues to grow for the rest of our lives (or, in some cases, until it falls out and we lose it). For the rest of our lives we have to "manage" our hair in some way.

HAIR is the one way that God has given to us whereby we can change our appearance. And for women God has intended that the hair be used to enhance a woman's appearance ... to her glory.

In a sense, God has said: "Alright, I'll give you something that will enable you to change your appearance without presenting something that is not really 'you'. I have given you your hair so that you may modify your appearance by the way you wear your hair. A different hair style can make you look quite different. Different hair styles can accentuate different facial features."

But the world says: "Look, that's a lot of work. And besides that, it doesn't go far enough. It is much easier, and it achieves far greater changes, to use facial paint. That way you can REALLY change your appearance. What God has made available in this regard is okay, but it just doesn't go far enough."

As far as men are concerned, God tells us that a man's hair should be short. However, even then God

has still given a man the opportunity to modify his appearance by means of facial hair ... clean-shaven or a beard or a moustache.

So a woman's hair is the medium which God gave to the woman to enhance her physical appearance, to make her more attractive, to increase "her glory". In the Song of Solomon, where Solomon described the beautiful bride, the hair features several times.

Behold, thou [art] fair, my love; behold, thou [art] fair; thou [hast] doves' eyes within thy locks:
THY HAIR [IS] AS A FLOCK OF GOATS, that appear from mount Gilead. (Song of Solomon 4:1)

The same point is also made in chapter 6 and verse 5. While this analogy is clearly linked to the culture of the time (i.e. we would not think of comparing an attractive hair style to 'a flock of goats'), it illustrates that Solomon obviously thought of it as very attractive and appealing. All our other physical features are fixed (the colour of our eyes and of our hair, the shape of our nose and our mouth, the type of forehead, etc.). But God has given us our hair to, within certain limits, modify the overall impact of all our features combined.

Consider our whole bodies for a moment, and try to view it from God's perspective. Based on our genetic inheritance we are going to have certain physical features. Those we cannot change. They are fixed (colour of eyes, shape of nose, height, etc.). But then God rounded off our physical bodies by making a part of us totally pliable and renewable ... our hair. WHY did God give us hair that is flexible and which continues to grow for the rest of our lives? That is the one element of our appearance over which God gave us extensive control! We can let the hair grow or we can shave it all off; we can perm it or straighten it; we can shape it into a hundred different hair styles; and when we don't like one style any longer, then we can change to a different style. For us men, we can grow a beard or a moustache or both together or we can be clean-shaven.

It is the hair which God has given us that enables us to express our individuality in our physical appearance. It can, and it does, express certain aspects of our character. But above all, it can express a woman's individuality ... it was intended by God to be used for the woman's "glory".

But the world's way to do this is with make-up. Make-up is Satan's way of saying: "I've got a much better idea."

However, God's way of having and maintaining the most attractive and pleasing appearance does not stop with the hair! We really have a responsibility to "glorify God" by the way we look after our whole bodies. That means we watch our diet; it means we don't eat more food than our bodies can burn; it means we watch that we don't become overweight; it means we do our best to maintain a reasonable muscle-tone by exercising realistically; it means we follow a life-style that includes adequate amounts of sleep; etc.. It means we have to discipline ourselves. And that takes real character. As Paul said ...

And every man that striveth for the mastery is TEMPERATE IN ALL THINGS. Now they [do it] to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. (1 Corinthians 9:25)

Good grooming and an attractive pleasing appearance are the result of a godly lifestyle, coupled with temperance and self-control. What we look like reveals a great deal about our character, especially as we get older. As God inspired Isaiah to write ...

THE SHEW OF THEIR COUNTENANCE DOTH WITNESS AGAINST THEM; and they declare

their sin as Sodom, they hide [it] not. Woe unto their soul! for they have rewarded evil unto themselves. (Isaiah 3:9)

The French novelist and philosopher Albert Camus put it in slightly different words. He said that "by age 50 a man has the face he deserves". The "hoary head" can be the result of an honourable and godly life, and we are to show respect before such men and women (Leviticus 19:32); but it can also be the result of an undisciplined and reckless lifestyle. It is all of the things that make up our overall appearance put together that present the right picture.

What has all this got to do with make-up?

Make-up cannot compensate for an otherwise undisciplined lifestyle. Make-up cannot hide character defects and short-comings. Make-up cannot change the story that our countenance really does tell! Barring sicknesses and accidents, as we get older in many ways we DO have the face we deserve ... AND THAT IS PRECISELY HOW GOD DESIGNED IT! And in such cases make-up is a way of trying to hide the truth, a way of covering our tracks, if you know what I mean.

Whether we like it or not, our faces reflect how we have lived. That's how God designed it. And in God's picture of things there is no room for make-up.

There is just one more point I would like to touch on.

MAKE-UP AND YOUR CHARACTER

I am not speaking about a woman who uses make-up to cover or to disguise an unsightly blemish. That is quite acceptable and was never an issue. I am speaking about the other 99% of women who use make-up.

There is something that many women do not realize before they start to use make-up. And that is this:

WHEN YOU START TO USE MAKE-UP IT DOES INFLUENCE YOUR CHARACTER IN SOME WAY!

It is the same type of thing that happened to Adam and Eve, when they ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. That act opened up their minds ("... the eyes of them both were opened", Genesis 3:7) to a different way of thinking. And when a woman decides that she is from henceforth going to use lipstick and eyeshadow and nailpaint and eyebrow pencils, etc., then THE WAY her mind works changes. Her character is INEVITABLY affected by this decision to accept make-up as a part of her regular appearance.

Understand something: EVERY decision, regarding how we will live, that we ever make in our lives will affect our characters in some way! That is what character is all about, after all ... making decisions and commitments and living up to those commitments. An uncommitted person, who does no more than avoid acts of sin because it is convenient to do so, is not righteous in the eyes of God. Such a person is simply a "WEAK" character. God is looking for people who are committed to the right things.

So IF we are going to decide that make-up is acceptable to God, that it is even PLEASING to God, then our eyes will also be opened to a different way of thinking. As a result our character will be different. I do NOT mean that our character will be "evil" ... I mean that it will be "DIFFERENT" from the way it would be if we rejected make-up and decided that its use is not pleasing to God. The way we view and assess a range of other situations and activities will be affected. Our sense of judgment will have changed.

What happens is that our perceptions of what is right and what is wrong, of what is acceptable and what is not acceptable, will be changed. And this change in our perceptions will be much broader than just the area which concerns itself with the use of make-up. Commonly the way we judge many situations will have been modified by our acceptance of make-up.

When this happens, you yourself may not even notice this change. If anything, it is more likely that others who have known you quite well will be the ones to notice that something about you has changed. Often they will not be able to pinpoint exactly what it is ... they just know there is something different about you. And depending on where they themselves stand, they may view the change in you for the better or for the worse.

IN CONCLUSION:

Well, having said all the above, I think we should focus again on the point we started with. The main reason why make-up should be rejected is because it involves DECEPTION. God hates deception. God will never put up with deception. God hates facades, but Satan is the master of presenting a million different facades. God's way of life is summed up by Paul as follows:

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are TRUE, whatsoever things [are] HONEST, whatsoever things [are] JUST, whatsoever things [are] PURE, whatsoever things [are] LOVELY, whatsoever things [are] of GOOD REPORT; if [there be] ANY VIRTUE, and if [there be] ANY PRAISE, think on these things. (Philippians 4:8)

Make-up is nothing more than a hollow facade, a disguising of the real appearance, a putting on of something that is not real. Make-up presents a lie! The red lips that make-up presents are not really red; they are ... "NOT TRUE"! The red fingernails that make-up displays are also not real; they too are ... "NOT HONEST"! The pencilled-in eyebrows are also not real; they are ... "NOT PURE"! The dark rims that are painted around the eyes present a fake impression; they are certainly ... "NOT LOVELY"! None of these things have "a good report" and there certainly is NEITHER VIRTUE NOR PRAISE in any of these things! God never has any praise for deception.

And that is really the bottom line ... that God will never approve of deception!

Frank W. Nelte