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Christians and Cosmetic Surgery — An Expanding Debate

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Should Christians seek cosmetic surgery? That is a pressing question that gets to the heart of our current cultural moment. As a society, we have corrupted the vision of beauty to the extent that some persons have procedure after procedure, entailing medical risk and using finite resources.

This was the topic for our discussion on Thursday's edition of *The Albert Mohler Program* [Listen [here](#).] The discussion was most interesting, and the issue is sure to grow larger in years to come.

After all, some parents are giving their daughters breast augmentation procedures as high school graduation gifts, even as persons are pairing up for procedures at clinics, while some clinics advertise "surgery points" modeled after frequent flyer programs offered by the airlines.

Something is seriously wrong here. How can we square these developments with the fact that the Bible stresses the value of inner beauty and the passing nature of all physical beauty? We are witnessing a mania of distorted beauty.

Some points to ponder:

Emily Baker never thought she had small breasts. With her petite frame and a full B cup, the 21-year-old had no reason to. But that didn't stop her from wanting bigger breasts. So as a \$5,500 high school graduation gift from her parents, Baker had a breast augmentation two years ago, making her a 36DD.

"They thought it was crazy for a long time," she said. "Eventually I kind of talked (my mom) into it."

Baker said it wasn't about her self-confidence or body image, although she does feel more comfortable in a swimsuit these days, it was more about the shape and the idea of having big breasts. "I wanted (this) since I was 16 (years old)," she said. "I just like the idea of them being a nice shape."

Baker isn't alone in her decision to have plastic surgery. According to The American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery (ASAPS), there were 11.5 million cosmetic procedures performed in 2005. Of that 11.5 million, 24 percent of patients were between the ages of 19 and 34. The most popular procedure for that age group was breast augmentation. [From [The Hub](#)]

Then:

The truth is, despite the cutting-edge techniques available today, cosmetic surgery comes with no guarantee that through it we'll achieve our heart's desire—to be accepted, valued, and loved. That's because body image is based more on feelings than fact. Research tells us the majority of people underestimates their attractiveness and typically misinterprets others' reactions to them. Simply stated, it's a myth that how you feel about yourself is related to how you actually look. Whether or not you see yourself as pretty often is divorced from reality. [Mary Ann Mayo in [Christianity Today](#)]

Finally:

The idea that a youthful appearance equals beauty permeates North American society — even in the most unlikely segments of our population. A friend's 7-year-old granddaughter said, "When I'm 30, I have to have surgery." When my friend asked why, the girl replied, "When you get old, you have to get surgery to be pretty again."

And don't be quick to think this is a women's-only issue; in 2003, 14 percent of cosmetic surgery patients were men. Clearly many see aging as an ugly truth that must be covered up. Unfortunately, this mind-set devalues true beauty and the natural stages of life. God's definitions of beauty and aging are vastly different from most people's. [Andrea Vinley Jewell in Family Magazine]

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