



# Perspective 6, 22, 1972

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It's odd, you know, how we usually describe other people by their defects. I was thinking about this the other day when someone asked me if I had seen Mr. Thomas. I know several men by the name of Thomas and so the other fellow identified the one he meant by saying, "Oh, you know, the man with one arm."

Surely there must be a better way to remember people than by their imperfections.

Human nature seems to lean in the direction of the negative. A trained marriage counselor knows that when a troubled spouse winds up in his office he can expect to hear a full afternoon of how horrible hubby is. About the only way to get the positive spout to flow is to begin to agree with the wife, making statements such as, "You must have the most horrible husband in town." Thereupon the wife will often begin to crank up a different tune, saying, "But he's not all bad."

Still, it just seems to be the bent of our nature always to look for the negative side, the imperfections in each other.

Put a black dot in the middle of a white sheet of paper and ask the class what they see. Everyone will see the black dot — and never see the white paper.

It's the same way with identifying people.

The man with the wart on his nose.

The woman with the faded dress.

That guy who drinks too much.

The kid who stutters.

The fellow who doesn't go to church.  
We are constantly picking out flaws, and often missing the beauty around us.

Someone gave a pastor friend of mine a new car. I saw him recently and commented on his beautiful new automobile. "Yes," he said, "but it sure drinks a lot of gas."

I remember the first time I met Eunice Wood. Eunice is a tall, middle-aged lady with ~~horribly~~ buck teeth. They tend to protrude even when she closes her mouth. For years, whenever someone mentioned Eunice, I had a mental image of buck-teeth to flash on my mind.

Last week Eunice's husband had a heart attack. She called us on the phone late at night and with choking voice, asked us to pray for him. As she was talking I had another mental image flash on my mind. It wasn't of a buck-toothed woman, but of an angel. Later I visited her husband in the hospital and stood at the foot of the bed watching his wife, with tender hands, caress his sick body. Her face was bathed in love.

The next day I was telling someone about Eunice's husband and they asked, "Who's Eunice?" Before I could think I heard myself describing her as the woman with the tender face. It made me feel so good I intend to practice that kind of positive identification on everyone.

Warts. Stutters. Twisted hands. Bald heads. Crooked limbs. Accents. We all have defects. But when we look beyond the black dots, we can see in most people a world of infinite beauty — beauty that's worth describing.