

**Presbyterian Counseling Center**

***CENTERPOINT***

Recently, I watched *The Girl with the Pearl Earring*, a film about the great 17<sup>th</sup> Century Dutch artist, Jan Vermeer. There is a simple, yet splendid, scene in which Vermeer identifies in his young and otherwise impoverished household maid an ability to stop and look and see through the eyes of an artist. In the scene, he directs her gaze through a window and asks her, “what color are the clouds?” Smiling at her cursory response that the clouds are white, he asks her to look again. After taking a longer and more deliberate look, the maid replies, “they are gray, yellow, and white.”

I’ve recalled that scene many times as I’ve worked with married couples in counseling. It leads me to wonder and ask: how often are you pausing in the rush and routine of your life to stop and look? What is happening in your marriage? Are you feeling fulfilled and content? Is your spouse? Is your marriage working for you? For your spouse? Have you asked yourself those questions? Have you asked your spouse? And if you have asked, have you waited, not for the quick and cursory response, but for the longer one which comes after the long pause, the deeper reflection? Are you, like Vermeer’s maid, merely glancing at the clouds or taking a longer look? [www.presbyteriancounselingcenter.org](http://www.presbyteriancounselingcenter.org)

-George R. Slaton