



The Beauty Trap

Where Do You Get Your Self Worth?

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I was a few minutes early for my photography session, so I pulled out a book and started reading. It wasn't long before I was lost in my latest who-done-it. After a while, I checked my watch and found that nearly thirty minutes had passed. Where in the world was that photographer?

No sooner had I asked myself the question, than in walked a frazzled and visibly upset young woman. She apologized for being late and proceeded to rush around getting things ready to start taking pictures. I suggested that she slow down, take a deep breath and pause for a few minutes. She then started pouring out her heart to me.

The young woman shared that her boyfriend had just dropped her off after the two had breakfast at IHOP. On her way out of his car, he told her that she was ugly. She explained how she tried to refute what he said by telling him that lots of people, male and female, had told her how attractive she was. He responded by telling her that they were lying, then drove off, laughing as if he'd told the funniest joke on earth.

She told me that she didn't believe what her boyfriend said but there was something in her voice and behavior that told me he had really "rocked her world" and not in a good way. She went on to say that he had called her ugly once before and she laughed it off as a joke.

At that point I went into coaching mode. I had a few questions for this young Sister. First, I asked her if she really believed that she was ugly. I walked her over to the mirror and pointed out her flawless skin, beautiful smile and sparkling eyes.

Next, I reminded her that the Bible says that she is fearfully and wonderfully made. She's created in the very image of God and there's absolutely nothing ugly about God.

Then, I asked her what were the benefits for her of dating someone who tried to undermine her confidence and self-worth.

She shared that she was asking herself the same thing and that maybe it was time to end the relationship.

By this time, she had calmed down and was ready to go about the business of taking pictures. After our session, I gave her some more words of encouragement and some scriptures to read. I said a quick prayer for the young woman and went on my way.

As I went about my daily tasks, the Lord reminded me of several women that I had encountered recently who were dealing with this issue of beauty, confidence and self worth. I went to the scriptures and this mini-Bible study is the result.

Grab your Bible, find a quiet spot and take a few minutes to complete the study. Once you're through, my prayer is that you will see yourself as God sees you.

The Beautiful People

We live in a world that equates beauty with self worth. According to today's society, if you aren't one of the "Beautiful People" you really aren't worth much. The "Beautiful People" are the ones you see on television, magazine covers and in the latest movie or video. Realistically, how many of the people you see in every day life fit into that category? Probably very few.

Unfortunately, too many women allow those popular images to determine how they see themselves. Is it a surprise when they are left feeling inadequate, inferior and unworthy? Over time they become caught up in the beauty trap—believing that if they don't fit society's view of beauty, they must not be beautiful.

There's nothing further from the truth. Our value is not based on physical appearance, but on God's love and His sacrifice for us. When we can accept the fact that God focuses on inner beauty and not the outward appearance that is the focus of the world, all of us can achieve a healthy and more realistic view of ourselves.

Questions:

- ♦ Webster's New World College Dictionary defines self worth as "one's worth as a person, as perceived by oneself." How would you describe your self worth?

- ◆ When you think about the world that we live in, what influences are we bombarded with every day that stress the importance of physical beauty? How can these influences affect our self worth? What are some ways to combat them?

- ◆ Can you identify any areas of self worth that you've struggled with? What gives you feelings of unworthiness? What gives you feelings of worthiness?

- ◆ What do you believe gives a person value?

- ◆ How can you apply 1 Samuel 16:7 to your own life?

You Are Unconditionally Loved

You are God's daughter, His beloved and cherished one. There is nothing that will change that. God loves you, imperfect as you might be, because you belong to Him. You were bought and paid for by the Blood of Jesus. John 3:16 states, "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life." This is a constant reminder that God loves you so much that He sent Jesus to die for you. You are loved with an everlasting love. God's love does not depend on what you look like and the other things valued by the world.

Questions

- ◆ What is the promise in Jeremiah 31:3?

- ♦ Read Isaiah 43:1-4. What do these scriptures mean to you?

- ♦ How does Romans 8:37-39 confirm that God's love for you is unconditional and everlasting?

You Are Fearfully and Wonderfully Made

Psalm 139 tells you that you are "fearfully and wonderfully made." God's Word does not lie—if He said it, it's true!

Despite this fact, many women look in the mirror and all they can see are their own perceived flaws. What does that say about God's Word?

There's nothing wrong with wanting to look your best. There's a problem, however, when you believe that you must look a certain way to be of value and worth. God just doesn't see you that way. In His eyes, you're more than a "10" every day!

Questions:

- ♦ Read Psalm 139:1-18. What do these scriptures tell you about God's feelings for you?

- ♦ Is there anything about the way you look that you want to change? Why? What would be the benefits of making the change? What negative consequences might there be?

- ♦ How would your life be different if you accepted yourself the way God created you?



Love the Skin You're In

How much of your time is spent on thinking about how you look? What would happen if you spent that time and energy on more productive thoughts and activities?

You are a unique individual, a gift to the world and the Body of Christ. Author Zora Neale Hurston once said, "Such as I am, I am a precious gift..." With all your self-perceived flaws, imperfections and peculiarities, you are precious. Trust what the Word of God says about you and get busy with your ultimate purpose—glorifying God.

Questions:

- ◆ What 10 things do you like about yourself that have nothing to do with your appearance? How can you use them to glorify God?

About the Author

Joyce M. Averils is a certified Biblical Counselor, Christian life coach, inspirational speaker and author. She is also the founder of Refresh Your Faith—an online spa for Christian women, whose mission is to tell women everywhere the good news of Jesus Christ and the love, healing and freedom that can be received through Him. Joyce's chief desire is to help you grow spiritually, live joyfully and love totally through Jesus.



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(Cut this out and tape it on your mirror or place it in your prayer journal)

I Am Fearfully & Wonderfully Made

But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance. But the Lord looks at the heart." **1 Samuel 16:7**

I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. **Psalms 139:14**

But now, this is what the Lord says—he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine." **Isaiah 43:1**

The Lord appeared to us in the past, saying: "I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving kindness." **Jeremiah 31:3**

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." **John 3:16**

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8:38-39