

The Truth About Your Beauty

A Sample Section from The Inside Out Course

Several weeks ago, in a 24-hour period, four women shared with me that they KNEW they were loved by God, but they had lots of fear. They didn't understand how they could be so strong in their faith yet so weak at the same time.

Have you ever felt like that? Have you ever KNOWN something in your head (I am loved by God, I am whole) but your heart and body (as well as past experiences) were telling a whole different story?

I think the bigger question being asked:

How can I reconcile all of the wondrous things that I hear about being a child of God with the lived reality of my life?

What's really going on? Well, here's a good starting point:

"For our fight is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, and against spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places."

Ephesians 6:12

You might want to get to a quiet place for this lesson.

My first question for you. How do you make up for the feeling that you are not quite enough? How do you fill that space?

St. John Paul II was fond of saying, "To understand our current lives, we have to go back to the beginning." Why did he go back to the beginning? Because IN THE BEGINNING was How It Was Supposed to Be. God's Original Plan was laid out in the garden.

To understand what's going on in the HEART OF WOMEN,
we need to revisit the garden scene.

Satan was at first a good angel, made by God. As such, he was beautiful. (See Ezekiel 28:12, which represents the garden scene.) However, his beauty (and the pride he felt about it!) was the cause of his downfall: *"You became haughty of heart because of your beauty; for the sake of splendor you debased your wisdom."* Ezek. 28:17

He did not want to serve God, he wanted to be like God, radically and irrevocably rejecting God and his reign. (CCC 391-393.)

Who were the other players in the garden? Well, Adam. God made him and he was the glory of creation. Yet he was alone. So God, in His goodness, created Eve, the glory of man. (1 Corinthians 11:7.)

She is Adam's "At Last!" (I love that phrase!)

For the sake of this lesson, I want to focus on Eve's BEAUTY. Why? Because somehow we've lost our understanding of beauty and it plays a KEY ROLE in our lives as women.

Eve, of course, was not one-dimensional. You are not one-dimensional. You were not created "JUST" for your beauty. You have many important characteristics and dimensions. I know that. But stay with me for a moment as we focus on beauty.

Before we focus on YOUR BEAUTY, let's focus on the Beauty of God. Wait. He's an invisible God. How can we see Him?

Well, the entire world shouts of his beauty! Think of your special spot in this world, whether that be the mountains, the beach, or a grassy hillside on your farm.



When you are soaking in the beauty of nature, what happens to your heart?

- You feel renewed.
- Inspired.
- Refreshed.
- Encouraged.
- Rested.

Always. Why? Because.that.is.what.beauty.does.

Beauty is the ESSENCE OF GOD.

EVE was made in the image of God's beauty. Beauty is the essence of a woman.

It was not something she had to earn. It was how she was made. The word "incarnation" means a person who embodies in the flesh an abstract quality of a spirit or god. (In this case, *God.)

Eve is the INCARNATION of the BEAUTY of GOD HIMSELF!

Satan, who had been perfect in beauty, saw Eve's beauty and he hated her because of it.

Not only that, but this woman shared in the DIVINITY of GOD and she could give life to the world. NO WONDER Satan went after her!

Eve was his greatest human threat.

WOMEN! This explains so much! This explains your life story! Satan was defeated by our Jesus at the Cross but he is not dead. He still roams the earth.

And you, my friend, are his target. WHY? Because as a woman, you are beautiful. It is your essence. This is not something that can be taken away. It was bestowed.

"Beauty is the core of every woman - who she is and what she longs to be - and one of the most glorious ways we bear the image of God in a broken and often ugly world." Captivating, page 133.

You have an indestructible dignity that has the potential to light up the world around you.

Do you see why Satan wounds you and attacks your womanly heart? It's not because you are insignificant and unworthy.

It's because you are vital and powerful.

YOU, as a WOMAN, are the MOST BEAUTIFUL LIGHT.

You are an incredible *threat* to the kingdom of darkness.

Have you ever considered what I am posing? That it's not because you are weak that you've been assaulted and wounded. It's because you are powerful and you have much to give to our world.

Think of those four women that I mentioned at the beginning of this lesson. They were effective in ministry, helping many. Yet. They doubted. They didn't feel like they were "enough."

You've felt that way, too. How does it change the way you think of your wounds when you consider that you are a threat and that Satan wishes to diminish you?

Are you starting to awaken to a new reality?

Okay. I know some of you might be grumbling, not really wanting to believe you are really that important or powerful. After all, you are just one woman. How powerful can you really be, right?

Well, here's the honest truth. We have lost an understanding of the
Power of God.

He is a CONSUMING FIRE and He wants to *IGNITE YOU WITH
PASSION.*

He wants to release old hurts and heal us THROUGH HIS LOVE. He wants us to leave our childish way of thinking of Him. It's time to leave the "Yes, Jesus Loves Me Because the Bible Says so" type of relationship.

I am going to dare to say that God wants us to go beyond the "He is my Savior" type of relationship.

I believe, with every part of my being, that He wants us to step into a more mature relationship with Him as a WOMAN.

He wants to awaken us to a deeper reality. He wants to enter into a much more intimate relationship with us, one of bride and bridegroom.

Whoa. Wait a minute. WHAT?

I don't know about you, but at first I wasn't sure I could accept the idea that GOD wanted a more intimate relationship with me. What did it mean that He wanted to pursue me? I knew it wasn't sexual, but having my Creator pursue me in a bride/bridegroom relationship meant something altogether different than I've ever experienced before.

As I analyzed my feelings (with the help of my priest) I realized I didn't want to be THAT OPEN, THAT VULNERABLE.

So I kept pushing the thought away.

But it kept pressing in.



I finally went to my favorite place to pray and I asked God to reveal more about this whole "love" thing.

With expectation, I opened my book, "He and I" and read, *"My little girl, nothing exists but your Christ. Then could anything keep your heart from Me?"* Then He went on and stated that He wanted to attract me right to the very inmost depth of my being, which had been

"CREATED FOR IMMORTAL BEAUTY."

Oh.my.stars. I just sat there. I was created for IMMORTAL BEAUTY. I read on,

"Unwind yourself from your self. Fall in love with your God - this glorious Reality. And if you are in love with Him, you will think about Him more often. It is this remembrance of Me that I want in you, this desire to please Me...keep your heart yielded, not by force, but by love that fuses two wills." He and I, page 305.

I knelt down and simply cried.

I thought of all of the wounds I had received. I thought of all of the messages I had believed about myself (that I was not pretty or feminine, that at six feet tall, I was too big, too loud, too crass). I thought of all of the ways I had tried to outmaneuver the pain that came from those messages.

I reminded myself, "Lori, Jesus did not die so you could live in slavery to the messages of your wounds."

He came to set us free.

Instantly, I knew this was about trust. Could I trust my God to love me as I really wanted to be loved?

I felt naked. Vulnerable.

I begged Him to touch my heart with the fire of His Love. I prayed over and over, *"I give you my cold heart. Take it. Give me Yours instead, full of passion and fire. Ignite me, Holy Spirit. I trust in You, I trust in You, I trust in You."*

I released my heart to Him.

I then sat back in the pew, and asked The Holy Spirit to speak to me. I opened my Bible and at first I was a little confused because I had turned to the Old

Testament. But I had spent enough time in the Word that I knew, when I prayed with an open heart, He always spoke to me through Scripture, so I trusted that He had something to say from the O.T.

Then I read,

"I will give you a new heart and place a new spirit within you, taking from your bodies your stony hearts and giving you natural hearts." Ezekiel 36:26.

Oh people. I wept.

I knew that I didn't have to earn His love. I didn't have to fear that I would lose it.

It was mine.

In His love I could find rest.



Why is this important?

The most powerful force on earth is a woman that knows she is loved.

As WOMEN, our beauty inspires and invites and invigorates. Our beauty gives grace and joy and healing to others. Why? Because our beauty reveals God in this world.

**You are beautiful. Your beauty is not something you have to go "get." It's who you already are.
Stop fighting it and rest in that love.**

When I use the word "rest" I mean enter into the relationship in trust and simple confidence. When you see two people in love, that's real rest. They don't have to compete for each other's love. They have it. They rest there. Real Love is a safe, life-giving place.

Rest in His love.

And then, when duty calls, as it absolutely will, take that love with you. And give it away. With your kind eyes. With your smile. With your beautiful, womanly essence.

You bring hope and healing to the world around you. Awaken to that reality. You are powerful in your beauty.

ACTIVITY: Awaken to your role as a WOMAN of God.

Please do this activity when you are alone and when it's quiet. You are beautiful. But don't take that from me. Let Him tell you how beautiful you are.

Literally ask the question: Am I beautiful? What do You see in me?

Let Him answer. He will show you all of the ways that He has bestowed beauty into you. He will remind you of situations when you were in grade school, middle school and high school. He will reveal times when you were radiantly beautiful in the ordinary times of living as a young woman and as you have nurtured and nourished others in your 20's, 30's and beyond. Get quiet and ask.

Let Him tell you how beautiful you really are.

I'm curious as to what He'll say to you. When I took the time to do this activity, I found myself remembering little, long-forgotten moments. Times when I was kinder than necessary. Times when I truly helped another. I found it interesting that it wasn't about my physical assets. It was about my heart.



*True Beauty flows
from the Inside Out.*

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