

BeYOUTiful Daughters

A Haven for Pastors Daughters

November 2013

Who am I? Where do I truly belong? Why am I here? What's the point of all of this? How do I know who to listen to?

It was the summer going into my freshman year of High School when I started asking myself these questions. I, like many other teenagers, was trying to find my identity in the transition from child to young adult. The struggle for me was a unique one because of a few things, the biggest one being who my Dad was in our community.

For me, discovering my identity meant figuring out who I was apart from my label of "Pastors' Kid", along with the other typical teenage stuff. What did I have to offer as an individual? What gifts and talents did I have? What did I really believe about all of this "God stuff" I had been taught all my life? What kind of person did I want to be? What about me was beautiful? Was I beautiful at all? What did I have to do to be beautiful in others eyes (especially the guys eyes)? Why did I get so sad when I looked in the mirror? Why did I have to be so different than everyone else?

I couldn't see it as a 14 year old...I was blind to the beautiful person that God had carefully and creatively shaped me to be.

I thought I was a mistake.

My self-esteem and over all self-worth took a nose dive that freshman year. I became a shell of a person, not caring about anyone or anything around me. I hated what I saw in my reflection, I hated myself. The light had gone from my eyes, when you looked at pictures of me, my eyes were hollow and dark. I didn't care what happened to me or what I did. I stopped feeling altogether and was just going through the motions of everyday life. I was sassy and rude to my family. I made my mom cry on a regular basis without a care towards her feelings. I even shaved the back of my head down to the skin and cut off my long beautiful curly hair all the way up to my ears. Still I felt nothing.



As teenagers, and especially teen girls, we struggle with so many obstacles to discovering our true inner beauty. We are constantly bombarded with magazine and TV ads showing us what "beauty" looks like. We are manipulated by marketing companies to always feel like we are not enough (not pretty enough, not skinny enough, not tall enough, not up to date with all the latest fashion...) and they will never stop because they want us to feel that way so we will buy all of their products. That is not reality, but as teenagers, on our journey to discovery, we are vulnerable to all of these things promising to make us beautiful.

We crave desperately to be told we are beautiful.

Recently, I have had the honor of sitting down with a few teen girls, and getting to know their stories, including their experiences with this subject. One is a Pastor's daughter, the other is not. Both girls are stunningly beautiful, what our society would deem "model quality", and both girls were teased and bullied and told they were anything but beautiful. Like me, they each believed these lies they were being told and their self-esteem was crushed. One of the girls got so low she wanted to end it all...I know how she felt because I've been there myself more than one time.

But their story doesn't end there, just like mine didn't. Then entered GOD! He came into the mess and started His good work in their lives. Inner beauty can only come from remembering who we are in Christ. We are made in His perfect image...we are not a mistake. The awesome Creator of the universe knit us together in the womb. He counts every hair on our head and knows our inner most thoughts. When we discover our identity in Christ as his cherished and beautiful daughters, suddenly we start uncovering the answers to all of those questions we were asking.

When we know who we are in Christ, knowing we are his precious creation, all the names people call us, the lies that we are told and the false reflection we see in the mirror are useless against us.

So how can we help the teen girls in our lives? Tell them they are beautiful on a daily basis. Even if they brush you off and say "whatever", they are listening. Tell them why they are beautiful, be specific, this will help them see things they might be missing.

Teens need their parents involved in their lives. Know what they're doing, ask questions about their friends. Give them hugs when they don't expect it. Try to be interested in what they like. *Fathers- tell your little girls that they are beautiful! Don't be afraid of them rejecting your compliment, say it anyways. They need to hear that from the man that they compare all other men to. Mothers, set a good example for your teen girls with positive self-talk and taking care of yourselves. Girls learn what they see. Be their role model by remembering who you are in Christ as well! If you struggle in this area as a mother and a woman, please contact me, I can help you, I understand what you're going through.

As for me, my story is still being written. Satan is still working overtime to get me to feel worthless and depressed, but I have a secret weapon now, my rock solid identity as a cherished, loved, uniquely created beautiful daughter of the King! On the days when I feel low, I remember that I was created for a reason and a purpose and turn to God to fill me up again. I enjoy what I see in the mirror because I know that God created me to be exactly how I am. He gave me gifts and talents that I can uniquely use to further His Kingdom. I have no regrets in my life about my past choices because I know God allowed me to go through those dark times to open my eyes to what others are going through. He knew I needed first-hand knowledge to be able to minister to them more powerfully.

I am so happy and honored to be called a "Pastors' Daughter" because that is who I was perfectly created to be! Partnering in ministry with my Dad over the past few months has been so amazing! It has allowed us to grow closer in our relationship and has helped to bring healing and restoration for both of us! I never would have imagined 20 years ago as a hurt and angry teenager that God would lead me into ministry one day in the very area that caused me so much pain back then, God is funny like that! He can work in ways that we can never see for ourselves, just trust Him, he will guide your path. I know God has big plans for my life-because it says so in His Word (Jeremiah 29:11)

(When I went to look for pictures of myself during my freshman year, I couldn't find any because I had destroyed them all back then, hating how I looked in every one of them.)

Blessings to you!
Sincerely,

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