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PRETTY FROM THE INSIDE OUT

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For Olivia,
Our beloved daughter.
You are beautiful to me.

Acknowledgments

Even though lots of people poured love, hard work, and prayers into this book, I really just want to thank my husband, Shane, and our children, Olivia, Zach, and Samuel, for making it possible for me to be a wife and mom and at the same time an author and speaker. They have given up a lot of time with me so you can hold this book in your hands.

They've done this because they believe that aside from being a mother, I'm also meant to be a voice for Christ. On this page, I just want to thank them from the bottom of my heart for their love and sacrifice. Without knowing it, they have taught me the real meaning of beauty and opened my eyes to the wonder of the Father, who bestows upon us every good and perfect gift.

My sweet family is the good and perfect gift God gave me and continues to give me every day.

I hope this book blesses them in every way possible.

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Introduction

Who am I? As girls, that is the number-one question of our lives. Are you what people think about you? Are you what you see in the mirror? Are you the image in your pictures? Is your value decided by magazines, or even windows on a screen that disappear with a click?

Or are you worth *more*? Whether you are an actress, a singer, a dancer, an athlete, an artist, a cheerleader, or you aren't sure what you are good at yet, you are more than what meets the eye. You are more than what people think about you. More than the reflection in the mirror. More than what magazines say. You are God's beloved daughter, and he has great dreams for your life.

The problem with us girls is we have a tendency to measure our value by what we can see instead of by what we can't see. When a girl walks into a room, we start measuring her up. *How is she different from me? Is she better than me? Do people like her more?* we might ask. Or if it's a boy, *Does he notice me? Does he see me, the real me?*

As girls, sometimes we look in the mirror and see only the pimple on our face or the way our jeans don't fit or the stringy hair that we wish were curly or curly hair we wish we could tame. Maybe someone has pointed out our flaws or told us we

weren't pretty—or told us we were—and we believed what they said about us. Maybe people have liked our pictures or criticized them, and we are starting to analyze them too. Or maybe we can't help but compare ourselves to the stars on TV and wish we looked like them or had all they seem to have. If you took a survey of every girl on earth, you would find out we have all battled with these things and fought to find our own identity.

This book is about that battle, and I want to help you win the war of who you are! We'll talk about five lies about your value, and then we'll learn to replace those pretty little lies with the big beautiful truths about who you *really* are and how valuable you are to God. These truths are like jewels in your crown that point to your true beauty, worth, and purpose.



We have a tendency to measure our value by what we can see instead of by what we can't see.

At the end of each chapter, you'll find messages from the Bible that will help you pave a beautiful pathway for your life with those precious jewels. **My goal is to help you see yourself in the reflection of God's mirror. Why? Because God's mirror is the only mirror that never changes.**

Before you get out of bed in the morning or go to sleep at night, take time to read a few of these pages so that you can be reminded of your worth from God's eyes.

Life is a journey. It doesn't start when you get through junior high, go to high school or college, or have a family of your own.

Your life begins now, and the choices you make today will determine the kind of life you have later!

No matter how busy you are, giving God the gift of your time is a gift you give to yourself. Ask him to pour truth into your heart—beautiful truth! As you go, when you discover little gems in the book that sparkle for you, mark them! You'll be able to look back later and see the valuable jewels God paved into your pathway when you were a girl.

I believe in you, I'm cheering for you, and I hope you see my love on every page.

Your friend,

Jen



Above all else, guard your heart,
for everything you do flows from it.
(Proverbs 4:23)



I

The First Pretty Lie:

You Are What Man Thinks of You

I used to think life started with the prince, but now I know I was a princess from the beginning.

A Man or a Mirror?

Have you ever wanted your daddy to be proud of you? Like if you could make his whole face light up, you would be the happiest girl? Or have you had a crush on a boy and found out he likes you too? That is the best feeling. When a boy thinks we are wonderful, we feel, well, wonderful.

But what if Daddy doesn't approve? What if Daddy doesn't show up at your performance? Or what if Daddy has problems of his own and can't seem to smile, even when you are twirling right in front of him? If you know what that's like, you know how crushing it can feel for Daddy not to love you the way you need.

Or what about when a boy says something mean about you behind your back or even to your face? Or a girl says, "So-and-so hates you." If you know what that feels like, you know how tiring it is to ride the roller coaster of people's opinions.

Our first “pretty little lie” goes like this: “If he thinks I’m pretty, I am pretty. If he likes me, I’m liked. If he loves me, I’m lovable.” The flip side of this lie sounds like this: “If he doesn’t want me, I’m not wanted. If she doesn’t want to be my friend, I’m not popular.”

This lie turns people into mirrors that reflect your worth. I was under the spell of this lie for a long time. Growing up, I had three best friends. No matter what I did right or wrong, they still loved me. But I also had some bullies in my life: girls who made fun of my flamingo legs, short, frizzy hair, and not-so-developed body. A few girls threatened to beat me up, and others just gave me cold, mean stares as I walked down the hallway at school. Boys, on the other hand, didn’t even notice me until I was 15. So I grew up looking for their approval.

When I started modeling in elementary school, I saw that my daddy was proud of me. Once I got through junior high and my braces came off and my hair grew out, people in the modeling world started giving me approval for my pictures. We all want to have *something* we are good at...and it didn’t feel like I was good at anything else.

But in the end, I found out that people make lousy mirrors. One day people liked me, and the next, they didn’t. One day they said I was beautiful, and the next, they said I was ugly. One day they wanted to be my friend, and the next, they wanted someone else. So I believed this lie as much as I believed the sky was blue.

When we make people into mirrors, we end up on a roller coaster ride—because people change their minds about us. One year a girl says you’re her best friend. The next year, she acts like she doesn’t even know you. Or worse, she says mean things that really hurt.

Boys change their minds too. One day a boy likes a girl, the next day he doesn't know who he likes. In the fairy tales, as soon as the prince sees the princess, he never changes his mind about her—his love is forever! But that's not always how real life goes.

Fairy tales can help us understand why we grow up believing pretty lies. In fairy tales, before the princess meets the prince, she is just a common girl with no chance at happiness. But once the prince on the white horse shows up, everything changes. She is magically whisked away from the mother who belittled her, the stepsisters who were jealous of her, and the hard life she endured. The prince saves her and slays the enemy who tried to rob her of her place in the kingdom. When he asks her to marry him on bended knee, her true beauty and value are finally revealed. She transforms from a lowly girl dressed in rags to a beloved princess, gowned and crowned.

So the love of the prince changes her. His acceptance gives her worth. His protection determines a bright future. In fact, without him, she would have remained hopeless. So as little girls growing up with the fairy tales, we can easily believe that a boy gives us value. The truth is, however, you have value totally separate from the prince. The truth is, you were born priceless. No man can give you your value and no man can take it away!



In an ideal world, your parents would only show you how beloved and beautiful you are. In a perfect world, kids at school would treat you like you are precious. In the real world, however, people are not perfect.

If we always depend on other people to tell us how good

we are, we ride the roller coaster of approval. Some days, we get that approval; other days, we don't. If we focus our attention on comparing our looks, athletics, grades, or popularity, we can go all the way through school with no identity of our own. **But if we know *who we are*, we know that others don't define us. Others don't define your beauty. Others don't measure your worth.**

I learned this the hard way. For years, I was accepted and rejected based on how I looked. Sometimes I looked good. Other times, I didn't look good at all. When people praised me, I let their praise lift me up. When people put me down, I recorded their mean words in my mind and played them again and again.

When I was modeling, it was hard on my heart to have people criticize my appearance so much. Sometimes they would analyze the size and shape of my body, tone of my skin, and texture of my hair, and it made me feel like I was never good enough. I compared myself to the other girls, and that left me feeling insecure.

Maybe you know how that feels. Someone hurts your feelings and you let it sink in deep and weigh you down. Someone applauds you and you feel like you are walking on clouds. While these are natural responses, it's not healthy if we are relying on other people to make us feel good all the time. Our worth has to be something we decide on in advance—no matter how people treat us.



Big Beautiful Truth

You were born priceless. No man can give you your value and no man can take it away!

Our True Worth

Do you know your true worth? Do you know you are loved, precious, and beautiful? And no one gets to decide that you're not? If I had known my true worth growing up, I would not have let people's compliments or cruelty shape me so much. I would have decided that God's Word was the final word on who I was, since he was the one who shaped me from the start. And that's the truth that led me to leave the modeling industry and figure out what really made me happy.

The one thing I was good at in school was writing. I could work hard on a paper and get a good grade, and it didn't have anything to do with how I looked. But in modeling, if people critiqued my looks, there was only so much I could do about it. I became tired of feeling like I couldn't be the perfect mannequin they wanted me to be, and the pain built up inside. I became very depressed and turned everywhere for answers to the "who am I" question. Nothing worked, and I mean *nothing*. Until I began to pray for love.

Within weeks of those prayers, I met a girl in a small town in Italy who told me about Jesus Christ. She explained that God loved me and Jesus could heal my broken heart, and she promised to pray for me.

Shortly after meeting her, I met a group of people passing out Bibles in a park. They invited me to church and gave me my first Bible. I began to read it by candlelight, and in those pages, I discovered that Jesus loved hurting people. He loved the lost, the sick, the deformed, the confused, the rejected, and the misunderstood. He reached out to touch those our world doesn't want to touch, and he loved those our world doesn't love. And he didn't care if people approved of him or not. **He knew who he was, because he knew *whose* he was.**



Big Beautiful Truth

Our worth has to be something we decide on in advance—no matter how people treat us.

Jesus is the ultimate Prince. When we give our hearts to him, his love is forever. He is our heavenly Father, our Daddy, our safe place from the storm and the rain. He is the King of Kings, the One and Only. He gives you value above anything human beings can give to you. When he looks upon you, he stands up for you and smiles with the warmth of love.

When I gave my heart to Jesus and threw myself into his lap, I had been hurt deeply by people. I had also hurt myself trying to fill the emptiness in my heart. So when Jesus entered my life, I fell in love with a King who saw the princess in me even when on the outside I was a mess.

Jesus loves us despite the ways we fall short of perfect. He accepts us just as we are. He gives us value despite what people think about us. He is a Prince bent on rescuing us and a King who will come back for us on a white horse (Revelation 19:11).

It is a lie to believe that you are what people think of you. People's opinions can change. People, as good as they can be, will one day die. But the mirror of God never lies and never dies. He is forever, and his love for you is forever. When you give your heart to Jesus, you become his daughter—the daughter of a King. That makes you a princess forever and ever and evermore. And you should see his castle, his kingdom, the place he has made just for you!



God Is...

Jesus is the ultimate Prince. When we give our hearts to him, his love is forever. He is our heavenly Father, our Daddy, our safe place from the storm and the rain. He is the King of Kings, the One and Only.

Like a Breath

Jewel for Your Journey

LORD, what are human beings that you care for them, mere mortals that you think of them? They are like a breath; their days are like a fleeting shadow (Psalm 144:3-4).

When God created human beings, he made man and woman “in his own image.” People are the only created beings made in the likeness of God. But people are *not* gods, so you must be careful to not let people define you. People don’t decide your worth; God does.

Even though we are made in the image of God, people can die in an instant. Our jewel for today’s journey says people are “like a breath” and our days are a “fleeting shadow.” James 4:14 says man is “a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes.” Man is a “breath,” a “shadow.” Man is here one day and gone the next. His life is brief. People are not mirrors, and not gods.

We can love people, appreciate people, honor people, forgive, serve, and care for people—all of that is very important—but

we cannot base our identity, value, or happiness on what people think about us. If we do, we are surely in for a roller coaster ride!

Remember, people are made in the image of God and deserve total respect and honor. But only God is a perfect reflection of you, and in the mirror of his face, every day, all day, you are valuable to him, no matter what people say about you. Don't hang your hat on people. Hang it on God, because he made you to be a reflection of him, and in the mirror of his face you are loved—always!

God Is Not a Man

Jewel for Your Journey

God is not human, that he should lie, not a human being, that he should change his mind
(Numbers 23:19).

Have you ever noticed how often people change their minds? One day, a girl likes one boy, and a few weeks later, she likes another boy. Or maybe a friend changes her mind about you. People can be “shifting shadows.”

The cool thing about God is that he doesn't do that. He says, “I am not a man!” “I do not lie!” “I do NOT change my mind.” It's great to have someone in your life who will never lie to you, never change his mind about you. In fact, Hebrews 6:18 says it is *impossible* for God to lie.

Can you imagine having a relationship with someone who *can't* lie to you? Someone who is only capable of telling you the truth? That's having a relationship with God. His Word is Truth—and every day, it's up to you whether you are going to let people define you or God define you.

Here's another amazing thing about God: He won't ever leave you or turn his back on you. In life, there may be some people who turn their backs on you. That happens to *everyone*. Most of us deal with heartbreak, and we *all* deal with disappointment and death. People, as much as we love them, have the freedom to leave us or change their minds about us.

But God doesn't die, will never leave you, can't lie to you, and won't ever turn his back on you. That's pretty awesome. That's a solid foundation to stand on. So stand tall, princess. Hold your head high. God is on your side—forever!

Prince Charming or Prince Perfect?

Jewel for Your Journey

All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God
(Romans 3:23).

It is so easy to get confused with the *prince* thing. The fairy tales suggest the prince is perfect. He defeats the enemy; he rescues us; he makes our dreams come true.

If we believe a human prince gives the princess value, we may let boys decide for us if we are beautiful or ugly, worthwhile or not, and loved or unloved. That's a lot of power to give to a boy! In truth, not even a full-grown man has the power to decide whether we are wonderful or not! That's up to God!

Every human being falls short of perfect. The Bible warns us that no man can always say or do the right thing (James 3:2,8). But God makes no mistakes, and he will never use his words to hurt you. People, on the other hand, can make mistakes, especially with words. Sometimes people's words can be uplifting and helpful, and other times they can be destructive

and hurtful—especially if they come out of the mouth of someone we love.

If people say mean things to you or about you, that doesn't mean they are right. Be careful not to let other people dictate your mood for the day. Don't give them the power to decide your value. Give that to God.

And remember, when you do meet a prince, he may be charming, but he'll never be perfect. Let God be the perfect one—the one true mirror that never changes.

A Prince or a Castle?

Jewel for Your Journey

It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in humans. It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in princes (Psalm 118:8-9).

Do you get your confidence from people liking you? Approving of you? Clapping for you? Or do you get your confidence from the Lord? It's easier to put our confidence in something we can see than to put it in God, whom we can't see. But it's something we *have to do* because only he can be our refuge.

A refuge is a strong fortress—kind of like a castle! So the princess runs to the castle to be safe from the storm. Princes can and should protect us, but only God is a castle that is never shaken. Those who put their hope in people will find themselves empty and dry, but those who put their hope in God will flourish like a healthy tree. Who will you make your refuge today?