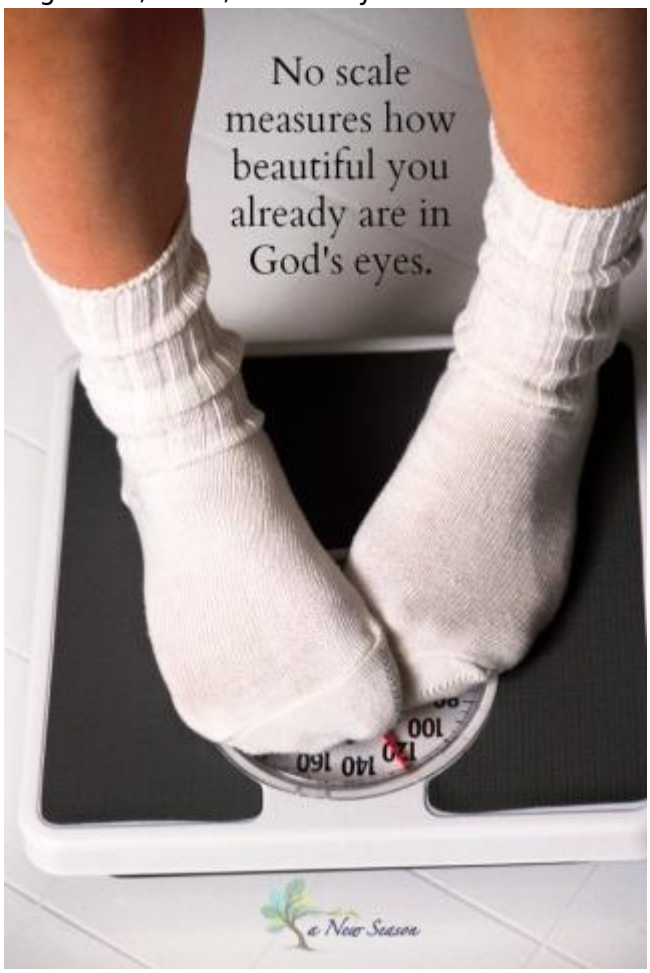
Published on *Happily Whole* (https://www.livinghappilywhole.com)

You're Already Beautiful

August 25, 2014, written by katie



Try telling a six year old she's beautiful on the inside when someone's making fun of her toothless smile and super sensitive ways. Talk to a four year old about why she's lovely just the way she is after her eye's been swollen shut from a bug bite and her sister can't stop laughing.

One day. Two girls convinced of their ugliness despite my attempts to tell them otherwise.

You may think, ‘Oh, that’s just girls…they’ll grow out of it!’

But, truthfully, isn’t it a little like us? Grown women groping for aesthetic acceptance, anxious to appear ‘just so’ from the looks of our faces to the figures we flaunt. Whether you’re already fitting into a self-defined mold or you’re still striving hard to fit in, doesn’t it feel like we’re spending too much precious time on something so physical?

Here, sweet sisters, is what I want you to know:

You’re already beautiful. But can you believe that? Can I?

Sounds cliché. A Cinderella story about what’s on the inside mattering more than outside appearances. That’s what we wish to believe about beauty, right? It’s what I was telling my daughters that day.

But there’s a problem with Cinderella’s theory, too! If beauty is only on the inside, I can let go, quit working out and cuddle on the couch swooning over caramel ice cream to escape matters of fitness…or more importantly, faith.

Could that be it? ***Are we leaving faith out of pursuits of personal wellness?*** As a professional of that field, I wonder…

Too often we aim for aesthetics, all of us woven into one type of cultural canvas. But when we fail and struggle with self-care in a life too busy for fit pursuits or the latest dieting fad, we remind ourselves mockingly of that age old message, ‘Beauty’s on the inside.’

It’s how we rationalize living unwell, excusing ourselves when we spiral out of control. We ignore our responsibility to care for the beautiful bodies God blessed us with.

Even as I preach it to my precious babies, isn’t it likely they’re going to grow up struggling between a desire to fit in and my attempts to instill the ‘inner beauty’ belief?

So, I’m back at wondering if the real problem lies in the ***neglect of our souls in the self-care equation****.*

All the straining and striving to reach the next milestone, to look lean, lose more weight or simply to fit in when you already know you’re the outcast *will never make a difference to your eternity*. None of it means a thing when it comes to the ***essence of you***, now or in your forever body.

Ahhh..that’s it! That’s how I know you’re already beautiful! And it’s even MORE than on the inside. You and I possess the prettiest ever ‘forever body’ already! It’s ***our souls*** shining through creating the essence of us.

With an original hand-crafted spirit our Savior sees us as utterly lovely, we walk this earth with eternity written all over us!

And ‘eternity’, my dear sisters, is the most beautiful message of all, one we never have to reapply.

I’m reminded of 2 Corinthians 3:18 – *‘And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his likeness.’*

When you’re feeling ugly or unappealing…….. look to Him who gave up every ounce of His own

beauty and built you in His likeness—more beautiful than any human world can conjure up.

When you're faced with wearing wrinkles…… remember God crafted every wave of the ocean to ripple with the beauty of tides as time and seasons change.

When you see grey hair sprouting like weeds…… remember God created lilies of the valley and Queen Ann's lace to line the countryside in His lovely craftsmanship.

Only after life gave me grey hair and a lack of sleep stationed itself under my eyes did I realize my real soul-beauty. Strange—after years of striving, searching for how to fit in to a wellness industry that speaks a different language, I found my beauty simply by being His daughter in an instant.

Exhaustion etches my days and my walk's weary with widowhood. But, when the struggling to meet social standards stopped and the soul-resting in His hands started, I learned I am loved no less when my hair's a mess and my brow wrinkles naturally. All those years I was striving for the wrong standard!

There's been no truth, no hope and no lifelong epiphanies I've ever received through living a fit life. I have, though, gained eternity by living well starting in the seat of my soul with everything else springing from that source.

Living well starting in my soul changed my entire story! And there's nothing skinny about that!

Start your living well with soul-care and you'll know, too, what it feels like to be ultimately loved and utterly lovely.

So, you see, **you were made for more** than social standards and striving so hard. You were made BY His hand, FOR His glory. And that's a beautiful story!

As for self-care, yeah, I do it all—eat well, exercise, the whole bit. God gave me those tools to communicate with. Now, however, I try to remember every bit of it so I can live fully for Him, honoring all my beautiful blessings from mind to body to my forever lovely spirit.

Lord, constantly remind all us ladies of Your truth in Ephesians 2:10 – 'For we are God's workmanship.' There's no better proof of Your beauty than that in us! Amen

**This article was originally written by me for aNew Season, a women's minitry I write for regularly. Please check it out here: aNew Season [1]*

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