

You Are SO BEAUTIFUL *By Angela Gidley*

My daughter is only four months old, but she is already so beautiful to me. I don't know what others see when they look at her because I can only see her through my eyes. My view of her may be biased, but it is the only view I have.

The same is true for my view of myself; I can only see through my own eyes. Many women struggle to see themselves as beautiful because of the world's increasing focus on physical beauty and sexuality. Beauty is subjective, but this culture has determined that beauty has a very narrow definition.

Our television shows include

makeovers that turn a woman from an "ugly duckling" to a "beautiful swan." I believe it is a warped mentality that places a woman's physical beauty far above her mental capabilities, social skills, and character qualities in

determining her worth. Our culture's obsession with a woman's body has greatly affected her ability to see the beauty God created in every facet of who she is. Our culture's focus on women's bodies has also affected a man's ability to see a woman as God created her and not as the sum total of her body parts.

I believe the lack of self-worth many women experience is compounded by the increased sexuality in media and our culture today. I can't buy a gallon of milk without seeing a magazine cover with a seductively dressed woman or a live woman (or young girl) in the store dressed in the least amount of clothing possible. Many girls and women dress as provocatively as possible for the attention they receive from men. However, that attention is often fleeting and leaves them dealing with the pain of rejection until they can attract the next man to make them feel beautiful again.

What is a woman to do when faced with so much "propaganda" telling her what she should look like and what it means to be beautiful? Philippians 4:8 has a suggestion for us: "Finally, brothers, whatever is true,

whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things" (ESV). I cannot change the fact that my eyes will come into contact with many images in a day. Some of the things I see threaten to remind me that I am not "good enough" to make a magazine cover. If I choose to let my thoughts stay there, it doesn't take long for hopelessness and depression to find their way in as well. So I remind myself of

Philippians 4:8 many times in a day. I can

choose to focus on many things, and the time I spend focusing on what I am not is time that I can't spend thinking about my family, my future, and the amazing blessings God has given me.

I can recount many statistics that illustrate how depraved our society has become. However, I would rather not place my focus on that today. These

verses get to the root of the issue

Angela Gidley with daughter, Isabella

for me: "For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace" (Romans 8:5-6, ESV). When women (and men) set their minds on the things of the flesh, the end result is death. Many spiritually and emotionally dead people have lost sight of the importance of where they set their minds.

My daughter is growing up in this over-sexualized, over-stimulated world. This is the world into which she was born. I will do my best to tell her every day that she is beautiful. She is beautiful to me. She is beautiful to God. I don't want her to ever forget it.

Side note: I highly recommend Matt Chandler's podcast "The Greatest Commandment Part 13: Canvas" for an excellent perspective on the life of the mind. It can be found in a PDF or audio version at <http://fm.thevillagechurch.net>



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