

God's  
daughters  
Loved, held, accepted, enough

**Hannah Fytche**

Text copyright © Hannah Fytche 2016

The author asserts the moral right to be identified as the author of this work

**Published by  
The Bible Reading Fellowship**

15 The Chambers, Vineyard

Abingdon OX14 3FE

United Kingdom

Tel: +44 (0)1865 319700

Email: enquiries@brf.org.uk

Website: www.brf.org.uk

BRF is a Registered Charity

ISBN 978 0 85746 409 5

First published 2016

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0

All rights reserved

**Acknowledgements**

Unless otherwise stated, scripture quotations are taken from The Holy Bible, New International Version (Anglicised edition) copyright © 1979, 1984, 2011 by Biblica. Used by permission of Hodder & Stoughton Publishers, an Hachette UK company. All rights reserved. 'NIV' is a registered trademark of Biblica. UK trademark number 1448790.

Scripture taken from *THE MESSAGE*. Copyright © 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 2000, 2001, 2002. Used by permission of NavPress Publishing Group.

Cover photo: lightstock.com

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Printed and bound by CPI Group (UK) Ltd, Croydon CR0 4YY

# Contents

Foreword.....	7
1 Enough!.....	9
2 Loved enough... .. even at a school desk	15
3 Beautiful enough: .....	31
you're fearfully and wonderfully made	
4 Humility's enough:.....	48
coping with friendship group conflict	
5 Accepted as enough: .....	63
letting your family see beneath the masks	
6 Christian enough:.....	80
finding your feet in church	
7 Held enough:.....	95
rhythms for connecting with God	
8 Created enough.....	112
Resources .....	118
Notes .....	124

# Foreword

*God's Daughters* is a book that is long overdue, in my opinion. For too long I have been mentoring and chatting with young women and men who struggle in relating their faith to their everyday experiences. They know what they should believe about themselves—many have been told often enough—but they find it so hard when the noise of their culture drowns out what God is saying through his word and through the church. It will be great to have this resource to use with the young women I work with, especially as it is the voice of a young woman speaking through the pages of the book.

Hannah has captured some of the most common feelings that young women struggle with, and is able to unpack what God is really saying to them about who they are and what they might be facing in their lives. She does this in a very structured way with the 'big picture' and 'close-up' sessions, bringing the subject of each chapter into focus. The other two elements—'what God says' and 'headphones time'—help young women to ground what is being said in a very practical way.

The subjects covered are issues that young women talk about a lot, so it is great to see them being addressed by someone of their own age. The book comes across as peer-to-peer encouragement rather than someone older telling them how it should be. However, it will be interesting to see what older women get from this book too, as, apart from the chapter on schools, the issues are relevant to us

all. Also, although Hannah is writing for young women who are Christians, people of no faith will be equally well able to relate to the subjects covered.

The book is written in a very readable style and intersperses biblical material with the points for reflection. The story of Elijah at the beginning of the book helps to set the scene and encourages us to continue reading.

My passion is to see all young women and girls enter into everything that God has in store for them and to achieve their God-given potential. Sadly, they are often restricted by what they think of themselves—feeling that they are never quite ‘good enough’—so how can we help them to throw off these lies and walk in freedom? This book, I believe, will be really helpful in that process.

I want to see young women resting in God’s love and knowing themselves to be completely loved and accepted by the Lord of all creation. This knowledge will make them bold and fearless in their service in God’s kingdom. Well done, Hannah, for writing a book that is so much needed in contemporary society!

**Sharon Prior**

*Senior Tutor at Moorlands College; co-founder of Sophia Network*

# 3

## Beautiful enough: you are fearfully and wonderfully made

Every second of every day he pursues us and offers us grace, but until we take off our masks, we will never be able to accept it.

JEFFERSON BETHKE<sup>3</sup>

### The big picture

Wake up. Stretch out, arms straightening. This duvet is warm, comfortable—maybe sleep a little longer? No. Feet hit floor, toes flexing. Stand up: commit to the day. Open blind, be blinded by sunrise light in return. Now I'm awake.

I walk over, grab a hairbrush and grin into the mirror: a dark mess of hair frames sleepy eyes. I brush out tangles and smooth stray hairs down, massaging my eyes with my free hand. I shower, and over the next 30 minutes I flit around my room, finding clothes, earrings, eyeliner, glancing always in the mirror to check my appearance—the combination of clothes, my hair.

Slowly, my look for the day forms, edges smoothed over as I scrutinise my reflection in that unforgiving, shiny plane of glass. I smile at myself when I'm done: I'm ready.



I guess you're familiar with this wake-up-and-prepare routine (unless you stay in bed all day—if that's you, I'm jealous). Days must start somewhere. Perhaps you sip a cup of hot tea as you pull on clothes, brush out hair and apply make-up. And I'm sure you're familiar with the confrontation that happens each morning—the face-off between yourself and your reflection.

You look yourself in the eye. What can you see there? Loneliness? Happiness? Then you look yourself up and down. Breathe in tight: 'This is what I'd look like if I were skinnier. If only...'. You then get right up close, exploring each inch of your face: 'Hmmm. Maybe I need to try a new face scrub. My skin's not as good as it could be. And a haircut is definitely needed soon. How should I wear my eyeliner today? What will people notice, but not too much?'

Think about what runs through your mind when you look in the mirror each morning. Have you ever had any 'if only' moments? Moments when you've thought 'If only I looked like...', 'If only I was...', 'If only I had those clothes...?'

These moments reveal something much deeper about how we think of ourselves, our image and the perceptions of other people. For the rest of this section, I'm going to uncover the meaning that lies behind our mirror confrontations, and what it could mean for our lives.

A few paragraphs previously, I described the mirror as 'unforgiving'. This is 'personification', talking about the mirror as if it's a person critiquing how I look. You may not know it, but that mirror over there on your wall is not just polished wood-framed glass. She's a person, a voice telling you what you need to change and how you need to change it. She rates your appearance and judges you honestly, revealing your flaws as well as your beauty.

We often, without realising it, treat mirrors like people. The reason we have those ‘if only’ moments when we see our reflection is because we see an imaginary ‘someone else’ there, judging who we are, based on how we look.

It’s as if the mirror offers the first impression of you for the day. First impressions are important: they can shape the way a person views you, or even the way they behave towards you, for the rest of the time you know them. A first impression can get you a job; it can make you lifelong friends or it can set people against you. It’s startling to realise that it only takes us two to seven seconds to form first impressions: people unconsciously make an assessment and form an opinion of you at the very moment you meet. So your appearance, both in looks and attitude, really is crucial, particularly when meeting someone for the first time.

This piles on a huge amount of pressure, don’t you think? Herein lies one cause of the ‘if only’ moments—‘If only I had nicer clothes/shinier hair...’ or ‘If only I looked prettier/skinnier/happier... other people would like me.’

A second cause is our tendency to make comparisons. In order to be dissatisfied with our appearance, we must have a standard to compare ourselves with, one that we believe we fail to meet. Each day we are bombarded with images of the ‘ideal woman’ who has the perfect figure, the shiniest hair and flawless make-up. Her clothes match brilliantly and she seems to want for nothing. This constantly reinforced image can become a standard that we strive continually to reach, believing that if we get there we will lack nothing and be accepted by all those around us.

Even if we don’t compare ourselves with the images of women presented in the media and in advertising, we all compare ourselves with the real women we know and see



around us each day—school peers, family members or leaders at church. Every day we get out our measuring sticks and line ourselves up against other people, comparing ourselves with the way *they* look.

The mirror's voice whispers again: 'You don't look as good as that popular girl at school. And that cousin of yours? Her clothes are so much nicer than yours. You're going to need to try harder to look pretty enough. If only you did this... you'd look as good as them.'

Here's another 'if only' moment—and you see that 'as good as' construction? That signals comparison, having an image in your mind that you strive to obtain. But, as Theodore Roosevelt said, 'Comparison is the thief of joy.'<sup>4</sup> Roosevelt was President of the USA over 100 years ago, and what he said then rings true for us now: comparing ourselves with others robs us of joy, disheartening us when we believe our image isn't as good as theirs.

A particularly prevalent form of comparison with others is related to the issue of weight, size or body shape. Maybe, for you, it isn't just the mirror that is unforgiving; perhaps the bathroom scales act as another judgemental voice. Weight can be a struggle, those numbers defining who we are, setting us up against the perfect weight, a standard reinforced by images in the media. We can feel disheartened when we don't measure up to that ideal, and sometimes this leads to more serious issues, such as depression and eating disorders. Having not struggled with these particular issues myself, any knowledge I have is second-hand, so I don't feel that I can talk about them as empathetically as I would like. If you are having a difficult time, there are people who can walk through it with you, more helpfully than I can. If you need someone to listen, book an appointment with your school

nurse or doctor, confide in a friend or family member, or find out more on the NHS website.

Let's look at the word 'unforgiving' again. It may seem obvious, but scales and mirrors aren't actually unforgiving. They are not people; they're just inanimate objects with no feelings or opinions. They're the passive objects in our morning confrontations; *we* are the unforgiving ones.

We're so self-unforgiving because we're concerned about how people look at us—what their opinions are of our looks, actions, weight and behaviour. We fear the opinions they *could* have. What if they think I look silly? What if they think I'm not pretty enough? What will they think?

We're unforgiving towards ourselves because we care about the potentially unforgiving judgement of other people on our looks or attitude. However little we notice it, I would suggest that we all, in some way, care about how we compare with the 'ideal image', and this is all right, up to a point. It is definitely OK to want to look your best and present yourself in the best light.

But what about when it goes beyond that point? When our desire to present ourselves well becomes a striving to be the image of pure perfection, we become consumed by the fear that we won't be good enough if we don't look pretty enough.

This drives us to act differently about our image and appearance. If body size worries you, exercise and dieting may have begun to feature in your life. If you worry about your skin, perhaps make-up is your best friend. Whatever your struggle with image, think about your way of coping with that struggle. Does it have a positive or negative effect on how you view yourself?

While our morning preparations can be simply about

getting ready for the day, they can also become a time when we put on a mask to hide our true feelings. The mask might be make-up, particular clothes, a confident persona, all things that cover up the way we feel inside and what we perceive as our flaws. We dress to impress, to perform to a standard and win over others' approval. We believe the 'if only's': 'If only you had better clothes/make-up/hair, you would be happier and more loved.' We act on these promises, hoping to achieve an appearance that's 'good enough'.

Do you ever feel like this? Do you think you're preparing not simply to be yourself for the day, but to be someone different—someone who people will like, accept, and love?

I read a blog called *A Girl Like Me*. In September 2014, the blogger posted a piece called 'Keeping up appearances'. These were some of the words from that post: 'Masks don't take away our pain and struggle... they just cover it up.'<sup>5</sup>

It's so true. While self-image may not be an immediate problem to you, I would suggest that we all face times where we put on masks to hide our true feelings and insecurities. We put on masks as we look in the mirror each morning, so that we can step through the day knowing that *at least* the way we look externally is OK. *At least* people will approve of me and like me. We accept the promise of the 'if only' and we put on our masks, believing that it will all turn out better, and we will be pretty enough for others' approval.

But this performance of communicating that we are OK, that we've got it all together, is exactly that—a performance, enacted on each day's stage. And after the curtains go down at the end of the show, we slump, unseen by the audience. When we're alone, the masks come off, and we get real again. Then we realise that this charade is exhausting.

## The close-up

Do you feel as if you're the only one who struggles with image and beauty? You're not. Have a read of the two stories below and reflect on what and who they are about. Before you read, I want to mention that, although these two stories both involve boys as the catalyst for the pressure on image, guys are not the only source of expectation. Think about what else could encourage a negative self-image—perhaps family, friends, movies, music, or yourself.



I began to read *King Lear* in the peaceful quiet of the canteen, settling down for an hour's study. Then, noise arrived.

'So who would *you* rate as the top five girls in our year, then?' Tom had come in, taking his place at a nearby table, others joining him as they overheard his words.

Steve responded with more questions: 'Ooohhhh, I dunno... What are we going on? Looks? Personality? Intelligence?'

'Looks, of course! I mean, that's the most important, right?' Tom laughed as he spoke, half-jokingly choosing the most superficial, yet most popular, topic.

'OK... so... Jemima, then Katherine, then maybe Megan...? They're all pretty fit. If Katherine was a bit taller, she'd be *perfect*!'

Tom's voice rose above the murmurs of agreement: 'You're going for the classics, then?'

'Yeah, I mean, they're the best looking in our year, by far. Everyone knows that.'

['The classics', I later discovered, were the people most often rated within the top five of our year group.]

Rosie joined the discussion. 'How about Ashley? If I were a guy, I'd definitely ask her out. Top quality girlfriend material right there!'

'Great choice! Oh, Rosie, you missed out on *all* the fun yesterday. We discussed basically everyone in the year—who looks best and who needs improvements. You should have been there, it was great!'

So the conversation continued. I was close to furious. I wanted to ask them, 'Please have a little more respect for these girls you're rating; how do you think they'd feel if they heard your conversation?' Intimidated, I kept quiet. Regrettably, having had a vivid insight into how these people rated others' appearance, I feared what they thought of me. Despite knowing that their opinion of my image didn't really matter, I felt an enormous amount of pressure to look just like their description of the 'perfect girl'.



Think about how this appearance-analysis makes you feel. Do you think that fear of people's similar judgements on how you look (judgements made either in thought or in conversation) could be partly the source of pressure to try to look 'perfect'?



Why here? Now? Today? Why me? Him? Us? Well, not 'us'. Just me, now, pushed into perpetual loneliness by the poison that overspilled from his heart straight into mine. The questions look back at me as my tear-drenched eyes gaze into the mirror: I think, in my brokenness, that I am the answer. He cheated on me because I am not good enough—not pretty enough, not clever enough, not thin enough.

His caustic words grow wild in my mind, even though he is gone. The words expand, fill my thoughts and foster self-hate, like ivy springing up around the sinews of my heart, the leaves covering

and choking the spark of my personality, in which I was once so confident. I am forced into something new.

As I turn away from the mirror, my eyes fall on the scales. Maybe this could be a solution...

Days wear on and I try to become acceptable, perfect, lovable. The numbers fall lower on the scales—but are they low enough? Will I ever be good enough?

As these thoughts circle and months pass, I slowly retreat into myself, the ivy becoming the controlling mask of my new personality. And then, some hope? Some love? Has someone noticed me?

Even better: someone has noticed not only the ivy-me, but the real me. Someone has noticed that spark, which had nearly gone out, and he cherishes it. This time, he is lovely, loving, true.

Even greater: the unconditional love of God sees the spark, too. He is reviving it, gently blowing on the embers and fanning them into flame, the orange heat burning away the leaves surrounding my heart. Although I still struggle daily with anxiety, and still dress to fit in, impress and be perfect, God sees the 'me' beneath it all, and he is loving me back to life.

## What God says

We've all heard the cliché, 'It's what's inside that counts', used pervasively in advertising, on TV and in everyday conversations. It's a statement that can have a variety of purposes—to empower people who feel unappreciated; to sell a product; to act as a reminder of what is really important. Do you know where this cliché came from? A quick internet search doesn't answer the question, and beyond the internet I'm not sure where to start looking. However, I would suggest that it originates from the Bible, or at least that it bears a

strong resemblance to the message the Bible gives.

Open up a Bible and read 1 Peter 3:3–5. I love the way Peter writes of beauty here, speaking directly about the emphasis that our mirror-confrontations place on our external appearance. The way *THE MESSAGE* paraphrases verse 3 is particularly challenging and inspiring: ‘What matters is not your outer appearance—the styling of your hair, the jewellery you wear, the cut of your clothes—but your inner disposition.’ *It’s what’s inside that counts.*

Peter pinpoints the source of your beauty as who you are on the inside. In other words, it’s your character and attitude that make you beautiful. These are things that the mirror doesn’t reveal; a pane of glass can’t look into and reflect your innermost being, your heart.

Peter isn’t the only man in the Bible who had this insight into true beauty. You may know of David, the famous king of Israel, whose life is documented in the Old Testament. God chose David to fulfil the role of king: he sent Samuel to anoint David as King Saul’s reign was drawing to a close. David’s father was Jesse, and Jesse had seven sons older than David, all of whom he paraded in front of Samuel. Surely one of these strapping young lads would be God’s chosen king? They were all handsome, strong, popular... what’s not to like? At least, these were the thoughts that Samuel had when he met the eldest of Jesse’s sons, Eliab.

However, God quickly spoke to Samuel: ‘Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart’ (1 Samuel 16:7). Here we see it again: *it’s what’s inside that counts.*

Samuel had seen the good, kingly looks of Eliab and

assumed that God had chosen him as king, but he couldn't see right into the depths of Eliab's heart—what motivated him, how he behaved, what his character was truly like. Only God could, and God saw that Eliab didn't have the qualities fit for a leader. In fact, God chose the shepherd-boy, Jesse's youngest and almost forgotten son who had stayed behind to tend the sheep as Samuel arrived. He wasn't considered good enough to be a king, yet, as David approached, God spoke again to Samuel: 'Rise and anoint him; this is the one' (v. 12). God looked into David's heart and saw a ruler.

You see again the emphasis on the inside, the heart, the inner disposition. God looked straight past the outward appearance and saw what mattered most. The heart of the matter is truly the matter of the heart; *it's what's inside that counts*.

Does this mean that God is asking us not to care about how we look, and instead to wear no make-up, never style our hair and wear whatever clothes we find in our rooms? I used to think that the answer to this question was 'yes'. I believed that I should pay as little attention as possible to my image; I should wear clothes that fitted and looked all right, but not care too much about them.

Times have changed, however! My view of beauty and image has shifted since discovering Peter's words and the story of David's anointing. I don't believe that God wants us just to forget about image and appearance; after all, he created our bodies and the entire concept of beauty. Beauty and image, like most things, aren't inherently bad, and being beautiful is not something that Christians shouldn't care about. Rather, if we view beauty as God does, our perceptions are transformed. We see that beauty isn't a performance we have to put on to hide our true identity, but that true beauty



is to do with our inner disposition. Our image on the outside is truly beautiful when it reflects the beauty that hums on the inside of us. Our outside image can be an expression of who we are inside, and that is a beautiful thing.

Pete Greig's prophetic poem 'The vision' draws a clear contrast between our outside and our inside. The poem talks of 'an army of young people' who 'are incredibly cool, dangerously attractive inside'. They are living and loving for Jesus on the inside, but 'On the outside? They hardly care. They wear clothes like costumes to communicate and celebrate but never to hide.'<sup>6</sup> (For the rest of the poem, visit [www.24-7prayer.com/thevisionpoem](http://www.24-7prayer.com/thevisionpoem). I definitely recommend it. Go read and be changed!)

I love the phrase 'costumes to communicate and celebrate but never to hide'. Greig exactly encapsulates what the Bible says about beauty and image. Our outside image should not be a mask that hides our inside identity; it should be an extension of our inside beauty, celebrating our identity in Christ and communicating our love for Jesus. With this, there's no pressure to look a particular way or wear particular clothes, just a freedom to make choices about your outside image based on your identity as God's beautiful daughter.

This is how Esther used her image. Esther has her own book in the Bible, telling the story of how she was chosen to be the wife of King Xerxes, a circumstance that led her to save the Jewish people in the Persian kingdom. The process of becoming Xerxes' wife was a long one, involving 'twelve months of beauty treatments... six months with oil of myrrh and six with perfumes and cosmetics' (Esther 2:12). She also had to hide the fact that she was a Jew (v. 10).

I couldn't begin to imagine having a whole year in intensive beauty school, but this was Esther's life, and it was

her image that was pleasing to Xerxes and enabled her to become his wife. As soon as she gained this royal position, she used her influence powerfully to save the Jews from a death order.

So here we see image and beauty used as tools to achieve God's plans and purposes. Esther's beauty placed her in Xerxes' palace 'for just such a time as this' (4:14, NLT). It can be the same for us, our image being a part of who we are for God.

Esther could do all of this because she was fully secure in her identity in God. Even though God is not mentioned once in the book of Esther, we can see in her courageous actions that she trusted him completely, saying, as she approached Xerxes with her request for the Jews to be saved, 'If I perish, I perish' (4:16). Esther knew deep within her that she was safe in God's arms, and so, on the outside, her image was an overspill of her confidence and hope in God. True God-inspired beauty comes from a beauty on the inside that only stems from security and contentment in our identity in Christ. We return to where we began: *it's what's inside that counts*.

But what if, on the inside, you don't feel beautiful or secure? What if you feel shaky, confused or lost? I have been through times when I've felt completely broken inside, unlovable and lost in a world where I couldn't tell where my heart was rooted. Sometimes it's a real struggle to remember who I am. In the words of Shakespeare's King Lear, I find myself asking, 'Who is it that can tell me who I am?'<sup>7</sup>

I love this question. It's so searching, and it prompts us to go deeper than we thought we could, in search of our roots and our identity. Notice that Lear uses the word 'who'. He's asking 'who' he can find his identity in, not 'what' or

'where'. Here, I see King Lear's realisation that wealth, land and riches can't ever define who he is, because these things change. I see him beginning to understand that the things of this world can never satisfy us or give us true worth and identity. It is only a person who can give us these answers.

For Lear, this 'person' was his own shadow, a recollection of his former days as a glorious king, before he grew old and mad. For us as Christians, this person is Jesus.

Do you know the verse 'Whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it'? It's recorded in Mark 8:35, and it is Jesus speaking to his disciples. It's potentially a confusing verse, but I think it's a real encouragement and challenge for us to let go of all of the things in life that we think are important, all the things that we think will make us good enough, all the things we think will bring us true, lasting identity. When we do let go of these things, we will 'save', or find, our life—our true self. And we will find it in Jesus, as we let go of our striving to look as if we're holding life together, and let God shape us with his love and grace. When we realise that our efforts to be perfect and beautiful are never going to be enough, we let God be our 'enough' for us, giving us a firm identity on the inside that spills out as true beauty.

Take a look at these verses. This is what God says about who you are.

- God 'chose us in [Christ] before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight' (Ephesians 1:4).
- You are 'fearfully and wonderfully made' (Psalm 139:14).
- You are God's 'treasured possession' (Exodus 19:5).
- In God 'we live and move and have our being' (Acts 17:28).

- God loves you just as he loves his Son, Jesus (see John 17:23).
- Nothing at all ‘will be able to separate us from the love of God’ (Romans 8:39).
- You are God’s ‘masterpiece’ (Ephesians 2:10, NLT).
- ‘Christ has truly set us free’ (Galatians 5:1, NLT).
- You are made who you are ‘for just such a time as this’ (Esther 4:14, NLT).

The Bible is like an epic love letter from God to his people, of which you are one. This is how he sees you—as a treasure, a beauty. Just like he did with David, God sees past all your masks, all your fears and insecurities, and all the thoughts other people have about you. He sees past it all and straight into your heart, your inner disposition. There he sees the beauty he placed humming at your core, and he declares you his beautiful daughter.

In his book *What’s So Amazing About Grace?* Philip Yancey asks this question: ‘How would my life change if I truly believed the Bible’s astounding words about God’s love for me, if I looked in the mirror and saw what God sees?’<sup>8</sup>

Looking in the mirror and seeing yourself as God sees you is amazingly transformative. Instead of believing the mirror’s hissing voice when it says, ‘You are just not good enough... no one will ever love *you*’, you can drown those words out with the roar of God’s love. Instead of hiding from people who might judge you for who you are, you can show your true self, safe in the knowledge that God sees you as beautiful, his own.

God’s still, small voice sings love over your soul: be encouraged and begin to take off those masks! Stop performing, and let people see the transformation that Jesus is working in

your heart, bringing out your best beauty and setting you truly free.

## Headphones time

We've discussed much about image and beauty in this chapter, perhaps touching some issues that you have been thinking through or struggling with. Spend some time now in a quiet space, listening to God's voice amid the busyness. You could revisit some of the Bible stories and passages mentioned (1 Peter, the story of David in 1 Samuel, and Esther) or use the pointers below if it helps to direct your thinking and prayer time.

- Think of three words that your friends or family would use to describe you. Are they the words that you would use to describe yourself?
- Are there any areas of your life in which you wear a 'mask'? Does it ever feel as if no one knows the real you? Why?
- Are you secure in your identity on the inside? Do you know you're beautiful? God sees the depths of who you are and the beauty he placed right at your core. Take a few minutes to reflect on these words from Psalm 139:13–16: 'For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed body.'

Beautiful enough: you are fearfully and wonderfully made

- How does it make you feel to know that God sees you as his beautiful daughter? How can this transform the way you view your image and your identity?
- Grab a felt-tip pen and write on your mirror the one verse or word that will remind you of your identity in Jesus. (Don't worry, felt-tip rubs off mirrors!)

## **Soundtrack**

'Beautiful things' by Gungor.

As you listen, reflect on what, or rather who, it is that makes you beautiful and sees your beauty as more than good enough. How does this make you feel? What encouragement does it give you?

**Do you ever feel under so much pressure to be prettier, cleverer or holier that you feel you just might break?**

**Do you ever feel like you're not good enough for other people, and they will never love or accept you?**

**Do you feel like you're the one who has to change, to solve the problems and get it all right?**

**I definitely feel like that sometimes.**

In this book I have taken six issues, each of which comes with its own pressures: school, image, friends, family, church and our personal relationships with God. In each case we may feel that our teachers, family, friends or even God expect us to be better than we feel inside. We may feel that if we don't meet these expectations we need to work harder in order to be loved and accepted.

***But this is not true!***

My prayer for you—and me—is that we realise we have had enough of trying to be 'good enough'. We need to let God strengthen us to keep walking. We need to listen to his gentle voice—and be encouraged to lift our eyes to him and dwell in his amazing grace.

**Hannah Fytche** is studying theology at university. Over recent years she has been mentored by Sharon Prior of the Sophia Network, which exists to empower and equip women in leadership, and to champion the full equality of women and men in the church.

'This book is deeply pastoral, lovingly personal and wonderfully uplifting. Every page contains within it a piece of God's truth and a reflection of his loving kindness; I have no doubt that it will mould and change the life of every person who reads it. The combination of big picture ideas, individual stories and personal reflection, all coupled with a "soundtrack" for each issue means that you can't fail to take something significant away from every single chapter. I wish I had been equipped with a book like this when I was a teenager!' **Nell Goddard, musingsofaclergychild**



978-0-85746-409-5

UK £6.99



visit our website at [www.brf.org.uk](http://www.brf.org.uk)