

I Want to See Beauty

Inspired by Mark 10:46-52

As Jenny was leaving the reception with her family and a sizable crowd of friends, they saw Bethany sitting off to the side alone, crying, and begging to be noticed. She did this every time her older sister Bridget was getting all the attention. Today was Bridget's wedding day, so of course she would and should be the focus. Several people went to Bethany and began consoling her, asking why she was upset. Bethany cried out saying, "I will never get a husband! I wish I looked like Bridget!" Some tried to shush her as it was embarrassing behavior. Others went through the usual mantra of reassurances. "You are beautiful! No, you aren't fat! You look lovely in that dress! Your hair is perfectly done!" and so on and so on.

In reality though, the two sisters couldn't have had many more differences. Bridget took after their mother's side. She was tall, with flowing blonde hair, slender long legs, and stunning light green eyes. She was definitely a beauty and she stood out in a crowd, for sure.

Bethany was the younger sister who favored their father's side of the family. She was a few inches shorter than Bridget, with wavy brown hair, brown eyes, and muscular legs. She was also very pretty and quite athletic. She stood out, but in a different way, and she always felt less than Bridget. Bethany had a tendency to put herself down, saying she is too fat, too plain, too homely, etc. Her parents supported her projects to make herself prettier. She dyed her hair blonde and had it straightened, wore colored contacts, and tried several weight loss products. Recently, she was even considering plastic surgery.

Rachel, Bethany's best friend, stepped up to the front of Bethany's pity party and said, "Let's take a little break; get up, I'm taking you on a little walk." Bethany stood, and the group happily stepped aside to let Rachel take over the situation. The two best friends walked into the Ladies Room and stood before the full length mirror. The bright lighting made it difficult to hide the truth of one's appearance. Local beauty salons and supply chains were shut down during the Pandemic, so over the past year Bethany's hair had returned to its natural color and texture. She couldn't get new colored contacts either. She looked like her old self.

Bridget had begged her little sister to stay natural for the wedding so that she would look like her true self in the wedding photos and all the distant family would recognize her. "You look so much like Grandma Elaina," she had told Bethany. "That's something to be proud of, not ashamed of. Grandma was a beautiful woman and she was deeply loved by so many people. Everyone will be delighted to see the resemblance!"

Rachel stood by her friend and said, “The most important characteristics of a best friend are to give unconditional love, to be totally honest, and to not let your bestie hurt herself. Look in this mirror and tell me what you see.”

Bethany sighed and said, “In this harsh lighting, I see a short, stubby mouse that belongs in the corner because no one really sees her anyway.” Rachel gently asked the difficult question, “Do you want to see another Bridget in the mirror?” Bethany looked a little perturbed. She wasn’t sure if she should be thankful or angry at what her friend was saying. Rachel continued, “Go your own way, Bethany. God made you to be you, not to try to be someone else. He made you to stand out in ways different from your sister. Look in this mirror and see the beautiful, strong woman that I see. Think of all the things in nature with rich brown colors like your hair and eyes. Do you think God makes mistakes in His creations?”

Immediately Bethany saw herself differently. She was beginning to see what her dear friend saw — a unique creation of God. Who was she to try and change the way He formed her? She wiped away the tears, stood a little straighter, and smiled. The two hugged and laughed. Rachel whispered a prayer that Bethany may always see herself as one of God’s Beloved Creations. As they returned to the party, Bethany followed her best friend in a new way.

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