

## Finding Your Way Back to You

As I looked in the mirror, I became suddenly conscious of the image in front of me. There was this beautiful girl, but she was in a disguise. Her hair was intricately braided in to give her length; her eyelids were painted to accent her clothing, and her eyes were hazel brown. As I rubbed my eyes, the brown contact circled with my hand to reveal my dark brown eyes hiding underneath. I had worn this cover for more than a decade because, to me, I looked prettier with light brown eyes. I was my own canvas, and I decorated me to fit what I saw as beautiful.

But here I was again, and I didn't see beauty anymore. I saw a girl who'd chosen to look like someone else rather than be herself. My appointment for more contact lens was coming up, and I knew I had a choice to make. I wear prescription contacts, and I had also chosen to get them in hazel brown, or occasionally chestnut brown. As my appointment neared, I knew that I had a decision to make. I was going to either continue wearing the colored contacts or I was going to come out as myself and opt for clear contacts. My choice was clear in my heart. I wanted to be me....again.

When the day came, I went into the doctor's office and went through my eye exam. The whole time my mind was racing. I now saw myself as prettier the way that God created me, but I was still being tugged on by familiarity. I was used to seeing me with those colored contacts. Nevertheless, I didn't hesitate when the nurse asked me what color I wanted for my contacts. "Clear," I said as I settled in the peace of mind that God had given me. I smiled as I realized that another set of chains had been broken, and I was now free to be as beautiful as I am in my Father's image.

When I arrived home, I looked in the mirror and didn't recognize the girl before me. Her eyes were dark brown and she was gorgeous. How in the world did I ever choose to hide her behind those layers of lies? I looked at my braided hair and thought to myself, "You're next." When I took the braids out of my hair, I saw a woman with shoulder length (uneven) hair and I laughed as I imagined what my friend would say if she saw my hair. "Girl, you better wear your own hair!" I could hear her voice as I played in my hair and looked in awe at how much it had grown. I did continue getting braids, however, but not for vanity reasons. I wear braids now as a protective style as I continue to grow my hair.

Nowadays, whenever I go out, I rarely wear makeup. The only time I wear a little makeup is when my husband and I are going on a date, but truthfully I know I look better without it. It's just the artist in me that wakes up and likes to design things; therefore, I have learned to be my own canvas for a different reason.

How did I begin this journey back to myself? It started with a prayer. I asked the Lord to remove all of the lies that had rooted themselves in my heart. I was initially thinking about doctrinal lies and any other lie that had found its way into my being, but the Lord took my prayer at face value and granted

me the desires of my heart. I had been lied to. I had even lied to myself over the years. I had transformed on the outside to accommodate the lies on the inside. But, as those lies were evicted from my heart, I found myself with a whole new set of eyes. Not just the dark brown eyes that I saw, but I suddenly had vision and I could see myself clearly. With this new sight, I also began to see the lies that have taken root in the hearts of others. Why can't we be as beautiful as God made us to be? One little prayer changed my life forever, and not only am I grateful, but my husband is grateful as well.

You may have gotten lost in the world's blind definition of beauty, holiness, and what defines you as a man or a woman worth being called a child of God. I have a dare for you. I dare you to ask the Lord to remove all of the lies that you have received in your heart, and believe that it is already done the minute you seal that prayer in Jesus Name. After you have talked to the Father, don't let your definition of beauty or your definition of who you are match up to the world's definition of beauty and who you are anymore. By the world, I don't just mean the obvious world who drinks, parties, and curses. I mean the entire world, including the section of the world that sits in some of these churches pretending to be saints. You are beautiful; you are blessed, and you are you. When you get comfortable being who you are, others will get comfortable accepting you for who you are. Anyone that does not like you as yourself, distance yourself from them and keep them lifted in prayer. It's not you that they don't like; it's the God in you that they want to cover up.

Find your way back to you, and don't hesitate to talk to the Lord about this journey. Do not think that you are where you need to be already. You have to understand that we are never close enough to the heart of God, so the journey doesn't end when we get saved or when we know 178 scriptures. Stop letting people define you, and stop trying to match up to people's definition of who you are. You don't have to wear the masks anymore or the fake personalities; just be who you are: goofy, intelligent, strange, and beautifully unmasked.