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The Master Artist

[You are a masterpiece created by God.]

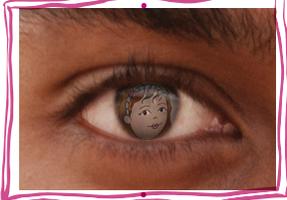
Worst Day Ever!!!!!! Today at school everyone was whispering and staring at me. So I went to the bathroom and right there on the tip of my nose was my first zit. I couldn't get a little cute one, like Laney Douglas' last week. (Hers looked like a beauty mark!) NOOOOOO! Mine is red like Elmo and swollen like a bloated whale. Getting ready for school in the morning used to take five minutes and now it seems like five hours couldn't fix my face! I'm a disaster! It's not like I want to be a lip-gloss addicted beauty queen or anything, but do I have to look like THIS? -Yuzi

...right on the tip of my nose!



Have you ever thought any bad things about yourself when you look in the mirror? Well, **have** you? Let's be honest. You have. And I have too. We're girls, and the whole girl world has experienced the phenomenon known as a bad hair day. And don't even get me started on zits. You know what I think? That God doesn't want us to think those thoughts, and that He really is sad for us when we write them down or worry about them **all day long**.

The Bible tells us that when God looks down upon you, he is "enthralled by your beauty"! (Psalm 45:11 NIV). The word **enthralled** means He is captivated, delighted, fascinated, charmed, enchanted BY YOU.



He can't take His eyes off of you. True fact. Psalm 17:8 says you are the "**apple of [His] eye**." That means that if you were to look into God's eye and see the reflection of what He was looking at, it would be **YOU!**

Wow! Think of that. The God of the universe, looking down at your uniquely chiseled features, coloring, and size, keeps His eyes on you because you are one of His treasured creations . . . He thinks you're beautiful.

So why can't you believe it?

Well, somewhere along the way, someone decided to redefine beauty. Right now the standard of beauty is to be as tall as a basketball player and as thin as a pencil. (And don't forget those lips the size of a watermelon.) It's an impossible standard, and as

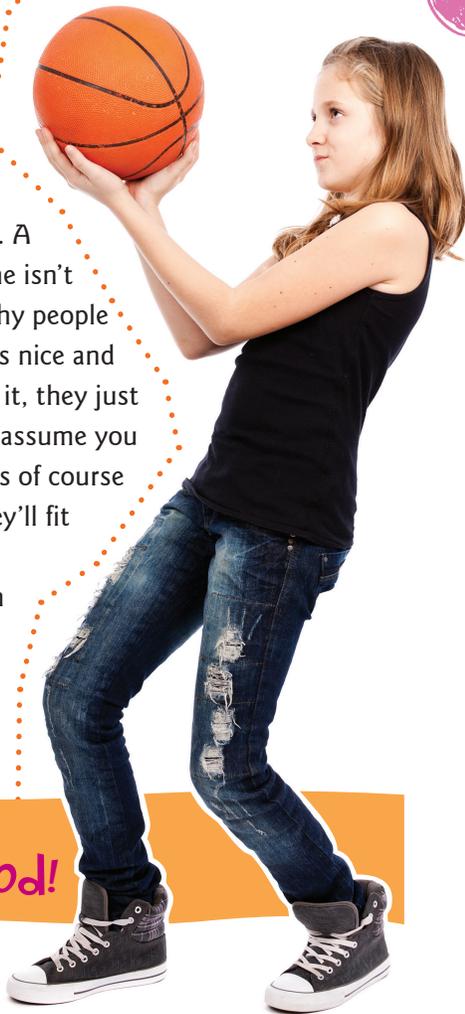
we'll soon discover, the standard of beauty today is a big fat lie!

Here's The Deal: no one is both as tall as a basketball player and as thin as a pencil. A tall basketball player's beauty is in her strength. A thin girl's beauty is in her delicate frame, but she isn't necessarily going to be tall! And I'm not sure why people want unnaturally fat lips. (When God makes lips nice and full, they are beautiful! But when we try to fake it, they just look swollen.) If I see you with swollen lips, I'll assume you ate something you were super allergic to. Unless of course God created you with full lips, because then they'll fit your face nicely and you'll be adored for them!

Each of us is different. Every girl has her own special appearance, and there is no mistake in how you turned out. How do I know this? Because I know the first secret—and you're about to know it too!



Secret #1: You are a masterpiece created by God!



Genesis 1:1 reads, “In the beginning, God created . . .”

Like an artist, He set out to make a beautiful world.

Let’s go back to the garden of Eden, where God made the first girl, Eve.

Oh wait! Back up. Let’s enter the garden just *before* He creates Eve.

Check it out. In Genesis 1, God surveys His fine creation and finds everything just right. He uses the word *good*. The aardvark is good. The aloe plant is good. The alpaca is good. The amoeba is good. The artichoke is good. (And I’m just on the A’s, but you get the idea.) *Everything* is good . . . with one exception. He says, “It is *not* good for man to be alone.”

Hold it one minute there.

Did you catch that? **Alone?**

The God of the universe was walking and talking with Adam. How could Adam have been *alone*?

God could’ve easily just been Adam’s BFF. He didn’t choose to be. Instead, He crafted a masterpiece . . . woman!

You are one of those masterpieces. Oh, what a



masterpiece you are! Like the famous Mona Lisa at the Louvre Museum in Paris or a fine Picasso painting on display in Barcelona, Spain, you're a masterpiece worthy of every glance that comes your way!

And there's a lot of glancing going on. Check this out: advertising researchers have actually attached little sensors to readers' eyeballs to follow the visual path and figure out what makes someone spend time reading an ad, increasing an advertiser's chance of sales. Crazy, huh? They've discovered lots of little tricks that will increase the viewing time by 1% . . . 2% . . . maybe 3%. But if you really want to stop the reader, use a woman. I've heard different numbers, but it seems a photo of a woman will increase the length of time someone spends with an ad by up to 30%. That's way more than anything else. It didn't matter much whether it was a woman or a man doing the looking. Both were drawn to the beauty of the female image.

**CRAZY,
HUH?**


Advertisers just don't get the same response when they use the image of a man, no matter how fantastic looking he might be. It's the masterpiece called "woman" that calls our eyes to praise. The masterpiece is applauded by our glances.

You were created as a masterpiece, and **you** are one of God's expressions of beauty. Short, tall; thin, thick; freckles; big eyes, small ones . . . it doesn't matter. The beauty of being an artist is making things that are **DIFFERENT!**

Take a look at these three paintings, and guess which one is by the world-famous painter **VINCENT VAN GOGH**.



The Potato Eaters



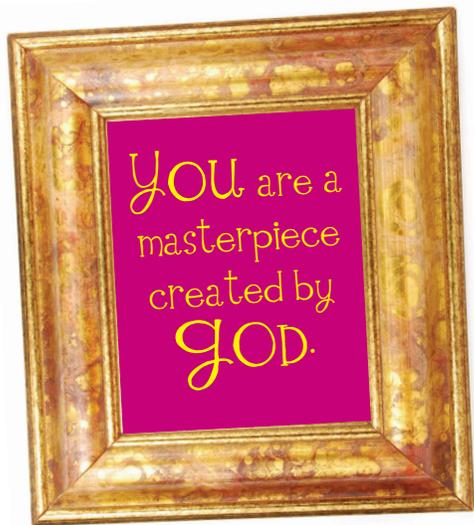
Starry Night



Sunflowers

Guess what? They're all by Vincent van Gogh! *The Potato Eaters* is considered van Gogh's first great work of art. (What's not great about something named *The Potato Eaters*!?) *Starry Night* may be his most famous. (Does it look familiar to you?) *Sunflowers* is from his famous still life collection. But each of these is unique in style and use of color. (*The Potato Eaters* is very realistic and dark. *Starry Night* is very unrealistic and used bright colors. *Sunflowers* is kind of in between, realistic but bright.)

Each of them is a masterpiece
because they were painted
by a master painter.



Why are you a masterpiece?
Simply because you were created by
THE Master Artist!

Is it hard for you to believe you are a masterpiece? Do you think you are too tall? Too short? Too heavy? Too thin? Is your hair too curly? Too straight? Too dark? Too light? Yeah, I know how it feels to be different from everyone around you. And how desperate you can become to do something about it!

When I was in sixth grade, everyone in the entire wide world—yep, I’m being dramatic—was getting their hair cut into “feathers.” A stylist would cut the hair around your face at an angle so you could brush it back into wispy “feathers” to frame your face. It was *the* style of the day. I had long, straight, blonde hair at the time, and it felt so boring compared to everyone else’s. I begged my mom to take me to get it cut. When we did, it didn’t go as planned! My hair

just didn't want to "feather." Instead it coiled into heavy, greasy-looking curls at the side. I cried myself to sleep a night or two. I felt so ugly.

Determined to fix it, I told my mom that what I now needed was a "perm."

Also the rage of the day! My mom said we couldn't afford a salon perm, so I begged and begged and begged until she relented to give me a "home perm." She tightly coiled all my hair into rollers until my eyes teared up and I felt I might not make it through. Then she poured what can only be described as a toxic liquid on my head. I'm pretty sure you could smell me on the other side of the earth. I smelled bad and I looked even worse, but this was going to be what made me beautiful! I could just feel it!

But *feelings are not facts*. Only the Bible can give us the real facts on true beauty. So how about we start there.

Bible True Beauty Fact #1

The Bible says one thing that makes a woman beautiful is being different or unique (Song of Solomon 6:9). No matter **WHAT** is different about you, you are a masterpiece created by God. It's not only okay to be taller, shorter, thicker, thinner, curlier, straighter, darker, or lighter, but it is also **BEAU000**-tiful! Different is good! (An art gallery full of masterpieces would get so boring so fast if every single one of them were the same, right?)



Bible True Beauty Fact #2

The Bible also tells us that a girl in love with Jesus **knows** she's a masterpiece! **"Wait!"** you might be saying. **"That sounds kind of prideful."**

So let me put it to you the way the Bible does.

The Bible says a girl who knows Jesus knows **very well** that she is a masterpiece. That's a lot of knowing. Let me show you where that shows up in the pages of the Bible:

.....

Secret #1 Power Verse

*"I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.
Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well.
My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being
made in secret, intricately woven . . ."*

(Psalm 139:14–15)

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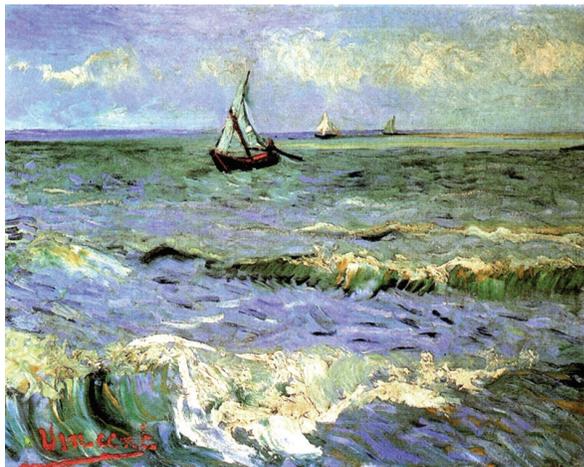
This verse says that God, the Master Artist, wove you together when you were still in the womb. Have you ever worked on a weaving loom? Or knitted or crocheted? If you have, you know that you don't just throw a blob of yarn together and say, "Well, would you look at that? Somehow I made a hat!" It takes careful attention to detail to weave something together. It can't happen on accident. It takes counting. Math!

What does that mean for you? Every single thing about you was made *carefully*. God calculated the length of your legs. The width of your nose. The curl in your hair. He's even counted the numbers of hairs on your head (Luke 12:7). He decided what color your eyes should be. And what shade of that color. He chose your skin color and the curves in your bones. You are His piece of art.

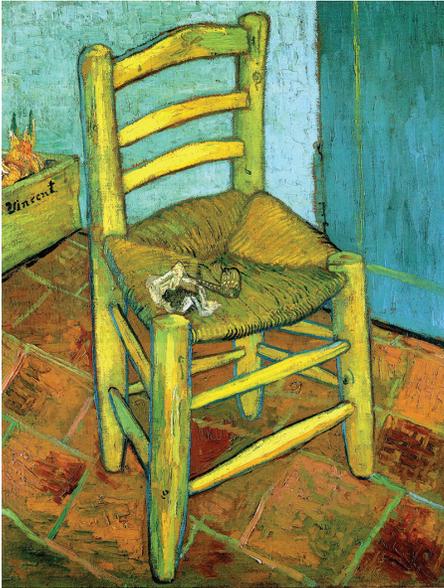
God does not make junk. He makes masterpieces. And He wants you to know **"very well"** that you're a masterpiece.

Why are you a masterpiece? That's simple: to make the Master Artist known. Our primary purpose on this earth is to glorify—or to make known—God. All this creative genius expressed in you is not to make you famous, but to make God famous! (Is this starting to make any sense?)

Let's go back to Vincent van Gogh's work for a minute. He had a unique way of signing his work. He only signed "Vincent." Sometimes it was really big like on this painting at the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam.



Seascape-at-Saintes-Maries
by Vincent van Gogh



Van Gogh's Chair by Vincent Van Gogh



I really wish I had known this powerful secret before I begged my mom for a perm. Oh yeah, that story didn't turn out so well. My mom had, in fact, rolled the rollers too tightly. So tightly that one of the rollers actually worked with those harsh chemicals to literally shave a spot right on top of my head. At first I could

Sometimes it was put in an unusual place like on this painting of his chair. See if you can find his name.

See it back there on the drawer? Now look back at Sunflowers by van Gogh and find the unique spot he placed his name on that one! Find it?

All of these paintings tell us "Vincent was here!"

You tell the world "God was here! God is here!"

It is your mission, should you choose to accept it, to let the whole world know that you are a masterpiece created by God **so that the whole world will know God is the Master Artist!**

hide it, but as the hair grew, there was a sprout of perfectly straight hair standing proudly on the top of my head. I looked so ridiculous, thanks to my obsession with a hairstyle! If only I had accepted the mission to let the whole world know that God

created me very well . . .

long, straight hair and all!

Now, let me remind you of something I said earlier.

Curling your hair when it's straight or straightening your hair when it is curly is not

bad in and of itself. Have fun! Braid it.

Cut it. Curl it. Even color it if your mom thinks that's okay. But make sure that

you don't lose sight of the fact that the way God created you is good, and your

beauty enables the world to see our Master

Artist. It's something He hopes we'll participate in with as much energy (or more) as we use to be creative with our expression of beauty when it comes to our hair!

**HAIR
FUN!**





Do you accept that mission? It's not for the faint of heart. In fact, maybe you should read the next chapter to know just how hard this mission could be. You see, we have an **ENEMY** that wants to get in the way of you accomplishing this mission.

