

The background of the entire cover is a close-up photograph of several vibrant pink chrysanthemum flowers. The petals are layered and detailed, with some showing a gradient from light pink to a deeper magenta. The center of the flowers is a textured, brownish-green. A large, pale yellow circle is centered on the page, containing the title and a small flower icon. A dark red horizontal band crosses the middle of the circle.

touchPOINTS™
for women

God's Answers for Your Every Need



FEATURING THE...



New Living
Translation.

* touchPOINTS™ *for women*

Books in the
TOUCHPOINTS™
Series

TOUCHPOINTS

TOUCHPOINTS
for Women

TOUCHPOINTS
for Men

TOUCHPOINTS
for Students

TOUCHPOINTS
for Leaders

TOUCHPOINTS
for Recovery

TOUCHPOINTS
for New Believers

TOUCHPOINTS
Heaven

touchPOINTS™
for women



TYNDALE HOUSE PUBLISHERS, INC.
CAROL STREAM, ILLINOIS

Visit Tyndale's online at www.tyndale.com.

TYNDALE, Tyndale's quill logo, *New Living Translation*, *NLT*, and the New Living Translation logo are registered trademarks of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.

TouchPoints is a trademark of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.

TouchPoints for Women

Second edition questions and notes copyright © 2011 by Ronald A. Beers.
All rights reserved.

First edition copyright © 1996, 1998 by Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.
All rights reserved.

First edition notes and special features copyright © by Ronald A. Beers and V. Gilbert Beers. All rights reserved.

Cover photograph of flowers copyright © Vibrant Image Studio/Shutterstock.
All rights reserved.

Wallpaper pattern copyright © Roberto hartasanchez castillo/iStockphoto. All rights reserved.

General editors: Ronald A. Beers, V. Gilbert Beers, Amy Mason

Contributing writers: V. Gilbert Beers, Rebecca Beers, Brian R. Coffey, Jonathan Farrar, Jonathan Gray, Sean A. Harrison, Sandy Hull, Amy E. Mason, Rhonda K. O'Brien, Douglas J. Rumford, Linda Taylor

Previously published under ISBN 978-0-8423-3306-1

Designed by Jennifer Ghionzoli

Scripture quotations are taken from the *Holy Bible*, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2007 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

ISBN 978-1-4143-2019-9

Printed in the United States of America

18 17 16 15 14 13 12
7 6 5 4 3 2 1

CONTENTS



- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| 1 Abandonment | 64 Distractions |
| 2 Abilities | 66 Divorce |
| 4 Abortion | 68 Emotions |
| 7 Acceptance | 70 Encouragement |
| 9 Adoption | 72 Envy |
| 10 Affirmation | 75 Escape |
| 12 Anger/Resentment | 76 Expectations |
| 15 Apathy | 78 Failure |
| 18 Appearance | 80 Faith |
| 21 Belonging | 82 Family |
| 23 Bible | 85 Fasting |
| 25 Bitterness | 88 Forgiveness |
| 27 Blessings | 90 Friendship |
| 29 Boredom | 93 Frustration |
| 30 Boundaries | 94 Gentleness |
| 32 Busyness | 97 Gossip |
| 34 Celebration | 99 Grief |
| 35 Change | 101 Habits |
| 37 Christlikeness | 104 Healing |
| 39 Church | 106 Health |
| 41 Comfort/Compassion | 107 Home |
| 43 Complaining | 109 Hope |
| 45 Compromise | 110 Hospitality |
| 47 Conflict | 112 Humility |
| 49 Confrontation | 114 Husbands |
| 51 Contentment | 116 Infertility |
| 52 Crisis | 118 Intimacy |
| 53 Criticism | 121 Joy |
| 56 Decisions | 124 Kindness |
| 58 Depression | 127 Listening |
| 61 Disappointment | 129 Loneliness |
| 63 Discipline | 131 Loss |

133	Love	201	Righteousness
136	Marriage	204	Salvation
139	Meditation	208	Security
141	Mercy	210	Service
144	Mistakes	213	Significance
146	Modesty	215	Speech
148	Money	217	Spiritual Warfare
153	Mothers	218	Stress
155	Motives	220	Submission
159	Moving	223	Suffering
161	Needs	227	Temptation
163	Neighbors	230	Testing
166	Obedience	232	Thankfulness
169	Parenting	234	Timing of God
171	Patience	236	Touch
172	Poverty	241	Trust
174	Praise	242	Truth
177	Prayer	245	Unity
180	Priorities	247	Vulnerability
182	Purity	250	Weariness
184	Rape	254	Will of God
188	Reconciliation	257	Wisdom
191	Regrets	259	Witnessing
194	Renewal	262	Worry
196	Repentance	264	Worship
199	Respect	267	Worth/Worthiness

ABANDONMENT



Does God abandon me during my difficult times?

PSALM 9:10 | *Those who know your name trust in you, for you, O LORD, do not abandon those who search for you.*

PSALM 27:10 | *Even if my father and mother abandon me, the LORD will hold me close.*

JOHN 14:16 | *[Jesus said,] “I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you.”*

2 CORINTHIANS 4:9 | *We are hunted down, but never abandoned by God. We get knocked down, but we are not destroyed.*

God is always pursuing you, trying to get your attention. Are you aware of him? If you are sincerely looking for him, you are sure to find him because God will never abandon anyone who wants a relationship with him. In your difficult times some of your closest friends might neglect or even desert you, but God never will. In fact, your difficulties can become the means to help you look more intently for God—and you will see him right by your side.

Are there some things I must abandon in order to have a closer relationship with God?

PHILIPPIANS 3:8, 10 | *[Paul said,] “I have discarded everything else. . . . I want to know Christ and experience the mighty power that raised him from the dead. I want to suffer with him, sharing in his death.”*

Abandoning those things that keep you from God is the best way to assure that you will not abandon him. If there is something in your life that is coming between you and God, work hard to get rid of it so you can have a closer relationship with him. Clinging to a sinful habit causes you to fall further and further away from God.

Promise from God HEBREWS 13:5 | *God has said, “I will never fail you. I will never abandon you.”*

ABILITIES

I’m really good at certain things. Does God give me talents and abilities for a reason?

EXODUS 31:1-5 | *The LORD said to Moses, “Look, I have specifically chosen Bezalel. . . . I have filled him with the Spirit of God, giving him great wisdom, ability, and expertise in all kinds of crafts. He is a master craftsman, expert in working with gold, silver, and bronze. He is skilled in engraving and mounting gemstones and in carving wood.”*

1 CORINTHIANS 12:6 | *God works in different ways, but it is the same God who does the work in all of us.*

Your talents and abilities are not random or accidental; they are part of the way God has uniquely designed you. God gave Bezalel talent as a craftsman and commissioned him to create beautiful objects for the Tabernacle. God does his work on earth through people, so he gives each person special gifts and talents.

Every ability you have is useful to God, so use each one for him. These abilities may become your full-time job, or they may simply be hobbies. Either way, God can use them to accomplish his purposes. It is exciting and deeply satisfying to do the things you enjoy for God's service.

MATTHEW 25:21 | *Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities.*

LUKE 12:48 | *When someone has been given much, much will be required in return; and when someone has been entrusted with much, even more will be required.*

1 CORINTHIANS 10:31 | *Whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.*

The abilities you have are gifts from God, and with them comes the responsibility of using them well. You may be gifted in the area of cooking, entertaining, managing a business, sewing, handling money, playing an instrument, or some other gift. Use whatever gifts you have been given to bring honor and glory to God.

How can my God-given abilities have the most impact?

PHILIPPIANS 2:5-7 | *You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had. Though he was God, he did not think of equality*

with God as something to cling to. Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave.

1 PETER 4:10 | *God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another.*

God has given you specific abilities and strengths. Sometimes you might neglect to use those abilities or get in the rut of using them only for yourself. When you see your abilities as gifts from almighty God, you will be humbled to think that he would value you enough to put these gifts in your care. Use them for your personal enjoyment, but use them also to serve others, for that is where they have the greatest impact.

Promise from God MATTHEW 25:29 | *To those who use well what they are given, even more will be given, and they will have an abundance.*

ABORTION

When does life begin?

PSALM 51:5 | *I was born a sinner—yes, from the moment my mother conceived me.*

The Bible points to the moment of conception as the beginning of human life.

What is the value of an unborn child?

PSALM 139:13-16 | *You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother's womb. Thank you*

for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it. You watched me as I was being formed in utter seclusion, as I was woven together in the dark of the womb. You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed.

JEREMIAH 1:5 | *[The Lord said,] “I knew you before I formed you in your mother’s womb. Before you were born I set you apart and appointed you as my prophet to the nations.”*

God is present continuously during the nine months of pregnancy—forming, watching, creating, and even scheduling each day of the unborn baby’s life. Before a baby is born, God knows him or her personally and intimately and he has already established a purpose for the baby. The value of an unborn child is priceless because he or she is already a friend of God.

Is abortion absolutely wrong?

EXODUS 20:13 | *You must not murder.*

One of God’s Ten Commandments is a prohibition against murder. In the abortion debate, the issue becomes this: Is an unborn child really a person yet? If the unborn child is a person, then aborting that child becomes murder. Murder carries grave consequences because it ends a human life that held so much potential, and it puts authority over human life into the hands of human beings rather than leaving it in God’s hands. The Bible is clear that life begins at conception, not birth. Therefore, aborting an unborn child is terminating the life of that child and is absolutely wrong.

The abortion issue has nothing to do with me. Why worry about it?

PROVERBS 24:11-12 | *Rescue those who are unjustly sentenced to die; save them as they stagger to their death. Don't excuse yourself by saying, "Look, we didn't know." For God understands all hearts, and he sees you. He who guards your soul knows you knew. He will repay all people as their actions deserve.*

Every child needs a champion, especially the unborn child. Perhaps God is calling you to be a voice for the unborn or to support a cause that helps the unborn. Maybe he wants you to adopt a baby or to help a new mother cope with her new child. Pray and ask God how he might want you to help the unborn.

Can I be forgiven if I have had an abortion or encouraged someone else to have one?

PSALM 103:3 | *[The Lord] forgives all my sins and heals all my diseases.*

ISAIAH 1:18 | *"Come now, let's settle this," says the LORD. "Though your sins are like scarlet, I will make them as white as snow. Though they are red like crimson, I will make them as white as wool."*

1 JOHN 1:9 | *If we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness.*

If you have had an abortion or encouraged someone to have one, you must clearly understand that it was wrong. But you must also clearly understand the wonder of God's

grace and mercy to anyone who sincerely asks him for forgiveness. No matter how great your sin, God's forgiveness is even greater.

Promise from God JEREMIAH 1:5 | *[The Lord said,] "I knew you before I formed you in your mother's womb."*

ACCEPTANCE

I feel so unworthy—does God really accept me?

GENESIS 1:27 | *God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.*

ROMANS 5:8 | *God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.*

EPHESIANS 1:4-5 | *Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure.*

You are accepted by God because he made you and created you in his image. Nothing you can do will cause God to love you more, because he loves you completely. And nothing you do can cause God to love you less. In fact, God accepts you and loves you so much that he sent his own Son to die for you, to take on himself the punishment for sin you deserve. He died in your place so you can be accepted into eternity with him.

What makes me acceptable to God?

ROMANS 3:30 | *There is only one God, and he makes people right with himself only by faith, whether they are Jews or Gentiles.*

GALATIANS 2:16 | *We know that a person is made right with God by faith in Jesus Christ, not by obeying the law. And we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we might be made right with God because of our faith in Christ, not because we have obeyed the law. For no one will ever be made right with God by obeying the law.*

Sin separates you from a holy and perfect God. But faith in Jesus removes your sin, making you holy and acceptable in God's sight. When you ask for his forgiveness, he looks at you as though you had never sinned.

How do I accept others, especially people I dislike?

MATTHEW 5:44 | *Love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you!*

ROMANS 14:1, 3 | *Accept other believers who are weak in faith, and don't argue with them about what they think is right or wrong. . . . Those who feel free to eat anything must not look down on those who don't. And those who don't eat certain foods must not condemn those who do, for God has accepted them.*

Pray for those you dislike. Through prayer, God can help you see people through his eyes. Then, don't be so quick to make up your mind about who they really are and what they should or shouldn't do. Judging others is better left to God because it is so easy for us to misjudge people. He sets the standard for accepting others.

Promise from God JOHN 1:12 | *But to all who accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God.*

ADOPTION

Is adopting a child right for me and my family? How can I know for sure?

PSALM 138:8 | *The LORD will work out his plans for my life—for your faithful love, O LORD, endures forever. Don't abandon me, for you made me.*

JEREMIAH 1:5 | *[The Lord said,] "I knew you before I formed you in your mother's womb. Before you were born I set you apart and appointed you."*

MATTHEW 18:5 | *[Jesus said,] "Anyone who welcomes a little child like this on my behalf is welcoming me."*

There are some things in life you can't know for sure, but the Bible is clear on this: God puts a high priority on loving children. If you adopt a child and welcome him or her into your heart and life, you are demonstrating the kind of love Christ showed for you.

How has God adopted me? Why would he want to do that?

JOHN 1:12 | *To all who believed [the Father's one and only Son] and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God.*

GALATIANS 4:4-5 | *God sent his Son, born of a woman, subject to the law. God sent him to buy freedom for us who were slaves to the law, so that he could adopt us as his very own children.*

When you accept Jesus Christ as your Savior, God adopts you into his family.

1 JOHN 3:1 | *See how very much our Father loves us, for he calls us his children, and that is what we are!*

God's love for you makes him want to adopt you.

EPHESIANS 1:5 | *God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure.*

Adopting you as his child has been part of God's plan since the beginning of time.

1 PETER 2:9 | *You are a chosen people. You are royal priests, a holy nation, God's very own possession. As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for he called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light.*

God has adopted you to be an example to others of his goodness.

Promise from God EPHESIANS 1:4-6 | *Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. . . . This what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure. So we praise God for the glorious grace he has poured out on us who belong to his dear Son.*

AFFIRMATION



How does God affirm me?

GENESIS 1:27 | *God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.*

1 CORINTHIANS 15:3 | *[Paul said,] “I passed on to you what was most important and what had also been passed on to me. Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said.”*

1 PETER 2:5 | *You are living stones that God is building into his spiritual temple. What’s more, you are his holy priests. Through the mediation of Jesus Christ, you offer spiritual sacrifices that please God.*

God affirmed you when he created you like himself. He values you so much that he was willing to send his Son to die for you because he wants you to live with him forever.

PSALM 5:12 | *You bless the godly, O LORD; you surround them with your shield of love.*

JOHN 10:28-29 | *[Jesus said,] “I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one can snatch them away from me, for my Father has given them to me, and he is more powerful than anyone else. No one can snatch them from the Father’s hand.”*

COLOSSIANS 2:13 | *You were dead because of your sins and because your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then God made you alive with Christ, for he forgave all our sins.*

God affirms you through his love, his blessings, his mercy, his forgiveness, and his gift of salvation. What greater affirmation is there than to be affirmed by the Creator of the universe?

How can I affirm others? Why is it so important?

ROMANS 14:19 | *Let us aim for harmony in the church and try to build each other up.*

1 CORINTHIANS 14:26 | *Well, my brothers and sisters, let's summarize. When you meet together, one will sing, another will teach, another will tell some special revelation God has given, one will speak in tongues, and another will interpret what is said. But everything that is done must strengthen all of you.*

1 THESSALONIANS 5:11, 13 | *Encourage each other and build each other up, just as you are already doing. . . . Show [your leaders] great respect and wholehearted love because of their work. And live peacefully with each other.*

Affirm others by encouraging them, praising them, and building them up.

Promise from God ISAIAH 54:10 | *"The mountains may move and the hills disappear, but even then my faithful love for you will remain. My covenant of blessing will never be broken," says the LORD, who has mercy on you.*

ANGER/RESENTMENT



Is God angry with me?

EXODUS 34:6-7 | *The LORD passed in front of Moses, calling out, "Yahweh! The LORD! The God of compassion and mercy! I am slow to anger and filled with unfailing love and faithfulness. I lavish unfailing love to a thousand generations. I forgive iniquity, rebellion, and sin. But I do not excuse the guilty."*

God cannot tolerate sin and rebellion against himself; therefore any kind of sin or evil angers him. But he is ready to forgive because he is kind and merciful. When you humbly

confess your sin and turn to him in faith, you will receive God's abundant love and mercy instead of his anger.

PSALM 30:5 | *[The Lord's] anger lasts only a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime! Weeping may last through the night, but joy comes with the morning.*

PSALM 145:8 | *The LORD is merciful and compassionate, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love.*

1 THESSALONIANS 5:9 | *God chose to save us through our Lord Jesus Christ, not to pour out his anger on us.*

The Bible promises that God is kind and merciful and that he is always ready to receive you, and all his children, with love. The “always-angry God” is one of the worst caricatures ever attributed to God. Any displeasure toward us results in gentle discipline and is an expression of his love in action.

How should I deal with my own anger in relationships?

EPHESIANS 4:26 | *“Don't sin by letting anger control you.” Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry.*

EPHESIANS 4:31-32 | *Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger. . . . Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.*

Anger must be dealt with quickly, before it becomes bitter, hateful, or vengeful. As hard as forgiveness might sound, it is most effective in melting anger away.

What is the best way to deal with an angry person?

PROVERBS 15:1 | *A gentle answer deflects anger, but harsh words make tempers flare.*

PROVERBS 29:8 | *Mockers can get a whole town agitated, but the wise will calm anger.*

Reacting to anger with anger almost always intensifies the problem. Responding with wisdom and gentleness almost always calms an angry person.

When is it okay to be angry?

MARK 3:2-5 | *Since it was the Sabbath, Jesus' enemies watched him closely. If he healed the man's hand, they planned to accuse him of working on the Sabbath. Jesus said to the man with the deformed hand, "Come and stand in front of everyone." Then he turned to his critics and asked, "Does the law permit good deeds on the Sabbath, or is it a day for doing evil? Is this a day to save life or to destroy it?" But they wouldn't answer him. He looked around at them angrily and was deeply saddened by their hard hearts. Then he said to the man, "Hold out your hand." So the man held out his hand, and it was restored!*

JOHN 2:15-16 | *Jesus made a whip from some ropes and chased them all out of the Temple. He drove out the sheep and cattle, scattered the money changers' coins over the floor, and turned over their tables. Then, going over to the people who sold doves, he told them, "Get these things out of here. Stop turning my Father's house into a marketplace!"*

Anger at sin is not only appropriate but necessary. Jesus' righteous anger arose from his devotion to God and compassion for others. It led to good deeds, not bad ones.

Promise from God PSALM 103:8 | *The LORD is compassionate and merciful, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love.*

APATHY



Why am I not always on fire for God?

GENESIS 3:6 | *The woman was convinced. She saw that the tree was beautiful and its fruit looked delicious, and she wanted the wisdom it would give her. So she took some of the fruit and ate it. Then she gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it, too.*

Temptation takes your focus off God and makes thinking about something else more exciting. When this happens, it's not that you really want to move away from God, but something else has suddenly got your attention! It's interesting and enticing. If what you're excited about is not what God wants for you, your passion for God will quickly die.

1 KINGS 11:1-3 | *King Solomon loved many foreign women. . . . He married women from Moab, Ammon, Edom, Sidon. . . . The LORD had clearly instructed the people of Israel, "You must not marry them, because they will turn your hearts to their gods." Yet Solomon insisted on loving them anyway. . . . And in fact, they did turn his heart away from the LORD.*

When sin takes a foothold in your life, it always leads you away from God and substitutes an apathetic attitude toward him. Satan will use all his power to keep you from getting excited about following God.

MARK 14:32, 34-35, 37-38 | *[Jesus and the disciples] went to the olive grove called Gethsemane, and Jesus said, ". . . Stay here and keep watch with me." He went on a little farther and fell to the ground. He prayed. . . . Then he returned and found*

the disciples asleep. He said to Peter, “Simon, are you asleep? Couldn’t you watch with me even one hour? Keep watch and pray, so that you will not give in to temptation. For the spirit is willing, but the body is weak.”

Sometimes you’re simply too tired or don’t see the significance of what is going on around you. Peter thought this was just another night out. If he’d had his spiritual antenna up, he might have sensed how significant this night was going to be.

MALACHI 1:13 | *“You say, ‘It’s too hard to serve the LORD,’ and you turn up your noses at my commands,” says the LORD of Heaven’s Armies.*

COLOSSIANS 1:22-23 | *You are holy and blameless as you stand before [God] without a single fault. But you must continue to believe this truth and stand firmly in it. Don’t drift away from the assurance you received when you heard the Good News.*

REVELATION 2:4 | *[God said,] “I have this complaint against you. You don’t love me or each other as you did at first!”*

Like all relationships, your relationship with God takes effort and energy. God continues to be fully committed to you. In order for your relationship to continue to be exciting, you must be fully committed to him—diligent in your efforts to know him better. A lack of effort and energy shows apathy.

What can I do when I am feeling apathetic?

LUKE 21:34 | *[Jesus said,] “Watch out! Don’t let your hearts be dulled by carousing and drunkenness, and by the worries of this life. Don’t let [the day of my return] catch you unaware.”*

Jesus warns his followers to be alert to spiritual apathy. You don’t want to be caught at the end of life having neglected

your relationship with God because you were too focused on living the good life. Always make your relationship with God a priority.

PSALM 119:83 | *I am shriveled like a wineskin in the smoke, but I have not forgotten to obey your decrees.*

Obey God's commands even when you don't feel like it. This takes tremendous effort, but it's hard to be apathetic when you're focused on something. Whatever takes great effort is stimulating and engaging. This will help keep you close to God.

ACTS 16:25 | *Around midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening.*

Instead of sinking into apathy when adversity strikes, worship God through prayer and song. Prayer and praise to God are sure cures for apathy.

PHILIPPIANS 2:4 | *Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too.*

HEBREWS 6:10-12 | *God is not unjust. He will not forget how hard you have worked for him and how you have shown your love to him by caring for other believers, as you still do. Our great desire is that you will keep on loving others as long as life lasts, in order to make certain that what you hope for will come true. Then you will not become spiritually dull and indifferent.*

The more interested you become in the lives of those around you, the more you'll care about them. Getting involved in the lives of others not only will keep you from becoming dull and indifferent but will also challenge you to think about ways to reflect the love of Jesus to them.

PROVERBS 13:4 | *Lazy people want much but get little, but those who work hard will prosper.*

2 THESSALONIANS 3:11 | *We hear that some of you are living idle lives, refusing to work and meddling in other people's business.*

One of the best cures for apathy is hard work! When you work hard, you become productive. The more productive you are, the more satisfied and fulfilled you will be. Moreover, when your hard work is an act of service to God, you gain more energy as you see God working through you to bless others.

JEREMIAH 1:4-5 | *The LORD gave me this message: "I knew you before I formed you in your mother's womb. Before you were born I set you apart and appointed you."*

You can stimulate your passion for life by realizing that God has a purpose for you. God created you specifically to make a difference for his Kingdom! Purpose stirs passion, and passion drives apathy away.

Promise from God EZEKIEL 11:19 | *[The Lord said,] "I will give [my people] singleness of heart and put a new spirit within them. I will take away their stony, stubborn heart and give them a tender, responsive heart."*

APPEARANCE



How much does appearance matter?

1 SAMUEL 16:7 | *The LORD doesn't see things the way you see them. People judge by outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.*

PROVERBS 31:30 | *Charm is deceptive, and beauty does not last; but a woman who fears the LORD will be greatly praised.*

1 TIMOTHY 2:10 | *Women who claim to be devoted to God should make themselves attractive by the good things they do.*

1 PETER 3:3-4 | *Don't be concerned about the outward beauty of fancy hairstyles, expensive jewelry, or beautiful clothes. You should clothe yourselves instead with the beauty that comes from within, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is so precious to God.*

Appearance does matter; just make sure you're focusing on the right things. Your body, which is in a constant process of aging and decay, and your hair, makeup, and clothes are only your outward shell. Your soul and character are your inner being, which is ageless and eternal and communicates who you really are. Walking with God causes you to reflect his beauty. There's nothing wrong with paying attention to your physical appearance, but not to the neglect of your spiritual appearance. What an impact you can have on others when they miss what's on your outside because they can't take their eyes off what's on the inside—God himself shining through.

1 CORINTHIANS 15:41 | *The sun has one kind of glory, while the moon and stars each have another kind. And even the stars differ from each other in their glory.*

Beauty comes in assorted sizes, shapes, appearance, and actions. There is no one model for beauty. In a very real sense each of us, as we strive to reflect God's beauty, creates a unique model for the beauty we exhibit to others.

How can I see beyond appearances?

MATTHEW 7:16-17, 20 | *You can identify [false prophets] by their fruit, that is, by the way they act. . . . A good tree produces good fruit, and a bad tree produces bad fruit. . . . Yes, just as you can identify a tree by its fruit, so you can identify people by their actions.*

1 JOHN 4:1 | *Do not believe everyone who claims to speak by the Spirit. You must test them to see if the spirit they have comes from God.*

All God's people must be "fruit inspectors," looking beyond appearances and words to the actual fruit of a person's behavior and character. Obedience to the Bible is an essential test of authentic faith in Jesus Christ. Good works alone are not sufficient. There must be a match between words and works, character and conduct.

Is there any value to maintaining a good appearance?

ECCLESIASTES 9:7-8; 11:9-10; 12:13 | *Eat your food with joy, and drink your wine with a happy heart, for God approves of this! Wear fine clothes, with a splash of cologne! . . . But remember that you must give an account to God for everything you do. So refuse to worry, and keep your body healthy. . . . Fear God and obey his commands, for this is everyone's duty.*

MATTHEW 6:17 | *When you fast, comb your hair and wash your face.*

1 CORINTHIANS 6:19-20 | *Don't you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself, for God bought you with a high price. So you must honor God with your body.*

You should not be obsessed with your physical appearance, but neither should you ignore it. How you present yourself is in part a reflection of who you are, and it plays a role in your ability to interact with others. Your body is the house in which the Holy Spirit dwells, so you should keep up the place in which he lives. The more you keep up your body, the more energy you have to serve him. Keeping your body clean and healthy allows more opportunities to become involved in others' lives and influence them with the good news of Jesus. How you present yourself can help you in the way you represent Christ.

Promise from God PROVERBS 31:30 | *Charm is deceptive, and beauty does not last; but a woman who fears the LORD will be greatly praised.*

BELONGING



Why is it important to feel like I belong somewhere—to a family, a spouse, a church?

DEUTERONOMY 33:27 | *The eternal God is your refuge, and his everlasting arms are under you.*

PSALM 73:23-24 | *I still belong to you; you hold my right hand. You guide me with your counsel, leading me to a glorious destiny.*

ROMANS 1:6 | *You are included among those . . . who have been called to belong to Jesus Christ.*

We all need a sense of belonging, for in belonging is security and acceptance. Feeling accepted gives you confidence to

God made you in his own image—you are his treasure and masterpiece! You are invaluable to him, which is why he sent his own Son to die for your sins so that you could live in heaven with him forever.

PSALM 139:13 | *You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother's womb.*

JEREMIAH 1:5 | *I knew you before I formed you in your mother's womb. Before you were born I set you apart and appointed you.*

God made you with great skill and crafted you with loving care. He showed how much value he places on you by the way he made you.

PSALM 139:17 | *How precious are your thoughts about me, O God. They cannot be numbered!*

Almighty God thinks wonderful thoughts about you all the time. He looks inside you and sees your real value.

PSALM 139:1-3, 6 | *O LORD, you have examined my heart and know everything about me. You know when I sit down or stand up. You know my thoughts even when I'm far away. You see me when I travel and when I rest at home. You know everything I do. . . . Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too great for me to understand!*

God values you so much that he watches over you no matter where you are or what you are doing.

1 CORINTHIANS 6:19 | *Don't you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God?*

God values you so much that he even allows your body to become the temple in which he lives. God does not need to

live in you. He can live anywhere. But by choosing to live within you, he declares you his dwelling place.

GALATIANS 3:26 | *You are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus.*

GALATIANS 4:7 | *You are no longer a slave but God's own child. And since you are his child, God has made you his heir.*

God values you so much that he has adopted you as his child.

MATTHEW 28:20 | *[Jesus said,] "Be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age."*

God's Son promises to be with you always. Why would he want to be with you if he didn't value you?

What makes me worthy?

GENESIS 1:27 | *God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.*

You—and all other human beings—are created in God's image. This means God values you highly.

1 CORINTHIANS 6:20 | *God bought you with a high price. So you must honor God with your body.*

1 CORINTHIANS 7:23 | *God paid a high price for you, so don't be enslaved by the world.*

You are worthy because God paid a high price for you. He loved you enough to die for you.

EPHESIANS 1:4-7 | *Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family*

by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure. So we praise God for the glorious grace he has poured out on us who belong to his dear Son. He is so rich in kindness and grace that he purchased our freedom with the blood of his Son and forgave our sins.

Before God made the world, he chose you to be born as his unique creation, holy and forgiven.

How can I develop a healthier sense of self-worth?

PSALM 139:17 | *How precious are your thoughts about me, O God. They cannot be numbered!*

ROMANS 12:3 | *Be honest in your evaluation of yourselves, measuring yourselves by the faith God has given us.*

1 PETER 4:10 | *God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another.*

Healthy self-esteem comes from an honest appraisal of yourself—not too proud, because your gifts and abilities were given to you by God, yet not so self-effacing that you fail to accept and use your gifts and abilities to their potential. Using your gifts to bless and serve others actually increases your self-worth because it takes the focus off you and allows God to work more effectively through you.

Promise from God PSALM 8:5 | *[The Lord] made [human beings] only a little lower than God and crowned them with glory and honor.*