

When You Don't Think You're Acceptable

"The Lord your God is in your midst, a Mighty One, who will save. He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will renew you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing" (Zeph. 3:17).

Growing up, I never felt beautiful. We didn't have much money, and all my clothes—except one new outfit every year—came from yard sales. A few times my mom tried to cut my hair herself and my long locks ended up at my ears, and after my baby teeth came in, my adult teeth came in crooked.

The worst year was sixth grade. I weighed more than my stick-thin friends and it was determined I needed glasses. I picked out Jordache frames—a popular brand at the time—but I still got made fun of when I showed up wearing them at school. "Hey, four eyes," I was greeted by Keith, the cutest boy in my class. I was horrified. After that, the glasses stayed home. I'd have to walk to the front of the room to see the chalkboard, but at least I wouldn't have to face the trauma of being completely homely.

It's funny how we carry the feelings of low self-worth with us into adulthood. Even after I grew out of my ugly-duckling stage, I still felt inadequate, unpopular. I carried this into my relationship with Jesus. I thought He loved me—because that's what Jesus is supposed to do—but I never felt truly beautiful in His eyes. Or at least I didn't feel that way until I stumbled upon Zephaniah 3:17.

I can still remember the rush of joy in my heart as I read those words. I imagined Jesus looking at me with complete infatuation. Like a groom singing a love song to His bride, I pictured complete love in His gaze. That type of love

overwhelmed me. I'm completely beautiful in His eyes. He doesn't just put up with me; He gave everything so I would be His.

Faith Step: Read a few popular love poems, like "She Walks in Beauty" by Lord Byron, and try to grasp Jesus' immense love for you.

Tricia Goyer *has written more than 35 books, including both novels that delight and entertain readers and nonfiction titles that offer encouragement and hope. She has also published more than 500 articles in national publications such as Guideposts, Thriving Family, Proverbs 31, and HomeLife Magazine.*