Reflections: The Woman God Sees

Introduction
Amanda had never been a wiz in the kitchen, but the newlywed was determined to cook for her husband. One Wednesday after work, she dove right in. Surf 'n' turf would be perfect, she thought. But things went wrong right from the start. Her grill was too hot and the steak burned. Her skillet was too small, and somehow the shrimp turned into flavorless pieces of rubber.

Amanda wouldn’t go down without a fight, though. She always had a solution for everything and this would be no different. She found a recipe for steak butter and plopped it on top. She spooned the shrimp onto a nice bed of pasta. Everything looked just perfect!

Her husband tried to put on a good face when he got home, but bad food is bad food. Except for appearances, the dinner was ruined and nothing could make it better.

Getting to the Heart
Unfortunately, changing appearances can only do so much. It creates a façade and, at best, it’s a distraction from a very real problem.

Do you ever see yourself as a burnt dinner in need of a disguise? Most women devote several hours every week to beauty routines, learning makeup tricks, and doing anything that can be done to improve their outward appearance. To be sure, many women are concerned about their inward beauty, too. They tally up volunteer hours, or post positive affirmations around the office, and maybe even look to life coaches in hopes of recapturing some form of calm existence. All this façade-building is aimed at fixing perceived problems.

After months, or years, of following a regimen like this, every woman comes to the same conclusion: nothing works. The department store makeup washes off at the end of the day. The positive affirmations and calm thinking fail as soon as work demands and sleep deprivation kick in.

Every woman is marred—inside and out. And so is every man, every child. We are all ruined by the stains of sin. And, as Christians, we know it’s worse than having dark circles under the eyes or an unpleasant personality. It’s the selfishness that prompts us to put our needs above the needs of our spouses, our children, and our families. It’s the obsession with busyness that leads us to fill our calendars but leaves our hearts empty. It’s the anger and resentment that we hold on to when things don’t go our way.

Sin is ugly, there’s no doubt about it. Even worse, the ugliness of sin doesn’t stop at the surface. It permeates our lives and ruins everything it touches. When we try to make things better on our own, we often find ourselves slipping into misery, anxiety, and self-doubt. Countless women—and men and teens and even children, too—struggle with the thought, “I am not enough.”

It’s true. You are not enough. You will never be enough. And that’s what makes the Gospel message such a wonderful thing! You are not enough, but Jesus is enough!
Our Savior's birth in the stable, his ministry on this earth, his climb up Calvary's mountain, his death on the cross, and his glorious resurrection—it all adds up and it's enough! Because of his sacrifice, your sins are gone. Through faith, forgiveness is yours! The ugliness of your guilt is erased. This amounts to much more than merely putting up a façade. This is no mere distraction. Your guilt is taken away! Your sin is atoned for! Through the lens of his Son's cross, God sees Christ's perfection in you. Your beauty—the beauty, the splendor of holiness (Psalm 29:2), is completely restored. Your Father sees your heart and he cherishes you. (Read Isaiah 62:4.)

So now, as you face the daily battle with sin, don't lose hope! Don't give up! Jesus had the final say, and his resurrection from the tomb provided a forever fix for our problems with sin. (Read Micah 7:19.) The Holy Spirit is constantly at work in your heart, preparing you for love and service in Jesus' name. Every time you fall into sin, Jesus' forgiveness is there to make you new again. (Read 2 Corinthians 5:17.) His grace refreshes your heart and prepares you to face another day, a day of beautifully living out his purpose in your life.

Because Jesus has truly changed us by rescuing us from our sin, God sees us as perfect. And we can do something similar. Put on your “Jesus glasses” and see people as he sees them. Look past your co-workers' shortcomings. Forgive your husband's inattention to detail. Reach out with love to the people around you who need it the most. Love and forgive, just as you are loved and forgiven in Christ.

You are redeemed, flawless, and forgiven in God's eyes, because of Jesus.

Taking It Home

If you are speaking on Mother's Day, use this ending: Today we thank God for creating mothers, grandmas, aunts, sisters, and female role models to love, teach, and nurture us. But even considering their most desirable qualities, these women aren't immune to sin. There's no way to cover up the mess that sin makes in our lives. But we can take that sin to Jesus. We can leave our sins at the foot of the cross and trust the power of his forgiveness to restore us.

I'd like to give each woman here with us today (name the item you are distributing to all the women present). Let this gift remind you of the delight that the Lord has in you!

If you are speaking at a women's retreat, women's ministry meeting, or on some other occasion, use this ending: There's no way to cover up the mess that sin makes in our lives. But we can take that sin to Jesus. We can leave our sins at the foot of the cross and trust the power of his forgiveness to restore us.

I'd like to give each of you (name the item you are distributing to all the women present). Let this gift remind you of the delight that the Lord has in you!