

Unrealistic Societal Expectations

From: Know and Believe:

A Lifetime Journey toward Rediscovering God's Love for You

Taken from Chapter 19: Unrealistic Societal Expectations

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Here in the United States of America and in many other societies, high standards are set for our citizens. These are not always written down in one place, nor are they legally required. They are gradually accumulated as someone grows up and is exposed to cultural peer pressure. One might observe them overtly in educational ads or more subtly in entertainment and advertisement media, and sadly, we often encounter these norms in painful personal ways.

Physical Appearance

Let me first address physical appearance since this is one of the most prevalent ways in which people are judged by society. If you go to any public place and just observe the people who are there, it will be very difficult to find many “perfect” people. You will find individuals of all heights, weights, ages, and manner of dress. You will see people who in no way measure up to perfection—not at all.

Most people do not look like a Hollywood star or a professional athlete. Most people just look like a relative or friend you know and love even though they are not the most beautiful person on earth. When we observe what real people look like, we realize almost no one fits the world's standards of perfection. Most of us are too short, too tall, too fat, too thin, too young, too old, out of shape, ill-shaped, or have hair that doesn't cooperate or is thinning. We grow old, and apart from surgery most people can't afford, we get wrinkles. This is not fair, but it's true for all.

We can know this, but still be at odds with what we see in the mirror each day. We can develop the idea we have less value than someone who is more beautiful than we are. People we encounter during the day sometimes might even make their negative appraisal of us obvious by staring in disgust or making a derogatory comment.

The world's evaluation of us hurts. It is unfair. It is unkind. We must not, though, allow the uninformed evaluations of us by others to prevent us from believing God loves us just as we are, **nor should we permit these negative reviews to keep us from pursuing what God is calling us to do.**

You see, God is not impressed by people's good looks. He loves ALL of us equally. Yes, we might not fit any description of perfection, but God is looking at our hearts, not our bodies.

1 Samuel 16:7

But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."

When we are with confident and cheerful people, we forget they are not perfect-looking. We get to know them for who they are and forget about their physical flaws. We begin to see them as God sees them. On the other hand, we often meet people who seem perfect in every way, but as we get to know them more personally, we realize that they are struggling with insecurities no one sees or that their personalities are in need of some development.

God sees the real you, and that is the person He created at birth and then recreated in Christ. He will not base His will for your life on your appearance. Knowing and believing God loves us gives us confidence and joy.

2 Corinthians 5:16

Therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer.

Note:

Sometimes those who are aware they are not "acceptable" due to their appearance feel they must compensate by being comical or superior. Please don't fall into the trap. Be yourself.

Don't allow your negative self-perception to keep you from doing what you believe God has called you to do. Move toward what He is calling you to be. The joy is there.