

# 2nd Opinion: Help your daughter find her worth in Christ, not from culture

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Several years ago, I received an email from a concerned mother and pastor's wife who recently discovered her 12-year-old daughter was cutting.



Vicki CourtneyThe discovery came as a complete shock to the mother, who said it was out of character for her daughter to engage in such a risky behavior. She was a straight-A student and involved in extracurricular activities. In addition to having two loving and engaged parents in the home, she also had many close friends and was involved in her church youth group.

The mother went on to share that after several counseling sessions, the root of the problem had been discovered. They recently allowed their daughter to engage in a popular social media app with some time limitations and protective boundaries in place. She was required to keep her account private and give her mother the login information, so her mother could monitor her activity from time to time. Even so, the mother didn't notice any unusual activity that might have triggered her daughter's

cutting.

And that was the problem. There were no comments that implied bullying. Nor was there any contact from a stranger making inappropriate requests. Her daughter confessed to the counselor she began cutting herself because she felt worthless when she compared herself to everyone else's highlight reel.

## Visible triggers

The triggers weren't obvious, but at the same time, they were out in the open for all to see. The girl struggled to understand why some of her friends' pictures got more likes than her pictures. Or why some of the girls she thought were her friends didn't mutually follow her back. She was stressed over pictures of girls who she perceived to be prettier and more fashionable and who had the comments and likes from boys to prove it. Or stressed over the pictures of some of her friends hanging out together without her.



She began to obsess over perfectly timed posts with witty status updates that might garner her more likes and followers, but it never seemed to be enough. The more time she spent on the app, the more worthless she felt.

So, what's a parent to do? How can we help our daughters reject the

culture's shallow standards for defining worth and raise them to see themselves through God's eyes?

### **Three ways to help**

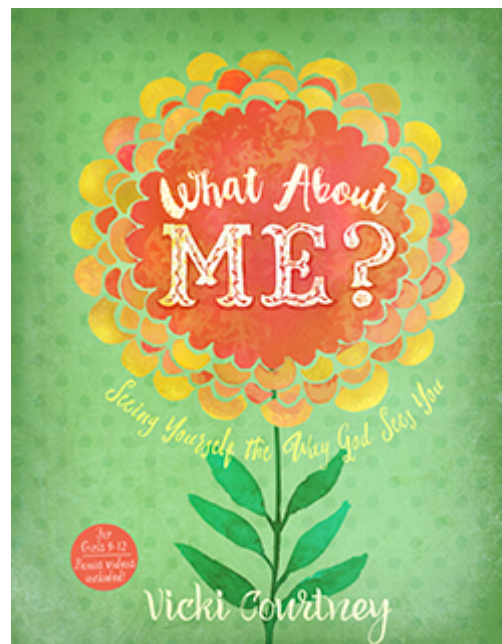
- *Take an honest assessment of the messages you are sending in your own home when it comes to worth.*

Do you put an unhealthy focus on outer appearance, body image, name brands or fashion? Are talents, awards and achievements emphasized in your home more than character qualities? Do you allow extracurricular activities to be a priority over church and other faith-based activities? What has a greater influence on you—what others think or what God thinks—or what his word says?

The truth is, we've all been guilty of basing our worth on the world's standards, and for most of us, it will be a constant, lifelong struggle to reject the lie. By admitting our own vulnerability to define our worth according to the culture's standards, we meet our daughters on common ground and are able to fight the battle together.

- *Take advantage of teachable moments.*

Your daughter will be bombarded day-in and day-out with messages that support the culture's shallow definitions of worth. Whether it's the lyrics to her favorite song, an ad encouraging her to cultivate her sex appeal for male attention or the steady stream of her friends' and classmates' seemingly perfect pictures and posts on social media, there will be no shortage of opportunities to point out the lies and remind her where true worth can be found.



- *Tell her where true worth can be found.*

Make a list of Scripture verses that will help encourage your daughter to base her identity in Christ, and refer to them on a consistent basis. Commit to memorize some of the verses together or post them in key places—the bathroom mirror, her locker or as the background on her phone or tablet—to serve as a daily reminder. Encourage one another with the verses when either one of you is exposed to messages that run contrary to God's standards regarding true worth and value.

Verses that encourage worth in Christ include Psalm 139:14; 1 Samuel 16:7; Proverbs 31:30; 1 Peter 3:3-4; 1 Timothy 4:8; Genesis 1:27; 1 Peter 2:9; 1 John 3:1-2; Colossians 3:1-3; Romans 12:2; Ephesians 2:8-9; Galatians 1:10; John 12:43; Colossians 3:23; Galatians 2:20

## **Draw boundaries**

It is impossible to protect our daughters completely from exposure to the culture's damaging lies regarding worth. However, it is wise to draw boundaries that would help limit their exposure to situations they aren't

emotionally ready to handle. If we are faithful to teach them where true worth can be found and model a commitment to those truths in our homes as well as our own lives, our daughters will be less likely to look to the world when it comes to defining their worth.

*Vicki Courtney, of Austin, is a national speaker and the author of many books and Bible studies for women of all ages. Her latest releases, What About Me? for girls 8-12 and Reflect for girls 13-18 address worth and aid girls in rejecting the cultures' lies. More information about her can be found at [VickiCourtney.com](http://VickiCourtney.com).*