
PHENOMENALLY CREATED

TRADING THE LIES YOU BELIEVE ABOUT
YOUR BODY FOR WHAT **GOD** SAYS IS TRUE

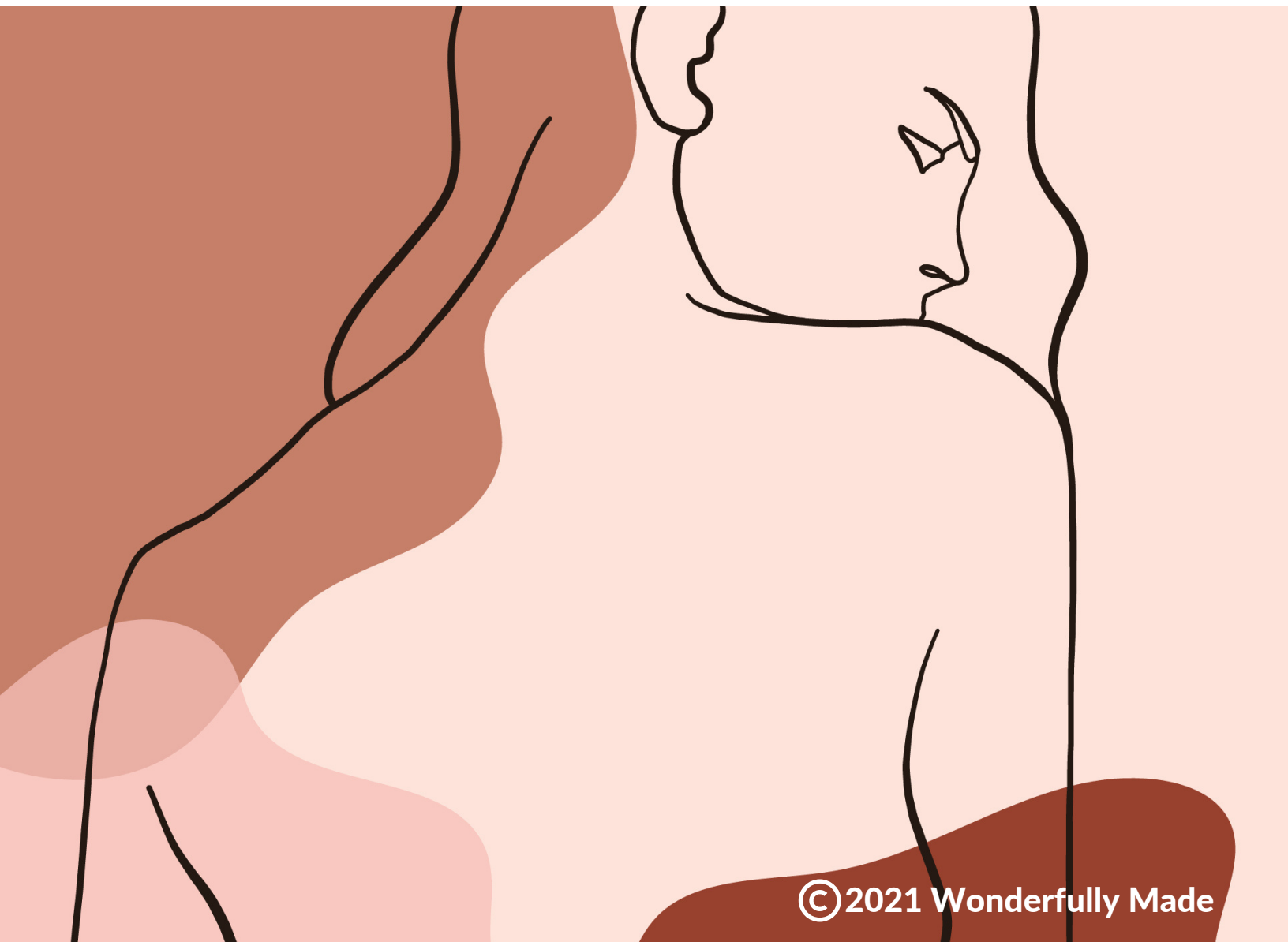
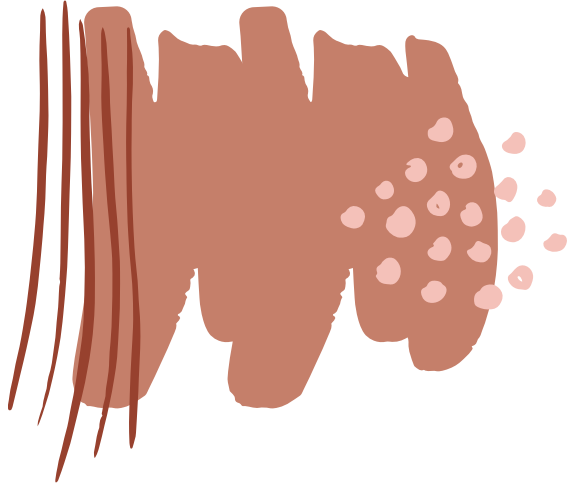
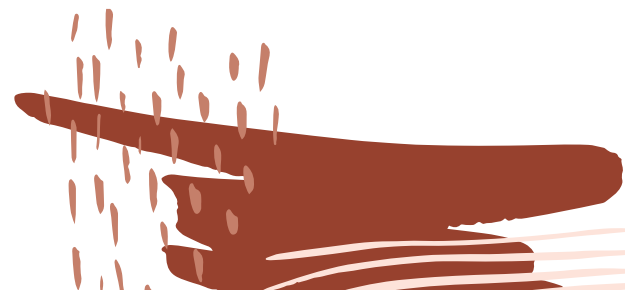


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Dear Friend,

Welcome, and thanks for being a part of our community at Wonderfully Made®. If you, like me and many girls and women I know, have struggled with making peace with the skin you're in you are in the right place. We hope this little guide will help transform the way you see your body so you can experience greater wholeness and freedom in your life. Here at Wonderfully Made we want you to know your true value, identity and purpose so you can fully be who God created you to be.



As girls and women, we know loud and clear what the world tells us about our bodies. But do we really know what God says about our bodies in His word? I'm excited for you to read on to find out. Our hope is that you will begin to believe that what **God says about your body is true. God made our bodies and He made them good – very good!** He loves you more than you can imagine and His desire is to see you rise above body hatred and shame so you can fully live into the purposes He has for you.

I know personally how difficult it can be to battle your weight, struggle with disordered eating and wrestle with body hatred. But I also know freedom is possible and I believe it is possible for you too. As we renew our minds with what is true, shut out the toxic narrative of our culture, stop comparison and begin to treat our bodies with kindness and respect, we can be transformed from the inside out. This is a journey. It's a journey that takes time and asking God to lead you to freedom.

We begin with an article I wrote titled "Our Personal Body Projects" about some insights God showed me in my own life. Then we will introduce you to Travis Stewart who wrote an article just for you about what the Bible really says about our bodies. I turned to Travis several years ago for support during a season when I was struggling with my body image and weight. His perspective helped forever change the way I viewed my body. Next, I will share some practical next steps.

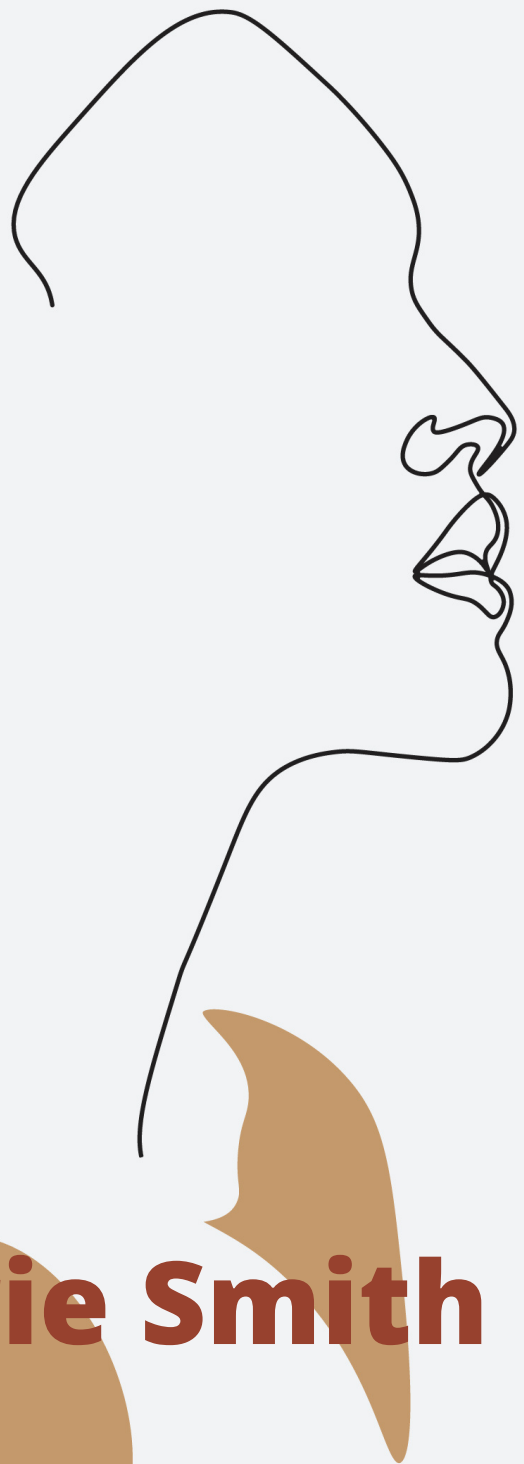
This little guide might be short, but we believe it is filled with questions, prayers and truth declarations that can truly set you free. Are you ready to start shutting out the lies and living into what is true so you can be free?

We are so glad you're here.

Love,

Allie Marie Smith

*Our
Personal
Body
Projects*



By: Allie Marie Smith

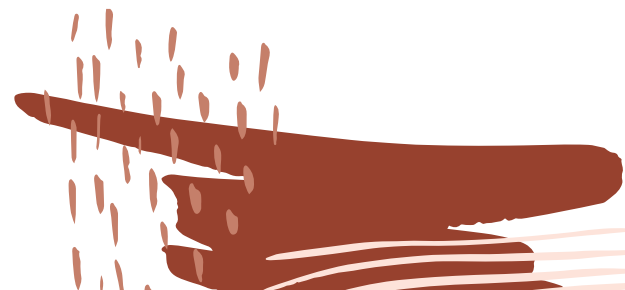
Women's historian and author Joan Jacobs Brumberg calls it "the body project" - the consuming obsession girls and women have on fixing their bodies. While body angst is an epidemic affecting the majority of girls and women today, it's not our heritage. For the women and girls many generations before us, character was esteemed much more highly than physical appearance. And character, as Brumberg writes in her book appropriately titled "The Body Project, "...was built on attention to self-control, service to others and belief in God - not on attention to one's own, highly individualistic body project."

The thing about projects, especially big projects, is that they have a way of sucking up all your time. I learned this several years ago, when I bought and decided to restore a 1961 vintage "canned ham" trailer, which I named Pearl. The hours I spent laboring over Pearl, stripping paint and wrestling with a ten-pound buffing wheel, was time I could have spent surfing with my husband or doing other things I loved.

In the same way, the opportunity cost of making your body an intensive project can equate to intelligence and creativity wasted, beach days not attended, birthday cake not enjoyed, and beautiful adventures not tackled. Ultimately, it can cost us a life well-lived and people well-loved.

The reasons that drive us on this personal body project are wide and varied, as are the fix-it tactics that we choose: chronic dieting, bingeing, restrictive eating, purging, comparison and over-exercise. Not to mention retail therapy and even plastic surgery. Whichever method or combination of methods we choose for our body project, there is an associated cost - a life that could have been more meaningfully spent.

One day as I was stripping away Pearl's old paint, the irony hit me - the more I buffed and shined and restored her to her premiere beauty, the older she was getting. I wondered where she would be in thirty, fifty, sixty years, and envisioned her rusting away in a trailer junkyard. Similarly, the reality is that our earthly bodies are outwardly wasting away. On this side of eternity, our bodies are temporarily deteriorating, but in heaven they will be healed and restored. In the meantime, our bodies deserve to be cared for, nurtured and enjoyed for the gift they are.



I was so focused on making Pearl look perfect, but she was already ready to be enjoyed. Her tires were road-ready and her axle was strong. She may have had a few dents and her curtains hadn't been hung, but she was ready for what she was made for. Pearl was already prepared for the grand adventures she had originally been created for.

While I was spending endless energy on making her look a certain way, I was missing out on memorable road trips and camping in beautiful places like the redwood forests of California. I was missing out on enjoying s'mores beneath a vast starry sky before tucking into Pearl's cozy bed. I was missing out on beauty, adventure and making some of the best memories of my life.

As I reflect on my younger years as a teen girl and woman in my early twenties I am saddened by my focus on how my body looked or didn't look. How much fuller my life would have been if I could have fully appreciated the wonder of my body and embraced the life it enabled me to have.

If we are so blessed by God that He gives us many days on earth, we will be dripping with wrinkles from head to toe. Our days left on this earth will be close to none. For those of us who spent our lives in constant body angst, we will then finally realize that *our legacy is not measured by the size we wear, but by the lives we lead.*

*Our bodies are not broken; they are not projects that need fixing.
They are wonderfully made vehicles for living.*

When was the last time you really meditated on the profound miracle that you simply exist?

In **Psalm 139**, the author David marvels at the way God has designed him and knows him:

*For you created my inmost being;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.
I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made
your works are wonderful,
I know that full well.
Psalm 139:13-14*

David praises God for the miracle that is his life. He recognizes the holiness of his existence and thanks God for it. He knows full well God made something good when He made him. To be wonderfully made means knowing God created you with intention and purpose. Most of all, being wonderfully made means knowing God personally and deeply, and having gratitude for being created and respect for all human life.

How quick are we to dishonor God with the harsh words we speak over ourselves. How it breaks His heart when we don't believe we have value. We are his precious creations, unlike any other person ever created, made with unique gifts and unique beauty. Let us daily walk in the wonder of being wonderfully made.

Let me leave you with wisdom by the singing group Mumford and Sons: "In these bodies we will live. In these bodies we will die. Where you invest your love, you invest your life. Awake your soul."

Theology of the Body:

What God's Word Says About Your Body

By Travis Stewart, LPC, MATS

Introduction

When each of my children was born, I was astonished by their tiny fingers, toes, eyes, ears, and noses. As my wife and I held them, bathed them, and snuggled all that baby freshness (OK, they didn't always smell fresh), we joyfully proclaimed that what God had created was "very good." Their delicate, beautiful bodies were awe-inspiring! Even as they grew, gained weight, and physically developed, we rejoiced over how God had formed them.

So, if we can all agree that a baby's body is good, why do so many of us struggle with body hatred? When does this shift happen? Why does it happen? And even more importantly, can we restore some of our understanding that God calls our bodies good?

Many of us begin hating our bodies in puberty. For others, it happens earlier if they experience a severe illness at a young age or are teased or abused in a way that creates shame around their bodies. For others, our culture's loud voices telling us that we need to be fit, toned, sexy, or perfect are enough to instill insecurity and body hatred. Many of us don't understand what God says about our bodies, making us more vulnerable to poor body image.

In my years working with clients with eating disorders, I began to study what the Bible says about the body and realized that most Christians didn't know what Scripture teaches about the body. I hope the truths here will help you gain freedom from body shame and encourage you to see yourself through the eyes of your Creator.

In *The Sound of Music*, Julie Andrews sings, "Let's start at the very beginning, a very good place to start." The book of Genesis is the first book of the Bible and where we first learn that everything God created is good. In each of the six days of creation, God orchestrates the making of sun and moon, land and sea, plants and animals. At the end of each day, God looks at what He has created and proclaims, "It is good." On the sixth day, God comes to the final project of his creation—people made in His very own image—and says not just, "it is good" but offers even greater delight when He declares, "It is very good!" God looks at you, your body, your heart, your mind, your whole person and says, "Wow! That's amazing. I love what I have created."

Somehow, we have forgotten this. In many Christian circles, we get the idea that our spirits are good, but our bodies are evil. Some Christians teach that God doesn't care about our bodies but only our spiritual lives. Yet, the Bible clearly teaches that God is concerned with our bodies and our physical well-being.

Jesus demonstrates his care for our bodies in his ministry of healing. In Luke, chapter 7, Jesus is asked about his work, and He sums it up saying, "the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached to them." (**Luke 7:22 ESV**). Jesus cares about us and makes the healing of peoples' bodies a primary feature of his ministry.

Your Body Is Good

Though our bodies are affected by sin, and we live in a broken world, our bodies' goodness is never lost. Psalm 139:14 proclaims that we are "wonderfully made" and "intricately woven" which paints a picture of both an artist rejoicing in his work and a parent celebrating the delightful hands and feet of a newborn child.

In fact, your body is so good that God has chosen it as a dwelling place. In the Old Testament, God walked in Eden and met his people in the Tabernacle and Temple. But that was not close enough for him. He desires an intimacy with you that goes beyond what can happen in a church building. So, in the New Testament, God became man in Jesus Christ and came down to earth to live among us (John 1:14). But even that was not close enough. Jesus told his disciples that it would be better for them if he returned to heaven and sent the Holy Spirit. Why? So he could live in us! In the Old Testament, God met with His people in a temple. After the resurrection of Jesus, God makes our bodies the Temple (1 Corinthians 6:19)! Don't ever doubt the goodness of your body, for God has chosen it as his holy place!

Your Body Is Good

You Are More Than Your Body, But Not Less

Contrary to the idea that God is most interested in "spirituality," God loves the material world. In the Garden of Eden, he got down in the dirt to create Adam. He rejoices over the physical world and refers to creation throughout the Scriptures as reflecting his glory. As physical creatures, he placed us in a physical world to tend and care for it with our hands. We live our lives in bodies—this is how we relate to God, others, and the world around us. No matter how hard we try to be "spiritual," we can't do it without our bodies. Even if we were to sit and pray, our heart would still be beating, our lungs expanding, and our brains would be making electrical connections with each thought. We can't get away from being physical because that is how God created us.

Jesus said the greatest commandment is to "love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." And we are to love our neighbors as ourselves. But how do we do these things? We can't simply sit and imagine love toward God and others. Loving is mostly action we take in our bodies. In Matthew 25:35-36, Jesus shows what it means to faithfully serve God when he says, "For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me." In loving God, we love our neighbors. In loving our neighbors, we meet their physical needs using our hands and feet, eyes and ears. You can't be "spiritual" without your body. And you can't give and receive love apart from your physical self.

Your Body Is You

We are not spirits who happen to have a body. We are embodied people. That's a fancy way of saying we are whole people. Our minds, spirits, hearts, souls—whatever words you want to use to describe aspects of what it means to be a person—are interwoven. Our bodies are a vital expression of us. If a friend sees me on the street, she knows it is me because she recognizes my face and how I walk." Our bodies do not define our identities and value, but we do not have an identity separate from our bodies.

Dr. Michael Williams, one of my seminary professors, taught me a lot about the importance of the body. He drives home the point when he says, "When my wife goes looking for my heart or my soul or my mind, she will find all of them when she sees the guy on the couch holding the TV remote."

It may seem more spiritual to say, "You are not your body! Don't judge your value by how you look! It's not important." The problem is that it's just not what the Bible teaches. We must balance two truths; Your body is you, AND it does not determine your value. Your body is valuable (Jesus died to heal it), but your body's shape, size, color, gender, race, or fitness does NOT determine your value. Therefore we treat our bodies with dignity but do not get our dignity from our bodies (more on this in a moment).

Your Body will be Healed & Whole in Heaven

How do we know that the body is **valuable**?

1. Because God created it.
2. God took on a human body when Jesus came to earth.
3. God will heal our bodies, and we will have them forever.

Yep, you heard that correctly! The Bible teaches that we will have bodies in heaven. **Philippians 3:20-21** says, "*But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body.*" Jesus, after he came out of the tomb, had a real, physical body. He still has it. **Romans 8:11-12** reads, "*If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through the Spirit who dwells in you.*"

What does this mean about the kinds of bodies we will have in heaven? First, they will be physical. A spirit is not a body. A body is a body.

Our bodies in heaven will be transformed. Our bodies will be "new and improved." I imagine it means that my body will be healthy, strong, healed, and possibly capable of things I can't even imagine right now.

There will be no more pain, illness, or disabilities. As we already saw, Jesus healed those who could not walk and restored sight to the blind. We have every right to believe that he will do the same for us when our bodies are transformed!

Finally, as **Revelation 21:4** teaches, "*He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.*"

Some of you may feel discouraged to read that you will still have a body and that it will be **your** body. Because you have struggled with shame or body-hatred, it's frightening to think you are "stuck" in your body. But the great news is that God will not only heal and transform your body so that it is strong, healthy, and healed; God will heal your heart, shame, and body-hatred! Finally, you will not only be content with your body, but you will be grateful for how God has made you.

Treating Our Bodies with Dignity

You've probably heard people say that you should love your body, but that idea may seem impossible. Honestly, I can say that God loves your body. I'm not sure it is crucial that you do. Scripture tells us to love God and love others. There is no command to love ourselves. However, God does command us to believe what He says, and God says that He loves you and the body he has given you. **Treat your body with dignity, respect, and care**, which means at least three things:

First, if you feel hatred or judgment toward your body, bring those thoughts and feelings to Jesus. Ask him to help you see your body the way he does. Don't be afraid to be honest with him in prayer. It's not like he is going to be surprised by how you feel.

Second, care for your body. Eat with balance, which means eating enough things that are good for you. But don't be afraid of sugar, carbs, or the occasional dessert. Exercise appropriately. Do all of the things your body needs to survive and thrive.

Finally, focus on what your body can do, rather than how it looks. It's OK to want to look your best or dress nicely, or work out, but when those things dominate your life and become more important than loving God and others, they will deceive you and trap you in unhealthy behaviors and isolation from others.

Jesus' Body is at the Heart of the Story

In the book of Genesis, we started at the beginning and learned that God calls our bodies very good. We will end at the cross. We know our bodies are valuable because Jesus took on a body to rescue and heal us. His body is at the center of the Christian story. The story that God took on human form when he came to earth in the infant Jesus's body. He played as a child. He worked as a carpenter. His ministry was full of hugging, crying, dancing, eating, and drinking.

He then gave up his body on the cross for us. By his wounds, we are healed (Isaiah 53:5). And the most fantastic news of all is that he walked out of the grave. Our future is found in that truth because someday, we will overcome death and live gratefully with redeemed hearts, minds, and bodies!



Tips for Moving Forward

By Allie Marie Smith



HERE ARE SOME TIPS AS YOU TRAVEL

on your journey towards freedom:

01.

Express gratitude for what your body allows you to do

Our bodies are amazing! Our eyes allow us to soak in the beauty of the creation all around us. Our arms allow us to hug the people we love the most. Our legs carry us through this world. So often we focus on the appearance of our bodies and the way our body allows us to move and exist in this world. We are truly phenomenally and wonderfully made! Next time you express disdain for a certain part of your body, replace it with thoughts of gratitude for what your body allows you to do.

02.

Shut out the toxic narrative of our culture and protect your eyes

We know loud and clear we live in a hyper-sexualized culture that objectifies women's bodies. While we don't have too much power of over this, we can control much of what we allow our eyes to see. Ask God to give you discernment and wisdom to become intentional with the media you consume. Unfollow triggering accounts on social media, be mindful of what movies you watch, magazines you read and the time you spend on Pinterest. Guard your mind and heart from the toxic narrative of our culture that reinforces body shame and idolization.

03.

Say, "No!" to comparison

It is natural to compare ourselves and our bodies to others, but we can break the habit more than we think. One mantra I started saying anytime I wanted to compare myself to another girl or woman is, "**She is wonderfully made and so am I.**" This began to help me shift my mindset from one of comparison to one of praise to God for the way He created me and other women. Being intentional about what you let your eyes see will also help decrease the temptation to compare yourself to others.

04.

Begin to speak with kindness over your body

At the end of this resource you will find several truth declarations you can begin to say to speak more positively about your body. With God's help, we can renew our mind and transform the way we think which can profoundly influence the quality of our lives. Thinking true thoughts about our bodies is one of the biggest keys to finding healing and freedom. **You can do this!**

05.

Start living fully

in your

present body now!

Waiting until you think your body is fit or thin enough to wear that dress or take that trip is a waste of your one valuable and precious life. Treasure and enjoy your body now in whatever season it's in.

06.

. Find Joy in
Moving Your
Body

Instead of viewing exercise as a chore, enjoy the emotional and physical benefits you get from being active. Be creative and find physical activities you enjoy that **enhance your vitality and nurture your spirit.**

07.

Remember
that health is

not a

“One Size
Fits All”

Skinny or thin doesn't automatically mean healthy. Focus your efforts on being physically fit, nutritionally well-nourished and emotionally free, rather than chasing the thin ideal. **Optimal health comes in a diversity of shapes and sizes.** Adopt better habits for the sake of your personal health and well-being, rather than looking a certain way.

Journaling Questions

21

#1

How will my life be different if I believe my body is good?

#2

What does it look like to stop objectifying my body and instead see it as a wonderful made vehicle for living?

#3

How can having a heavenly mindset about my body transform the way I see and treat it now?

#4

What social media accounts or other types of media do I consume that trigger hatred, which would be beneficial to stop looking at?

#5

What would it mean to begin speaking kindly about my body?

#6

What does it mean to praise God for fearfully and wonderfully creating me?

#7

What does freedom mean to me?

#8

How is possibly holding a mental picture of your ideal body serving you?

#9

How can you embrace the body you have now?

#10

What is one kind thing you can do to show respect and gratitude for the gift of your body?

TRUTH

God,

You have declared that my body is good and I choose to believe you.

I praise you God because I am fearfully and wonderfully made.

I am wonderfully made.

My body is good.

I treat my body with kindness and respect.

I am grateful for the way my body allows me to love people in my life.

I am grateful my body allows me to do the things I love.

My body is my vehicle for living an intentional, purposeful life.

My body allows me to love and serve the people in my life.

My body is so valuable that God will one day heal, resurrect, and transform it into something even more glorious. Let me treat it in such a manner.

DECLARATIONS

PRAYERS

God,

Thank you for the body You have given me.

*Thank you, **Jesus**, that You came in a body, lived in a body, died in your body, and were resurrected physically, all so that you might heal me, body and soul.*

Make my body an instrument of Your love and peace.

Help me to believe that what You say about my body is good and true.

Set me free from this prison that I may praise Your name.

Help me guard my heart and eyes from all that is untrue.

***Holy Spirit**, thank you that you value my body enough to make it your dwelling place and temple (**1 Corinthians 6:19**).*

Lord, show me the path to freedom and help me to turn my eyes away from images that make me feel unworthy, and to live loved instead.

In your precious and holy name, amen.



ABOUT
WONDERFULLY
MADE

Wonderfully Made is a Christian-based 501c3 nonprofit organization dedicated to helping girls and young women know their value, while equipping them to live spiritually and emotionally healthy lives.


We are a message of hope and worth with young women through our resources, films, podcast, and online community.

If you are a teen girl, young woman, mom or mentor, we invite YOU to connect with us at:

[wonderfullymade.org](https://www.wonderfullymade.org)

or on IG:

[@wonderfullymade_org](https://www.instagram.com/wonderfullymade_org)




Instagram:
[@wonderfullymade_org](https://www.instagram.com/wonderfullymade_org)

ABOUT ALLIE

Allie Marie Smith is the Founder and Director of Wonderfully Made, a non-profit for teen girls and young women. She is an award-winning author, speaker, podcast host and certified life coach. She lives in North Santa Barbara County where she loves surfing and adventuring up and down the California coast with her husband, Paul, and Golden Retriever Gidget. You can connect with Allie via her website at alliemariesmith.com or sometimes find her on Instagram at [@alliemariesmith](https://www.instagram.com/alliemariesmith)



ABOUT TRAVIS



Travis Stewart is a jack-of-all trades who also happens to be a licensed professional counselor. He has worked with eating and body image issues since 2003 and was the visionary of Hungry for Hope, a faith-based conference which provided training and help for professionals and lay people in the treatment of eating disorders. He graduated with degrees in counseling and theology from Covenant Theological Seminary. He lives in St. Louis with his wife Susan and dog Sadie as they are adjusting to the empty nest. He talks with his two adult kids every chance he gets.