I Feel Pretty by Sheryl Merritt

“I feel pretty…oh so pretty…I feel pretty and witty and bright and I pity any girl who isn’t me tonight.” So go the words to the song, “I Feel Pretty” (Music by Leonard Bernstein, Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim) from my favorite musical *West Side Story*. When the character Maria sings this song in the show, she is not singing it from a conceited or arrogant standpoint. Instead, she is singing it because she is extremely happy and excited. She is so delighted that she shares her joy with those around her, and though they are initially mocking her song, they join in because her zeal is infectious.

Pretty can be replaced with the terms confidence and self-assured. I can change the words of the song and sing, “I feel confident…oh so confident. I feel self-assured…true to who I was created to be. You may not quite understand or like this confidence I exude but I can’t deny my God given self-confident self – Me!”

Like the giddy Maria in the musical, can you encourage others around you because of the joy you have? Do your friends acknowledge your confidence, positive attitude and high self-esteem? Better yet, do these things encourage them?

I recognize that I am fearfully and wonderfully made like the scripture says. God made me and He doesn’t make mistakes. He also made me unique. There is no one just like me and I’m not just like anyone else either. I am an original design and because of my unique makeup, I can rest assured that I have something no one else can offer to the world…at least not in the way that I can. And this is one thing that builds my confidence and should help to build yours.

Stop and take an inventory of the gifts and talents that God gave you. While you are taking that inventory, take time to use your gift to encourage yourself, bless others and increase the Kingdom of God. This is another great way to increase your confidence and recognize that what you have to offer is necessary and if you deny those gifts to the world, you are denying someone a blessing that is you.

There was a time, and truthfully, there are some days that I don’t feel my best, when my self-esteem is lower than it should be, and I’d rather stay in bed than go face the world. But I know that deep inside me that person God gifted me to be must rise to the occasion and press ahead. And if I have to force a song until it naturally comes out, that is how it has to be. You see, sometimes we have to remind ourselves that we are great because greatness is inside of us. We are blessed because the blessing is inside of us.

When we remind ourselves of all that has been poured into our very being, then we can confidently and assuredly do all that God called us to do*. For the Lord shall be thy confidence and keep thy foot from being taken (Proverbs 3:26); in whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him (Ephesians 3:12), for we are made partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end (Hebrews 3:14).*