

The song “I Only Have Eyes for You” was composed in 1934 by Harry Warren and Al Dubin. It has been recorded by numerous musicians, including Peggy Lee, Frank Sinatra, Art Garfunkel, and Michael Bublé. *Rolling Stone* ranks the Flamingo’s version of the song #157 in their list of the 500 Greatest Songs of All Time.

“I Only Have Eyes for You.” The Lord has His own version of this golden oldie: “you are valuable in My eyes.” The *you* in our text is singular, not plural. It’s *you* not *you all*. Singular *you* denotes a focus that is individual and intimate, particular and personal. The same specific concern for *you* comes in Isaiah 43:1 where God says, “I have called you by name, you are Mine.” God cares about everyone and everything, that’s for sure, but to emphasize the value God places on you, He uses twenty-five second person word forms in our text. Over and over again it is you, you, you . . . you! “You are valuable in My eyes.”

Those who first received these words were far away from home. These Israelites were in Babylon, and Babylon said, “You are nothing in my eyes.” Babylon was distant, aloof, cold, and calculating. It called Judean exiles state slaves and prisoners, cogs in their vast and ever-growing political machine.

So the question of the day is: Where do I find my value?

To get at this, try to picture it this way: Have you ever stood in front of fun house mirrors at a fair or amusement park? I remember being at one when I was young, I remember how some mirrors would make me look tall and skinny. Others would make me look short and fat. And still others would make me look ugly and creepy. None of them reflected who I really was.

And neither do the mirrors that surround us. Just turn on the TV, surf the net, go to a mall, pick up a magazine. There we see perfect people with perfect families and perfect marriages delighting in perfect jobs. Then we take a look at our own lives and see that we just don’t measure up. You name it—we don’t have it. Addicted to how the world sees us, we begin feeling tall and skinny, short and fat, ugly and creepy. If we look into these mirrors long enough, we begin to lose heart and feel down-right worthless.

And when we feel worthless, we not only discount ourselves, we begin discounting everybody else. You name them—we discount them: spouse, child, colleague, parent, boss, friend. When we feel like nothing, we treat other people like nothing. We sell each other off for cut-rate prices, slashing and burning reputations. Obsessed with what we don’t have, we get stuck in the game of gossip and judgment.

Let me be as clear as possible. How you stack up in the eyes of others does *not* reflect your true value. Your value comes from the Lord, and He says, “You are

valuable in My eyes.” It is the same *you*—singular, not plural. Specific, reserved, and exact. It is *you*! And *you* are incredibly valuable. The Hebrew word here, translated “valuable,” denotes significance, stature, and substance. You are prized, priceless, and precious.

Let me explain. Value is based on ownership. A car owned by Elvis Presley is worth a lot more than my old 2005 Chrysler Town and Country Minivan, which over the course of ten years was dented, damaged, scraped, and almost completely rusted away! My car’s worth is connected to the fame of its owner (or lack thereof); which means not a whole lot! We got a \$500 tax write off for it when we gave it away to charity and I think they were being generous!

So value is based on ownership? The Lord says in Isaiah 43:6–7, “Bring My sons from afar and My daughters from the end of the earth. All upon whom My name is called, and whom I created for My glory, whom I formed and whom I made.” God has created and claimed, fashioned and formed us. We are His sons and His daughters.

And value is based on how much someone is willing to pay? God says in Isaiah 43:4, “And I will give people in exchange for you, and nations in exchange for your life.” When Israel passed through the Red Sea, the Lord paid for it with the life of Egyptians. Now Israel is about to leave their captivity through the Persian King Cyrus and God will pay for it with the life of Babylonians. Our God is willing to lay down people’s lives for us.

But why trust the Lord to place value on us? Just who is this God anyway? Isaiah 40:26 says that He calls every star by name. The Milky Way is 104,000 light-years across and contains over 100 billion stars. To count them one by one would take a person over 3,000 years. According to the latest findings of the Hubble Space Telescope, there are hundreds of billions more galaxies in the universe! And this God calls each of them by name! This is the God who says in Isaiah 43:1, “I have redeemed you, I have called you by name,” and in verse 4, “You are valuable in My eyes.”

But there’s more. His Word is everlasting—Isaiah 40:8; His righteousness is everlasting—51:8; His love is everlasting—54:8; His covenant is everlasting—55:3. No wonder Isaiah 40:28 states, “He is the everlasting God.” This is the One who says, “I only have eyes for you.”

You always you, forever and ever . . . you! **You** are valuable, cherished, of infinite worth. Where? Not in the eyes of Babylon. There we are nameless numbers and state-owned statistics. Where are we valuable? Not in our eyes. When our eyes are wide open, we see our dishonesty, idolatry, and ongoing sin.

So where are we valuable? God says, “In My eyes!” To quote Luther, “Although in supreme trials you seem nothing in your own eyes and are condemned

as one cast off by the world, in My eyes you are glorious. Therefore you may be vile in your own eyes, in the eyes of the world, and even in those of your brothers... Fear not. In My eyes I regard you as a precious jewel.”¹

But there is more. In the baptismal flood, God claimed you as His own; and on a hill called Calvary, He paid for you with His Son, Jesus. This means God has more than just eyes for you.

He has hands and feet for you, nailed to a cross. He has a head for you, crowned with thorns. He has a side for you, thrust through by a spear. But there's *more*. God has a heart for you. Jesus says, “As the Father has loved Me, so have I loved you” (John 15:9). God has ears for you. Jesus says, “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened to you” (Matthew 7:7). And God has body and blood for you. Jesus says, “Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of your sins” (cf. Mark 14:23).

Isaiah testifies to this one indisputable fact. Our God loves these lyrics: “The moon may be high, but I can't see a thing in the sky. I only have eyes for you.”²
Amen.

¹ Martin Luther, *Lectures on Isaiah: Chapters 40–66*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan, et al., Luther's Works (St. Louis: Concordia, 1972), 17:88.

² Songwriters: Dubin, Al/Warren, Harry; Lyrics © Warner/Chappell Music, Inc.