

Lucy was a ladybug. In fact, Lucy was one of the most beautiful ladybugs anyone had ever seen. She loved her bright black spots, and would count them every day by flying down to the nearby pond to look at them closer in the reflection from the water.

“One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten. Ten b-e-a-utiful spots!” she’d say to herself with a smile on her face.



Lucy loved how bright and beautiful they looked as they reflected back to her from the crystal-clear water. She loved how very black her spots contrasted perfectly with the bright red color from her ladybug wings. Lucy looked at herself one last time in the water, and flew into the air to begin her day.

Day after day, Lucy would leave her home, fly to the pond, and admire herself in the pond. However, each time she went to the pond, she made sure to be very careful not to get too close to the edge of the grass, because she didn't want to fall into the water.

One day, while perched on her favorite blade of grass, as she crept closer and closer to the end, as she bent over to look down, the wind blew, and she fell straight into the water. She frantically flapped her wings, and luckily was able to fly back up to her original spot on the grass. Worried, she looked once again at her reflection. She noticed that the spots were not black anymore. In fact, they weren't even shiny like they usually were.



Lucy thought, maybe once the water dried, that they would go back to normal. Though a little worried, she flew away confident that everything would be ok tomorrow. However, no matter how much she tried to stay positive, she was worried about her spots. She was in fact the most beautiful ladybug, but she thought, if her spots weren't shiny, black and beautiful, no one would love her or want to be her friend anymore.

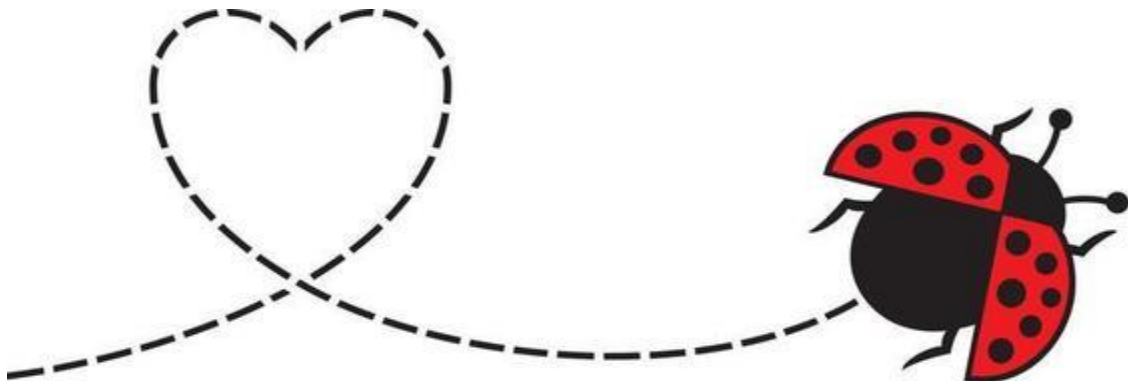
That night, Lucy tried to sleep, but all she could think about were her spots. She remembered her mom always told her, whenever you're anxious, you can always go to God for help. So, Lucy stopped, closed her eyes, and began to pray. "Dear God," she said, "Today, I fell in the water and when I got out, I noticed my spots weren't like they used to be. They were turning gray, and were not shiny and beautiful. Please bring my black spots back to me, and make them shiny again. I love them so very much, and it's what makes me beautiful. Without my spots, my friends won't like me anymore, or want to be my friend. Ok God, goodnight," Lucy concluded and finally fell asleep.



The next morning, Lucy woke up, and poked her head from under her leaf blanket. She remembered her friend Annabelle was coming over to play, so she wouldn't be able to go to the pond like she normally would. She thought, "I will check my spots at the pond as soon as our playdate is finished. I'm sure everything will be just fine."



“Hi Lucy!” Annabelle said as she landed on the leaf below Lucy’s. “Where are we going to visit today?” “You scared me Annabelle,” Lucy answered. “I’m sorry, Annabelle replied back. “It’s ok, I guess I was lost in thought. Let’s go to the school!” Lucy said back to Annabelle. “You know how much the kids love us, and how special we feel when we are with them.” “You bet I do!” screamed Annabelle excitedly. “Last one to the school is an ugly beetle,” Annabelle said flying ahead of Lucy.



Lucy and Annabelle raced as fast as they could, flying over trees, going around the bushes, and finally arriving at the school.



The sun was directly over the school. Lucy and Annabelle knew the bell would ring, and the kids would be running to the playground very soon.



“Can I ask you a question Annabelle?” Lucy asked with concern in her voice. Annabelle replied, “Of course, you can ask me anything. We’re best friends.” Lucy paused for a second, and then continued, “Why did you say last one to the school is an ugly beetle? Is it because you saw my spots? You think I’m ugly now? You probably don’t even want to be my friend anymore.”

“Woah woah woah, where did that come from?” Annabelle replied. “What in the world are you talking about? I’m your best friend, and I love you very much. What’s going on?”

“I’m sorry, said Lucy, I didn’t mean to freak out on you, but the other day, I fell into the pond, and ever since, I noticed that my spots weren’t as shiny and black as they usually are. I thought maybe I just dreamt it, but I am pretty sure they are turning gray. If anything happens to my spots, I will be the laughing stock of the whole forest. I didn’t get to check them today, would you look at them for me and tell me what you see?”



“Of course I will Lucy,” Annabelle replied. “I’m sure they’re fine. Turn around, let’s take a look. One, two, three, four, five on this wing, and one, two, three, four on the other wing. Nine beautiful spots,” Annabelle finished with a smile on her face.

“Nine? Did you say nine? Oh no! That can’t be right. I have always had ten spots. Count them again,” Lucy asked now in a panic.

“Ok, let’s see, um, one, two, three, four, five, um, and here’s six, seven, eight and finally nine. Are you sure you had ten spots Lucy?..... Lucy?”

To her surprise, Lucy had passed out cold after hearing the final total of spots.

“Lucy, wake up!” Annabelle screamed as she began flapping her wings over her face to give her some much-needed air. A few moments later, Lucy slowly opened her eyes and said, “I knew it, one of my spots is gone! My spots are the reason I am beautiful, and why everyone likes me. If I lose all my spots, even the kids will not think I’m special anymore. I can’t let them see me like this,” she said immediately flying away from the playground.

“Hey, wait up, where are you going?” Annabelle screamed trying to catch up to Lucy. “Back to my house. Please don’t follow me. I need to be alone,” Lucy replied flying as fast as she could.

That night, Lucy prayed again. “Dear God, why am I losing my spots? Did I do something wrong? Are you mad at me? I’m sorry for whatever I did to lose my spots. Please bring my spots back to me, and make me beautiful again. No one will be my friend or think I’m special anymore if they’re all gone. Amen.”



The next day, Lucy awoke to the sun shining brightly in her face. She thought to herself, “Maybe it was just a dream that I lost a spot. There’s no way a ladybug can lose a spot. That’s just silly. I’ll fly to the pond, look at my reflection, and everything will be just fine.” And that’s exactly what she did.

Standing at the end of the long blade of grass. She wanted desperately to look at the water, but she was scared to look. She tried, once, twice, but each time was too afraid, for she feared the worst. Finally, she said, “Ok Lucy, this is silly, just look at the water,” and when she did, she began to cry. For when she looked at her reflection this time, even more spots were missing.



“What am I going to do?” thought Lucy. “I can’t let anyone see me like this, they’ll think I’m a monster. I have to hide.” Not knowing what else to do, Lucy flew as fast as she could, back to her house to come up with a plan.

As she flew towards her home, she noticed a blackberry bush full of plump berries. She thought, “I’ll use the blackberries to paint new spots on my back. Then no one will know that I lost my spots, and I’ll be beautiful again.”



She flew as fast as her wings could carry her down to the blackberry bush. She started rubbing her wings against the berries, and to her surprise, it was actually working. Before she knew it, the berries were sticking to her wings. She decided to fly back to her house.

That night she prayed again, “Dear God, I asked you to give me back my spots, and yet, everyday, I continue to lose more and more. Why are you allowing this to happen? Why won’t you let them grow back? If you could let me know, I’d greatly appreciate it. Amen.”

Immediately after saying Amen, she heard a voice saying, “Lucy, why do you think that you are not beautiful? I made you just the way you are, and I don’t make mistakes. You are beautiful because you are mine. People look at the outward appearance, but I look at the heart. I love you just the way you are, and you should too.”

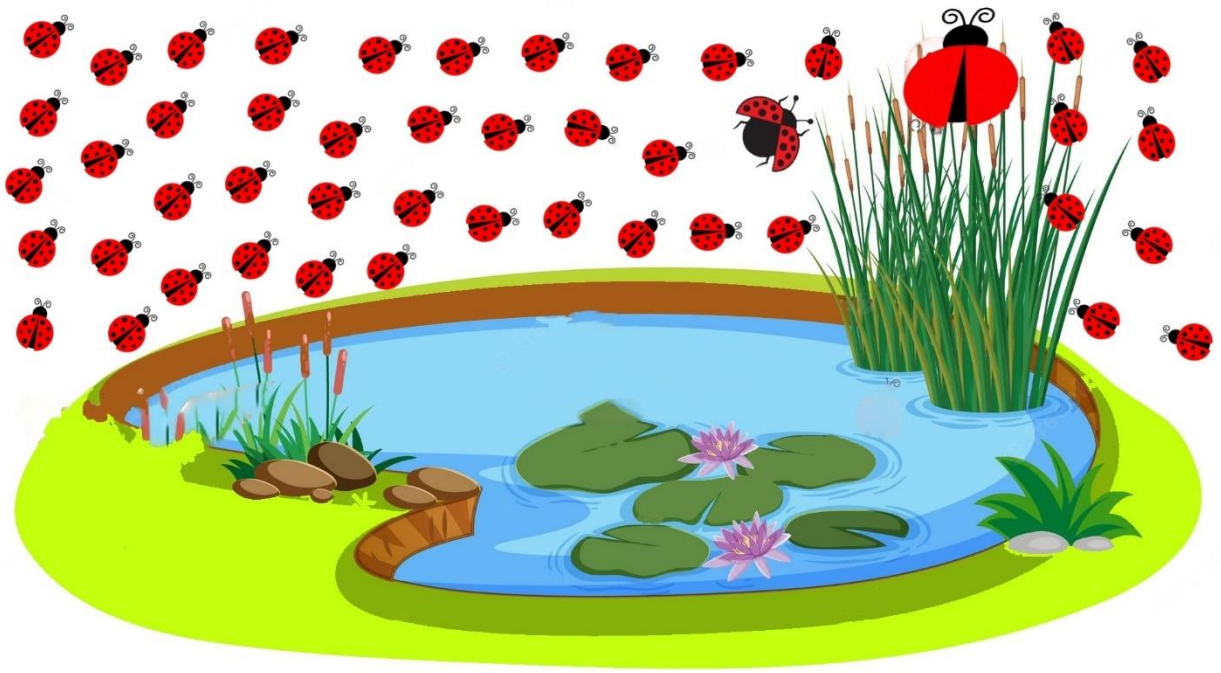




Lucy awoke and went to the pond, just as she had always done. She climbed the grass, slowly crept to the edge, and looked down. Immediately, she screamed so loudly that all the animals from far and wide came rushing over to her to see what was going on. Before she could fly away, Lucy was surrounded by hundreds of concerned ladybugs. Her friend Annabelle was the first to speak. "Lucy what's wrong? Why did you scream like that?" "Go away!" Lucy screamed. "I'm hideous. God told me I was beautiful, but how can I be beautiful with no spots? Just leave me alone. You don't have to pretend that you care about me. Now that my spots are gone, I'll just move to a desolate island, so you never have to look at me ever again!"



Just as Lucy was about to fly away, she looked at all of her friends that were surrounding her. They weren't leaving. One by one they kept saying, "Your spots are not why we are friends." "You are my friend, because you make me laugh." "You are my friend, because you are kind." "You are my friend, because you are good." "You are my friend, because you are helpful." "You are my friend, because you are fun to be around." "You are adventurous." "You are smart." Each friend gave a different reason. Annabelle spoke again saying, "Lucy, yes, your spots were beautiful, but you're not beautiful because of your spots. Your true beauty is not what's on the outside, but what is inside of you. You have a heart of gold, and that's what makes you the most beautiful ladybug in all the land."



Not knowing what to think or say, Lucy looked at all her friends and said, “What you all said to me, made me realize that I have been so focused on my appearance, that I failed to remember that true beauty comes from within. I have the bestest friends in the world, and I’m so thankful that you love me just the way I am.”

One by one, all of her friends began hugging her. Never had she felt more loved, than she did right now. But what happened next was the most miraculous of all. For with each hug she received, a new spot appeared on her wings. By the end, she had so many spots, she couldn’t even count them all. From that day on, when Lucy looked at her spots, she didn’t think about how she looked on the outside, but the spots reminded her how lucky she was to have so many amazing friends who loved her just the ways she was.



- 1) Who was Lucy? (A ladybug)
- 2) What did she do everyday? (Look at her reflection in the pond)
- 3) What was it about Lucy that made her beautiful? (her spots)
- 4) How many spots did she have? (10)
- 5) What happened when Lucy fell into the pond? (Her spots started to turn gray)
- 6) What did Annabelle discover when Lucy asked her to count the spots? (that one was missing)
- 7) When Lucy found that more spots had disappeared, what did she try to do to fix it? (put blackberries on her wings)
- 8) What happened when Lucy found out all her spots had disappeared? How did she feel? (She screamed, and felt she wasn't beautiful anymore.)
- 9) What did her friends say to her when Lucy said she wasn't beautiful? (They said it wasn't her spots that made her beautiful, but it was what was inside her heart that made her beautiful)
- 10) Is everyone the same or are we all different? (Different)
- 11) Because everyone is different, is it ok to make fun of someone who doesn't look or do the same thing that we do? (no)
- 12) Did you know that each one of you are special and beautiful? (yes).
- 13) What is something about you that makes you special or beautiful? It could be anything like being smart, or funny, or good at sports or crafts, or writing or drawing or whatever you can think of.
- 14) Because everyone is special or beautiful, how should we treat each other? (With respect and love.)

### **A special note from the author:**

Sometimes it's hard to see ourselves as beautiful. Especially if we don't have the nicest clothing, or name brand shoes, or latest fashions. We constantly compare ourselves to others, and try to do whatever it takes to get other people to like us and accept us. But the Bible says, that when God created us, He created us in His image. And He said we were not just good, but very good. We are beautiful, because we are His creation. God has given each one of us gifts and talents that makes us beautiful. Just like Lucy's friends showed her that some of her talents were things like being funny, smart, kind, good, helpful, fun to be around, and adventurous, you too have things inside of you that make you special, unique and beautiful. While, yes we can be beautiful on the outside, our true beauty comes from within us. When we do the right things, are kind to others, and when we love and treat others with respect, we are not only showing others how beautiful we are, but are showing others how beautiful and wonderful they are as well. So, the next time you see a ladybug, remember that God created you unique, you are special just the way you are, and you don't have to change who you are or what you look like to be accepted by others. There is only one you and you are awesome, just the way you are!



# Lucy And Her Beautiful Spots



**By Timothy J. Ewing**