



Have you believed these myths about beauty and your body? Fight the lies with God's truth, believing He loves you just the way He made you.

## Miss Conceptions

### Misconception No. 1

#### The Coat-Hanger Concept

Models are considered the most beautiful women in the world. After all, they're paid a lot of money for the way they look. Season after season, we watch these extremely thin women walk the runways in the latest fashions. They are photographed, talked about and ultimately idealized by the public. So much so that girls are dying to look like these pencil-shaped women.

Let me offer a bit of perspective. First of all, did you know that models are actually paid to be living coat hangers? Fashion designers want women who have no curves so the clothes they design will hang off them the way they would off a metal coat hanger. In other words, they want people to be looking at the clothes, not the girl. To achieve this curve-free look, models are almost always under a healthy weight.

Alarmingly, the dress sizes of models have been plummeting over the past years. Models used to be a size 4 to 6, already very thin, but now many of them are trying to fit into a size 0 to 2! A girl would have to have a very small bone structure to be a healthy size 2.

Once I realized that models are actually paid coat hangers, I felt better. I don't want to be a coat hanger, I felt better. I don't want to be a coat hanger; I want to be a person. And people have thighs, stomachs and upper arms with some curve. Clothes designers mean for their clothes (once they leave the runway) to be worn by people, with a shape.

The Bible teaches us not to compare ourselves with

others. We each have unique talents, personalities and bodies! Instead of joining the race to see who can be the thinnest, we would be much better off investing our energy into trying to figure out what God wants us to do with our lives and bodies. Being healthy is important. We should exercise our bodies and our minds and not fill them with junk, but being thin has no importance with the Lord.

### Misconception No. 2

#### The One-Size-Fits-All Lie

Have you ever worn a one-size-fits-all shirt? Let me guess-it was too big, too long, or the sleeves didn't fit. In trying to fit all, the shirt really fits none. Clothes come in different sizes because we are all . . . you got it: different sizes. So, why is it that most girls want to wear the same size? At the moment, superthin is in, but if we were living even 60 years ago, we would all be wishing for a nice, curvy size, because, back then, thin was not in.

Those of us with curves can complain about being born in the wrong time period, and the naturally thin can be thankful they weren't living a few decades back, but really the message should be clear. One size does not fit all. It never did, and it never will. So we girls should quit trying to wear the same shirt and just get it in our own size.

The Lord gave the church body (His people) different gifts, each unique and important. If we all had the same gift of, let's say . . . singing, well, we would sound great during worship time, but who would teach Sunday school, and who would give the message, and who would do the paperwork? We

each have a different function in the church just as we each have a different physical shape. You have your own particular healthy size that God gave you, and He wants you to be content. If God wanted us all to be size 2, He would have made us that way. Instead, He made us in a vast array of sizes, colors and shapes, and He loves them all equally.

### Misconception No. 3 The Thin = Happy Myth

Many of us buy into this myth. We think that if we were thinner, we would be happier. Yet I know tons (and I bet you do, too) of thinner-than-you, unhappy girls. For starters, most girls can never be thin enough; we just keep telling ourselves that if we were just 5 kilos lighter, we would be satisfied. I have learned that even at my thinnest, I wanted to be smaller. It's like a mirage we just keep chasing:



A few less kilos and my life will be all I want it to be. I, for one, have not found this to be true. I really didn't have peace with my size until I realized that number on my jeans tag had no correlation with my degree of happiness.

Happiness is coming to terms with ourselves because we are God's children, and He made us each a unique shape and size. True happiness in life is found in our peace and purpose for the next life. Knowing we will spend eternity with Jesus is the only authentic

happiness we can find on earth. It's tempting to look at people that seem to have it all, but they're experiencing only temporary happiness. What we get through Christ is permanent happiness that has nothing to do with how thin we are!

### Misconception No. 4 The Love-Yourself-First Fable

A popular concept today is the fable that you have to love yourself first before you can love anyone else. But Jesus said that the greatest command is to "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind," and the second greatest command is to "love your neighbor as yourself" (Mathew 22:37,39). As Christians, we're called to love the Lord first. Not ourselves, but our God. By giving our love to God first and foremost, He will supply us with enough love for others. It's not until we really learn to love God that we can love ourselves in the right way, a way that's not self-serving or self-centered. We have value because we are the Lord's creation. When we enjoy this type of healthy self image, we are free to live unselfishly and with the joy and confidence in who we are as His children.

#### True Satisfaction

These four misconceptions often keep us girls down and leave us thinking about ourselves instead of our Lord. It's no doubt that we live in a physical world that all too often puts more stock in the outside appearance than the inside. It's easy to feel depressed or unhappy because we have physical flaws (every single one of us), but in finding our worth in being children of God, we can experience the satisfying love of the Lord. And realize that we don't have to be thin, human-coat-hangers trying to love ourselves in the hopeless search of human happiness.

Instead, we can simply run into the Lord's arms and feel His healing love that has the power to free us from all the misconceptions that hold us back from being the girls He created us to be.

## Remember God's Promises...

### When you feel you don't measure up.

Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. (Philippians 1:6)

Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the lord is to be praised. (proverbs 31:30)

The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart. (1 Samuel 16:7)

I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. (Psalm 139:14)

A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones. (Proverbs 14:30)