



Q & A

Q: When I look in the mirror, all I do is focus on everything I hate about myself. What should I do?

A: If looking in the mirror is a negative experience, next time think about saying something positive about yourself instead, whether you believe it 100% or not. Try to think about one of your favorite features instead of focusing on what you may consider faults or disappointments. If you are faced with more serious issues of frustration, disappointment, and hate, please make sure to talk to a trusted individual who can lead you in the right direction for guidance.

Q: Sometimes I feel like people are judging me because of how I look, even when I go to church! How do I deal with it?

A: No one is perfect...and most people (including those at church) are influenced by society's standards. Instead of getting upset, try a different approach. Be a role model through kindness, compassion, forgiveness, and being non-judgmental toward others. It's possible that *your* example of kindness to others, even though they might not be kind to you, could change their hearts and minds. Be strong and don't let negativity change how you respond to Christ's greatest commandment to love one another!

INFO



Find us on Facebook!
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If you or someone you know is struggling with an unhealthy body image or eating disorder, it's important to tell someone. Speak to a friend, your parents, a school counselor, a trusted adult, or your parish priest to get help.



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Online Resources:

- Building Healthy Body Esteem in a Body Toxic World: www.bodyimagehealth.org
- National Eating Disorders Association: www.nationaleatingdisorders.org
- toll free phone number: 1-800-931-2237

Books:

- "Who Calls Me Beautiful? Finding Our True Image in the Mirror of God" by Regina Franklin, Discovery House Publishers, 2004.
- "Comfortable in Your Own Skin: Making Peace with Your Body Image" by Deborah Newman, Focus on the Family, 2007.

GET THE FACTS

Body image is defined as a person's sense of his or her own physical appearance. Our body image often affects not only how we view ourselves, but also how we interact with others. This can affect our sense of self-worth and plays a big part in our physical and emotional development.

All Day, Every Day: Did you know the average person is exposed to 3,000 ads a DAY? In addition to selling products, ads attempt to sell the myth that we can, and should, achieve physical perfection in order to feel good about ourselves. Many of these ads are even digitally altered, making it even more difficult for us to distinguish between "perfection" and reality.

The Myth of Perfection: These unrealistic expectations about body image set us up to fail, especially when we may never be able to look a certain way. Instead of inspiring us in a positive way, our constant exposure to the idea of perfection may cause us to have anxiety and an unhealthy obsession about our own body image.

NAVIGATING THROUGH YOUR TEEN YEARS: BODY IMAGE

KNOW THE SIGNS

The following might be signals that you have a negative or unhealthy view of your body:

- When you see yourself in the mirror, car windows, or storefront windows, you only notice things that you don't like about your body.
- You rarely think you look good.
- You have a tough time taking compliments, as you really don't believe they are true.
- It takes you forever to choose clothing.
- You compare yourself to others constantly.
- You criticize your body regularly.
- You skip events because you don't think you look good enough to be in the crowd.

THE CHURCH SPEAKS

Created in the Image of God

If we were to live by society's expectations and standards of living, it would be almost impossible to be happy. Fortunately, we are blessed to have a higher standard! God loves you for exactly who you are, because He created you exactly as you are—in His own image and likeness (Genesis 1:27). Rather than focusing on man-made "ideals" for beauty, think about your own reflection as an icon of Christ.

Looking Inward

"The Lord sees not as man sees; man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart" (1 Samuel 16:7). Your self-image should be a reflection of who you are as a person, the decisions you make, and your relationship with God, not how you look in front of the mirror. Remember...you are more than skin and bones. You are the "temple of the Holy Spirit" (1 Corinthians 6:19). Regardless of our physical appearance, we have each been created in His image on the inside. Don't forget or downplay this incredible honor, and remember the special way God created each of us.

Unique in God's Sight

People come in all shapes and sizes. Trying to compare yourself to someone else never really works. Each of us has unique strengths and weaknesses that make us one-of-a-kind and important in God's eyes. It says in 1 Corinthians 12:18-20, "But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased. And if they were all one member, where would the body be? But now indeed there are many members, yet one body." What does this mean? Regardless of our physical appearance, intellect, skin color, or any other features, we have all been created with a specific purpose. Sit down and write all of the things that are unique about you. Consider how you can use your uniqueness and God-given talents to best serve Christ and others.