

Mandisa: Radiating Jesus

American Idol alum Mandisa Hundley expresses a newfound freedom on her new album, aptly titled *Freedom*. She says that when she started working on this new CD, she was drawn to songs that dealt with the issue of freedom. "I knew that's where God was directing me and that's what He wanted me to talk about. ... And then I realized that I could not do an album called *Freedom* and proclaim that God was able to set people free and still be held captive by a lifelong food addiction. ... I didn't want to be a hypocrite; I didn't want to tell other people that He could set them free and not believe it for myself."

She hired a personal trainer and changed the way she thought about food. She has already lost 70 pounds and is still pressing forward. She says her new album is "very encouraging to me and I know it will be encouraging to people that are fighting, feeling like they are bound by something. I feel like this is an album that will convince them that we serve a very powerful God who's able to set us free."

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Mandisa – Freedom

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This freedom comes when we understand God's love for us, she explains. "When we really grasp what God's love is ... we won't

be bound by the things that we're bound by. And I don't think that we would search for our identity in other things. I think when we really fully understand how God feels about us, that we would be so secure in that, we really would be free of a lot that has us entangled right now."

Giving a shout out to her "women out there," Mandisa says, "I really learned the hard way that our beauty really doesn't come from the outside. You hear that all the time but I'm fully convinced of it now. ... When people, at my very highest weight, were saying that I was so beautiful, I knew that they were seeing something that was way beyond my physical appearance."

Referring to 1 Peter 3:3-4, which says that beauty should come from a gentle and quiet spirit, Mandisa says that American woman especially need to "understand that we should spend more time cultivating a relationship with the Lord, which is what brings out the inner beauty, than we do with getting our nails done and our hair, all that stuff. There's nothing wrong with those things, I just think that if we were to focus a little more on the inside that we would be secure in what God says that beauty really is."

"And I love that it's not 'a gentle and a quiet *mouth*.' I think a lot of people get that twisted. ... You can be a loudmouth and have a gentle and quiet spirit-just be a loudmouth for Jesus."

And just as Moses was radiant after spending time with God, the same happens to us, she says. "God gives us a radiance that really can't be matched by any cosmetic that we could come up with. I've seen people that the world probably wouldn't call typically beautiful and they have such a heart for the Lord that I see it in them. I think the world is looking for the real thing. And ... if we were to portray where our beauty and value comes from ... they would be a lot more attracted to Jesus."

Freedom releases on March 24.