

Where the Church Messed Up the Modesty Conversations

Most women can identify a moment when they looked in a mirror and criticized one feature or another in their reflection. It's an ugly habit cycling through generations, and a mother can destroy her daughter by criticizing her own reflection.

But Chris Shook and her daughter Megan Shook Alpha are out to straighten the record about true beauty, and how it comes from your reflection in Christ—not in cultural perception.

“Megan and I have found that women and young girls who are insecure grow into insecure moms, raising daughters who feel insecure about themselves,” Shook tells *Charisma News*. “Moms try to do things right and mean it by telling their daughters they are beautiful, and (they really do) mean it. They say all the right things and believe it, but these daughters then see moms looking in the mirror and being self-critical. Somehow, we have feeling we can put ourselves down while verbally encouraging our children.”

To combat this, Shook and Alpha put their wisdom and Bible study on beauty in their book, *Beauty Begins*.

Their words are meant to inspire generations of women—from pre-teens to grandmothers—to seek their beauty in God and not in the culture's rapidly redefining standards.

And while some Christians may argue they are not affected by the culture's definition of beauty, the mother-and-daughter duo realize how the deep superficial lies have seeped into the church.

“Because of culture and what we see on media and everything, girls now see the less clothes you wear, the more attention you get, the more beautiful you are,” Alpha says. “But to see

more of your body doesn't make you more beautiful. It might get you temporary attention, but it's not going to last. Dressing modestly, I do it because I want to show people it's more than the clothes you wear, but that doesn't have to do with my beauty."

Shook and Alpha agreed the church has missed the mark when it comes to discussing beauty standards because they just don't talk about it at all. Rather, many congregations throw around the word modesty without addressing the how and why behind it.

Rather than addressing women only, though, Shook and Alpha think the conversation must involve everyone.

"Because men, their role is so foundational with their influence on wives and daughters and girlfriends, and (we can help men) realize how do women feel, what drives us to want to be beautiful, what feelings we have in insecurity, what part can they play and how they can help," Shook says.

But the heart of the matter rests with women and how they think about themselves: Are they looking with the eyes of Christ or the eyes of culture?

And if a mother wants her daughter to be the daughter of the King she is, it starts with the mom's heart and words.

"Moms (must) believe their worth in Christ and communicate with words and actions with our daughters," Shook says. "The truth is, all of us more than ever in this world are increasingly visually driven and it's tougher to turn away and say what we see with our eyes is a lie."