

LOOKING IN THE MIRROR

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I saw an interesting headline on a news website this past week that had a link to a story about a young woman who had “*sworn off looking in a mirror for an entire year.*” Her wedding is in six months, and she feels under “constant pressure to look perfect.” She then began to wonder if “a year without mirrors could lead to greater self-acceptance,” and then made her decision not to look in a mirror at all for the next year. Some recent studies were mentioned that have found that, on average, women look in the mirror over 70 times a day. A certain psychology professor and “body image expert” (whatever that means) believes that “constantly checking ourselves out in the mirror can be bad for our mental health.” Notice that the modern definition of being mentally ill is actually thinking there may be something wrong with yourself that needs to be changed!

The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God

If nothing else, this article is a splendid illustration of the foolish thinking that is so pervasive in our world today. It seems that the only condemnable behavior that remains is anything that makes someone feel about themselves. It’s the same basic point of view that has led some people to argue that there shouldn’t be letter grades in school. After all, getting a low grade in school may harm a child’s precious “self-esteem.” You can’t “judge” anyone’s lifestyle or behavior choices for the same reason. Now you can’t even look in a mirror without being mentally damaged by what you see in its reflection! Truly, God has made foolish the wisdom of this world (1 Cor 1:20). “*The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God*” (1 Cor 3:19). Perhaps it should not come as a surprise that the young lady in the news story is a university student in California working on a Ph.D. in sociology. One thing that she is absolutely correct about is that looking in a mirror is an act that is contrary to accepting yourself as you currently are. Mirrors are expressly designed to rebuke us, to show us what is wrong with our physical appearance. And the information that we gain by looking in a mirror is only useful insofar that we then make some effort to fix whatever problems we have. God teaches us that His word is our *spiritual* mirror.

Seeing the inner man

James 1:22-25 says, “But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: for he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. *But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.*” It makes no sense to look in a

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mirror, see what's wrong with our appearance, and then do nothing about it. But that is precisely what we are doing if we hear God's word, but don't do what it says. We will be blessed by God if we look in the mirror of His word and then keep it, continuing in it without forgetting what we saw there. What we actually see in that spiritual mirror is not our outward man, but our inward man. And that is the most important part of us to see, because that is the part of us that is eternal. "For which cause we faint not; *but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.* For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: *for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal*" (2 Cor 4:16-18). Our thoughts, words, and deeds proceed from what is in our spiritual hearts. The Lord taught that "those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: these are the things which defile a man" (Matt 15:18-20). In Luke 6:45, Christ says, "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh." When we study the scriptures to measure ourselves by Christ (Eph 4:13), we will see what needs to be changed in our hearts. If we are wise, we will then fix whatever problems we have. Concerning the incomparable glory of the New Testament, 2 Corinthians 3:18 says, "*But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.*" Indeed God's purpose for us in this life is for us to be *conformed to the image of his Son* (Rom 8:28-29). Satan would delight for us to choose to approach our spiritual lives like the woman in the news story. He would love for us to accept ourselves as we are and not change anything. However, "*there is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death*" (Prov 14:12). Satan would love for us to make the choice to refuse to look in the spiritual mirror, God's word. But we must study to show ourselves approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth (2 Tim 2:15). Satan would love for us to go away and forget what we see if we do look in the spiritual mirror. But may we never be so foolish! Rather, let us always be hearers *and* doers of God's word.