

The Dim Mirror

"Mirror, Mirror, on the wall..."

We've heard this before. The characters in the story consulted the mirror because, supposedly, a "mirror never lies". This is not altogether true though. While a mirror may help to curb the vainly puffed-up notion of physical perfection, the truth is that mirrors lie to us every time we look into them. They give us a phony image of ourselves. They offer a view of a *flesh* creation. This is not who we are.

Created in His Image

God Almighty created man to have three parts, like He does. God the Father moves by the Holy Spirit and came as one of us in the form of the man Jesus. We are a ***Spirit*** that has a ***Soul*** and lives in a ***Flesh*** body. The real "you" is the spirit man inside of you. It isn't your body. It isn't even your thoughts and emotions; although the soul and the spirit are so connected that only the Bible can distinguish them. (The Word of God is sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, joint and marrow. [See Heb. 4:12]) Our spirit is the eternal part of us. Whether we're saved or not, our spirits are eternal. If we do not know God, we encounter eternal damnation, eternal despair, eternal separation from God. But if we do know Him and accept Jesus as Lord and Savior then, through Him, we inherit eternal life, eternal peace, and eternal dwelling with the Lord.

Women

While this concept is true for all of mankind, there is an element of weakness for women especially to fall into temptation in regards to their self-image. We grow up indulged with notions of the importance of physical beauty and the bearing it has on social worth and status. I am, by no means, excluded from this. I, as a female, have struggled with my own self-image for as long as I can remember. Even as a child I can remember looking around the classroom to see how I measured up to my peers. In middle school, I went through a period of anorexia partially caused by my feelings of physical inadequacy. In high school, I turned those feelings into disdain for anyone who I thought did look attractive and sought to find ways that they were inferior to myself (i.e. I was smarter or more likable, etc.) Later, as a young adult, I struggled greatly with my self-image after I had children. I became ashamed of my stretch marks and "bulges". People I loved pleaded with me the whole time, "Beauty is in the eye of the beholder" and "Inner beauty is true beauty". While these are accurate phrases, all I heard was affirmation that I really didn't look very good. I was comparing myself with those around me by the scales and measures in my own head. The Bible calls this unwise: "But they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise." [See 2 Cor. 10:12] In context, this passage is about not boasting in the things the world boasts of, but only in the

things which Christ has placed in us to His glory. It goes across the board though. Our standard is Jesus Christ and His purposes are our goal as believers. The moment we take our eyes off of Him and look to those around us we are already off.

This world is caught up in physical beauty. I fear for our young women. Even in the church this pressure exists. Like with many things in the church, we don't combat the lies of the world with God's truth, we just dress it up with phrases that sound holy. Those phrases that I mentioned before that loved ones would quote to me: they're true enough, but they don't attack the real threat. On top of that, I fear for the young girls who are very attractive. After all, you don't usually hear those things being said to really cute little girls as they grow up. Instead you hear "Oh my, what a lovely girl", "My, aren't you adorable". What kind of message are they getting about who they are and what is important. Perhaps it is even more difficult for them to see in the dim mirror than the rest of us. I am not suggesting that we never compliment someone on their appearance, I just think its important to be cautious in what we convey to young people, especially our little girls, about **who** they are.

"What's Love Got To Do With It?"

1 Corinthians 13:12*

"For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known."

What has Paul been talking about? Love. Love's perfecting work in us. True love: being everlasting; the love walk. Go back and read it all in context. (1 Corinthians 13:1-13)

Why is it in a mirror dimly now? Because the flesh hinders us. (We mentioned before how we are three parts.) The flesh is in part and it is passing away. When we look in a mirror, we can only very dimly see who we are. But, when the flesh is done away, we will know as we are known. Imagine that. You'll see the perfected Spirit and righteousness of Christ that composes who you really are in Him.

Why do we look in a mirror to begin with? To see who we are, what we look like. Does it work? In the natural, yes; but not really. No way.

How are we known by God? You have to really grasp this. He sees Jesus; He sees Himself. He sees the perfecting love from the cross (His love) shed abroad in our hearts. [See Rom. 5:5 KJV] He sees "CHRISTIAN". That word means 'little Christ'. He sees us as His children. It looks good to Him. That's why the scripture says: "Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I am known"... When will that be? "Face to face".

We only know in part who we are in Christ. It is essential that we grasp this. This is foundational for how you walk out your faith.

If you look into that dim mirror and get stuck on the image of the temporal, fleshy version of yourself then you're defeated before you step out of the bathroom. Your love walk is already in the toilet. You're already set up to be acting out of your own strength.

However, if you start off with renewing your mind daily with who you are in Christ, you'll be better equipped to pick up your cross daily (use it to crucify your flesh) and walk in love before the world to glorify your Father in heaven.

What makes something true or not is if it is validated by the Word of God. Not if the person telling you about the Word has had it manifest totally in their life, or if it works for the preacher, or if you know someone who has seen it work. If it is the Word, it is true. Even Paul said that what he wrote was a challenge for him to live up to [See Rom. 7:15]; nevertheless, it was right and valid because it was God's Word.

I'm not exactly giving a testimony here, I'm learning just as much as I write. I just thank God for allowing me to partake of this message.

~ Amanda Paul
12/10/04
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