



# The Southeast Sower

Southeast Church of Christ

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## A Mirror For The Soul”

(Part III)

By

Jeff Haught

*“But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does,”*  
-(James 1:22-25).

In the two previous articles, *A Mirror for the Soul, Part I and II*, we considered James illustration of those who are hearers of God’s word and not doers. James tells us that they are like one who looks into a mirror and beholds their appearance, but who is not impacted and transformed by the reality of that image enough for it to have a lasting effect after walking away. The applications for us that we have considered thus far

are that as a mirror reveals the spots and blemishes of our physical appearance, so the word of God reveals the spots and blemishes of our spiritual appearance, and that God’s word is truly a mirror for our soul that shows us what we are in His sight. As we have gazed into the word of God we have seen that, *“All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God,”* (Rom. 3:23), and that the consequence of the stain of sin on our spiritual appearance is death, (Rom. 6:23). Yet being more keen, insightful, and penetrating than any earthly mirror, God’s Word goes even further to show us how to correct our spiritual appearance, and even commands us to do so without delay. Therefore, we must heed God’s word carefully as it reveals to us not only what we are in His sight but what we can be by His grace.

When we look into the mirror of God’s word and it reveals to us our sinful appearance in His sight, do we feel the same sense of shame, guilt, or embarrassment that we would if our physical appearance was marred in some noticeable and obvious way? We should (if

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The Southeast  
Church of Christ meets at:

35 Walnut Court

Mogadore, OH 44260

Phone: 330.628.7432

## SERVICES:

### Sunday

Bible Study: 10:00 am

Worship: 10:50 am

6:00 pm

### Wednesday

Bible Study: 7:30 pm

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our hearts have not been hardened over time by it). The sense of shame and guilt that comes with the initial realization of our sinful appearance coupled with the love we should have for our heavenly Father who created us in His own image should prick our hearts, creating a strong desire to change our appearance in order to be more pleasing and acceptable in His sight. Just

as we should desire to wash a dirty face, we should desire to cleanse our souls!

How is it then that our souls can be cleansed from the stain of sin? What is the cleansing agent that would remove the stain of sin, making us presentable in God's sight? Romans 5:8-11 tells us, *"But God commendeth His love for us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life."* Through His grace, God sent His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ (John 3:16), to die for sinners. The blood of Christ is given as a gift from God only. It is not of ourselves. *"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,"* (Eph 2:8). Believers in Christ are justified by His blood, saved from God's wrath through Him, and reconciled to God by Christ's death. Furthermore, John writes, *"But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin,"* (1 John 1:7). John tells us that the cleansing agent for our

souls is the shed blood of Jesus Christ, and that we have access to it by walking in the light of Christ. While many seek and devise other solutions for cleansing themselves of sin, God's word shows us there is no other cleansing agent than the blood of Christ. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh to the Father but by me," (John 14:6).

How then do we access the blood of Christ, the powerful agent that cleanses us from all sin? Obedience - the apostle Peter tells us we purify our souls in obeying the truth, (1 Peter 1:22). Repentance - Christ message to those in Luke 13:3 applies to us today, *"Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish."* Confessing Christ - "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation," (Romans 10:10). Baptism - Peter said in Acts 2:38, "Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins..." Our sins can be washed away and our souls can be purified through the blood of Christ as we are raised to walk in a "newness of life." Consider the words of the apostle Paul in Romans 6:3-4, *"Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His*

*death? <sup>4</sup>Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."* This is what our spiritual appearance can be through God's grace.

Yet, not only will many deny their sinful appearance as they look into God's word, many will also distort God's word and His plan for cleansing souls even as they would distort a mirror. One can bend and twist a mirror to make themselves look taller or thinner like in the carnival "House of Mirrors", but in reality they are still short and overweight. Similarly, one can bend and twist God's word through "faith only" and "once saved always saved" doctrines but in reality they remain in a lost, sinful condition, wholly unpresentable to God in judgement. Peter describes those in 2 Peter 3:16, *"...as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures."*

God's word as "a mirror for the soul" shows us what we can be by His grace. Do we desire to heed what it reveals?