



The Southeast Sower

Southeast Church of Christ

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“A Mirror For The Soul”

(Part I)

By

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“There is nothing worse for the lying soul than the mirror of reality.”

- S. Maraboli

I remember on several occasions as a young boy after having gotten ready to leave the house in the morning, being abruptly stopped by my mother, only to be sent back the hallway to correct my unsightly appearance. Hanging my head low, I would sulk incredulously to the bathroom mirror to confront the offending spot or blemish, and wipe, rub, comb, brush or wash it away. Then, and only then, was I deemed by my mother to be presentable to family, friends, or to the general public at large. Thankfully, the mirror was an important tool in accomplishing this necessary task. Were it not for the revealing benefits of the mirror, I would probably still be in a perpetually unpresentable state of physical appearance to this day.

Certainly, we all can relate to this story, and understand the usefulness of mirrors in our day to day lives. A mirror is usually one of the first things we look at upon awakening each morning. It shows us our dirty or unshaven faces, our messy hair, etc. We generally accept the reflected image as accurate and reliable without questioning or doubting the authenticity of the reflected image. We don't break the mirror because we don't like what we see, but rather we set about correcting our physical appearance, and use the mirror as a helpful aid in doing so. In fact, we wouldn't think of starting our day without it, and we even continue checking our appearance with mirrors throughout the day - women through the use of compact mirrors in their purses, and yes, even men through the use of the flip-down sun visor mirror in the car. Doing so in order to check one's physical appearance is a perfectly acceptable and proper thing to do.

Yet, if checking one's physical appearance on a regular basis is necessary and important in order to be presentable publicly to others, then how much

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Bible Study: 10:00 am

Worship: 10:50 am
6:00 pm

Wednesday

Bible Study: 7:30 pm

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more necessary and important is it to check one's spiritual appearance in order to be presentable to God? How much more imperative should that be to us!

God's word tells us the spiritual aspects of our lives should always take priority over the physical aspects. *“For bodily exercise profiteth little, but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life*

that now is, and of that which is to come,” (I Tim. 4:8). Our priority should be godliness which gives us promise in this life temporally, as well as the next life eternally. *“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,”* (2Cor. 4:18). Our primary focus should be on that which is eternal. Jesus said in Matthew 10:28, *“And fear not them who kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”* Given what Jesus tells us, our priority should be the spiritual appearance of our soul to the one who created it, and who will also judge it -God.

But how do we check our spiritual appearance? What mirror do we hold our thoughts, words, and actions up to in order to check for spots or blemishes on our hearts and souls? What we really need is a mirror for our soul! But where would we find such a mirror? And after finding it, would we be able to use it to correct our spiritual appearance?

Well, James tells us that we do indeed have such a mirror. *“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).

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 we must heed what it reveals to us. God’s word is truly a mirror for our soul. It is more keen, insightful, and penetrating than any earthly mirror.

The Hebrew writer states, *“For the word of God is quick and powerful. And sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart,”* (Hebrews 4:12). God’s word penetrates far beyond and beneath our physical appearance to the innermost parts of our very being. Our thoughts, our words, our actions, our emotions, our motives, our hearts, our minds, our will are all laid wide open and bare as we gaze into it. It reveals exactly what we are spiritually in God’s eyes.

However, whether we accept the spiritual

appearance of the reflected image that we see of ourselves as we gaze into the mirror of God’s word, and whether we choose to make spiritual corrections to it is oftentimes a different story. We may become upset and angry at the image we see of ourselves. Our hearts may become so conditioned, numb, and hardened to that image that we refuse to accept it as being unpresentable to God. But just like a physical mirror, refusing to accept the reality of the image doesn’t change the fact that it is still unpresentable. And just like a physical mirror, being angry at God’s word, the mirror of the soul, doesn’t change the image that it is reflecting. If we want to see something different then we have to be something different. It is only when we accept the reflected image and see ourselves for what we truly are that we can have the earnest desire and sense of urgency to make ourselves presentable to God. God’s word is the only mirror for the soul that can assist us in doing just that if we would simply look into it.

Over the next article or two I would like to examine God’s word more closely as a mirror for the soul that reveals to us three things - what we are in God’s sight, what we can be by God’s grace, and what we will be in God’s judgment.