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Do You Like What You See in the Mirror?

James 1:23-24: (NASB) ²³For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; ²⁴for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was.



Happy New Year! ...Or is it? Have you asked yourself if you are happy and excited about this New Year or do you fear the same old stuff will get in the way of the better life you had imagined? When you look at your own character and your own track record, what do you see? Do you see accomplishment and progress or failure and backsliding? Do you see consistency and focus or sporadic efforts and distracted attention? Bottom line: do you want to do better, do you want to be better and do you want to feel better about where you stand?



We have two minds, How To Say "No" to Almost Anything, Epipheo.TV

- (Narrator) You know that feeling when you really want to accomplish something, but it seems like your brain is almost fighting against you?
- (Kelly McGonigal) We actually have something more like two minds.
- (Narrator) That's Kelly McGonigal, author of "The Willpower Instinct."
- (Kelly McGonigal) We have one brain that is very responsive to our immediate needs and when we're in that mindset, we tend to make choices that are inconsistent with our long-term goals but we also all have this other brain, this other mindset that thinks about long-term consequences, remembers what our big values are, takes a kind of expansive view on our lives and our choices. And when we're in that mindset and that system of the brain is in control of our choices, we tend to do things that make our future self actually happier and healthier, more productive, more successful.

On what basis do we judge ourselves when we look in the mirror? Is it on a basis of comparison to others? Which "brain" are we using? Is it on a basis resulting from peer pressure? Is it on a basis of what we THINK we ought to be? Is it on a basis of our actual performance relating to our goals?

Fortunately, the Scriptures give us a sense of which "brain" to use and why:

James 1:18-25: The short-term brain is far too reactive.

We need to slow down, regroup, think and THEN respond: ²¹Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls. The long-term brain is now in gear! ²²But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. When we prove ourselves doers (putting into action what we have heard), we are establishing a habit. This will keep our focus where it belongs: long-term first and then short-term wants and needs based on our long-term focus. ²³For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; ²⁴for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. Without the long-term mind as a basis for our decisions, we simply get lost in the moments that currently surround us. The next moment overrides the previous moment and that is why we never get out of the cycle. ²⁵But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.

By looking intently on the perfect law of liberty, you are focusing yourself on something much bigger. True blessing comes from deciding to live daily - based upon a God-directed life and not based on moments. But what about "Live in the moment!" and "Do the most important thing in every moment!" Living "in the moment" is not based "on the moment." Living in the moment means your long-term mind is focused and in gear. What is happening in the moment around you is not driving you and you can respond to it. Living your life based "on the moment" obliterates your long-term mind.

Whatever the image we see looking back at us through the mirror tells us what it is that is foremost in our minds. This realization can be alarming and even depressing at first, for most of us do not really like what we see. Our challenge therefore is to learn to see in our reflection what God sees in us... **How do we do this?**



One way is to take some time to focus on how far and wide God sees as compared to how dimly and narrowly we see. The chapter of [Isaiah 40](#) does this. This is the chapter with the well-known verses about *mounting up with wings as eagles* and *running without getting weary*. In a moment, we will look at the recipe this chapter gives us for making our image we see the same as the one God sees.

[Isaiah 40](#): Among other things, this chapter is a lesson on what *God* sees and therefore what we should see! (See the Full Edition Rewind Bonus Material for many more details.)

[Begins](#) with Israel ending their "double" of disfavor. Israel went through a period of favor, being God's chosen people for 1845 years. At the time of Jesus' crucifixion, he said *your house shall be left unto you desolate*. ([Matthew 23:38](#), [Luke 13:35](#)) The prophecies indicated they would have a period of disfavor that would be equal to the period of previous favor.

[Verses 1-3](#) show us God's unalterable care for His people Israel. He knew they needed a period of punishment but literally counted the years until the consequence of disfavor could be lifted. This shows us how God cares. He punishes with eternity in mind and limits the punishment to only what is necessary. God views things long-term.

[Progresses](#) to the collapsing of the world's ways before God. [Verses 4-8](#) show us how God cannot and will not allow injustice and sin to continue. He sees the beginning and end and shows us how to see the same.

[Reminds](#) the true followers of Christ of the responsibility of the church to spread the Good News and God's care for them. [Verses 9-11](#) In God's eternal sight, He sees those whom He has called to follow Jesus as His own precious and worthy vessels to carry and spread the hope of His plan. We can see the Old Testament was very important in the carrying out of God's plan. So many prophetic details for us are found there.

[Proclaims](#) the utter might and greatness of God. [Verses 12-17](#) Isaiah sees and shouts out God's utter greatness related to the physical earth as well as the human family.

[Compares](#) God to idols fashioned by the hands of men. [Verses 18-20](#) Isaiah is shown the stark contrast between the God of all creation and foresight against the puny, faulty and useless gods that His own human creation makes.

[Responds](#) to idols with a practical and scientific view of God's greatness. [Verses 21-25](#) God reveals the edges of the depth of His knowledge and power regarding our earth and our human rulers.

All of this incredible prophecy and power help us to see God as He really is. It also reminds us the Almighty God sees US as viable and valuable, and we need to get past ourselves to see that as well.

Would seeing ourselves as valuable be showing pride? No. We simply want to see ourselves as God sees us. That is not pride. Too often we see our lives through the stories we make up and not through God's view. If God says the true church will be responsible to do certain things for Him, then they have value.

This brings us to the first of four [Personal Mirror Management](#) principles:

1. [LOOK UP](#) to Him who is truly mighty and embrace His power and wisdom! [Isaiah 40:26](#): The same God who put those stars in place is the One touching your life. Our resolve should be for others to hear and see God through us. This can only be done if we can see God through ourselves when we look in the mirror because that is what HE sees. That is the challenge and what we must focus our lives on.

As we look up while looking in the mirror, what will we see?

2. [REALIZE](#) His understanding and His eye NOTICE and RESPOND to all things! [Isaiah 40:27-28](#): It is human nature for us to put aside God's protective power in our lives, because we generally preoccupy ourselves with our own interpretations and stories and we make up things that just are not real. For us to see "God through us" in the mirror, we must apply [personal discipline](#) to our understanding and apply this second point. We can see God in the wrong way. We know God is just, wise, powerful and loving so anything outside of that is a wrong perception of Him.



Self-discipline is making yourself do what you need to do regardless of how you feel. This helps you move towards your long-term goals. The challenge is a lot of our attitudes that get in the way. **Pride:** [Proverbs 16:17-19](#) **Anger and Jealousy:** [Proverbs 27:4](#) These attitudes cause us to only see what THEY are focused on and not God's real power in our lives. Remember, God forgave us for our sins by giving us His son so we need to forgive others. **Greed:** [Luke 12:15](#) **Ego:** [Luke 16:14-15](#) **Laziness:** [Proverbs 26:13-15](#)

These attitudes can cause us to only see that which WE want in our selfishness, causing us to ignore God's attention and response in our lives. Make the change based on godly principles and His long-term view of you. These attitudes all diffuse discipline. Fight by looking UP, claiming God's hand in your reflection. We have to decide that what we will look at is God in us and through us. Others will begin to see God's actions through us.

We usually look in the mirror and see a reflection that is riddled with our own faults and deficiencies. It is a funny thing, when the Almighty God looks at us, He sees chosen vessels capable of carrying His Truth and His Hope to others! How do we change what we see to be more in line with what God sees? **Personal Mirror Management!** [Isaiah 40](#) reveals the might, power, prophetic prowess and protection of God towards us.

3. **BELIEVE** He is an endless power source compared to those in the prime of life and to those who are even the mightiest in the eyes of men!

[Isaiah 40:29-30](#): We are creatures of habit. Once we begin to judge ourselves as "less than" others or "not as" strong or talented as others, we begin to settle into the complacency of mediocre expectations. Unless altered, the reflection that we see of ourselves will be one of lack and powerlessness. Satan would love us to be in this mindset to keep us down!

[Philippians 4:13](#): (NKJV) *I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.*

There is a reward for every bad habit we have. We need new habits of self-observation. Once we LOOK UP to God's power and REALIZE His care, we are now positioned to BELIEVE He will energize our weary souls!

What can help us fuel such a radical new habit of self-actualization? What fuels you in your life enough to break an old habit by replacing it with a new one? What does it take to give you the energy to look at things differently?

Would true rest from your burdens fuel you? What will bring you to believe it is possible?

[Matthew 11:28-30](#): Jesus said this - he was, is and always will be the centerpiece of God's plan. Are you willing to begin seeing your reflection as a reflection of one who dwells in the peace of God through Christ?

Would the solemn word of God fuel you? What would help you believe God's word over your own word? [Isaiah 45:22-24](#): God's word and character are the most dependable forces in our universe. His word has promised us His care. Are you willing to begin seeing your reflection as one who stands in the palm of His hand?

Would the ability to cast fear aside fuel you? What must your belief be based on to replace your fear with courage? [1 John 4:16-18](#): All of what God has done, is doing and will do are a reflection of His love. Are you willing to begin seeing your reflection as a reflection of the very character of God Himself?

We can be so afraid of making mistakes (is it our pride?) that we opt for inactivity. We need to learn to not be afraid to make mistakes with the greatest of confidence in God's overruling power...**AS LONG AS WE ARE ATTEMPTING TO DO GOD'S WILL AND NOT OUR OWN.**

4. **TRADE IN** your old source of strength and put on HIS strength, for it is only then we can mount up with wings and not become weary.

[Isaiah 40:31](#): This strength does not come from you! To *wait for the Lord* requires two things: 1. There must be faith or else you would not wait. 2. There must be patience built directly upon the foundation of the faith present. The greater the faith, the greater the patience and the greater the opportunity for fulfillment!

If you want to change a habit, you have to look at what starts the habitual reaction. What is the cue? Then look at what reward you get for acting a certain way. The cue and reward are



as vital to understand and deal with as the habit itself. This is why most of us fail when we try to change our habits.

Trade in your old source of strength and look to the new strength of God. When we go to the mirror, we have a habit of what we look for. We see what we expect and sometimes the "reward" is negative like self-loathing. Ask: Is this habit my long-term desire or is it a quick fix of what my mind wants? We should be saying our life is built on something bigger.

We started by looking up to God and refocusing our minds. We then went to the realization stage, which is the natural outgrowth of looking elsewhere. Once we see and absorb what we are looking up to, we can then believe it. If our belief is sound enough, it provokes us to act! God set this process up for us in [Isaiah 40](#).

[2 Corinthians 5:16](#): We make a clear decision to look upon one another to see Christ in them. This paradigm shift allows us to see something far more valuable than physical appearance or actions. **Our view of those around us is now elevated - we look with new eyes and see new reflections:** [2 Corinthians 5:17](#) **The sum total of LOOK UP, REALIZE, BELIEVE and ACT WITH NEW STRENGTH is our transformation!** [2 Corinthians 5:18-19](#)

In a simplistic form, wisdom is "knowledge applied." We now know how to change our view of our reflection, but we need to keep that knowledge working. Let's drop in on Solomon and observe the making of his wisdom. **Solomon has become king:** [2 Chronicles 1:7-10](#)

Observations: These show an attitude ripe for the development of wisdom.

- God's command to Solomon is open-ended and reminiscent of finding Aladdin's Lamp. *Ask what I should give you.*
- Solomon's answer recalled God's mercy. *You have shown great and steadfast love to my father David.*
- Solomon's answer is God-centered. *O...God, let Your promise to my father David now be fulfilled.*
- Solomon's answer is full of humility. *You have made me king over a people as numerous as the dust of the earth.*
- Solomon's answer begs for wisdom and knowledge. *Give me now wisdom and knowledge.*
- Solomon's answer reiterates it is the people of God he is to rule.

[2 Chronicles 1:11-12](#): **Observations on God's answer:**

- God blesses heart-service not lip-service. *Because this was in your heart.*
- God recognizes Solomon's humility. *You have not asked for possessions, wealth, honor, or the life of those who hate you or long life.*
- God fulfills the needs of a king who seeks. *Wisdom and knowledge are granted to you.*
- God blesses in abundance. *I will also give you riches, possessions, and honor, such as none of the kings had who were before you, and none after you shall have the like.*

The results of seeking wisdom and God's blessing: [1 Kings 4:29-31](#): The sad part is Solomon eventually lost his wisdom through vanity.

If we apply wisdom to our lesson of seeing our own reflection as God does, we will begin to live with a peace and strength we never knew existed! That is when life changes. Look in the mirror and decide to see something different.

We know God sees potential in us, which can sometimes be discouraging. But God sees our ability to *take the steps* to follow His will. It is a choice. What reflection do you want to see when you look in the mirror? See God in you and through you.

***So, do you like what you see in the mirror?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!***