




Do You Like What You See in the Mirror?

James 1:23-24: (NASB) ²³*For 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: (NASB) ¹⁸*In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures. ¹⁹This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger; ²⁰for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God.*

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.

Good and bad habits, *Daily Habits of Successful People*, Brian Tracy

- *Well, Aristotle said that 95 percent of everything you do is the result of habit. So, the rule is, form good habits and make them your masters rather than allowing bad habits to form. In fact, the other rule says that good habits are hard to form but easy to live with. Bad habits are easy to form but hard to live with. Now, one of the turning points in my life and my studies of psychology is the discovery that all habits are learned and can be unlearned. Actually, you don't unlearn a habit. You simply replace a bad habit with a good habit that has more power and impact. And how do you develop a good habit? You develop a habit by repetition.*

We develop good habits by repetition. The good habit has to be our master based on the mind that is long-term oriented.

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.



Personal Mirror
Management

How is it possible to see something different when you look in the mirror?

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.



Three powers, *How to Say "No" to Almost Anything*, Epipheo.TV

- (Kelly McGonigal) Many people think of willpower as the ability to resist temptation, but willpower is actually three powers: "I will power," "I won't power" and "I want power." I won't power is what we typically think of as willpower. It's the ability to resist temptation. I will power - that's the ability to remember that you want the consequences of doing this difficult thing. And the third power, I want power, the ability to walk around the world with a clear memory of what it is you care about most, so that when you're deciding what to eat for lunch, it's not an automatic choice, but actually in that moment you think about your desire for health. And actually, what willpower does is it allows you to put your energy and attention on exactly what it is you want and what you care about.

Isaiah 40: Among other things, this chapter is a lesson on what God sees and therefore what we should see! (See Bonus Material for 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.

Isaiah 40:1-3: (NASB)

¹Comfort, O comfort My people, says your God. ²Speak kindly to Jerusalem; And call out to her, that her warfare has ended, That her iniquity has been removed, That she has received of the LORD'S hand double for all her sins. ³A voice is calling, clear the way for the LORD in the wilderness; Make smooth in the desert a highway for our God.



Isaiah 40:4-8: (NASB)

⁴Let every valley be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; and let the rough ground become a plain, and the rugged terrain a broad valley; ⁵Then the glory of the LORD will be revealed, And all flesh will see it together; For the mouth of the LORD has spoken. ⁶A voice says, call out. Then he answered, what shall I call out? All flesh is grass, and all its loveliness is like the flower of the field. ⁷The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the LORD blows upon it; surely the people are grass. ⁸The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever.

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.

Isaiah 40:9-11: (NASB)

⁹Get yourself up on a high mountain, O Zion, bearer of good news, Lift up your voice mightily, O Jerusalem, bearer of good news; Lift it up, do not fear. Say to the cities of Judah, here is your God! ¹⁰Behold, the Lord GOD will come with might, With His arm ruling for Him. Behold, His reward is with Him and His recompense before Him. ¹¹Like a shepherd He will tend His flock, In His arm He will gather the lambs and carry them in His bosom; He will gently lead the nursing ewes.

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.

Isaiah 40:12-17: (NASB)

¹²Who has measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, and marked off the heavens by the span, and calculated the dust of the earth by the measure, and weighed the mountains in a balance and the hills in a pair of scales? ¹³Who has directed the Spirit of the LORD, or as His counselor has informed Him? ¹⁴With whom did He consult and who gave Him understanding? And who taught Him in the path of justice and taught Him knowledge and informed Him of the way of understanding? ¹⁵Behold, the nations are like a drop from a bucket, and are regarded as a speck of dust on the scales; Behold, He lifts up the islands like fine dust. ¹⁶Even Lebanon is not enough to burn, nor its beasts enough for a burnt offering. ¹⁷All the nations are as nothing before Him, they are regarded by Him as less than nothing and meaningless.

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.

Isaiah 40:18-20: (NASB)

¹⁸To whom then will you liken God? Or what likeness will you compare with Him? ¹⁹As for the idol, a craftsman casts it, a goldsmith plates it with gold, and a silversmith fashions chains of silver. ²⁰He who is too impoverished for such an offering selects a tree that does not rot; He seeks out for himself a skillful craftsman to prepare an idol that will not totter.



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.

Isaiah 40:21-25: (NASB)

²¹Do you not know? Have you not heard? Has it not been declared to you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth? ²²It is He who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers, who stretches out the heavens like a curtain And spreads them out like a tent to dwell in. ²³He it is who reduces rulers to nothing, who makes the judges of the earth meaningless. ²⁴Scarcely have they been planted, scarcely have they been sown, scarcely has their stock taken root in the earth, But He merely blows on them, and they wither, and the storm carries them away like stubble. ²⁵To whom then will you liken Me That I would be his equal? Says the Holy One.

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: (NASB) *²⁶Lift up your eyes on high and see who has created these stars, the One who leads forth their host by number, He calls them all by name; Because of the greatness of His might and the strength of His power, not one of them is missing.*



The same God who put those stars in place is the One touching your life.



Hear God through you, Joyful Noise (2012) movie (This movie is about a very talented church choir with a new choir director who is trying to get the kids to focus and do things in a God-honoring way. This scene takes place during a rehearsal.)



- (Olivia) I'm gonna make a change for once in my life. 🎵
- (Choir Director) Alright now. You're singing too loud.
- (Olivia) It's gonna feel real good. Gonna make a difference. Gonna make it right. 🎵
- (Choir Director) Okay. This is why I shouldn't have let you all talk me into doing pop songs in church. Now don't you bring all that "Mariah/Christina" mess up in here. I don't care about hearing you. I want to hear God through you.



"I want to hear God through you." That is the essence of what we are studying today. How can we get to the point where we see God's reflection in ourselves?

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: (NASB) ²⁷Why do you say, O Jacob, and assert, O Israel, My way is hidden from the LORD, and the justice due me escapes the notice of my God? ²⁸Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth does not become weary or tired. His understanding is inscrutable. (Literally that means His intelligence is beyond investigating.)

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.



 **Honesty and discipline, *Daily Habits of Successful People*, Brian Tracy**

- *One of the most important habits is that of character and honesty. It's always tell the truth no matter what the price. The final characteristic, the final habit is that of self-discipline. And I have written and spoken on this for years and years, but self-discipline seems to be the foundation habit that makes everything else possible. And the best definition of self-discipline is that self-discipline is the ability to make yourself do what you should do, when you should do it, whether you feel like it or not. You see, anybody can do it when you feel like it. It's when you don't feel like it and you do it anyway that you eventually develop the self-discipline that makes everything else possible.*

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.

What attitudes keep us from understanding and accepting the depth of God's power in us?

Pride: Proverbs 16:17-19: (NASB) ¹⁷The highway of the upright is to depart from evil; He who watches his way preserves his life. ¹⁸Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before stumbling. ¹⁹It is better to be humble in spirit with the lowly than to divide the spoil with the proud.

Anger and Jealousy: Proverbs 27:4: (NASB) Wrath is fierce and anger is a flood, but who can stand before jealousy?



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.



Three powers, How To Say "No" to Almost Anything, Epipheo.TV

- If you want to change automatic behavior prompted by that short-term part of our brain, we can't just rely on "I won't" willpower, which will eventually wear down. We also have to tap into "I will" willpower, like whenever I am tempted to eat a piece of chocolate cake, I will eat a handful of carrots instead. Or, "I want" willpower when I am tempted to smoke, I will remind myself that I really want to be alive to see my grandchildren. By doing this we are tapping into new sources of willpower, and it will make changing those behaviors that much easier.*

"I won't" is a good place to start, but that is not the end. So often when we make a New Year's resolution, we say "I won't do this anymore." We must include "I want" and "I will" based on our long-term mind to help us elevate our behavior.

Greed: Luke 12:15: (NRSV) *And he said to them, take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for one's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions.*

Ego: Luke 16:14-15: (NASB) ¹⁴*Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, were listening to all these things and were scoffing at him. ¹⁵And he said to them, you are those who justify yourselves in the sight of men, but God knows your hearts; for that which is highly esteemed among men is detestable in the sight of God.*

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.

Eventually in the movie, *Joyful Noise*, the choir was singing with heart rather than singing to be lauded:



"Man in the Mirror," (Verse one) Joyful Noise Movie

*As I turn up the collar on
My favorite winter coat
This wind is blowin' my mind
I see the kids in the street
With not enough to eat
Who am I, to be blind?
Pretending not to see their need
A summer's disregard
A broken bottle top
And a one man's soul
They follow each other on
The wind you know
'Cause they got nowhere to go
That's why I want you to know*



*I'm starting with the man in the mirror
I'm asking him to change his ways
And no message could have been any clearer
If you wanna make the world a better place
Take a look at yourself and then make a change*

Make the change based on godly principles and His long-term view of you.

Laziness: Proverbs 26:13-15: (ASV) ¹³The sluggard saith, there is a lion in the way; A lion is in the streets. ¹⁴As the door turneth upon its hinges, so doth the sluggard upon his bed. ¹⁵The sluggard burieth his hand in the dish; it wearieth him to bring it again to his mouth.

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.

recap
recap

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.

For us to lock onto this we need to:



LOOK UP to Him who is truly mighty and embrace his power and wisdom!

REALIZE that His understanding and His eye **NOTICE** and **RESPOND** to all things!



A caller from Connecticut suggests: Every Sunday morning, you draw a bigger and better picture of God. I love to see the beautiful definitions of God's character. I like your thought on long-term investment - it was the best advice I ever got from a financial planner! There are three aspects to the mirror:
1. What we see. 2. What others see in us. 3. What God sees in 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: (NASB) ²⁹He gives strength to the weary, and to him who lacks might He increases power. ³⁰Though youths grow weary and tired, and vigorous young men stumble badly...

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!

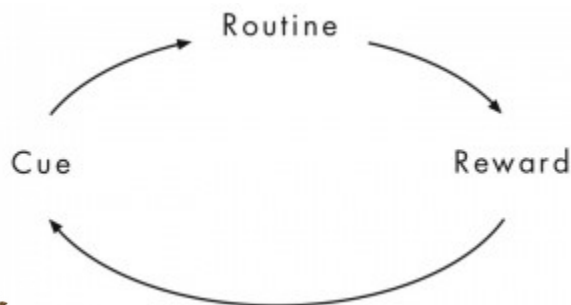
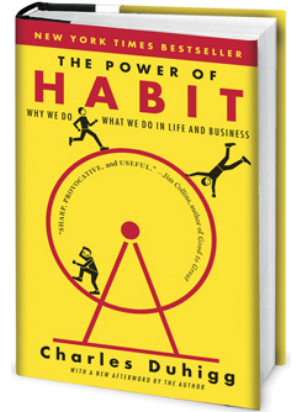




Philippians 4:13: (NKJV) *I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.*

))) Habits in three parts, *The Power of Habit*, Epipheo.TV

- (Narrator) So, if you are like me, you probably have at least a few bad habits you would like to break, but it's tough because no matter how hard I try, I seem to slip back into the same old routines again and again.
- (Charles Duhhig) In the last decade we've learned a lot about how habits work.
- (Narrator) That's Charles Duhhig author of the book, "The Power of Habit."
- (Charles Duhhig) In particular, we've learned the neurological structure of a habit.
- (Narrator) He says we tend to think of habits as a single thing, but actually...
- (Charles Duhhig) Each habit has three components. There's a cue, which is like a trigger for a behavior to start. And then there's a routine, which is a behavior itself, and then finally a reward, which is how our brain learns to encode that automatic behavior for the future.



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!



Personal Mirror
Management

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: (NASB) ²⁸*Come to me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. (If we let him!)* ²⁹*Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.* ³⁰*For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.*

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: (NASB) ²²*Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is no other.* ²³*I have sworn by Myself, the word has gone forth from My mouth in righteousness and will not turn back, that to Me every knee will bow, every tongue will*



swear allegiance. ²⁴They will say of Me, Only in the LORD are righteousness and strength. Men will come to Him, and all who were angry at Him will be put to shame.

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?

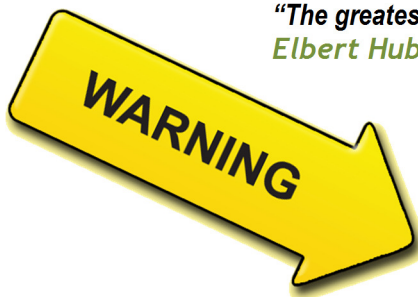
So we LOOK UP, REALIZE and BELIEVE.
How do we translate those things into a new reflection?

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: (NASB) ¹⁶We have come to know and have believed the love, which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. ¹⁷By this, love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the Day of Judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world. ¹⁸There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love.

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?

"The greatest mistake you can make in life is to be continually fearing you will make one." — Elbert Hubbard



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: (NASB) Yet those who wait for the LORD will gain new strength; they will mount up with wings like eagles, they will run and not get tired, they will walk and not become weary.

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!



Personal Mirror Management



Cue and reward, *The Power of Habit*, Epipheo.TV

- (Charles Duhigg) One of the big differences is that for years when people thought about habits, they focused in on the routine, on the behavior. But what we now know is that it's these cues and these rewards that really shape how habits occur and how to change them.
- (Narrator) Charles says that whether we like it or not, this kind of habit formation is endemic to our brain.



- *(Charles Duhigg) What it will do is our brain will latch on to a cue that it associates with a behavior and a particular reward, and over time that cue and reward become more and more sort of intertwined. The particular part of the brain named the basal ganglia will relate them together. And the behavior that's associated with that? That will just sort of happen automatically.*

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 5:16-19: (NASB) ¹⁶Therefore from now on we recognize no one according to the flesh; even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know him in this way no longer.

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.

Cue - I want to see Christ in them.

Response - How beautiful that is!

Reward - Be drawn closer to them, combating jealously and other negative emotions.

Our view of those around us is now elevated - we look with new eyes and see new reflections:

¹⁷Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

The sum total of LOOK UP, REALIZE, BELIEVE and ACT WITH NEW STRENGTH is our transformation!

¹⁸Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, ¹⁹namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

Even better, because if we are transformed the world can follow. Now that is a reflection you want to see!



"Man in the Mirror," (Verse two) Joyful Noise Movie

*I've been a victim of
A selfish kind of love
It's time that I realize
There are some with no home
Not a nickel to loan
Could it be really me
Pretending that they're not alone?
A willow deeply scarred
Somebody's broken heart
And a washed-out dream
(A washed-out dream)
They follow the pattern of
The wind, you see
'Cause they got no place to be
That's why I'm starting with me
I'm starting with the man in the mirror
I'm asking him to change his ways
And no message could have been any clearer
If you wanna make the world a better place
Take a look at yourself and then make that change
I'm starting with the man in the mirror
I'm asking him to change his ways
And no message could have been any clearer
If you wanna make the world a better place
Take a look at yourself and then make that change!*

Seek that new reflection by focusing on different things.

**The last piece of the puzzle is staying on course.
What part does wisdom play?**

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: (NRSV) ⁷That night God appeared to Solomon, and said to him, ask what I should give you. ⁸Solomon said to God, You have shown great and steadfast love to my father David, and have made me succeed him as king. ⁹O LORD God, let your promise to my father David now be fulfilled, for you have made me king over a people as numerous as the dust of the earth. ¹⁰Give me now wisdom and knowledge to go out and come in before this people, for who can rule this great people of yours?



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.** *For who can rule this great people of yours?*

The function of wisdom is to discriminate between good and evil. — Cicero

 **Design new habits, *The Power of Habit*, Epipheo.TV**

- (Narrator) Charles says the good news is that we can also use this knowledge to our advantage.
- (Charles Duhigg) There was a big study that was done about how to create exercise habits. They told a group of people to choose an obvious cue like always go running at the same time every day or put your workout clothes next to your bed so you see them first thing when you wake up. Then go for a run or go work out, and when you get back from exercising give yourself a small piece of chocolate. Now this is kind of counter-intuitive, right, because people who are exercising are trying to lose weight, not eat more chocolate. And yet what the researchers knew is the brain needed that reward. The basal ganglia needed some reward, but what they found was that people who ate a small piece of chocolate after coming home from a run or a workout, they were much more likely to start exercising habitually.
- (Narrator) So, according to Charles, whether you want to break a habit or start a new habit, the key is to divide the habit into its key component parts - routine and reward - and design it for the result that you want.

2 Chronicles 1:11-12: (NRSV) ¹¹God answered Solomon, because this was in your heart, and you have not asked for possessions, wealth, honor, or the life of those who hate you, and have not even asked for long life, but have asked for wisdom and knowledge for yourself that you may rule my people over whom I have made you king, ¹²wisdom and knowledge are granted to you. 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.



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: (NRSV) ²⁹God gave Solomon very great wisdom, discernment, and breadth of understanding as vast as the sand on the seashore, ³⁰so that Solomon's wisdom surpassed the wisdom of all the people of the east, and all the wisdom of Egypt. ³¹He was wiser than anyone else...his fame spread throughout all the surrounding nations.

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...!*

*And now even more to think about...
only in the **Full Edition** of CQ Rewind!*



Getting over a painful experience is much like crossing monkey bars. You have to let go at some point in order to move forward. — C.S. Lewis

Courage doesn't always roar. Sometimes courage is the little voice at the end of the day that says I'll try again tomorrow. — Mary Anne Radmacher

Dripping water hollows out stone, not through force but through persistence. — Ovid

A little more on Isaiah 40:

- Begins with Israel ending their double of disfavor. Verses 1-3 show us God's unalterable care for His people Israel. He literally counted the years until the consequence of disfavor could be lifted.

Isaiah 40:1-31: (NASB) ¹Comfort, O comfort My people, says your God. ²Speak kindly to Jerusalem; And call out to her, that her warfare has ended, That her iniquity has been removed, That she has received of the LORD'S hand double for all her sins. ³A voice is calling, clear the way for the LORD in the wilderness; Make smooth in the desert a highway for our God.

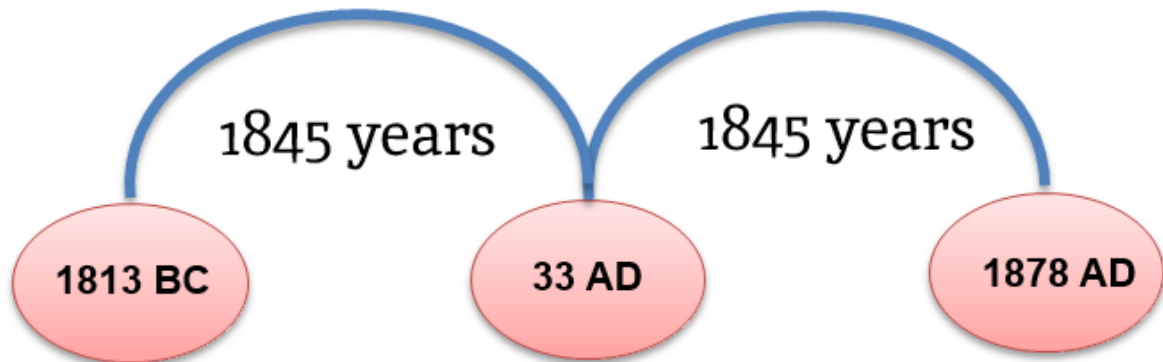
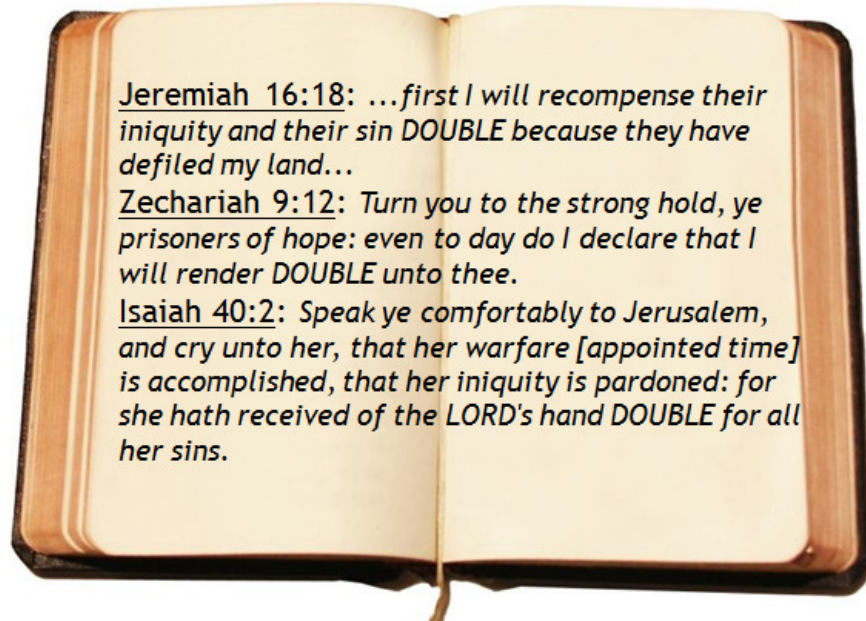
This ending of disfavor came in the late 1800's and was signaled by the Jews' first settlement in Israel called Peta Tikveh, translated "Door of Hope."



The head of the *fleshy* house was Jacob. Through his twelve sons he founded the nation of Israel. The head of the *spiritual* house is Jesus. Through his twelve apostles he founded spiritual Israel, the church.

Three scriptures refer to Israel's period of disfavor as a "double" or repetition of their period of favor:

Israel's Double



Genesis 49: When Jacob (also named "Israel") died, God's *favor* extended to his twelve sons and their progeny.

Matthew 23:38: "Behold your house is left unto you desolate." Israel's national rejection of Messiah begins a period of 1845 years of God's *disfavor*.

Petah Tikvah established; formal period of disfavor ends; Israel begins returning to the Land.



- **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 the end and shows us how to see the same!

⁴Let every valley be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; and let the rough ground become a plain, and the rugged terrain a broad valley; ⁵Then the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all flesh will see it together; For the mouth of the LORD has spoken. ⁶A voice says, call out. Then he answered, what shall I call out? All flesh is grass, and all its loveliness is like the flower of the field. ⁷The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the LORD blows upon it; surely the people are grass. ⁸The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever. ⁹Get yourself up on a high mountain, O Zion, bearer of good news, Lift up your voice mightily, O Jerusalem, bearer of good news; Lift it up, do not fear. Say to the cities of Judah, here is your God!

After the re-gathering of Israel, there has been a shaking of the governments of this world. It becomes the responsibility of the true church to relay the message of the good news of the kingdom!

- **Reminds 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!

¹⁰Behold, the Lord GOD will come with might, With His arm ruling for Him. Behold, His reward is with Him and His recompense before Him. ¹¹Like a shepherd He will tend His flock, In His arm He will gather the lambs and carry them in His bosom; He will gently lead the nursing ewes.

During this time of shaking, the true church will complete its journey and be gathered to God.

- **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.

¹²Who has measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, and marked off the heavens by the span, and calculated the dust of the earth by the measure, and weighed the mountains in a balance and the hills in a pair of scales? ¹³Who has directed the Spirit of the LORD, or as His counselor has informed Him? ¹⁴With whom did He consult and who gave Him understanding? And who taught Him in the path of justice and taught Him knowledge and informed Him of the way of understanding? ¹⁵Behold, the nations are like a drop from a bucket, and are regarded as a speck of dust on the scales; Behold, He lifts up the islands like fine dust. ¹⁶Even Lebanon is not enough to burn, nor its beasts enough for a burnt offering. ¹⁷All the nations are as nothing before Him, they are regarded by Him as less than nothing and meaningless.

These few prophetic details just cited are a glimpse of the power and might of God over ALL things from the mere physical aspects of earth to the application of justice and wisdom to its inhabitants.

- **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 His own human creation make.

¹⁸To whom then will you liken God? Or what likeness will you compare with Him? ¹⁹As for the idol, a craftsman casts it, a goldsmith plates it with gold, and a silversmith fashions chains of silver. ²⁰He who is too impoverished for such an offering selects a tree that does not rot; He seeks out for himself a skillful craftsman to prepare an idol that will not totter.



The absolute silliness of idolatry!

- **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.

²¹Do you not know? Have you not heard? Has it not been declared to you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth? ²²It is He who sits above the circle of the earth,

Here we see in ancient times God revealed that the earth was round - not flat.

And its inhabitants are like grasshoppers, who stretches out the heavens like a curtain and spreads them out like a tent to dwell in.

In ancient times, God revealed the earth has an atmosphere - like a curtain - which separates that which is inside from that which is outside. Curtains were often used to keep heat in. The tent shows us how the earth's atmosphere literally surrounds it.

²³He it is who reduces rulers to nothing, who makes the judges of the earth meaningless. ²⁴Scarcely have they been planted, Scarcely have they been sown, Scarcely has their stock taken root in the earth, But He merely blows on them, and they wither, And the storm carries them away like stubble. ²⁵To whom then will you liken Me That I would be his equal? Says the Holy One.

God truly is above all! Now that we know this, we can read the rest of the chapter.

The result - here are the four steps that can come into play once we absorb and accept the greatness previously displayed:

²⁶Lift up your eyes on high And see who has created these stars, The One who leads forth their host by number, He calls them all by name; Because of the greatness of His might and the strength of His power, not one of them is missing. ²⁷Why do you say, O Jacob, and assert, O Israel, My way is hidden from the LORD, and the justice due me escapes the notice of my God? ²⁸Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth does not become weary or tired. His understanding is inscrutable. ²⁹He gives strength to the weary, and to him who lacks might He increases power. ³⁰Though youths grow weary and tired, and vigorous young men stumble badly, ³¹Yet those who wait for the LORD Will gain new strength; They will mount up with wings like eagles, They will run and not get tired, They will walk and not become weary.