

James Lesson 2 Article

God's Mirror

This is the main purpose for owning a mirror, to be able to see yourself and make yourself look as clean and neat as possible. As we look into the mirror of God's Word, we see ourselves as we really are. James mentions several mistakes people make as they look into **God's mirror**.

First, *they merely glance at themselves*. They do not carefully study themselves as they read the Word. Many sincere believers read a chapter of the Bible each day, but it is only a religious exercise and they fail to profit from it personally. Their conscience would bother them if they did not have their daily reading, when actually their conscience should bother them *because they read the Word carelessly*. A cursory reading of the Bible will never reveal our deepest needs. It is the difference between a candid photo and an X ray.

The second mistake is that *they forget what they see*. If they were looking deeply enough into their hearts, what they would see would be unforgettable! We tend to smile at the "extremes" of people back in the days of the great revivals, but perhaps we could use some of that conviction. John Wesley wrote about a preaching service: "One before me dropped as dead, and presently a second, and a third. Five others sunk down in half an hour, most of whom were in violent agonies" (*Wesley's Journal* for June 22, 1739). Before we consign these people to some psychological limbo, remember how saints in the Bible responded to the true knowledge of their own hearts. Isaiah cried, "Woe is me! for I am undone!" (Isa. 6:5) Peter cried, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" (Luke 5:8) Job was the most righteous man on earth in his day, yet he confessed, "I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes" (Job 42:6).

Mistake number three is: *they fail to obey what the Word tells them to do*. They think that *hearing* is the same as *doing*, and it is not. We Christians enjoy substituting *reading* for *doing*, or even *talking* for *doing*. We hold endless committee meetings and conferences about topics like evangelism and church growth, and think we have made progress. While there is certainly nothing wrong with conferences and committee meetings, they are sinful if they are a substitute for service.

If we are to use God's mirror profitably, then we must gaze into it carefully and with serious intent (James 1:25). No quick glances will do. We must examine our own hearts and lives in the light of God's Word. This requires time, attention, and sincere devotion. Five minutes with God each day will never accomplish a deep spiritual examination.¹

The Word

Just as a newborn baby does not have to be taught to hunger for its mother's milk, the newborn child of God does not have to be taught to hunger for God's Word, his spiritual food and drink. That is the natural impulse of his new spiritual life, of his new creation. To use another metaphor, his spiritual dial is tuned to the frequency of Scripture.²

¹ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Jas 1:22). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

² MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1998). *James*. MacArthur New Testament Commentary (65–66). Chicago: Moody Press.