



God's Mirror

bible study

By Rev. Daniel Paavola

Opening: Pray for God's vision of us to become our own vision. Pray also that we see others as God does in His mirror.

Mirrors, Mirrors, On The Wall,
I'd Just As Soon Avoid Them All.

If possible, I don't try on clothes before I buy them. It's not the little rooms, the hidden pins, or the stiff collars that get me. It's the mirrors. Changing room mirrors show sides of me that I never see otherwise, and I would just as soon keep it that way. I'm amazed that people see me that way every day and actually keep their eyes open.

Now, you might love the mirrors in your life. That's wonderful, and I wish for you a long, happy reflective life. But if you can relate to my problem with mirrors, then we're ready for God's view of us in **Ephesians 5**. God uses our ordinary relationships to reflect His own relationship with us.

In **Ephesians 5:32** Paul, having quoted **Genesis 2:24** concerning a man and wife becoming one flesh, then says: *This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church* (ESV). There-

fore, what does the marriage experience show us about our relationship with Jesus? The good news is that this is a mirror with only the best views of us all in Christ.

A Very Costly Engagement Ring

The first mirror is engagement. What reflects light, love, and hope better than a beautiful engagement ring? While we can't impose our 21st Century engagement practices on the Bible, there's biblical truth in the costly action of the groom beginning the engagement. We're His choice by grace, before the world's foundation, **Ephesians 1:3–6**. This choice is not dependent on our past or our promised future. It is made timelessly by His own action.

But there is a cost. While **Ephesians 1** shows the eternal view of God's choice, that selection came at His personal expense. Consider the groom-to-be who goes searching, day after day, for the perfect ring. He has sold his car, his motorcycle, his boat — everything — to get the money for this ring. Finally, he finds the right one. Seeing it, people stop in amazement. How could he pay so much? And who is this woman for whom so much is spent?

Perhaps the ring that binds us to Him is Jesus' crown of thorns worn on the cross. That is an expensive ring! That's a ring that took years to shape. That's a ring that stops the world whenever it's seen. He poured His entire life into that moment. The lasting circle of His crown is the binding, eternal choice of God for each of us.

Read **Ephesians 5:25–31**. Consider the following questions:

Why should it cost something to buy the engagement/wedding ring? In other words, why should the groom-to-be not say, "Honey, you won't believe it! I got this for almost nothing!"

How does the crowning sacrifice of Jesus' death present us *to himself in splendor*, **verse 27** (ESV)?

Since, as **verse 29** states, no one is expected to harm his own body but rather cherish and nourish it, why would Jesus give up His entire life for us?

When the world sees the price paid for us, how might our image improve, at least in the eyes of those who can count that cost?

For One Long Shining Moment

Engagement is a great time and showing off the ring is wonderful. But soon everyone has seen it. There has to be something more — the wedding day. If ever there is a day for mirrors, this is it. I hope that every bride is pleased with what the mirror shows as she walks into the church. Even more, I hope that she is pleased with the reflected view that

comes with the groom's smile. Being pleased with herself in the mirror is one thing; seeing pure joy and love in the eyes of her husband is even better.

Read **Titus 3:3–7** and recall **Ephesians 5:25–27**. Consider the following questions:

Many brides show up at the church two hours before the service wearing torn blue jeans and an old sweatshirt. Oh the difference two hours later! So also for us in the transformation done by Christ. What has to be removed before the wedding moment can begin?

How perfectly do we appear in the mirror of God's sight? (Imagine the ultimate *Say Yes To The Dress* episode.)

But while God says that He finds nothing wrong with us, **Ephesians 5**, we still know we're not perfect. Should we correct His view and point out our flaws?

But Now There's Two

Maybe the best cure for our fear of mirrors is to bring someone else into the picture. Then we don't have to look at ourselves at all. We can focus completely on that other person. That's the final step in the mirror of God. Once we are united with Christ, our view changes from ourselves to Him. We move from the wedding day to the marriage, to a lifetime of seeing someone besides ourselves. Our fears of how we look are calmed when we see Him, with us, and in action for us.

Read **Romans 8:33–39** and recall **Ephesians 5:25–33**. Consider the following questions:

How closely to Christ have we become in the view of God? See also **Galatians 3:26–28**.

When do we see Jesus in action for us? Especially what do we see Him doing in **Romans 8:34**?

Related to this, there is a third Person in the mirror. What is the Spirit doing on our behalf in **Romans 8:26–27**?

If we are afraid of being separated from God, viewed harshly again in a mirror of judgment, what message should we hear from Him in **Romans 5:1** and **Romans 8:1**?

In The End, It's Not The Clothes

When we're finished looking into God's mirror, what matters is not what we're wearing or how we promise to look better next time. It's the relationship with our Savior who is willing to be seen with us. It's His place beside us and within us and His view of us that matters. When He says that in His view we look perfect, that's the last image we need from the mirror.

Closing: Pray to be able to see ourselves as God sees us, without stain, wrinkle, or blemish. Pray also that our focus is not on ourselves but on Jesus who is willing to be seen with us.

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