

Looking in the Mirror

By Ginny Larsen

The first thing in the morning I usually do after I get up is to look into the mirror and see what I need to deal with for the day to prepare my outward appearance in a way that I will be able to present myself to the Lord for His service and to others who have to spend any time with me. Sometimes when I get up it looks pretty challenging! The damage of the night is evident! I can choose to ignore what I see and just walk away from that mirror as I am and say, "Who cares?" I don't want to bother with it, but that is pretty disrespectful to both God and those I am in contact with. Or I can say to myself, "I belong to the Lord and I am to love others as I love myself, so I need to present myself as I perceive the Lord and others would have me best do to bless them."

There is another kind of mirror that is a mirror of our soul that we have been given. It is the Word of God. It shows us the hidden things of the heart when we look into it, if we do so honestly in humility before God. We can treat that mirror view of our hearts in many different ways as we look at the reflection we see there. *"For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known. So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love"* (1 Corinthians 13:12-13). *"Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. But be 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 who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing"* (James 1:21-25).

Ancient mirrors were made of polished brass or other metals; they were not clear and gave a dim image to the one who looked into it. Just so, we only see all that God has for us in eternity very dimly, as a dim image of what is to come. We don't see everything perfectly, though His Word gives us all we need at this time for life and godliness. But when that day comes that we are standing before Him and receiving our full redemption, we will then know fully, just as we are even now fully known by Him. What a glorious day that will be! We will have been perfectly conformed to that perfect image of the Son! This is even now what the Lord is doing and what He has called us to: to be conformed to the image of His Son. Everything that comes into the life of a believer is to that purpose. *"And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose. For those whom He foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, in order that He might be the firstborn among many brothers"* (Romans 8:28-29).

But He gives us the mirror of His Word that we might look into it each day in order for that work of being made into His image to be done. It both shows us His image that we are to walk more and more according to and which we are being made into. It also shows us an image of ourselves, which tells us how far from His image we have come. It exposes the hidden things of our hearts and contrasts our sinful nature to His perfect divine nature. As we gaze more and more into that perfect reflection of Who He is, we begin more and more to walk by faith according to that, and it is more and more reflected in our lives.

But as James says in James 1:24-25 above, we can also walk away and forget what we've seen and be hearers of the Word but not doers. The Lord has been showing me lately even as I perceived myself as a "doer" of the Word, that there are many ways I need to newly apply that

Word to my daily life that I've overlooked in reading it, as I face a new challenge and a new trial in my life. Sometimes the road ahead seems impossible, and we don't want to face it. We want to just look away, hope it isn't true, and hope it will not be something we have to truly face. But as the plaque I have on my living room wall says, "If God brings you to it, He will bring you through it." Just as in past trials, I have gone to the Word to find my strength and comfort and counsel, I must now as well face this challenge, be obedient to the Word, apply it in every aspect to my life in faith, and trust the Lord, even as I feel I do not have what it takes to do so or the strength to do so. To me it seems impossible, but with God all things are possible, and **He** makes the way. The Word is not only my mirror, but it is my road map, my counsel, my guide on the path that the Lord already has prepared for me to lead me through this "red sea" I must face, even as I trust Him alone to part the waters and lead me through it. As I read it, I am convicted of my lack as well as His provision, and I am strengthened in faith to act on it.

One small example happened to me as I was reading Romans 12:12 recently, which I have made my verse for the day to memorize and hopefully practice more each day: "*Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.*" I am also focused on the next verse: "*Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord*" (Romans 12:11).

We "serve" the Lord by our faith in His Word which brings obedience. Through these little verses, I saw so many ways I was letting my flesh overcome in me and cause me to be ineffective in big things as well as little things daily. I looked up the word "slothful" as well as "fervent." Lately I have been more weary than usual, and it is so easy for me when I am weary, both physically and emotionally, to be slothful in putting off doing things that need doing spiritually, in prayer for others, or in doing things for my own family. The anxiety of being overwhelmed and weary causes me to procrastinate or even to neglect doing certain things, and the weariness is the opposite of being "fervent." I can let the foreboding of life ahead take away all the energy for life now today and let it rob me of joy as well as strength.

I read these things thinking I need to be a "doer" of the Word, not just read it, agreeing, but then forgetting to practice. I need to rejoice **in hope**, as it is a command of the Lord as well as something I can trust in – that I do indeed have hope in the Lord and promise for the future. The Lord is pointing out to me daily where I need to "practice," "apply," and be a "doer" and not just a reader! So, I need to be **trusting Him** to make me aware throughout the day, as I go along, as that's when it's easy to forget. Sometimes when trials and challenges come, it quickens us to the need to be more of a doer, a "practicer" of each of the things we read in His Word that otherwise may just escape our notice.

Fervent from Vine's NT: C. Verb. zeo (G2204), "to be hot, to boil" (Eng. "zeal" is akin), is metaphorically used of "fervency" of spirit, Act_18:25; Rom_12:11.

This is so opposite of weariness of spirit! I cannot let myself grow "weary in well-doing." No wonder Paul said to "*rejoice always; again I say, Rejoice*" (Philippians 4:4)! His joy is our strength, and when we allow depression over our circumstances to set in (and who had more reason to be depressed than Paul?) then it robs our strength. We need to present ourselves to Christ as a living sacrifice and look to Him, knowing He lives in us as Believers, and that "I've been crucified with Him and risen with Him and the life I now live I live by faith in Him." I can by faith put on Christ and trust in His resurrection power in me. My eyes will have to be on Him as He daily continues to conform me to that image. If I tried to overcome in myself and with my eyes on me, I would faint in despair! I would only become more weary! But as I look into that

perfect image of Christ in His Word, that Word works in me to conform me to His image even as the Spirit He has given me takes that Word in power and makes it effective in me.

I can rejoice in hope because that hope is very, very real – a real and living hope! It is a sure hope. I will see the glory of the Lord in all He allows or brings into my life. His Word is powerful and effective to bring about all that He purposes it to. What a joy that we are called according to that purpose and are being made into His image through it! What a loss if I fail to trust it, agree with it, and obey it!