

God's Word - Our Mirror



What God's Word Will Do for You (Part 9)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be back with you again today sharing with you the wonderful secrets of "What God's Word Will Do For You." Yesterday I spoke about God's Word as the means to cleanse us and to sanctify us; that is, to make us holy. I explained how God's ultimate purpose goes beyond simply making us pure and separating us from sin. His ultimate purpose is to make us share in His own holiness. Today I'm going to speak about an aspect of God's Word that is unfamiliar to many people: God's Word as our mirror. In James 1:21–25, we read these words about the work of God's Word in us and how we are to receive it:

> "Therefore putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls. [So we have to receive the Word as something implanted in our souls which is able to bring us salvation. But then James warns us that we have to act on what the Word says.] But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. For if any one is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; For once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. But 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 shall be blessed in what he does."

So you see, when God's Word comes to us, we have two obligations: to receive it with humility and to act on it on what it says. And then James uses the example of the mirror. He says that when we read the Word of God or when we are confronted with it, it's like a mirror held up in front of our eyes which shows us what we're really like. It doesn't show us our external experience but our inward nature and character. Now, I've proved this true in my experience many years ago.

I was, at that time, a professor of philosophy at Cambridge University. I felt it my duty to study the Bible as work of

philosophy, not believing in its authority or making any distinction between it and the many other books that I've read. Gradually, reading the Bible completely changed me. And I want to read a passage to you from my book, Foundation for Faith, in which I describe the change that took place as I studied the Bible. I'm referring now to this passage here in James 1.

> "James here compares the operation of God's Word to a mirror. The only difference is that a normal, material mirror shows us only what James calls our 'natural face'—that is, our external, physical features and appearance. On the other hand, the mirror of God's Word, as we look into it, reveals not our external, physical features, but our inward spiritual nature and condition. It reveals to us those things about ourselves which no material mirror and no work of merely human wisdom can reveal—things which we can never come to know in any other way or through any other means.
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> Someone has summed this up by saying: 'Remember that while you are reading your Bible, your Bible is also reading you.'
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> I can still recall, after the lapse of many years, how definitely and how vividly I first proved this in my own experience. I first commenced to study the Bible as a skeptic and an unbeliever—with the background of a student and a teacher of philosophy. I approached it as being merely one among many systems of philosophy in the world. However, as I continued to study it, I became conscious, even against my own will, of certain strange and deep-seated changes taking place within myself. My attitude of intellectual superiority, my sense of self-confidence and self-sufficiency began to crumble.
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> I had adopted the attitude of the ancient Greek philosopher, who said: 'Man is the measure of all things.' I had assumed that by my own intellectual and critical faculties I was capable of measuring any book or system of wisdom that I cared to study. But now to my own surprise, as I studied the Bible, even though I could not fully understand it, I became conscious that I was being measured by some standard that was not my own, nor that of any human being. Like Belshazzar, in the hour of his feast, there seemed to open up before my unwilling eyes the words: 'Thou art weighed in the balances and found wanting.'
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> Without any special change of outward circumstance, I became inwardly restless and dissatisfied. Pleasures and activities of various kinds, which had previously attracted and occupied me, lost their power to divert or to entertain. I became increasingly conscious of some deep need within my own being which I could neither define nor satisfy. I did not clearly understand it, but through the mirror of His Word, God was showing me the truth concerning my own inner need and emptiness.
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> After several months, this revelation of my need caused me, even in my spiritual ignorance and blindness, to seek God with humility and sincerity. Finding Him in this way, I discovered that He who had thus revealed my need through His written Word was able also to satisfy it completely through the Person of His Living Word, the Lord Jesus Christ."

Well, that was my personal testimony. The Bible served as a mirror in my life to show me things that no human work of wisdom or philosophy or intellectual studies could ever reveal to me. However, bear in mind that a mirror only helps us if we act on what we see. If we look in the mirror and see that our face is dirty, we should go and wash it. If we see that our clothes are in disorder or our hair is in disorder, we should go and make the necessary adjustments. So it is when we look in the mirror of God's Word. It shows us the things that are unclean and that are out of order in our lives, but it only helps us if, after we see these things, we make the necessary adjustments and bring our lives into line with God's requirements.

What, then are the appropriate responses when the mirror of God's Word shows us our inner condition, shows us the things that are wrong, the things that need cleansing or adjusting or setting in order? I would suggest to you there are three things we should consider, as necessary. First, we receive the revelation, we don't argue with it. We just say, "That's right. That's how I really am." Secondly, we believe God's promises that always come with His revelations. And thirdly, by faith, we appropriate God's provision.

Now, if we will take these three simple steps, then a wonderful change will come in what the mirror will show us because it will then show us not what we are without Christ and in our sinful condition, but it will show us what we are in Christ. It will show us a wonderful inner transformation that has taken place within us, and we'll begin to see things like

this: 2 Corinthians 5:17:

> "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!"

That's what the mirror shows us when we are in Christ. And then a little further on, in 2 Corinthians 5:21:

> "God made him who knew no sin [that's Jesus] to be sin for us, so that in him [Jesus] we might become the righteousness of God."

When we look in the mirror now we don't see ourselves in our sinful condition, but we see ourselves with the righteousness of God through faith in Christ imputed to us. We can also turn to Isaiah 61:10, where it says:

> "I delight greatly in the Lord: my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels."

That's what the mirror shows us when we are in Christ. No longer do we see the dirty rags of our own self-righteousness, our own achievements and cleverness and intellectual ability, but we see ourselves clothed in a completely different style. With a garment of salvation and a robe of righteousness, the righteousness of Jesus Christ, and we begin to see God imparting to us spiritual grace and spiritual beauty.

There's another beautiful passage about the mirror that I want to read to you in 2 Corinthians 3:18:

> "But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit."

You see, there's an ongoing process of transformation. All the time that we are looking there into the mirror of God's Word and we're open to the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit is transforming us into the likeness of what we're looking at. We glimpse Jesus, the Holy Spirit moves in our heart, we become like Jesus in that particular respect. We look back again in the mirror, we get a new glimpse of Jesus, and the Holy Spirit changes us in that respect. And so, the more we gaze into this mirror and the more we behold the glory of the Lord revealed in this mirror, the more we are transformed by the Holy Spirit. Bear in mind this important fact: that it's only while we're looking in the mirror of God's Word that the Spirit transforms us. When we take our eyes away from the mirror, when we turn to human wisdom or human theories or even human theology, the Holy Spirit can no longer operate upon us. The Holy Spirit operates when we, in faith, look at the Word of God and allow it to reveal to us what God wants us to be and what we can become in Christ. And then we are continually being transformed from glory to glory. The Spirit of God is moving and working upon our hearts and in our lives making us into the likeness of what we have seen in the mirror of the Word.

All right, our time is up for today. I'll be back with you gain tomorrow at this time. I'll be bringing you the last of my talks on this theme, "What God's Word Will Do For You." I'll be speaking on God's Word as Our Judge."

Radio Program

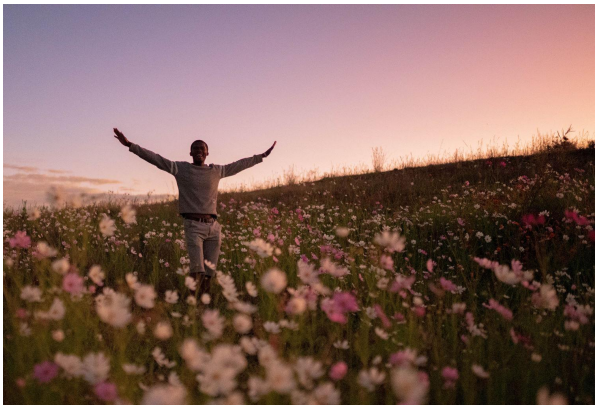
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Last Updated: 13 Apr 2023
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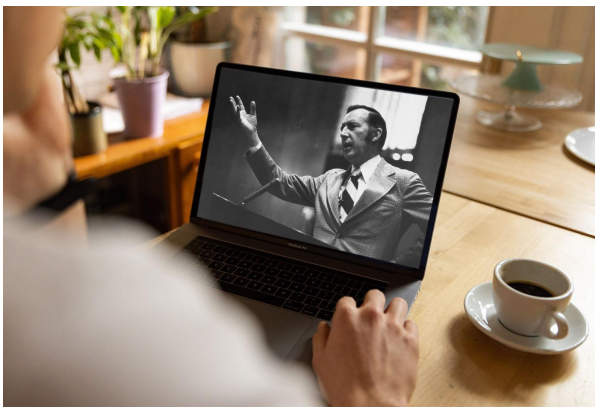
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