



Wisdom Beyond the Mirror

1 Peter 2:9–10

We are described by Jesus as His beautiful creation, chosen, rescued and redeemed, beloved sons or daughters, adopted into His family, a part of His church, set apart for the good, the true, and the beautiful, and following His ways for Him to be known to the ends of the earth.

“Who am I?” This is a core question that all of us, from the youngest to the oldest, struggle with. Obviously, it shifts and changes for men and women, from different ages to different seasons of life. And for many of us, it often comes down to the mirror, how we see ourselves.

Article – “Mirror, Mirror – A summary of research findings on body image”

- Concern for appearance and standards of what is and is not beautiful is evident throughout history.
- Recently, media has intensified and distorted the standard of beauty where the current media ideal of thinness for women is achievable by less than 5% of the female population.
- 8 out of 10 women are dissatisfied with their appearance.
- Men generally have a more positive body image or are indifferent, but there is increasing evidence of greater body-dissatisfaction among adolescent males and middle-aged men.
- Surprisingly, male body builders experience greater dissatisfaction with their appearance in contrast to other men, while female body builders have a more positive body-image than other women.

“The wounded spirit is born by many, yet it often can’t be seen. It can be a burden heavy enough to bend and warp the course of our lives, but it’s buried deeply, hidden in a secret place, and we’ve been afraid to talk about it.” Frank Peretti, ‘The Wounded Spirit’

HOW WOULD GOD DESCRIBE YOU? But let us first look at it from a different angle.

OT Descriptions:

- Moses – “Man of God” – (Deuteronomy 33:1, Joshua 14:6, Psalm 90:1, Ezra 3:2, 1 Chronicles 23:14, 2 Chronicles 30:16)
 - “The Lord would speak to Moses face to face, as one speaks to a friend.” (Exodus 33:11)
- Caleb and Joshua – “they followed the Lord wholeheartedly” (Numbers 32:12, Numbers 14:24, Deuteronomy 1:36, Joshua 14:8-9, 14)
- David – “a man after God’s own heart” (1 Samuel 13:14, Acts 13:22)

1st & 2nd Kings (2nd Chronicles)

- 1st & 2nd Kings is the description of the succession of Solomon’s reign from King David and then the split into two kingdoms, Rehoboam in the south (Judah), Jeroboam in the north (Israel). It was a rollercoaster of reigns where they “did what was right in the eyes of the Lord” or “did what was evil in the eyes of the Lord”.
- Northern kingdom: 0 for 20 – thumbs up
- Southern kingdom: 8 thumbs up, 12 thumbs down
- “Did what was right in the eyes of the Lord” - 1) Worship the God of Israel alone, 2) Rid Israel of Idolatry, 3) Faithful to the covenant
- And yet, it was not always clear cut. There were several “however’s” (10x in 1 Kings) in their reign. I.e., 1 Kings 22:43 – Jehoshaphat “did what was right in the eyes of the Lord. The high places, however, were not removed, and the people continued to offer sacrifices and burn incense there.”

Reflection

- What is your “however”? Are you fully devoted to God and His ways?
- Conviction versus shame – shame condemns us; conviction leads us to the best of what God has for us.
- **Family** – how has God called you as a son or daughter, brother or sister, husband or wife, father or mother, uncle or aunt, grandfather or grandmother?
- **Work** – are you working with all your heart? Are you treating your employees or co-workers with dignity and fairness? Are you reflecting God’s heart to act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God?
- **School** – Are you doing all things for the glory of God? Are you trusting God for your grades, sport dreams, and college desires? Do you help those that are in need?
- **Neighborhood** – Do you hang out with your neighbors? Do you pray for them? Do you share the gospel with them? Do you love them?

Bigger “however”

- There is a bigger “however”, another twist to the story. It is called the gospel, the good news. It is Jesus, and us ultimately being described through Him.

1 Peter 2:9 – 10

- Think back to the mirror and how we so easily describe ourselves by our appearance. This passage does not talk about appearance, it talks about transformed hearts in community.
- The context of 1 Peter as depicted in chapter 2 is of Jesus “scattered through the Mediterranean world”. They were the diaspora, foreigners in other countries. Probably asking, “Who am I?”
- This is a picture of God’s action, Him choosing and rescuing us.
- Chosen – God chose you – He wants you. It is nothing that we have done but rather His sovereign desire. He chose you. Isaiah 43:1, “But now, this is what the Lord says – he who created you, Jacob, he who formed you, Israel: “Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine.”
- Rescued us - “Him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.” – Colossians 1:13, “For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.”
- It is God who chooses; it is God who rescues us. We are defined by Jesus and there is nothing that can change that.

Timeout – “I feel like you are saying two things that don’t seem to fit.”

1. What I do matters. That I should desire and try to be a “person of God”, to “follow God whole-heartedly”, to be “a man after God’s own heart”, “to do what is right in the eyes of the Lord.”
2. What I do does not matter. It is Jesus who did it all for me. He chose me, rescued, and redeemed me. I am defined by Him.

Does what we do matter? Yes! A resounding Yes!

- It was Jesus who said in Matthew 5:16, “let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.” In Matthew 25:40, “Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.”
- 1 Peter 2:9 – “holy nation” – echoes from the OT - “be holy as I am holy” – set apart, sacred – following the ways of God to thrive

Does what you do earn your salvation? No! A resounding No!

- Ephesians 2:8-9, “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast.” - our salvation, our life in Jesus now, our life in Jesus for eternity is

all grace. It is a pure gift. But it is a gift to transform us towards His ways. In Ephesians 2:10, “For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”

“Grace is not opposed to effort, it is opposed to earning.” Dallas Willard, ‘The Great Omission’

How does God describe you?

We are described by Jesus as His beautiful creation, chosen, rescued and redeemed, beloved sons and daughters, adopted into His family, a part of His church, set apart for the good, the true, and the beautiful, and following His ways for Him to be known to the ends of the earth.

Declaration of truth over you:

1. I am God’s workmanship, created in Christ to do God’s works. (Ephesians 2:10)
2. I am a new creation in Christ. (2 Corinthians 5:17)
3. God has chosen me to be his very own. (Thessalonians 1:4)
4. I am fearfully and wonderfully made. (Psalm 139:14) (Ephesians 2:10)
5. I have the peace of God that passes all understanding. (Philippians 4:7)
6. I have the greater one living in me than he who is in this world. (1 John 4:4)
7. I am born of God, and the enemy has no hold over me or my family (1 John 5:18)
8. My God will supply all my needs according to his riches in glory. (Philippians 4:19)
9. God has not given me a spirit of fear, but peace, love, and self-control (2 Timothy 1:7)
10. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. (Philippians 4:13)

Discussion Questions:

Head: Do you feel like our media-saturated culture is distorting our view of beauty?

Heart: What is your “however”? Is there an area in your life where you are not giving your all to God and not being a part of all His ways?

Hands: How can you live more into the identity that God has given you? Who can you encourage today towards how God might describe them?