



Self-Image, the Man in the Mirror

By JENNIFER JOHN, Contributor to Engross Magazine
Published January 26, 2010

Billions of consumer dollars are spent each year on the shopping experience. The newsstands are filled with magazines covered with attractive people displaying the latest of everything; you name it from fashion must-haves to our favorite culinary delights. We are constantly bombarded with messages in media dictating what we should wear, what we need,

what we should have and how we should look. Fashion Retail is a lucrative industry and can attribute most of its success to this simple philosophy - if it looks great on the customer, they will feel great and if they feel great they will buy it. Retailers know that there is a direct relation between how we feel when seeing ourselves wearing their items and actually purchasing the product. For this reason, most clothing stores are filled with mirrors, strategically placed and positioned throughout the location to encourage the “good feeling” we get when we see ourselves looking great wearing their product.

So what do you see, when you look into the mirror? How does that person in the mirror look to you? Is there something in particular that catches your attention? Is it a physical attribute – such as your height, your weight, your hair, your nose or your eyes or is it something that is not readily seen with the optical eye – wounds from a past experience. When some look into the mirror, they tend to focus on more than what is being seen through the optical eye, they see personality, what others think of them, unrealistic expectations placed by others or themselves on their lives, past failures or traumatic experiences. It is very important how you see yourself because it will determine what you think of yourself.

Every one of us has a mental picture, an imagery of ourselves. This image consists of what we think we look like, how we see our personality, what kind of person we think we are, what we believe others think of us, how much we like ourselves or think others like us, and the position or status we feel we have in life. This picture is strongly based on our interactions with others and our life experiences. Snap-shots taken throughout our journey in life whether consciously or sub-consciously have impacted the image we have of ourselves. Words spoken to us or things that people have done can negatively impact our self-image. There are people who still struggle today with unpleasant experiences or hurtful words spoken to them in their past and some even from their childhood. They see themselves through tainted glass, a distorted view of their true self.

In His Image

Genesis 1:26-28 "God spoke: *"Let us make human beings in our image, make them reflecting our nature...he created them godlike, reflecting God's nature. He created them male and female."*

We were made in God's image, reflecting His nature. Everything that makes God who He is was poured into us. Our self-image, how we see ourselves, is to reflect His image. God designed us to be just like Him, to have His personality, to have His attributes, to function just like He does. He created the God-image from the very beginning for His children. This is the plan that God has for each of us. This was the plan that He had for Adam and Eve. Adam and Eve were created in this image. The scripture says that after God made Adam and Eve, *the two of them, the man and his wife, were naked but they felt no shame* (Genesis 2:25). However, after they ate the fruit from the tree that God instructed them not to, the scripture says that they saw what was really going on - that they were naked. They sewed leaves together to cover themselves and hid from God. When God came walking through the garden in the cool of the day, He called out to the Man (both Adam and Eve) and Adam answered God saying *"I heard you in the garden and I was afraid because I was naked. And I hid."* To which God asked him *"Who told you that you were naked..."*. What changed for Adam and Eve? They were naked before they ate the forbidden fruit and felt no shame whatsoever – I believe that they no longer saw themselves with the God-image. They saw themselves through the reflection of sin and shame – Sin Consciousness. When you see yourself the way God sees you, there is no room for sin, shame or condemnation.

God sent his only beloved Son, Jesus to die on the cross to restore man in right relationship with Himself. On Jesus, was laid, all of our shame, sins, rebellion, hurt, pain, diseases and sicknesses, everything that would keep us separated from God. Christ came and brought salvation to a dying world. Christ also brought the God-image back to mankind. So when you give your life to Christ you position yourself to receive the God-image for your life – *"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: **old things are passed away**; behold, all things are become new"* (2 Corinthians 5:17). God has reflected His image and nature in Christ. Jesus said to His disciples, *"If you have seen me you have seen the Father"* (John 14:9). When you look at Christ you see God's personality shining back at you. Jesus on earth mirrored the Father in Heaven. He went on to say that *"I and the Father are one"* (John 10:30). The nature and personality of Christ cannot be separated from the nature and personality of God. As a Child of God our nature and personality cannot be separated from that of Christ.

The Word of God is a true reflection of who God says that we are. In James 1:22-25 it says: *"...Those who hear and don't act are like those who glance in the mirror, walk away...But whoever catches a glimpse of the revealed counsel of God—the free life!—even out of the corner of his eye, and sticks with it, is no distracted scatterbrain but a man or woman of action. That person will find delight and affirmation in the action."*

God gave us His Word as a mirror to see ourselves in light of the God-image to ensure our success. He expects us to see ourselves through the light of His Word. How we see ourselves will determine how far we go in life. He has predestined us for victory and equipped us with everything that we would possibly need in life. He has accounted for every experience and situation that we would have on our journey. He knew the challenges we would face regarding our self-image and how they would impact our lives.

A New Image

When we gave our lives to Christ, the Holy Spirit came to dwell in us. Jesus spoke of Him as the One who would teach us everything we needed to know, without Him we could not do anything. I encourage you to use the Word of God as a mirror. Let the Holy Spirit show you the God-image you were created to have as you spend time with Him. As you read the scriptures, meditate on them, personalize them and see yourself as God intended you to be. In so doing, this will begin to change the old image you had of yourself to the new image the Holy Spirit has for you. Let Him heal you of your past hurts and pains, let Him remove the wounds of hurtful words spoken to you. Partner with the Holy Spirit today to restore to you everything that belongs to you as you begin to function in the God-image.