

Addicted to Appearance

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Introduction:

A. Mirrors that Isolate Us

- We can only see others through the lens in which they see us
- It enslaves us to an image or what others think of my image
- It prevents us from being known or knowing others
- Destroys relationship – it separates me from you
- We become obsessed with self, no room for concern for others
- We seek to be admired more than known

Our Battle with the Mirror...

Does it, often, shape our choices, actions, inactions, and ways we engage with those around us?

The issue is not the behavior itself, but the degree to which we allow those activities to dictate our worth.

B. Attempts to Battle the False Image

- Jean Kilbourne, *Killing us Softly* documentaries
- 2012 Dove International Study on women & body image
- It prevents us from being known or knowing others
- Dove Commercials

C. Why It's Not Enough

- It is void of God. True beauty and success stems from His standard of these things.
- Any agenda for change must focus on the thoughts and desires of the heart.

- There is still a mentality that I deserve happiness, good circumstances, a good self-image now. I am pursuing good esteem for the sake of making myself better.
- It is internal, not external – and ultimately eternal.
- The answer is not to focus more on ourselves, but less. And to know what is our proper focus.

D. Image-bearers

- We are made in God's image.
- The corrupted image lures us away.
- We tend to focus on the created thing, rather than the Creator.
- God creates, the world corrupts – we corrupt.

The Bible acknowledges that great and small exists in every exchange of life. How quickly a God ordained difference becomes a tool we use to measure ourselves.

"I am not forgetting how horribly this most innocent desire is seen in our human ambitions, or how very quickly, in my experience, the lawful pleasure of praise from those whom it was my duty to please turns into deadly poison of self-admiration. But I thought I could detect a moment...during which the satisfaction of having pleased those whom I rightly loved and rightly feared was pure. And that is enough to raise our thoughts to what may happen when the redeemed soul, beyond all hope...learns at last that she has pleased Him whom she was created to please. There will be no room for vanity then. She will be free from the miserable illusion that it is her doing. With no taint of what we should now call self-approval she will most innocently rejoice in the thing that God has made her to be."

—*The Weight of Glory*, C.S. Lewis

E. Mirror-breaking Passages

2 Corinthians 4:6-10, 16-18

⁶ For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. ⁷ But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. ⁸ We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; ⁹ Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; ¹⁰ Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.

¹⁶For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. ¹⁷For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; ¹⁸While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

Breaking the Mirrors

“For a few minutes we had the illusion of belonging to that world. Now we wake to find that there is no such thing. We have been mere spectators.”

—*The Weight of Glory*, C.S. Lewis

“It doesn’t happen all at once,” said the Skin Horse. “You become. It takes a long time. That’s why it doesn’t happen often to people who break easily, or have sharp edges, or who have to be carefully kept. Generally, by the time you are Real, most of your hair has been loved off, and your eyes drop out and you get loose in the joints and very shabby. But these things don’t matter at all, because once you are Real you can’t be ugly, except to people who don’t understand.”

—*Velveteen Rabbit*, Margery Williams

“It would seem that our Lord finds our desires, not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us. Like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in the slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased.”

—*The Weight of Glory*, C.S. Lewis

“Imagine yourself as a living house. God comes in to rebuild that house. At first, perhaps, you can understand what He is doing. He is getting the drains right and stopping the leaks in the roof and so on; you knew that those jobs needed doing and so you are not surprised. But presently He starts knocking the house about in a way that hurts abominably and does not seem to make any sense. What on earth is He up to? The explanation is that He is building quite a different house from the one you thought of – throwing out a new wing here, putting on an extra floor there, running up towers, making courtyards. You thought you were being made into a decent little cottage: but He is building a palace. He intends to come and live in it Himself.”

—*Mere Christianity*, C.S. Lewis

F. Christ Models the Image We are to Bear

Isaiah 53: 2-3

²For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. ³He is

despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

Identity is not found in appearance, but in a person.

G. Should We Care about Appearance?

All beauty acts as a mirror and is meant to point back to the Creator.