Bible Study

Looking in the Mirror and The Double Minded Man
Reflecting Jesus in Christian Living Series

It seems like a good place to start this series is in self reflection. We are encouraged by Apostle Paul in:

1 Corinthians 11:28
But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup.

This examination perhaps has a more involved meaning than we sometimes consider. I certainly believe it is in the realm of self examination but it also asks one to personally examine why he does something.

In this case, "eating of the bread and drinking of the cup." When one makes this examination he must conclude that it truly represents in our mind the body and the blood of Christ. When he reaches that determination then and only then does he become worthy of partaking in the Lord's Supper in remembrance of His sacrifice.

In essence, this examination of purpose would be appropriate for all Christian living. For example, do we follow the ***Golden Rule of treating others the way we want to be treated*** *and if so, why?*

Is it only because Jesus said to do it or do we also connect every reason or purpose behind such a command. We know exactly how it feels when others don't treat us the way we want to be treated. It is hurtful, harmful to self esteem and carries with it many negative consequences.

When some are treated poorly over and over again, they often become the "bully" so to speak. A negative influence can have a negative result just as a positive influence can have a positive result.

Properly understanding why Jesus made that statement and practicing that behavior equally sheds light on how important it is to be obedient to His rule. It is the ultimate in reflecting Jesus in Christina living.

He is basically saying treat others the way you would treat your own children. If they are in need, don't withhold your aid but help them.

Matthew 5:44
"But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you"

Why is it important? Why follow that rule?

Proverbs 25:21-22
21 If your enemy is hungry, give him bread to eat;
And if he is thirsty, give him water to drink;
22 For so you will heap coals of fire on his head,
And the LORD will reward you.

In Romans 12 Apostle Paul quotes this Proverb as well instructing us on Christian living:

Romans 12:9-21

9 Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. 10 Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another; 11 not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; 12 rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer; 13 distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality.

14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. 16 Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion.

17 Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. 18 If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. 19 Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. 20 Therefore

"If your enemy is hungry, feed him;
If he is thirsty, give him a drink;
For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head."

21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Why do this for our enemy? To influence and perhaps create change in that individual by walking as Christ or at the very least have a positive influence on those who observe our behavior.

James writes: "Be a doer and not just a hearer"

So many people believe that something really isn't wrong if no one finds out about it. And they teach their children that very same thing. I have always taught my children just the opposite. Why? Even if no one knows what you have done, God does?

Micah 6:8
He has shown you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you But to do justly, To love mercy, And to walk humbly with your God?

Some scold or even teach their children to do right when they themselves do just the opposite. "Do what I say and not what I do."

"How can we expect children to grow up to do good when we don't set an example for them in our day to day life?"

The same can be said for us as Christians. "How can we expect to have a Christian influence on others when we don't live it day to day."

Jesus said:

Matthew 5:14-16
14 "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. 16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

When we look in the mirror as a Christain before we leave for the day then we should remember that reflection all day long.

James 1:21-27

21 Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

22 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. 23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; 24 for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. 25 But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.

26 If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless. 27 Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.

*James says to "**lay aside**" any part of our mind or fleshly deeds that are evil. In other words, get rid of them. He emphasizes this point with these words: **filthiness, overflow of wickedness.** (superfluity of naughtiness **KJV**)*

*Seems to me that **filthiness** covers a lot of territory. James is talking about evil practices. It seems from that standpoint that this is the given character of a person that is evident by how one lives. It can be seen by others but I believe it also includes hidden sin. Either way, whether public or private, it describes one who practices or participates in evil.*

***Wickedness** or **naughtiness** describes sin that injures others. It is malicious and intended. I believe it involves not only participation in evil but also approval without participation of certain **naughtiness**.*

After describing the many sins that God had given men over to practice by their own freewill, Apostle Paul states in:

Romans 1:24-32

24 Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, 25 who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

26 For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. 27 Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due.

[28] And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; [29] being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers, [30] backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, [31] undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful; [32] who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.

Many today have accepted all kinds of immorality even though they don't participate bodily in this immorality. Nevertheless, their mind does. That makes them guilty. Participant or not, Apostle Paul says it is wrong and condemned.

Back in James 1 overflow or superfluity signifies useless characteristics of a person that can only have negative and lasting consequences for themselves and others. Sometimes this is seen in how we express ourselves by what we say but it includes our appearance and where we go.

We will emphasize these points in more detail as we follow our outline.

James says we are to receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

Meekness in this context is an interesting word. We traditionally define meekness in this way: gentleness, humility, and patience.

Jesus says in Matthew 5: Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

Colossians 3:12-13
12 Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; 13 bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.

Apostle Paul says this is the true character of the Christian!

Apostle Paul says in Galatians that meekness is a fruit of the spirit.

The meaning behind meekness in James is as important in this context as it is in accepting the entirety of the Bible. That includes the Old Testament message as well as the Gospels and Christian instruction and doctrine as set forth by the Apostles.

James is saying we are to receive this word with the right attitude so that it will be ingrained or implanted in our heart. He is saying that the word which can save our souls should become our natural character. Spiritual being over the natural or fleshly being.

This is an important concept as we strive to further understand James 1. To receive this message with meekness means without resentment. That is a challenging proposition for the world and it often complicates their ability to accept the word in all humility. It is the old attitude "No one is going to tell me what to do!"

James is saying we all have to overcome this feeling in order to allow the word to be implanted in our hearts! To also accept correction and direction for Godly living so that we will reflect Jesus in Christian Living.

The Bible certainly gives us words of compassion and love, the truth about salvation and it also corrects and disciplines. This is the part we must accept with meekness and not resentment.

Nevertheless, the word will never be of any use if the receiver only hears and expects that's all that is needed. It would be similar to feeling that all I need to do is hear the word about Jesus and I have gained salvation.

The engrafted word inspires action. Therefore, James says: But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

If we are hearers only and believe that's all that is required we have deceived ourselves.

When we stand before a mirror we see our actual reflection. Every bit about what we look like is revealed in a very personal and transparent way. "The Good the Bad The Ugly" so to speak. The word that has been heard is just like that image in that it tells one what they must do, detail by detail. Unless that word has been engrafted, becomes part of our character, we know what we must do as we hear it, when we no longer stand before that mirror we forget what we look like.

When we are not engaged in the word, we walk away and forget what it says to do. In a sense one has to come back and stand in front of the mirror once again to see himself and to see how others see him.

Such is the case for the hearer only. He must return to the word to remember what it says. The one who allows the word to be engrafted in him need not return to the mirror. (This doesn't mean he doesn't continue to study and

learn). It is who he has become. So transparent in every situation that he can reveal spiritually, "What you see is what you get!"

We want everyone to see our light, so that through good works God is glorified!