

Why You Must Turn Away From Satan's Mirror of Shame

When my soul is starving, I feed my flesh. When my soul is satisfied, my flesh is sustained.

Over the last week, I have noticed external indicators of my internal condition that are all too familiar. My heart is hurting. But instead of acknowledging pain as the indicator of a deeper problem, I avoid it altogether. I try to raise my serotonin (happy chemical) levels and physically feed my flesh by eating more sugar and carbs. I mentally and emotionally feed my flesh through distraction in attempts to escape. It is such an easy escape with the availability of social media, movies or any of the thousands of mindless avenues I could go down on the internet. And there's another other easy escape: sleep. All of this is a temptation to avoid life altogether.

None of it ever works. In my own power and ability, I cannot escape my brokenness.

Whenever I take any of those escape routes, it either leads to me feeling bad physically, my body wondering where the vegetables have gone and wanting exercise, or mentally drained. It always leaves me feeling I am even more cluttered and in chaos than before.

It is so easy to try to distract ourselves from our brokenness instead of bringing it to God. This leads to things in my life not getting done, which doesn't help me emotionally. In fact, looking around my home raises my anxiety as I see the to-do list growing before my eyes after the time I have spent distracting myself. So after distracting myself and seeing the looming responsibilities, I'll take a nap; avoid now, face life later. Well, I always wake up.

The insanity of the inner workings of my brain are laughable.

Yet how many times have I fallen into this very trap before? How many times have you fallen into it? God wants us free.

A trap. That's what it is. A trap set by the devil to get me exactly where he wants me: alone and isolated so he can lie to me some more.

It's easy to believe lies when you are isolated, and so easy to isolate when you are believing lies.

In my isolation, the devil plays a game. He leads me to his "Fun House" where there is a hall of mirrors. These mirrors distort my image; the reflection I see from them is a lie. But the best lies are mostly truths. Blatant lies are difficult to believe, and the devil knows this. So he shows me an image of myself that is mostly true.

In the Mirror of Shame, he reminds me of my past. Reminds me of the abhorrent behavior I engaged in before Jesus rescued me and set me free from my past and sins. But the devil still reminds me of the grotesque things I allowed to happen to my body, of the painful memories I have suppressed for so long, of my failures both big and small. It is me in the reflection. However, the reflection is a distorted and perverted image of who I am. The devil gets me to believe that distorted image *is* me; who I am. When this happens, I start to equate who I am with what I do. I let past (and present) actions define me instead of letting my identity in Christ define me.

When I begin to believe the devil's lies, I slip and sink into the pit. I come under the oppression of depression. Despair and exhaustion become my companions. And then I feel ashamed, ashamed that I have allowed myself to become enveloped in darkness yet again. And then I sit there longer, shaming myself for my shame. Does this sound familiar? I know the devil doesn't try to do this to only me. God doesn't want this cycle for any of His children.

So why does God want brokenness from me? Why can't it just

disappear? Why do I have to experience the weight of my sin, resulting in shame? Jeremiah 31:3b-4a gives us the answer “I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you. Again I will build you, and you [insert name], will be built.”

God allows us to feel brokenness because He wants to rebuild us. He wants to heal us. He wants to restore us to an even better condition than we were in before we were broken. He wants to make us new creations.

“Therefore, if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature. Old things have passed away. Look, all things have become new” (2 Cor. 5:17).

All of this can’t happen if I cut corners. I can’t skip over the pain and grieving of my sin and go straight to forgiven. That is denial.

Denial is deceit that destroys the heart. Not acknowledging the wounding sin has caused your heart is like a child with a bleeding arm saying to the doctor, “I don’t need stitches. I’m healed.” It’s a painful process for a wound to be stitched. And like a wound unattended, denial allows for heart wounds to fester and become infected.

“He heals the broken in heart, and binds up their wounds. He counts the number of the stars; He calls them all by their names” (Ps. 147:3-4).

So I have massive, infected heart-wounds that are painfully being cleaned out and stitched up, but I so easily forget by whom.

We forget that the very God who determines the number of stars and calls them by name is the same God who is healing us. We forget how great and mighty God is. I know that when I am feeling broken, I forget how much He loves me. I forget that I am “confident of this very thing, that He who began a good

work in you will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:6).

When the devil shows me the past, my past wounding and past shame, it is easy to believe the lies and forget the truth. The truth is that Jesus never left me in my shame and pain. The truth is that I abandoned myself and my hope and faith in a God bigger than the ugliness of my past sin.

We are in a war. The devil, a much craftier adversary than you and I, will outsmart us every time. We need Jesus to fight the battle for us if we want to be victorious. However, we have to be willing to show up to the battlefield. Retreat is defeat. There is no winning when we run in fear. God will fight the battle, but we can't run away.

When I show up and finally say, "I'm ready to surrender all (again) to you Jesus. You take it," He tenderly says, "Here I am. I've been waiting. I never gave up on you and I never will. I won't leave the good work I began in you unfinished."

When I finally see the truth, His love and grace are overwhelming.

"For if by one man's trespass death reigned through him, then how much more will those who receive abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:17).

When I look in the mirror of righteousness, I see my true reflection. The truth is that I am vested in Christ's righteousness. Righteousness that is held completely, permanently and inalienably; not capable of being taken away or denied. I am forgiven and free. It is who I am, not what I do. While what I do is based on who I am in Christ, who I am in Christ is not based on what I do.

When I remember who God is, and who God says I am, that hall of mirrors in the Devil's fun house actually does become a

funny game. Because I can look at that perverted image of myself and say, "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many live" (Gen. 50:20).

I cling to the promise "that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose" (Rom. 8:28). He will use my pain for His purpose, my growth and His glory.

As I already said, we are in a war. Words are the weapons. Truth pierces the darkness and lies bring death and destruction. Today let us pick up the "Sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Eph. 6:17b) and fight. With Jesus, we cannot lose.

"No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, neither angels nor principalities nor powers, neither things present nor things to come, neither height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:37-39). {eoa}

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