

# Looking In The Mirror

*Step Ten: Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.*

Steps 10,11, and 12 are often referred to as the maintenance steps of recovery. Recovery literature describes the first nine steps as preparation to new life. With Step 10 begins the adventure of living what we are learning.

How many times do we look in the mirror each day? Suppose we saw someone looking in the mirror, and he found that he had mustard smeared around his mouth. We would find it strange if he didn't immediately wash his face and clear up the problem. In the same way, we need to routinely look at ourself in a spiritual mirror. Then, if anything is wrong, we can made the proper adjustments.

*So get rid of all the filth and evil in your lives, and humbly accept the message God has planted in your hearts, for it is strong enough to save your souls. And remember, it is a message to obey, not just to listen to. If you don't obey, you are only fooling yourself. For if you just listen and don't obey, it is like looking at your face in a mirror but doing nothing to improve your appearance. You see yourself, walk away, and forget what you look like. But if you keep looking steadily into God's perfect law -- the law that sets you free -- and if you do what it says and don't forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it. (James 1)*

We can use this illustration to support the sensibility of doing a routine personal inventory. As we examine our life, we need to respond with immediate action if something has changed since we last looked. If we put off taking care of a problem that we see, it may soon slip our mind. Just as we would think it foolish to go all day knowing there is mustard on our face, it is not logical to notice a problem that could lead to a fall and not correct it promptly.

In practical terms, how are we to conduct a daily personal inventory?

*Always be joyful. Keep on praying. No matter what happens, always be thankful, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus. Do not stifle the Holy Spirit. Do not scoff at prophecies, but test everything that is said. Hold on to what is good. Keep away from every kind of evil. (1 Thessalonians 5)*

Paul offers five recommendations for the components of a daily inventory.

1. We are to pray constantly.
2. We are to praise and be thankful. In recovery we frequently refer to the compilation of a "gratitude list."
3. We are to release God's Spirit into our hearts daily to help us know and live the truth
4. We are to search for God's direction and will for all our activities
5. We are to engage in a regular and consistent evaluation of both our assets and liabilities. We are indeed called to hold on to what is good and to keep away from every symptom of our old character defects.

## Questions For Reflection and Discussion

1. Who or what are some of the mirrors in our life?
2. How do I "check in the mirror?"
3. Why do we avoid taking action about things in ourselves we see that need adjustment?
4. What is God's promise if we do the work of getting to know what we should obey and then doing it?
5. Of the five things God suggests we do in a daily inventory, which have I done today?
6. Which of these inventory items would be listed as essential if someone evaluated that by my day-to-day behaviour?
7. What's the benefit of each of the inventory items? Why are they important?