

UNIT 15

+

HE HAS MADE

EVERY

NATIONALITY

“Made in the Likeness of God”

by Daniel Davis

Can you imagine your life without mirrors? You would never know what you look like. You would not be able to see easily if cars were coming up behind you as you took a turn or changed a lane while driving. You would never enjoy the smile of a child grasping the meaning in a reflection. Nor would you be able to laugh at a pet facing off against a fierce but familiar enemy.

Mirrors help us to get a sense of reality for places and things we otherwise could not see. Want to know if your hair is out of place? Use a mirror. The hair on the back of your head? Use two. Large mirrors are used in the Hubble Space Telescope and the new James Webb Space Telescope to help scientists and interested observers see and study stars and galaxies across the universe.

Not every mirror tells the whole truth, however. Perhaps you recall the need for the printed warning “Objects in mirror are closer than they appear,” especially if you are driving a vehicle being chased by a T-Rex. And some mirrors are intentionally altered for a fun house to skew the reflection in humorous ways. But if you want to see what is real, it is best to have a mirror that is flat, clean, smooth, and pure, not to mention aimed in the right direction.

IMAGE-BEARERS ARE MIRRORS

Mirrors in ancient times were crafted from polished metals. Not the best means for an accurate reflection. But today’s glass mirrors do an amazing job of displaying a truthful image.

Making a mirror involves a process called silvering, applying a metallic material, often aluminum, to the back of a sheet of glass.¹ Once complete, you can no longer look through the glass, but it becomes a

So often the mirror of our being is aimed not at Christ but at the distractions and deceptions of our gold- and silver-plated idols.

looking glass. What was once transparent has now become reflective.

When God created human beings on day 6 of creation, He chose to make them in His image. Adam and Eve and all their descendants were to fill the earth, work it, and rule over it as God's representatives (Gen. 1:26-28). All of humanity was designed from the beginning to reflect our Creator throughout His creation, even as that creation testifies to us about who God is (Rom. 1:20). We weren't made to be empty, transparent windows but mirrors radiating the glory of God in the world.

But look around. Look at the people of every tribe, tongue, and nation. Or better yet, look in the mirror, and what do you see reflecting back at you?

OUR REFLECTIONS ARE SKEWED

Though all human beings were made to reflect God's glory in the world, we do a very poor job of fulfilling our purpose. This is because of sin. Adam and Eve broke God's "law" in the garden of Eden

and thus shattered humanity in their wake. Now we all fall short of God's glory (Rom. 3:23), and our reflections distort the holiness of the holy God we were meant to image.

A mirror may have a solid backing material that reflects well, but if the glass that provides the structure for the reflective surface is dirty, warped, pitted, or cracked, then the image it puts off will be distorted. Similarly, we are made in the image of God, and that hasn't changed, but that image is skewed through our sinful nature and our sinful acts, whether we know it or not.

The Israelites knew of God's creation, they knew of God's law, and they knew their purpose to be a light to the world. But they chose rebellion and eventually would suffer the consequences. The Assyrians, on the other hand, didn't know their right hand from their left, meaning they were ignorant of the truth and reality of the God they were made to reflect (Jonah 4:11). Their sins caught up with them as well because the Creator God, though slow to anger and abounding in love (Ex. 34:6-7), will not be mocked by His image-bearers (Gal. 6:7).

THE MINISTRY OF IMAGE-BEARING

The image a mirror is meant to reflect also can be skewed if the mirror is pointed in the wrong direction. You've likely been the victim, whether accidentally or on purpose, of a bright, directed flash of light into your eyes via a watch, a CD, a cell phone, or even a mirror. The rays of the sun catch the reflective surface and bounce into your face, temporarily scarring your vision. The purpose of our image-bearing as human beings compares well with this phenomenon.

When we have our spiritual gaze aimed upward at God, more specifically, at Christ our Savior seated at the right hand of God (Col. 3:1-4), then the light of His perfect glory and character will more readily reflect through our words and actions in this dark world.

Yet so often the mirror of our being is aimed not at Christ but at the distractions and deceptions of our gold- and silver-plated idols. This is the default state for all of humanity. Rather than look to our Creator to image Him here, we have lowered our gaze to try to see ourselves

shining back at us in the idolatrous works of our hands. Then, caught in an endless reflection akin to a hall of mirrors, we become stuck, fixated on the seemingly infinite and hollow images of our sinful selves until we reap the judgment we deserve for our narcissistic pride.

But Jesus, the Son of God, came into the world as “the image of God” (2 Cor. 4:4). He came to save us from our sin and to break us free from our self-made traps in this world. He calls us upward and lifts our gaze that we should behold Him in all His glory and rightly reflect the truth and reality of the gospel in a world that cannot distinguish its right hand from its left. As image-bearers of God, as mirrors reflecting “the light of the world” (John 8:12), let us shine forth and show all the world the glory of God in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.



Jesus calls us upward and lifts our gaze that we should behold Him in all His glory and rightly reflect the truth and reality of the gospel.