

The Oak Grove Oracle

(Family News & Views of the Oak Grove Church of Christ)

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The Man (or Woman) In the Mirror

My late mother would often cite for my benefit a "wake up call" phrase (some would call it a "chimney corner Scripture"), whenever I was being critically unfair in my "judgment" of others. Her point was that we sometimes harshly judge in others, weaknesses or infractions which we may be blindly guilty of ourselves.

Her pithy quotation was from a longer poem penned by Robert Burns, a Scottish poet. In 1786, he gave his poem the attention-grabbing title: "To A Louse - On Seeing One On A Lady's Bonnet, At Church." I wish I had space in this bulletin to reproduce the entire humorous ditty, for it is quite thought-provoking. Perhaps if you look it up on the internet, you'll get a kick out of reading it. A word of caution though: if you're like me, it may be a kick in the seat of your pants! When Annie Dell McCain was using it as a "text" for one of her many "sermons" aimed at me, she would quote it from its original antiquated Scottish brogue. Below, is the English translation:

Oh would some power the gift give us, To see ourselves as others see us.

She would usually follow up her pew-scorching homily with one if not several quotations from the Holy Book. Most likely it was a passage about harsh or unrighteous judgment of others (see Mt. 7:1, Lk. 6:37, Jn. 7:24, etc.). No, my mother was not a public preacher, but behind the closed doors of our home and vehicle, the McCain boys learned what God thought about moral principles in no uncertain terms. Perhaps some of it "took," and hopefully I'm a little kinder and not quite so critical as a result of her loving lectures (Eph. 4:15, 2 Tim. 1:5, Titus 2:4-5).

Too bad we can't always clearly see ourselves in the two-way mirror through which others watch us. Our vision is nearly always 20/20 in picking out the faults and sins of others, but sadly, we may have "cataracts" when it comes to perceiving our own shortcomings.

Jesus had a few comments about the human tendency to be spiritually blind (and deaf too) when it comes to correctly judging ourselves by the righteous standard of His Holy Word (Mt. 13:13-15). If you really want to be self-aware and perceive yourself realistically, take a good long look in the mirror. Who will you see looking back at you - the hypocritical praying Pharisee, or the humble God-seeking Publican (Lk. 18:10-14)? Maybe it deserves more than just a fleeting glance.

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