



New Beginnings, Volume 20, 2008  
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*Proverbs 27:19*

*As a face is reflected in water, so the heart reflects the person.*

Many times in my youth, I would go down to Johnson Lake to fish in the summertime. I would push my 12-foot wooden boat out from the shore and glide out through the lily pads. Then, in the warmth of the sun, I would fish for bluegills, sunfish, and the occasional large-mouth bass. Often, the water was as still as glass, and I could see myself reflected in the water. It seemed strange and funny to see myself fishing like some silent movie. It was so clearly me, yet I was the one observing me.

In the years since those carefree days, I have learned what the water of Proverbs shares in 27:19. I have learned that it is not our outward appearance that reveals who we are, it is the heart. It is easy for people to “act” the part of someone they are not. It is all too common to know people who say they are one thing, yet reveal a very different character when we really get to know them. Sadly, this is just as true with people in the church as it is among the unchurched. Perhaps, in part, that is why there are so many unchurched. It’s not that they do not believe in God. It’s that they have found so many who claim to be Christians, yet reveal a very different character outside of the church.

Being a person of genuine faith in this materialistic, secular-driven culture is often not easy. It is all too easy to succumb to the world’s values and the world’s way of living. In the name of caring for our children, it is justified that we buy designer clothes for our kids at two to

three times the cost of just ordinary brands. In the name of “safety”, we buy \$30,000-\$50,000 SUV’s to drive when we really know it’s not about safety; it’s all about prestige. There are far too many people who have been lured into massive debt for cars and homes they can’t really afford and don’t really need. Too many people are buried by consumer debt trying to fill empty needs. There is little thought given to what we really need or how our style of life honors God.

As we reflect upon who we really are, we need to search our hearts. What are the values we hold dear? Are they the timeless values that have been revealed in the Bible? Are we authentic believers in God and what God’s Word teaches us, or have the values of the world taken control of our lives? Scripture tells us that the fruit of the life of an authentic believer in God is kindness, gentleness, humility, compassion, and caring. Are these characteristics descriptive of our lives?

The beginning of the year is always a great time to commit or, perhaps, recommit to a new start in life. One of the wonderful things about God is that God is always more than eager to meet us on the pathways of life with open arms, as the father did for his prodigal son. Let us begin anew by inviting Jesus, the Christ, fully into our hearts. Then, our hearts will reflect His mercy, compassion, and forgiveness for all.