



The Flame

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from GCCN Prayer Ministries

Mirror, Mirror

I'm guessing that you just conjure up the image of the self-obsessed wicked witch and her magic mirror? Alright. So that's out of the way.

Mirrors reflect our predilection with obsessing over ourselves. [You did get that, didn't you? "Mirror." "Reflect."]. Being self-aware is certainly not a sign of poor mental health, but start talking to a mirror, and you'll set most shrinks into a frenzy of note-taking.

The tendency to be preoccupied with ourselves or our appearance, along with a host of daily issues is quite natural. And often those daily issues are viewed through the grid of what others will think about us or whether others will understand. Even a significant part of our prayer experiences may concern those things. But whatever they may be or what shape they take, we are invited to take them to the Lord (1 Peter 5:7).

The danger, however, is that I can too easily walk through my days with my eyes fixed on the dust around my own feet. If I fixate on the pebbles that might bruise me, my understanding of prayer along with my sense of grace will remain impoverished.

The disciples saw something in Jesus that made them aware that there was more to prayer than they had experienced, so they ask Him to teach them to pray. In His response there is a little-noticed feature that can greatly impact our understanding of prayer.

Notice the following: Give *us* each day our daily bread. Forgive *us* our sins. Lead *us* not into temptation. Not "give *me*" or "forgive *me*" or "lead *me*." Prayer as the expression of my relationship with God provides me with a whole new sense of myself. I am not a solo act. I am not fully defined in the singular.

Rather I am a part of a larger functional whole, the Church, and my prayer life should reflect that dimension of my relationship. Just as I have meaning by being part of an earthly family that adds to my identity and worth, so the "us" in my spiritual identity completes who I am.

If I fail to reflect an awareness of those around me who need daily bread and forgiveness just as I do, then I have truly failed to hear the heart of the Lord to whom I pray.

Taking Your Next Step

As you pray, seek God for a fresh sensitivity that your needs are also reflected in the lives of others. You are lonely; others are lonely. You are fearful; others are fearful. You long for joy; others long for joy.

In the same way, when you reach for and experience peace, others do as well. When grace covers your mis-steps, others are embracing the same hope.

As you pray, let God lift your eyes from your own worn sandals to realize that you are not traveling alone, and as you glance into your spiritual mirror, may you see the reflection of those with whom you share your dependence on grace.