

Magic Mirror

It's probably a safe assumption that everyone present is familiar one way or another of the story of Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs. It was based on the 1812 German fairy tale by the Brothers Grimm. It was the first full length animated musical fantasy film by Walt Disney, which is probably what we are all aware of.

The plot was simply Snow White, having lost both of her parents at a young age, was a princess living with her wicked and cold-hearted stepmother, the Queen. Fearing that Snow White's beauty would outshine her own someday, the Queen forced her to work as a maid. The Queen asks her Magic Mirror daily "who is the fairest one of all." For years, the mirror always answers that the Queen was, pleasing her.

One day, Snow White meets and falls in love with a prince who overhears her singing. Angered, the Queen orders her Huntsman to take Snow White into the forest, kill her, and bring back her heart in a jeweled box. The Huntsman cannot bring himself to kill Snow White and reveals to her the Queen's plot. He then urges her to run away into the woods and never return. Snow White flees and gets lost in the woods, where she meets up with the Seven Dwarfs. Doc, Grumpy, Happy, Sleepy, Bashful, Sneezzy and Dopey were their names if anyone is taking notes.

Dwarfs would not cut it with today's politically correct mindset, they would be called "vertically challenged" individuals with names like Physician, Socially Irritable, Un-depressed, Lethargic, Inhibited, Sternutation and Cerebrally Challenged. They would all be non-binary and gender neutral, including Snow White and the Queen. She would have been arrested for burglary and also charged with exploiting the handicapped.

Snow White became the object of the queen's hatred when the mirror told her one day that Snow White was more lovely than she was. Jealousy is a form of pride. The queen could not stand to have someone fairer than she. Of course, the story would not be the same if the queen actually tried to be kinder and gentler than Snow White and was not so obsessed with pride and her own self-elevation.

It is difficult for the queen to be objective about her beauty or, for that matter, her own faults. She was so absorbed in herself she needed regular affirmation. To cut this fairy tale short, the Queen poisons Snow White with an apple (she purchased from a serpent) and puts her into a coma. She is later awakened by her Prince Charming's true love's kiss and they live happily ever after. The Queen gets her comeuppance getting struck by lightning and falling off a cliff. Are there any parallels in personality traits in the Queen applicable to members in God's own church? Just from reading the essays of last week and today, definitely.

The sin of pride can be quite blinding and Satan's smooth talking can deceive *anyone* and at *any* time. Now this is not a lesson on Snow White but a look at the pride and arrogance of self-elevation and the disorder it can cause in the Body of Christ.

Having just read part two from last week's essay, I know now why this essay was not shared last week. When members of God's Church begin to look at themselves and the importance of the organization more than the One Who founded the Church and growing in likeness to Jesus Christ, failure is soon to follow. Focusing on individuals and hierarchies opens the door for "the self" and assumptions of perfection. "We are the Philadelphia Church"...sure you are...good luck with that.

Luke 18:10-14- "Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one was a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed with himself in this manner: 'God, I thank You that I am not like other men— extortioners, unrighteous, adulterers—or even as this tax collector. I fast twice in the week, and I give a tithe of everything that I gain.' And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat himself on the chest, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house

justified, rather than the other. For everyone *who exalts himself shall be humbled*; and the one who humbles himself shall be exalted.”

Isaiah 2:17- “And the pride of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low; and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day.”

Whenever we throw our arm out of socket trying to get noticed or gain attention to ourselves, we invite the enemy in for coffee. We can think of ourselves, without asking a mirror, that we are far more important than we actually are. How can this happen to God’s elect?

1 Corinthians 13:12- “For now we see through a glass darkly, but then *we shall see* face to face; now I know in part, but then I shall know exactly as I have been known.” In this time of our journey toward God’s Kingdom, we tend to look at ourselves in a mirror dimly. We see only a blurred reflection of what and who we *think* we are. When our time of perfection comes, we will see reality, Him, Face to face. We will be in the presence of true Perfection. We will then at that time know just how God sees and knows us. We may have been teaching or writing but is our motive in alignment with God’s? Were we self-appointed, volunteered or did we just think we have a better way? Are we doing all things for the glory of God?

Matthew 5:16- “In the same way also, you are to let your light shine before men, so that they may see your good works, and may glorify your Father Who *is* in heaven.” Definitely food for thought. Jesus sought only to glorify the Father.

John 8:58- “Jesus answered, “If I glorify Myself, My glory is nothing. It is My Father Who glorifies Me, of Whom you say that He is your God.” God knows the heart and we must have the proper motive.

1 Corinthians 10:31- “Therefore, whether you eat, or you drink, or you do anything, *do all things* to the glory of God.”

How many folks do you know who have more degrees than a thermometer? Intelligent and well educated? And yet they do not possess wisdom? Certificates and diplomas on a wall do not necessarily equate to intelligence. I am not mocking anyone who has put forth the work for a higher education, most certainly not. I do want to clarify the difference between educated, intelligent and wisdom. According to several sources on line (Webster, Wikipedia and Free Dictionary):

Educated means: having an education, especially one above average, showing evidence of schooling, training, or experience.

Intelligence means: having the capacity for understanding; ability to perceive and comprehend meaning.

Wisdom means: the *ability to use* your knowledge and experience to make good decisions and judgments.

Wisdom is the key to the right application of the other attributes. “Common sense” or “horse sense” are other applicable layman’s terms. My granddad used to say “you can have all the book sense in the world and without an ounce of common sense you’re useless.” Sounds about right. Our government leaders are well educated but just how many of them possess the wisdom to lead? Most are too busy standing in front of their mirrors asking questions of self-importance on a daily basis.

Wisdom and knowledge are certainly essential to knowing and applying the Word of God. Do we truly value knowing the wisdom of God’s Word?

Proverbs 2:1-5- “My son, if you will receive my words and treasure up my commandments within you, So that you incline your ear to wisdom and apply your heart to understanding; Yea, if you cry after knowledge *and* lift up your voice for understanding; If you seek her as silver and search *for* her as for hidden treasures, Then you shall understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God.

Proverbs 16:16- “How much better *it is* to get wisdom than gold, and to choose understanding rather than silver!”

Psalm 119:72- “The law of Your mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver.” The Books of Psalms and Proverbs are chockfull of scriptures on wisdom and knowledge.

Society places such a priority on higher education but in so many instances, there is an absence of wisdom taught anywhere. We’ve lost the foundations of character taught in early years for indoctrinations into the world’s way and of “self.” We need reassurances from the Magic Mirrors to feed “the self.” Having a degree in French History and unable to find a suitable job is not uncommon.

We, however, put a value on learning and living every one of God’s Words. Why? Because if we truly are loving God first (**Matthew 22:37, Mark 12:30, Luke 10:27**), it becomes quite clear that we must live and do His Word, not just *think* we understand it or remotely know it. How many TV preachers can spew out scripture and not have a clue of what God actually says as evidenced by their religious practices? So many refer to a book by “so and so” when the direction *should be* focused on God’s Bible. Again, this does not negate any reading from author’s who possess genuine knowledge of God’s Word but I urge caution on any source. Remember, “Prove all things, hold fast to that which is good.”- **1 Thessalonians 5:21**. This does not mean to pick up a book by any of the TV evangelists because

they know the scriptures or they have some good thoughts. They ***do NOT*** know God or His Word. *If they did, they'd be doing it.* Remember also, we have been called out from among them. **2 Corinthians 6:17-** “Therefore, come out from the midst of them and be separate,” says *the* Lord, “and touch not *the* unclean, and I will receive you;”

We cannot discount any of God’s Word. We must live by every Word that proceeds from the mouth of God (**Deut. 8;3, Matthew 4:4, Luke 4:4**). Negating ***any part*** of the Bible, omitting one sentence will lead to misunderstanding.

Isaiah 28:9-10- “Whom shall He teach knowledge? And whom shall He make to understand doctrine? *Those* who are weaned from the milk and drawn from the breasts, For precept *must be* upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, there a little;”

We are tasked to ***dissect*** God’s Word, line by line and precept by precept. Both Old and New Testaments, Genesis to Revelation. Missing a single word can cause one to become *fixated* on a concept that is not the complete truth. Missing an exit on a trip will takes you miles out of the way. In our journey to God’s Kingdom, in deviating from His map (The Bible), we may miss our destination altogether.

We can study, recite, and share God's Word until we are blue in the face. But if we do not have that personal relationship with God Almighty, we will *never* come to the full understanding of His Truth and His Way.

2 Timothy 3:1-7- "Know this also, that in *the* last days perilous times shall come; For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, braggarts, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, implacable, slanderers, without self-control, savage, despisers of those who are good, Betrayers, reckless, egotistical, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God; Having an outward appearance of godliness, but denying the power of *true* godliness. But *as for you*, turn away from *all* these. For from *men such as* these come those who are worming their way into houses, and are gaining control over empty-headed *gullible* women given over to *various* sins, *being* driven by all kinds of lust. *They are* always learning but *are* never able to come to *the* knowledge of *the* truth."

Romans 10:5- "For Moses wrote *concerning* the righteousness that *comes through* the law, "The man who has practiced those things ***shall live by them.***"

How do we receive constructive criticism? Do you encourage feedback? Do we seek to learn when we make mistakes? Can we admit our own?

Proverbs 1:7- "The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of knowledge, *but* fools despise wisdom and instruction." Being weak in God's Word and "assuming" you

have a better way can lead to destruction. God will *not* take away our free will. He *will* permit our folly and let us “take the wheel” and drive...for a while.

Proverbs 28:26- "He who trusts in his own heart is a fool; but whoever walks wisely, he shall be delivered."

We need to receive and accept correction when it is needed to keep us in alignment with God’s Word. Failing to receive correction is a sign of pride and deception.

Proverbs 14:6-8- “A scorner seeks wisdom and does not *find it*, but knowledge *is* easy to him who understands. Depart from the presence of a foolish man when you do not perceive *in him* the lips of knowledge. The wisdom of the prudent *is* to understand his way, but the folly of fools *is* deceit.”

Proverbs 16:2-7- “All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes, but the LORD weighs the spirits. Commit your works unto the LORD, and your thoughts shall be established. The LORD has made all for His own purpose; yea, even the wicked for the day of evil. Everyone who is proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD; though joined hand in hand, he shall not be unpunished. By mercy and truth iniquity is purged, and by the fear of the LORD *men* turn away from evil. When a man’s ways please the LORD, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.”

Ecclesiastes 7:5- “*It is* better to hear the rebuke of the wise than for a man to hear the song of fools.”

Deviation from God’s Word will stir up strife and contentions within the Body of Christ. It can lead to compromise and challenges within. Puffed up pride resulting from a church hierarchy is nothing new. With rank, a level of self-importance can result if one’s heart is not in the right place. Remember, “However, it shall not be this way among you; but whoever would become great among you, let him be your servant; And whoever would be first among you, let him be your slave;”- **Matthew 20:26-27**. I saw numerous promotions over my 30 years in law enforcement. Most were fitting and yet some had egos inflated larger than their ranks, admiring their indicia in their mirrors.

Proverbs 16:27-30- “An ungodly man digs up evil, and his lips *are* like a burning fire. A perverse man causes strife, and a whisperer separates chief friends. A violent man lures his neighbor and leads him into a way *that is* not good. He shuts his eyes to devise perverse things; and moving his lips, he brings evil to pass.”

The blessings of God’s correction and staying the course are found throughout scripture.

Psalm 94:11-13- “The LORD knows the thoughts of man, that they are vanity.

Blessed is the man *whom You chasten*, O LORD *to teach him* out of Your law That You may give him rest from the days of trouble until the pit is dug for the wicked,”

We know the end times will see a rise in false prophets, teachers, and false doctrines. Many will succumb and fall away.

Matthew 24:24- “For there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and they shall present great signs and wonders, in order to deceive, if possible, even the elect.”

Many of the weak will stray and fall victim to pride and deceit. Altering God’s Word with “a better way” or “I think it should be done this way” is changing God’s Word.

Galatians 1:6-9- “I am astonished that you are so quickly being turned away from Him Who called you into *the* grace of Christ, to a different gospel, Which *in reality* is not another *gospel*; but there are some who are troubling you and are desiring to pervert the gospel of Christ. But if we, or even an angel from heaven, should preach a gospel to you *that* is contrary to what we have preached, LET HIM BE ACCURSED! As we have said before, I also now say again. If anyone is preaching a gospel contrary to what you have received, LET HIM BE ACCURSED!”

Some of the definitions for “accursed” are: “doomed, damned or abominable.”

When God uses these terms, we had better be paying attention. He gives us a final warning in Revelation regarding changing His Word for our own prideful arrogance.

Revelation 22:18-19- “For I jointly testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book, *that* if anyone adds to these things, God shall add to him the plagues that are written in this book. And if anyone takes away from the words of *the* book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from *the* book of life, and from the holy city, and from the things that are written in this book.”

As shepherds and future shepherds, we must watch over each other and protect the flock.

Acts 20:28-31- “Take heed therefore to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which He purchased with His own blood. For I know this: that *after my departure* grievous wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; And from among your own selves men will rise up speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after themselves. Watch, therefore, remembering that for three years I ceased not to admonish each one night and day with tears.”

As shepherds we must always speak God’s undefiled truth.

Proverbs 8:7-9- “For my mouth shall speak truth; and wickedness is an abomination to my lips. All the words of my mouth *are* in righteousness; there is nothing twisted or perverse in them. They *are* all plain to him who understands, and right to those who find knowledge.”

2 Timothy 4:2-5- “Preach the Word! Be urgent in season and out of season; convict, rebuke, encourage, with all patience and doctrine. For there shall come a time when they will not tolerate sound doctrine; but according to their own lusts they shall accumulate to themselves a *great number of* teachers, having ears itching to *hear what satisfies their cravings*; And they shall turn away their own ears from the truth; and they shall be turned aside unto myths. But *as for* you, be vigilant in all things, endure hardships, do *the* work of an evangelist; fully carry out your ministry.” This is mission number one. We will pray for the misinformed while guarding our own. Cull them from the flock if that’s what it takes.

God will never give up on us, you will never hear Jesus Christ say “I’m done with him.” Remember, “Being confident of this very thing, that He Who began a good work in you will complete *it* until *the* day of Jesus Christ.”- **Philippians 1:6**. We may give up on Him ***by our own choice*** and commit the unpardonable sin. A dip in the lake of fire awaits for those who make that choice.

God is most gracious will all who seek Him and His truth. He will give us ample time to repent and turn away from our sins, right up until the sky cracks and the trumpet sounds.

“The Lord is not delaying the promise *of His coming*, as some in their own minds reckon delay; rather, He is longsuffering toward us, not desiring that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”- **2 Peter 3:9**.

Hebrews 2:1-3- "For this reason, it is imperative that we give much greater attention to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should slip away. For if the word spoken by angels was *enforced* without fail, and every transgression and disobedience received just recompense, How shall we escape, *if we have neglected so great a salvation; which was first received when it was spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him;*"

With all the turmoil going on, Satan is no longer targeting Sunday churches. He is bringing all guns to bear on those who are walking in God's Truth and keeping His Sabbaths and Holy Days and all of His Commandments.

God's plan for mankind is far greater than we can imagine. We have the privilege of being called by His grace to understand and live by His Word. But we must remain vigilant and do not succumb to any untruths or misconceptions from

unlearned “believers.” We need no mirrors to remind us of our short comings nor to seek self-elevation. Here is a reality check for all of us; stand naked in front of your mirror, if you do not throw up, burst into laughter, or shatter the mirror, you can almost get a glimpse of what God sees. Fortunately, He will not judge us from the outward appearance but from the fruit we bear, and from the love and obedience we have for Him in our hearts. God will raise us up Himself at the appointed time. Amen!

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