



Beyond the Broken Mirrors

—Arlin Weaver

Imagine the proverbial man who lives in a room of mirrors. No matter which way he turns, everything points back to himself.

And it's a view he's very content with—because he's delighted to be the center of his universe. If he looks north, the view is graced with ... himself. To the south ... himself. East and west reflect the same image.

The man of the mirrors is content in his own glory—until the day a longing, vague and ill-defined, taunts him with hints of life beyond the mirrors.

This Mr. Ego is a narcissist, though, and not quickly shaken. Still, with passing years and building despair, the crisis comes, and in ultimate desperation, he cries out to the world beyond his mirrors.

He meets the Man who breaks the mirrored cell as a Liberator—and indeed, He is!

To the north is a limitless expanse of meadows, trees, and beauty. To the east are the ocean and the rising sun. To the south are inviting paths, happy homes, and busy villages. To the west are smiling faces, cheerful children, and gracious friends. This is the world beyond the broken mirror.

We've all been as foolish as the man of the mirrors. We've imprisoned ourselves by our own visions of self-aggrandizement; we've lived preoccupied with ourselves; we've embezzled God's great gift of life and spent it on ourselves.

And only God can convince us that our walls are confining, and that there is life beyond self. At first, the very idea of the world beyond self is strange to us. Then it teases us, and ultimately torments us. The tug of the infinite trounces the tawdry cheapness of the mirrored room.

“For none of us liveth to himself” (Romans 14:7).

The advent of the gospel in our lives demands the end of the mirrors—it dares to shatter them without apology. The call of the Liberator, Jesus, is for Mr. Ego to “deny [utterly disown] himself.” He goes even further, insisting that self must die—and die by crucifixion.

This Liberator redefines virtue, too. Instead of self-gratification and self-esteem, He gives us three true virtues: love, faith, and hope (see 1 Corinthians 13:13). These are like the great, expansive vistas outside the broken room of mirrors.

With love we discover others. Love introduces us to a world of relationships, of joyful interaction, and creative self-abandonment. With love, we become givers. With love, we share. With love, we uplift others. And with love, we forget ourselves—and our old mirror prison.

With faith we discover God. Faith is God-focused. We worship our Liberator—instead of haunting the temple of our sacrilegious self-worship. We live for God alone, we love God first, and we abandon self for God.

With hope we discover the infinite. Outside our room of mirrors, we begin our journey into an eternal future. Freed, God calls us to journey from our prison into His permanent, built-for-forever kingdom. Transience and temporal living are forgotten, and the things and virtues of God become eternally worth our investments.

I suspect you know where you live. If it's in a room of mirrors, then you're imprisoned.

But if God has broken your cell, and you have escaped the bondage of self, then the vistas beyond the broken mirror are yours.

Let God liberate self, and let Him teach you how to live in the freedom of love, discovering faith, and journeying with hope. ~

**With love,
we forget
ourselves—and
our old mirror
prison.**