

Scripture's Reflection on Body Image

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depression

binge eating

anxiety

preoccupation with appearance

self-hatred

unrealistic standards

self-injury



love of
beauty

Addictive
dieting

bulimia

food
rituals

success

anorexia

perfectionism

plastic
surgery

materialism

bigorexia

obsessive exercising

body dysmorphia

It touches us all

- Have a love-hate relationship with food, exercise, weight, the mirror?
- Ever not feel good, attractive, successful, valued, or noticed enough?
- Feel fear or shame over being unattractive, unaccepted, imperfect?
- Do you wonder what it would be like to be free from such things?

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Mirrors that isolate us

- We can only see others through the lens in which they see us
- It enslaves us to an image of what others think of my image
- It prevents us from being known or knowing others
- Destroys relationship – it separates me from you
- We become obsessed with self, no room for concern for others
- We seek to be admired more than known

Our battle with the mirror...
Does it often shape our choices,
actions, inactions, and ways we
engage with those around us?

The issue is not the behavior itself,
but the degree to which we
allow those activities to dictate
our worth.

Attempts to battle the false image

- Jean Kilbourne, *Killing Us Softly* documentaries
- 2012 Dove International Study on Women & Body Image
- Dove commercials

Why it's not enough

- It is void of God. True beauty and success stems from his standard of these things.
- Any agenda for change must focus on the thoughts and desires of the heart.
- There is still a mentality that I deserve happiness, good circumstances, a good self image now. I am pursuing good esteem for the sake of making myself better.
- It is internal, not external – and ultimately eternal
- The answer is not to focus more on ourselves, but less. And to know what is our proper focus.



Image-bearers

- We are made in God's image
- The corrupted image lures us away
- We tend to focus on the created thing, rather than the Creator
- God creates, the world corrupts – we corrupt

God creates; the world corrupts



The Bible acknowledges that
great and small exists in every
exchange of life.

How quickly a God-ordained
difference becomes a tool we
use to measure ourselves.

“I am not forgetting how horribly this most innocent desire is seen in our human ambitions, or how very quickly, in my experience, the lawful pleasure of praise from those whom it was my duty to please turns into deadly poison of self-admiration. But I thought I could detect a moment...during which the satisfaction of having pleased those whom I rightly loved and rightly feared was pure. And that is enough to raise our thoughts to what may happen when the redeemed soul, beyond all hope...learns at last that she has pleased Him whom she was created to please. There will be no room for vanity then. She will be free from the miserable illusion that it is her doing. With no taint of what we should now call self-approval she will most innocently rejoice in the thing that God has made her to be.”

The Weight of Glory by C.S. Lewis

Mirror breaking passages:

“But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us....

Therefore, do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.

For our light & momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, what is unseen is eternal.

2 Corinthians 4



Breaking the mirrors

“For a few minutes we had the illusion of belonging to that world.

Now we wake to find that there is no such thing.

We have been mere spectators.”

The Weight of Glory by C.S. Lewis

Velveteen Rabbit

- *“It doesn’t happen all at once,” said the Skin Horse. “You become. It takes a long time. That’s why it doesn’t happen often to people who break easily, or have sharp edges, or who have to be carefully kept. Generally, by the time you are Real, most of your hair has been loved off, and your eyes drop out and you get loose in the joints and very shabby. But these things don’t matter at all, because once you are Real you can’t be ugly, except to people who don’t understand.”*



C.S. Lewis

- “Imagine yourself as a living house. God comes in to rebuild that house. At first, perhaps, you can understand what He is doing. He is getting the drains right and stopping the leaks in the roof and so on; you knew that those jobs needed doing and so you are not surprised. But presently He starts knocking the house about in a way that hurts abominably and does not seem to make any sense. What on earth is He up to? The explanation is that He is building quite a different house from the one you thought of - throwing out a new wing here, putting on an extra floor there, running up towers, making courtyards. You thought you were being made into a decent little cottage: but He is building a palace. He intends to come and live in it Himself.”
- [Mere Christianity](#)

C.S. Lewis:

“It would seem that our Lord finds our desires, not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us. Like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in the slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased.”

• The Weight of
Glory •

Christ models the image we are to bear

Isaiah 53: 2-3

He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to Him.

He was despised and rejected by men, a man of
sorrows,

And familiar with suffering.

Like one who was despised, and we esteemed him
not.

Identity is not found in appearance,
but in a person

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Should we care about appearance?



All beauty acts as a mirror and is meant to point back to the Creator.