"Take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm."
Ephesians 6:13

"For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does." (James 1:23–25).

We all look into the mirror every day. Mirrors are a great help in preparing ourselves for the day. We use them to check ourselves to see that everything is in place. To look in the mirror and immediately forget what kind of person we are is to see the flaws in our appearance and do nothing about it. No one leaves the mirror with bed-head sticking up in back! It is combed down, or at least covered with a hat. The image in the mirror in instructive.

God's law (the Bible) is compared to the mirror into which we should look intently. The Greek word translated "looks intently" is full of meaning:

to stoop and look into...
metaphorically to look carefully into, inspect curiously (Thayer). It is implied in this passage that we should have this attitude of looking into the mirror of God's Word. We do so for the same reasons we examine ourselves in a physical mirror: to inform us of what we really are.

Sadly, many people look into God's mirror weekly or less. We examine the physical body daily (multiple times even), but do not see the need to look intently into God's mirror for the soul. And when we do read the Bible we often go away forgetting what kind of person we are. We deceive ourselves into thinking we are righteous, yet when we read His Word we see all our flaws. What a dangerous spiritual attitude. We need to frequently look at ourselves by seeing God's Law. He informs us of what our attitudes should be (for example in Philippians 2:5, or Colossians 3:12–13), and by comparing ourselves to His Word we can see our shortcomings and where we need to correct and improve. Regular stops in front of the mirror will help us every day.
Just seeing the faults is not enough, we must become one who “abides” by the law of liberty. The King James translates “abides” as “continueth therein.” The Greek is paramenō meaning “to remain beside, continue always near” (Thayer), and “to stay near, that is, remain (literally tarry; or figuratively be permanent, persevere)” (Strong’s). The way we “remain beside” and “stay near” to the Law of liberty is to become the “effectual doer.” We cannot be those who look into the mirror of God’s Word and do nothing about what we see in ourselves. Correction must be made.

At times we see faults that are obvious (such as bed-head) which needs immediate attention. Spiritually we also find need for immediate correction of sin that is blatant and obvious (such as foul language [Ephesians 4:29], drunkenness [Galatians 5:19–21], or an unloving attitude toward our spouse [Ephesians 5:25]). At other times, a closer, deeper examination will reveal flaws (such as when we get very close to the physical mirror). I have to believe this is what is meant in James 1 by “looking intently at the perfect law.” It is a deeper study involving contemplation and comparison to self. It is reading with application. Seeing the application is also not enough. Just seeing the faults is not enough, we must become one who “abides” by the law of liberty.

In tough times, God wants us to focus, trust and act constructively in Him. May we all keep standing upright in our upside down world.

**Know Your Bible**

**Apostles**

1. By what other name was Matthew known? *Matthew 13:54*
2. Who doubted the resurrection of Jesus? *Mark 16:13-14*
3. What was the apostle to the Gentiles? *Romans 1:15*
4. Who were the “sons of thunder”? *Mark 3:17-19*
5. Who was with Jesus at the Transfiguration? *Matthew 17:1*

Answers: 1. Nathaniel or Levi; 2. Thomas; 3. Paul; 4. Peter and John; 5. Peter

**Family In The Military**

The following relatives of members are actively serving in the military at this time.

Lester Mahey III, Austin Markham, Jessica Blake, Daniel Davall, Dave Campbell, Josh Blain

**Standing Upright When Our World Is Upside Down**

Our lives may go smoothly for a while, then suddenly, our world can be turned upside down. The sudden death of a close loved one, the doctor’s diagnosis that we have a terminal disease, or the final word from our employer that we no longer have a job can send us for a loop. Companions gone on whom we often depended and with whom we enjoyed life; health gone that now seems so precious; and a job gone through which we supported ourselves and our families; all hit us hard. What should we do during these trying times?

**BE NOT ANXIOUS** God knows our situation in life at all times (Matt. 6:32). If we lose our jobs, we must not allow the situation to cause us to be distracted with anxiety. Jesus said, “Be not therefore anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or, ‘What shall we drink’ or ‘Wherewithal shall we be clothed’” (Matt. 6:33). Anxiety will not get us a new job, nor will it put food on the table. We must stand up straight in our overturned world with faith in our Lord. Trusting in the fact that God knows our need, we need to respond with: “but seek ye first His kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matt. 6:33). We must stand up and continue to pursue living according to God’s righteous standard, the gospel of Christ, knowing God will help us find a way to feed, clothe and support our family.

**KEEP TRUSTING** Jesus points to two facets of faith that are effective antidotes for paralyzing anxiety. We must first trust the fact: “your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things” (Matt. 6:32). And, He will provide for our necessities to be met (Matt. 6:33). Trusting in God KNOWING our situation, and then, that He will ACT TO PROVIDE for our needs is powerful thoughts of faith that keep us upright in our upside down world. Such trust undergirds us; vaccinates us from the paralyzing disease of worrying about tomorrow (Matt. 6:34); and frees us to do what we can do. We can concentrate on obtaining new skills, look for a new job, or do whatever is necessary to improve our immediate situation. Jesus wants us to keep trusting in Him, and to keep living righteous lives as He provides for our physical well-be-ing.

**BE THANKFUL** One way we stand upright in our upside down world is that we continue to be thankful, even in difficult times. While we are asking God for help in our immediate dark situation, we can be sure to give Him thanks for the companions, prosperity and health that He did allow us to have. The darkness that surrounds us at the moment should not cause us to cease to be thankful for the blessings enjoyed in former times. Paul exhorts us to “Pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus to youward” (1 Thess. 5:17–18). While we may not always feel thankful “for” everything that happens to us, we certainly can “in” all things express thanksgiving to God. We can be thankful to Him that we have a home in heaven prepared, reserved and waiting for us where death, loss of health or a lost job can’t overturn everything.

In tough times, God wants us to focus, trust and act constructively in Him. May we all keep standing upright when our personal world is suddenly turned upside down.

Charles Willis

Jerry Fite

Jessica Blair, Austin Markham, Lester Mahey III, Jessica Blake, Daniel Davall, Dave Campbell, Josh Blain