

# The Man in the Mirror

*“For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgement...”*

*-- Romans 12:3*

As we continue on our journey toward intentionality and authenticity in our Christian walk through 2014, we take some time to reflect honestly and carefully on one of the most important elements in our lives – ourselves. If we want to become more intentional about living Christian lives we must take time, not only at the start of that journey, but throughout, to critically reflect on who we are and what there might be in us that needs changing – we must develop an honest opinion of ourselves.

As Paul invites his hearers in this passage to do; we must be brave enough to reflect honestly on who we really are and not think of ourselves more highly than we ought... we must apply sober judgment when it comes to our self-image. This is all the more vital when we think of the fact that we live in a world that exalts the ‘self’ and encourages individuals to (subtly, it must be said) to think of themselves not only in the first place, but also in the loftiest possible terms – as one popular product slogan has it: “Because I’m worth it!” We live in an age where it is easy to develop a self-image that is not entirely honest. And if we want to be intentional Christians we must avoid this temptation at all costs.

Paul gives us some sound advice to help us develop a true self-image and to learn to see ourselves as we ought to be – there are two steps in this process: 1) We must accept and celebrate the fact that we belong to each other (Romans 12:5). We are not our own possessions, we do not exist for our own sakes, we belong to each and exist for the sake of others. When we see ourselves in relationship with others, then we begin to develop a truer self-image. 2) We must create space for each other by ‘letting’ the other be who they have been created to be and do what they have been called to do (Romans 12:7-8). When we create space for others we soon find that we too are afforded the freedom to be and do what we have been called to.

As a final thought, we should always endeavour to see ourselves in the mirror that is Christ... to view ourselves in relationship to Him and ask ourselves the critical question – To what extent do we reflect the image that he has called us to? It is not by comparing ourselves to others that we develop a true self-image, but rather in answering the question of how true we are to who God has called us to be.

As you continue to reflect on some of these thoughts here are some questions that might help crystallize and shape your thinking:

1. How would you describe yourself to a stranger?
2. What are your greatest strengths and weaknesses? (Name two of each)
3. What would you most like to improve about yourself?
4. Who/what do you think God has called you to be?

## Prayer:

Most gracious and loving Father, thank you for making me the way I am and calling me to be a part of your family on earth. Help me to always see myself as I ought, never to be proud or arrogant, always to be humble and gracious. Help me to embrace and celebrate the fact that you have called us to belong to one another and create space for each other. In doing all these things, help me become the person you have called me to be. Amen

## Food for Thought:

A wise Rabbi, by the name of Zusya years ago said just shortly before he died: “In the world to come I will not be asked, ‘Why were you not Moses?’ I will be asked, ‘Why were you not Zusya?’” The challenge for the intentional Christian life is not to be like others – no matter how great they were – but to become a little more ourselves each day.