



May 24, 2024

### **The Real “Smart Mirror”**

Warm hellos once again friends, brethren, fellow laborers, spiritual family, and scattered children of God from here on the Gulf Coast. My wife and I pray and hope this finds you doing well, and that again your week has been blessed.

Back in January of this year someone referred me to an article on “Smart Mirrors”. Before even reading it, I asked, “What would make a mirror smart?”

Okay, so what is the mirror with AI technology? How would I use Mirror AI?

The answer given was “Using Mirror AI is easy!” “Simply download the app from the App Store or Google Play, take a selfie, and let the app's AI-powered technology do the rest.”

And then this caught my attention. “This smart mirror uses AI to boost your confidence and mood in addition to changing your life ...”

The smart mirror, which has already been recognized with a 2024 CES Innovation Award in the smart home category, combines AI and natural language processing (NLP) to analyze the sentiment of whoever is looking into the mirror through expressions, gestures, and tones.

Kind of weird I’d say. But it gave me food for thought once again.

I reflect back (sorry folks had to write that) as a child to this familiar children’s rhyme. “Mirror, mirror, on the wall...” In the rhyme, the mirror supposedly would talk back.

Over the years, I’ve also noticed how many superstitions there are regarding

mirrors. In some cultures, people will not allow a one year old or younger child to view him or herself in a mirror. I've heard it's because the child's growth will be limited because their reflection will be frozen in the mirror. Sounds crazy, but some people sincerely believe it!

The most commonly known superstition is that breaking a mirror brings seven years of bad luck. This belief is widely spread even yet today. History records that this came in part from the ancient Romans. They believed life was renewed every 7 years, and since a mirror contained a person's likeness, when the mirror was broken, the person who gazed into it would have bad luck until the next seven-year-cycle. Again, no basis of truth, but many still hold on to its belief.

In spite of some of these things I mention, mirrors can be useful tools for us. They reveal things about us that otherwise we would not see or know. How useful will the "smart mirror" with artificial intelligence technology be, I suppose only time will tell.

When we gaze into a mirror, we can see how we look to others. Is that tie on correctly? Is that shirt collar buttoned? Does the outfit look color coordinated? Is there a piece of meat between my teeth? Do I look like I just crawled out of bed?

What about facial expression? Look in the mirror and smile. Then frown. Then just relax and be normal. How do people you come in contact with see you? Does your "normal" expression tend to be a frown, or a happier outlook? I'm not saying to put on a false face, but what about improving your genuine expression.

Aha! So we can see how useful a mirror can be. We all think we could spot ourselves easily in a crowd, but seriously, what would we do without mirrors? It would be more difficult to find out what needs changed in our personal appearance if we did not have a mirror. For those ladies who wear makeup, how difficult would it be to do so, without a mirror?

In our weekly Bible Basics interactive studies we covered the book of James. The law of God, revealed in the Bible is like a mirror. Yes, it really is. When we look at it properly, we are able to see our own human nature just like it is. We can see the flaws that need to be removed. We can see where there needs to be changes made.

The Ten Commandments for instance are another mirror. If we take things that do not belong to us, and belong to others, we might know it is wrong in God's eyes, but when we look into God's mirror we see that this is the commandment against stealing, for us.

A person who does not honor his parents, does not clearly know how God views this action, unless he or she looks into God's law and sees the commandment to honor one's parents.

I'd say this mirror (the Commandments of God) is ever so much smarter than anything man can come up with.

That is why carefully studying God's Laws are so important. By doing so, we see what needs to be removed from our character. Once we see it though, is only the first step.

The second step then, is to remove it! James 1:22-25 says our normal reaction, is when we look in the mirror and see the flaw, is to look the other way and ignore it. It's like when I look in the mirror, see a piece of food in my teeth, and don't like what I see. So I throw the mirror away, right? That's illogical, at least for me.

Some teach that the Laws or Commandments of God are done away with. How absurd!

How do you look to God? Take time to examine yourself closely in His mirror...His laws contained within the pages of the Bible.

Let's be sure our character is clean, and well groomed. Some day we will see God face to face...that will be much more revelatory than any mirror we have today.

As we enter the Sabbath...reflect on these thoughts with me will you?

Arms up friends! Our sincere prayers and thoughts are with you daily. Thanks in advance for your heartfelt prayers for us.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'S. Hoefker', written in a cursive style.

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