

Mirror, mirror

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In this week's epistle reading, Paul gives us what is perhaps the most alarming sentence in all of scripture: "But when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed."

I don't know about you, but to me wearing a veil sounds pretty appealing. What could be more comforting than a nice piece of tulle hiding my horrible-at-poker face? Or maybe a mask to keep others from seeing what I rarely want to look at? After all, the [Man in Black](#) endorses the mask (no, he wasn't burned by acid): "It's just that they're terribly comfortable. I think everyone will be wearing them in the future."

Paul's words are alarming because I like the veil. It protects me. It forms the first line of defense in the battle to keep the outside world from seeing the person I'm afraid to display. A sheer piece of metaphorical fabric is all it takes to hide my true feelings, my true doubts, my true fears. With the veil on, I'm comfortable telling all those little white lies that get me through the day. No, I'm not sad; I'm just tired. . . . Yeah, I've never liked that singer either. . . . Thanks, but I already ate.

The veil is my stealth technology, my armor of avoidance. With increasing frequency, it's more than simply metaphorical. It's my iPod earbuds hanging from my ears or my phone plastered to my face or my huge *Top Gun* sunglasses-- anything that creates a buffer zone between you and me.

This isolation may be comfortable; avoidance may be the easiest way to coast through life. But Paul's alarming words remind me that comfortable and easy is rarely the best course of action. The veil isolates you from me by first isolating me from myself. If I'm too afraid to display the real me, then that true interior identity will vanish, and the veil will turn out to be covering an empty shell.

That's where practicing in front of the mirror comes in. Paul says that "all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another." Every

morning, I look at myself in the mirror and try to see the version of me that God sees.

Of course God sees me without the veil. God sees me both as I am now and as the person I could be if I shed the veil. With gentle pressure, as I look at my unveiled face in the mirror, God transforms me into the person I'm too afraid to display, the person who best reflects the glory of God.