

# The Guy in the Glass

A favorite parking place for me in Bible study is the *Book of Proverbs*. It raises questions of values, moral behavior, the meaning of human life and right conduct.

A theme that appears over and over is that “the fear of God (meaning submission to the will of God) is the beginning of wisdom.” Here is an example: *He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city* (Proverbs 16:32 NKJV).

Put another way: He who conquers others is strong. He who conquers himself is mighty. That’s a powerful insight.

In line with that philosophy is one of my favorite poems. It is entitled *The Guy in the Glass*, written by Dale Winbrow Sr., published and copyrighted in 1934. It appears below. (Don’t be misled by the word *pelf*, an informal word for money or wealth, in the first line; some reprints mistakenly substitute the word *self*.)



## The Guy in the Glass

When you get what you want in your struggle for pelf,  
And the world makes you King for a day,  
Then go to the mirror and look at yourself,  
And see what that guy has to say.

For it isn't your Father, or Mother, or Wife,  
Who judgment upon you must pass.  
The feller whose verdict counts most in your life  
Is the guy staring back from the glass.

He's the feller to please, never mind all the rest,  
For he's with you clear up to the end,  
And you've passed your most dangerous, difficult test  
If the guy in the glass is your friend.

You may be like Jack Horner and "chisel" a plum,  
And think you're a wonderful guy,  
But the man in the glass says you're only a bum  
If you can't look him straight in the eye.

You can fool the whole world down the pathway of years,  
And get pats on the back as you pass,  
But your final reward will be heartaches and tears  
If you've cheated the guy in the glass.

(more)

The poem contains an important truth: It is humbly serving others – and in the process, serving God – that brings true inner peace and fulfillment.

– Beecher Hunter