



FROM GLORY TO GLORY

We have heard the expression, "Keep your eyes on Jesus - if you look at people you will be disappointed". People are imperfect and are inclined to walk after the flesh (according to their own desires and understanding).

This attitude is a "cop out"! We should assume that people have a right to look at us and they should see JESUS, His nature, attitudes and behavior. That should be the goal of every born again believer. Without this as our goal, we will find ourselves living carelessly.

Paul in several places encouraged others to imitate him - just as he himself imitated Christ. (1 Cor. 11:11, 1 Cor 4:16). In the 3rd chapter of Philippians, he said that he had not reached perfection but this was his goal and he was pressing on to obtain perfection (maturity) and verse 16 tells us to "live by the standards to which we have attained".

We as Christians should be able to say to others, "You can keep your eyes on me. Go ahead and check me out, examine me. You will find the nature and behavior of Jesus as you keep a close watch on my life".

The true test of a Christ-like nature comes out under pressure. I've heard it said and I believe it is true, "You cannot judge a person's Christianity by their behavior in church." You need to check them out at home or at their jobs. The manner in which we react to a difficult situation is often times a clue to where we might be on the road to spiritual maturity. Many times our conversations in the privacy of our own homes would disqualify us as examples.

THE WORLD HAS A RIGHT TO EXPECT TO SEE JESUS IN US

How do we get this Christ-like behavior? Is it a magical-mystical thing that "zaps" us and one morning we are suddenly different? NO!! When we are "born again", God's Spirit is united with our spirit and a NEW CREATION is born from an incorruptible seed (sperm) 1 Pet. 1:23. This birth involves our spirits through faith and is not based on our feelings - our five senses, however, being filled with the Holy Spirit involves our emotions (5 senses) and is an experience.

"You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit is come upon you" (Act 1:8). The first thing that we need power over are our choices, wills and emotions. I have heard my husband say that the Holy Spirit within us becomes our "battering ram" knocking down strongholds in our natures and allowing the new nature to have control. Our old nature has been programmed by the things of the world. All of the desires and controls of the old nature are still a part of us in our thoughts and our behavior. The reaction patterns are still the same even though we have been born again.

We must chose to PRACTICE the things of God. 2 Peter 1:2-11 tells us that we become partakers of His divine nature by PRACTICE. We must control new thoughts and directions, and now we have the power of the HOLY SPIRIT to help us do just that.

We begin to yield our 5 senses to the control of the Holy Spirit:

1. We love our enemies by a choice to do good to them - not by feelings. Luke 6:27

2. We forgive by choosing to forgive and then behaving as though the wrong never happened. Mark 11:25.

We began to PRACTICE the word of God until it becomes a part of our nature. This is how habits are developed and THIS IS HOW WE ARE CHANGED!

It is awkward and uncomfortable to "put aside" our old nature and begin practicing something new. When a baby first begins to feed himself, he is very messy and awkward, but with practice it becomes no problem. When you first began learning to play a musical instrument, you were very slow and uncomfortable, plus the sounds coming out of the instrument were anything but harmonious...but soon, you could put your fingers in the right places without thinking about it. It had become a part of your nature! 1 John 3:7,22 says, "Let no one deceive you, the one who PRACTICES righteousness is righteous and he who PRACTICES sin is of the devil...whatever we ask we receive because we keep His commandments and DO those things that are pleasing in His sight." His commandments were never designed to appease our 5 senses. He did not say we would "feel" like keeping his commandments and doing things that please Him. We don't have to live void of feelings but our feelings must line up with the word of God.

"Do not imitate what is evil but what is good. The one who does good is of God" (3 John 11).

"Let the one who does wrong, still do wrong and let the one who is filthy still be filthy, let the one who is righteous still practice righteousness and let the one who is Holy still keep himself Holy. Behold I come quickly" (Rev. 22:11).

WE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO CHANGE WHEN JESUS RETURNS. WHAT EVER WE ARE PRACTICING... THAT IS THE WAY WE WILL STAND BEFORE HIM!

"Lay aside the old self which is being corrupted....that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind..and put on the new self which is in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth" (Eph. 4:22-32).

THERE ARE SOME CHARACTERISTICS THAT WE ARE INSTRUCTED TO "LAY ASIDE": anger, lying bitterness, wrath, slander, clamor, (arguing), and malice. This can be done. We can change our natures by choosing to change and by perseverance.

I believe the ultimate purpose of God is to reveal His nature through His people. The world is waiting to see us as we are changed from glory to glory into the image of Christ Jesus.

by Latena Willis