

# A Christ-Like Standard For Living

## By Bill Denton

### INTRODUCTION

#### A. Illustration

1. I know what a Miss America looks like, but how about a Miss Kingdom of God? Hard to see, isn't it? -- C. David Gable in Leadership, Vol. 9, no. 2.
2. I think it is hard to see
  - a. yet we are accustomed to forming images in our minds so that whenever a person talks about a "Miss America," we know pretty much what he's talking about
  - b. we would do the same with other images
    - 1) what would Mr. Universe look like (body-builder)
    - 2) at school, what would Mr. or Miss High School look like?
3. Maybe it's a good thing that we don't select Mr. or Miss Kingdom of God

#### B. On the other hand, the Bible does teach what we should look like

1. It is not a physical image at all, rather it is a spiritual image.
2. God never has been as interested in the outward, physical appearance as with the inner, spiritual appearance
  - a. 1 Sam 16: 7 But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God *sees* not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."
  - b. 2 Cor 5:12 We are not again commending ourselves to you but *are* giving you an occasion to be proud of us, so that you will have *an answer* for those who take pride in appearance and not in heart.

#### C. In fact, the Bible teaches that God intends to shape us into the image of Jesus Christ

1. We should "look like" Jesus
2. He is the standard for life
  - a. not that we ought to look like him physically
  - b. rather, it is Jesus who defines for us the kind of people we are to become
  - c. Jesus provides a standard for living

#### D. This morning, I want to show you some of what the Bible says about Jesus as the standard for living

## I. JESUS IS OUR MODEL

**A. 2 Corinthians 3:18** -- But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.

### B. Quote

“It's hard to effect change unless people feel a compelling need to change.”

-- Max De Pree, Leadership, Vol. 15, no. 3.

1. This is one reason it is so important for us to understand the problem of sin and its consequences – unless and until we understand the problem, there will always be a lack of motivation to change for we will miss the need to change

2. Romans 6:12-18 -- Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin *as* instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace. What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? May it never be! Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone *as* slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness? But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.

### C. Back to 2 Cor 3:18

1. Let's go back and read beginning in 2 Cor 3:7
2. Paul puts the “ministry of death” up beside the ministry of the Spirit – gospel
3. If the “ministry of death” had glory, how much more the ministry of the Spirit
4. Moses had to put a veil over his face because it reflected God's glory, and the people could not bear to look at it
5. But when a person turn to Christ, the veil is removed
  - a. but we don't look into the face of another to see God's glory
  - b. it's as if we look into a mirror – we see God's glory on our own face
  - c. how can it be? -- because we are being transformed into the same glory
6. As Paul would say in Rom 8:30 – we are predestined, called, justified and glorified
7. All that, however, because we were intended to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ (Rom 8:29)

## II. JESUS IS OUR MOTIVATION

A. 2 Corinthians 5:14-17 -- For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf. Therefore from now on we recognize no one according to the flesh; even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know *Him in this way* no longer. Therefore if anyone is in Christ, *he is* a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

### B. This is truly a Christian's conclusion about life

1. one (Jesus) died for all, therefore we all died – that's how we view our earthly life; dead
2. but he died so that those who live might live with a new purpose – “for Him” who died and rose on their behalf
3. therefore (conclusion) we don't recognize ourselves or other of the faith, according to the flesh (old life)
4. instead, if we're in Christ, we're new creatures; old things passed away and new things have come

C. Here's your motive, one that Paul mentions several times in one way or another – if you're a Christian, you're dead to whomever you once were, and whatever you once were -- You are a new person

## III. HOW IS ALL THIS DEMONSTRATED IN OUR LIVES?

A. Galatians 2:20 -- I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

B. Galatians 5:22-23 -- But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

C. Something happens to people who put their faith in Jesus Christ, who become his disciples, who are saved through his death and resurrection, and who yield themselves to shaping work of God's Spirit

1. They simply are not the same people they once were
  - a. doesn't mean they won't struggle with temptation and sin
  - b. it does mean that there is a process at work that progressively changes them more and more into the image of Jesus, seen in how they live
2. A Christian isn't recognized by what they used to be or do, but what they are now in Christ

## CONCLUSION

### A. Illustration

The only person who likes change is a wet baby.

-- Mark Twain, Leadership, Vol. 15, no. 3.

### B. Oh, did I forget to mention that becoming like Christ is not the easiest thing in the world, or that it is comfortable or without pain?

1. I don't think it's ever been easy to die and rise from the grave
2. Yet the apostle Paul keeps using that imagery to speak to us about the new life we are to live in Christ, about the process of becoming less like ourselves and more like Jesus.
3. Maybe this is one reason so many never really change at all
4. How about you?

### C. Invitation