

In His Likeness

Sunday Morning, October 30, 2016

It is always an amazing thing when our children are born and come out looking like us. And it is really cool when they actually learn positive things from us and use them out throughout their lives. Unfortunately, too many Christians of our day seem to be totally unconcerned with the need to be conformed to the image of Christ as they were born to be as we read about in **(Romans 8: 29)**.

For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

Rather, they seem to think that they can live pretty much as they please, as long as they admit it to God. This could not be farther from the truth. Somewhere along the line we have lost our fear of God.

As John Franklin says: Barna Research shows no significant difference in the lifestyles of Christians within the church and those of pagans when it comes to living together before marriage, illegitimate births, gambling, and discounting absolute standards of right and wrong. In fact, the divorce rate among Christians is even higher (26% compared to 22%).

As Romans 8:29 points out, we need to realize that we have been “predestined” to be conformed into His likeness. Eventually it will happen, but what a blessing to us, others and a pleasure for God if we would focus on making His priority our priority. We need to stop and think as we go throughout each day and recognize if we are thinking, saying and doing things that help us make progress towards that goal.

It all starts with our mind. Turn to **(Philippians 2:5)**

5 Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,

6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God,

7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.

8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

We need to have the same focus as Christ to help us be conformed into His likeness. He was humble and obedient in his thoughts and actions. He did not do things for His own pleasure or do things that would enhance His pride.

(Romans 8:5-9) gives us further insight in to our mindset:

5 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.

6 For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.

8 So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

9 But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.

To be conformed into His likeness our thoughts must be on spiritual matters. We must look at everything in our lives through the lens of scripture and God's eyes.

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Our decisions on how to do daily activities or places to go or people to associate with should be based on God's methods and ways. We should be asking Him for guidance and then obeying. We should not be focusing on our needs and preferences first. We should not be letting our flesh, thoughts or emotions control our decisions, words and actions.

The Apostle Paul in **(I Corinthians 11:1)** reminds the church body that we can start this new mind set process by imitating.

Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.

Be in the Word and learn what Christ was like. Then we can imitate Him. We also can find mature Christians and imitate their godly behaviors.

We must walk as He walked, if we want to conform to His likeness.

(I John 2:6)

He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.

We must be very careful not to conform to the image of the world that Devil has designed. The devil is the great deceiver and Father of Lies. His smudged thumbprint is all over this world. His deceptions have been woven in to things taught by our education system, our government, and our society. The Devil's first sin was pride and the first thing he did was to influence and deceive Adam and Eve into committing a sin based on pride. They wanted to eat of the fruit so that they could become wise. That was a sin of pride.

Although they had been created in God's image, they soon became influenced to take on Satan's image.

Being wise may have seemed a good thing to be, but it was their pride that told them that they needed to know all and not have to rely on God and what He taught them. We need to be careful that we are not influenced by Satan in this World and start conforming to his image. Sometimes concepts, ideas, things will seem innocent enough or good, but they really are not good from God's perspective and they will not help us conform to His likeness.

- ✝ Are you making progress in the right direction?
- ✝ Are you looking more and more like Christ?
- ✝ Can others look at you and recognize that you are a Christian by your words and actions?
- ✝ Can others look at you and know what Christ looks like?