

Reflecting the Image of Christ

Written by admin

Sunday, 28 April 2013 11:04 - Last Updated Sunday, 28 April 2013 11:29

by Toni Babcock



Does reflecting the likeness of Jesus solve all the challenges we face as Christian women? Not necessarily. Projecting Christ-likeness is no guarantee we will become a social magnet, or treated with respect in the world (quite the opposite is often the case), but there are positive steps we can take to avoid needless and destructive behaviors that mar the image of Christ in our lives as women.

It is important to remember God looks on the heart, but people are not God. They are looking at us. We can't expect them to have confidence in what we say while we repeat the same self-sabotaging patterns we developed from childhood. People frame opinions about us based on how we act, and on what we appear to believe about ourselves. If we continually present ourselves in a weak or negative light, we will be discredited in the minds of many.

Consider the following checklist of do's and don'ts as you live out your faith in Jesus:

1. Become aware of words and actions you display that tear down instead of build up your faith in the Lord. Those little self-deprecating remarks we tend to make about ourselves will stick in the mind not only as a lack of confidence, but a lack of faith. If you have put your trust in the Lord, you are a daughter of the King. Stop tearing yourself down. Preserve the honor of Christ by respecting yourself and your birthright in Him. Others will take note and respect you too. (Proverbs 14:1 KJV)

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Proverbs 18:7

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KJV)

2. Practice discretion at all times. Ask the Lord to help you set a watch on your tongue. Author and pastor Colin Smith put it this way: "Don't be a truth terrorist." Not everyone needs to know everything about you. Be prayerful and maintain your personal boundaries. If self-revelation is a problem for you, try to figure out why you feel the need to be so "transparent." Is there a hidden score you are trying to settle, or an agenda you need to repent of? If so, deal with it in a godly way. (Proverbs 11:22 KJV) (Ecclesiastes 5:1-2 KJV) (Psalm 141:3 KJV) (Jeremiah 17:9-10 KJV)

3. Do not neglect the Word of God. God's word is a lamp unto your feet and a light unto your path. (Psalm 119:105 KJV) (Proverbs 13:13 KJV) (Proverbs 3:5-6 KJV).

4. Do not forget to praise God and be thankful. (Psalm 146:1-2 KJV)

5. Stop being a pessimist if you are inclined to be so. If you find yourself always complaining about your impossible circumstances to the Lord, remember who you are complaining to. In a moment of fear and weakness, Martha thought it was too late for Jesus to solve her big problem, and the Lord had to give her a mild scolding. (John 11:39-40 KJV).

6. If you are challenged with depression and anxiety issues, trust Jesus in the dark if you have to. "Who is among you that feareth the LORD, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of the LORD, and stay upon his God." (Isaiah 50:10 KJV).

It may take time, but God promises to make darkness light before us, and crooked things straight. In fact, the light and the dark are both the same to God, so we have no legitimate excuse to indulge ourselves with reasons not to trust Him. (Isaiah 42:16 KJV) (Psalm 139:11-12 KJV)

7. Always choose the fear and the favor of God over the fear and favor of man. (Jeremiah 17:5-8 KJV) (Proverbs 31:30 KJV)

8. Recognize your purpose and position in Christ. The more you apprehend who you are in Christ, the more your confidence in Christ will grow. (Romans 8:1-4 KJV) (11 Corinthians 5:15-21 KJV) (Ephesians 1:15-23 KJV)

9. Learn to freely give and receive God's love. This may take time if you have been spiritually or emotionally wounded, but don't give up. Improve your odds of success by keeping your

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heart clean through the Word, and covering your wounds with love. It will keep any contagion from spreading around. (1 John 4:10-11 KJV) (1 John 4:16 KJV) (John [1](#) 5 :[3](#) KJV) (Proverbs 17:9 KJV)

10. Avoid the pitfalls of emotionalism. This does not mean we should never be led to feel, but we should not be led solely by our feelings. People who are ruled by emotions instead of the truth make themselves prey to false teaching. I don't know about you, but I wouldn't want to join the rank of "silly women laden with sins" Paul alludes to in his letter to Timothy (11 Timothy 3:6-7 KJV).

I encourage you to study the above scriptures and the dangers they expose, as well as the promises they make. Destructive patterns form over a lifetime, but they are not insurmountable. No one can say they are damaged beyond repair or spiritual usefulness once they believe the gospel. We were formed to reflect the image of Christ and to live in His service. God has something important for us to do in his kingdom, and he wants us to figure it out what it is, and let Jesus shine.

Toni Babcock is a freelance Christian writer from South St. Paul. She enjoys writing short stories for children and young people, as well as memoirs, poetry and spiritual essays.

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