

Image isn't everything**971226**

I don't know how many of you remember the advertisement that has a famous tennis player in it with the slogan: "Image is everything." Surely in the world today this is what most people believe; this is what sells. This is why the cosmetic, fragrance, automobile, and clothes industries are multi-billion dollar affairs. Even as we realize this we have a laugh as Billy Crystal says on Saturday Night Live, "You look marvelous!"

I was once part of a great team at work, and we had to make many presentations. We had the best of tools with which to create artistic and informative color viewgraphs. We sort of took pride our abilities in this area. I remember once we had a visitor who said to us after we had briefed him, "If you're as good as your presentations, you must be pretty good." We took this as a compliment. But the word if can be a very big word.

What really interests me is that there is no physical image recorded of Jesus Christ. We don't know how tall he was, or what color of eyes or hair (although we might can guess). In spite of this, Christ through His love and sacrifice has conquered the world. Information on his looks was simply not important in the overall scheme of things.

What a different world we live in now! What man could be elected President today without having his face plastered on every television set in America? And people generally vote for a face and not a platform. It reminds me of the story of Saul, who was a head taller than anyone else. To the people he looked very regal and fitted perfectly their image of a king. But he did not have the substance within. His image was not enough to make him a good king.

Sometimes we are not as good as our presentation, and that turns everyone off. The image we try to portray fails to convince others and we are seen for what we really are. The Bible uses the idea of whitewash to describe the process of presenting a false image. In Matthew 23:27 we read, "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men's bones and everything unclean." What a condemnation! It just goes to show that image is indeed not everything!

With Christ, what you see is what you get. Except that for this to be true you must look spiritually, not physically. We have been given a description of Christ that appeals to people of every race and color. His unfailing love and complete sacrifice for mankind is what draws us to Him and causes us to imitate Him. This spiritual image is a reflection of the glory of God (Hebrews 1:3), the greatest Good. And God is everything.

So perhaps we should modify the expression somewhat. Instead of saying "Image is everything," we should realize that only spiritual image is everything. We must hold the spiritual image of Christ in our hearts so that we can follow Him.

© Copyright 1997, Heard Lowry