

Student Support Program

THE CHURCH OF
Jesus
Christ

Image Is Everything

It's not about what others think of you. It's about who they see inside you



By Brother Cameron Staley

We care about what people think of us. It's as simple as that. Even if you've heard someone (maybe even yourself) say, "I don't care what people think about me," deep down, we know that's not true. It's human nature.

We don't realize it, but we are taught by our society from the time we are little kids that there are few things as important as our personal image — you know — how others view us.

It's all about us!

The Almighty Ad

Advertising companies exist because they can make a connection between a product or service and a feeling inside us that

says, "Hmmm...if I only had *that*, then everything would be perfect!" They stay in business because they can connect with our emotions, especially our insecurities.

I remember an advertising campaign from when I was a kid, and the slogan was "image is everything." If my memory serves me correctly, it was a Canon camera television commercial, and professional tennis star Andre Agassi was the pitchman, and he had an atrocious mullet (in his defense, mullets were "cool" in the late 80s/early 90s...I think).

Strength Vs. Weakness

Concern with our personal image — how other people view us

— can be a phenomenal strength or a crippling weakness. That might sound strange because most of the time when you think about being concerned with personal image, you tend to think that it's a bad thing. I believe it's actually the opposite.

Concern *and care* for our personal image is the most effective way for us to draw others and ourselves closer to Jesus Christ!

The Word tells us to "let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:16). Too many times in my life, I've found myself

wondering what big stage God might want me to be shining that light on. Now I've learned that thinking like that wastes a lot of valuable time.

Every interaction we have with other people, whether verbal or non-verbal, is an opportunity to shine our light and help people see Christ. These are big-time opportunities, and we have to treat them that way.

How Do They See You?

I was recently airing my complaints about a certain situation at work to a friend of mine, and I was really confident that I was right (which, by the way, meant that someone else was *wrong*). I just knew that I had the answer to the problem, and I was letting my buddy know all about it.

As I became more animated, a few other coworkers came over to listen to my rant. I explained that if everyone listened to me, the issue would definitely be resolved — and they'd see they should have listened to *me* from the very beginning. The issue ended up resolving itself — without any of my "brilliant" input.

Well, shortly after the conversation ended, I sat down at my desk and quickly realized that I was more concerned about my team viewing me as the guy that had all the answers than I was about actually helping to solve the problem.

I sat there for a few minutes, filling up with embarrassment and regret, and for some reason, I

thought of that commercial.

I realized that I was being childish and selfish. The thought that nagged at me for the next several minutes was, "What image do these people that I spend 40+ hours per week with actually have of me?"

What a powerful message: "image is everything." It's such a loaded and profound phrase. We all represent something or someone by our actions.

Who was I representing at that moment? Was I shining the light that Christ put in my heart, or was I trying to make sure that the spotlight was on me? Was I sharing the joy that I've found in Christ, or was I trying to make people think that I was brilliant for 30 seconds?

Reflect What's Right

Whether or not we recognize it, we have the ability, through the power of the Holy Spirit, to reveal Christ to other people through the simplest actions. Who do we want people to see, Christ or us? I say both — but we should want people to see Christ *through* us.

We're on the biggest most important stage every single day, and it's our calling to reflect His light so people see Him!

It definitely doesn't take much effort to earn a reputation for being self-absorbed. To earn that badge, all we have to do is be lazy, rude, and quit when times get tough. It's much more challenging to develop a reputation for being interested in others before ourselves. It takes hard work, consistency, and perseverance.

As I sat there at my desk, I wondered silently which opinion my coworkers had of me: selfish or selfless? I know which one I *want* them to believe. Let's challenge ourselves every day to put a pure heart into the conversations that we have, the emails and texts that we send, and even the simplest look we keep on our face when we casually cross paths with someone.

Let's remember that somewhere along the way, someone reflected the light of Christ to us when we may have been in the dark. Image really is everything — it's just up to us to decide whose image we want to reflect.

Mirror, Mirror

If you think you need to reflect a more Christlike image, remember to look in the mirror often. The mirror is the word of God. James 1:23-25 says, "For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth *therein*, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed."

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