



Can We Bear the Image of Christ?

by Gene Easley

When situations change, when our environment changes, when the people we are around are no longer our old friends but are now new, unfamiliar faces, when new challenges face us, when new temptations confront us...can we still bear the image of Christ? When we have moved away from our old home where our Christian testimony and our commitment to Christ were understood and went mostly unchallenged, but now we have moved to a new location where we are not known...can we still maintain the same commitment and level of influence for Christ we once had? Can we still manifest the presence of Christ wherever life may take us?

Or maybe we have not moved from our old town but have only changed employment, and those around us are not acquainted with our profession of faith in Christ. Can we maintain our witness for Christ in this new environment? Or maybe the question should be, "Will we maintain our witness for Christ at all?"

It is easy to lose our balance when change comes. We become established in our old location. We feel secure in our routine. We rise in the morning. We have our devotional time with the Lord (or at least every Christian should). Then we spend our day around people we know and who know our Christian testimony. But when something comes along to change our routine, will we be able to keep the presence of Christ shining through us?

Daniel had this challenge in his witness for the God of Israel (Daniel 1:8). He had never eaten things sacrificed to idols. No one had ever required that he do such a thing. But now in Babylon he was expected to do so with no questions asked. He now had to establish his testimony in Babylon based on the convictions he had grown to cherish in his homeland of Judah. Those principles required him to be the same Daniel as had been reared by his parents.

How about Joseph? He had lived under the protection and care of a loving father. He knew right from wrong, but things would change. When he was sold into Egypt, his circumstances were drastically different. He would be tested as to whether his dedication to God was real or not. When Potiphar's wife tempted him to sin, his quick response was that he would not "sin against God" (Genesis 39:7-9). Joseph didn't say, "I am away from my family, I am away from the eyes of my father, so who is going to know?" No! He knew God would know, and that was all that really mattered. He was the same Joseph in Egypt as he had been at home in his father's house. His witness and his testimony did not change in a new location.

There was a young man who had been faithful to attend Sunday school, week after week, for a number of years. His local church gave him a special award for his faithfulness. Then he joined the military service, got in with the wrong crowd and, instantly, stopped attending church. In a new environment, this young man changed from a faithful son to one who dropped out of church completely. You might ask, "How could that happen?" His life and testimony were, apparently, unstable. And we learn from his example that we need to get our roots down deep, make our dedication real and learn how to put Christ in our lives no matter where we are. When we go to that new location, will people look at us and say, "That person looks like Christ?"