

306 09/05/05 What is the world's perception of our witness?

I have a heavy burden on my heart for the way that much of the world views Christianity. In a recent conversation with a friend, I said that I thought that being a poor example of Christianity out in the world was truly a black mark on our name and an insult to Christ. He asked me a very pointed question: "Are you doing anything to change the world's perception?"

Other than prayerfully tending to my own witness, I guess I am not. I know of no better place to begin making a change than with children. Perhaps if their parents are aware of the need and have some guidance in how to train them, the next generation can change the way that the world views Christians.

There has always been a great need for witnesses for Christ. Even in the midst of his earthly ministry, Jesus saw the need. "Then he said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few.'" Matthew 9:37. The need is surely greater today.

A good witness testifies about what he has personally experienced. For example the victim of aggravated assault might say, "He broke into my house, beat me and stole everything of value. My life has been in shambles since that day." A good witness for Christ might say, "He went to the Cross, died for my sins and offered me salvation. I have experienced joy beyond belief since I accepted his offer."

So far, that makes sense. The problem comes when the person testifying that she has experienced unbelievable joy is, in reality, anything but joyous. Or, when a person who says he wants to be obedient to Christ is verbally attacking someone with whom he disagrees. Or, when a person condemns a sinner rather than loving him.

Since we are all sinners, we will all fail to be what Christ would have us be. However, it is important that if we are going to wear his name, we must study his Word and pray continuously so that we come closer and closer to him. Then we really can be a good witness for Christ.

In the next few weeks, I will be writing about some ways we can teach our children to be witnesses—the kind of witnesses that can change the way the world sees Christ and those who are called by his name.