

What kind of shopper are you? Are you a hunter...knowing exactly what you want before you go, setting out for the kill and getting back home before anyone knew you were gone? Or are you a reflective shopper? "Oh, I wonder how this would go with those pants at home...naaa...doesn't fit quite right at the shoulders." You go from store to store only to come home empty-handed. Maybe you're a mix of these two types--the passive-aggressive shopper: You ARE going to come home with something to wear, but you just can't decide what you want, so off you go...scooping up blouse after pants after dress after belt after shoes. "I can always return what I don't want later," you tell yourself while heading to your car with numb fingers and a crick in your shoulder. What kind of shopper are you?

Since the combinations are endless, let's pretend that we are all window shoppers. We determine that we won't go inside a store until something really fantastic catches our eye, even if we have to go from window to window, squinting at every last detail...as soon as we see that thing we can't resist, we'll go in and check it out! The truth is that we'll probably choose to go into the store that most clearly displays their items: front, back, price tag showing, etc.

This is a little bit of the picture of living out the gospel of Christ. We've all heard the phrase, "I'd rather see a sermon than hear one anyday (see page 2)." So true, isn't it? Jesus is the only One who can save the lost, but He draws unbelievers to us to do some "window shopping." I used to think that, as Christians, we were the item underneath the bright light, and that we needed to be perfectly beautiful all the time, doing and saying all the "right" things. The truth is this: We are not the One on display---Jesus is---and our lives are the reflection of Him.

"We put no stumbling block in anyone's path, so that our ministry will not be discredited."

2 Corinthians 6:3 (NIV)

It is clear when we read this verse that the Lord wants us to keep His windows sparkling, so they'll need to be squeegeed on a regular basis through the cleansing of the Holy Spirit. Why? Not so that Christianity will look pretty and perfect to everyone looking in...but so that it will be pure and unclouded to them. The verses that follow explain how we can present Christ clearly to others (I like the way "The Message" translates it):

"Our work as God's servants gets validated-or not-in the details.

*People are watching us as we stay at our post, alertly,
unswervingly...in hard times, tough times, bad times...working hard,
working late, working without eating; with pure heart, steady hand; in
gentleness, holiness and honest love; when we're telling the truth,
and when God's showing His power; when we're doing our best setting
things right; when we're praised, and when we're blamed...ignored by the
world, but recognized by God...immersed in tears, yet always filled with*

deep joy...having nothing, having it all.:" (Read 2 Corinthians 6:3 thru 10 to see the verse in its entirety, as I omitted some for space.)

If we make ourselves the object on display, we will fail miserably. If we make Him the Centerpiece of all that we do, then others can see him clearly and purely, which is the goal of any true window shopper, isn't it? Let's take the time right now to pore over these verses, asking Jesus to help our lives to reflect Him honorably. Ask Him to show us spots or smudges that we haven't cleaned up or that have been unnoticed in the corner of our frames. The most awesome truth of all is that when we show off Christ in this way, many will be desperate to have Him too, no matter what kind of shopper they are. And when they walk inside, they will be delighted to possess this priceless Treasure, all the while, throwing their Discover Cards away...

Sermons We See *Edgar Guest*

*I'd rather see a sermon than hear one any day;
I'd rather one should walk with me than merely tell the way.
The eye's a better pupil and more willing than the ear,
Fine counsel is confusing, but example's always clear;
And the best of all the preachers are the men who live their creeds,
For to see good put in action is what everybody needs.*

*I soon can learn to do it if you'll let me see it done;
I can watch your hands in action, but your tongue too fast may run.
And the lecture you deliver may be very wise and true,
But I'd rather get my lessons by observing what you do;
For I might misunderstand you and the high advise you give,
But there's no misunderstanding how you act and how you live.*

*When I see a deed of kindness, I am eager to be kind.
When a weaker brother stumbles and a strong man stays behind
Just to see if he can help him, then the wish grows strong in me
To become as big and thoughtful as I know that friend to be.
And all travelers can witness that the best of guides today
Is not the one who tells them, but the one who shows the way.*

*One good man teaches many, men believe what they behold;
One deed of kindness noticed is worth forty that are told.
Who stands with men of honor learns to hold his honor dear,*

For right living speaks a language which to every one is clear.
Though an able speaker charms me with his eloquence, I say,
I'd rather see a sermon than to hear one, any day.