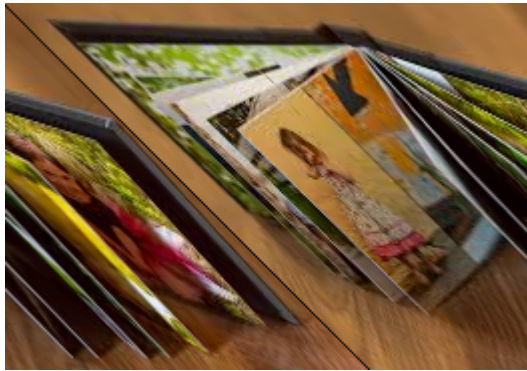


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Have you ever gone through an old family photo album? Some of the photos go back a very long time. Some photos were taken before we were born. Some photos depict an entire family tree. Parents, grandparents are usually seen in these albums. Mothers and fathers can be viewed as young children. We can also see pictures of ourselves, days when we were young, innocent and without a care in the world. At times sorrow is revived as we look at the pictures of loved ones who have departed to be with Lord.

As we look at these old photos we probably find ourselves yearning for those childhood days....days before the aging process stole some of the carefree moments of our lives.

Imagine now, if you will, that God has a photo album and He comes across your picture. What will He think when he looks at it? Will God see a son who has made bad mistakes and has regrets? Will He see a daughter who has gone astray? Or will He see the child who had once left home but has returned, as He patiently waited for His wayward child to come to his senses? Will your photo show you after you have come in contact with the saving blood of Jesus Christ? Will your picture reveal a life that has been purified by obedience to the Gospel?

We are told in 2 Corinthians 5:17 that "old things are passed away behold all things become new." That is the picture I want God to see when he looks at my photo. I don't want God to see a picture of me while I was still in my sins. I want Him to see me as a righteous person who is living by faith (Romans 1:16-17). I want God to see a picture of me possessing the "attitude of Christ" having comfort from His love, having fellowship with the Spirit, having tenderness and compassion, making joy complete, being like minded, having the same love for one another that Christ had for me, being one in spirit and in purpose, doing nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility thinking of others better than myself, looking to the interests of others (Philippians 2:1-5). That is a picture that encourages me. That is the picture I want God to see when He looks at me.

Do you want and need a new picture to be taken? Jesus is the only way to overcome sin, regret, shame and guilt. Through Jesus we can stand innocent in the presence of God. But in order for this to happen, we may need to have a new picture taken. I am usually disappointed when my own photo is taken, especially for a driver's license or other form of photo ID. They are horrible. I think, I cannot look like that bad. Of course with photo shop, pictures can be altered to look almost anyway we want them to. Hair can be added, wrinkles removed, youthfulness can be restored. The problem with this is the fact that an altered photo does not represent how a person really looks. Generally a photo pictures us as other people see us, not as we see ourselves. God's photo album is accurate. The way we look to God is how we really look. The only way we can change our appearance before God is by having faith in Him and obeying Him.

Your picture and mine are in God's eternal photo album. Say "CHEESE!"