

Self Image

✖ All of us have three images: *projected* image, *perceived* image, and *actual* image. Your *projected* image is the way you desire others to see you. Your *perceived* image is how others see you. Your *actual* image is who you really are.

For so many, their *perceived* image is what matters most. Their reputation is of greater importance to them than the true motives of their hearts. This causes them to *project* themselves in the way they desire to be *perceived*. Their efforts are focused on appearances, status, titles, saving face and so forth.

Consider Jesus—He was rejected by many, slandered by the influential, lied about by the rulers, and viewed by the establishment as a heretic or even demon inspired. His *perceived* image was not favorable in the eyes of many, especially the notables. Yet His *actual* image was quite different, for Scripture states that He is the express image of the Father (see Hebrews 1:3).

Jesus was a person of integrity—He was the same with the people He met as He was with His Father. He did not boost His reputation and did not seek the accolades and approval of men. He only cared for what was important to His Father. That is our Father's goal for us, and it should be our goal as well.

"We must all appear and be *revealed as we are* before the judgment seat of Christ" (2 Corinthians 5:10, AMP). We must remember that our projected or perceived image is not what will be revealed before the entire assembly of heaven. Rather it will

be our *actual* image, our true heart motives and intentions.

Paul continues: "It is because we know this solemn fear of the Lord that we work so hard."

(2 Corinthians 5:11, NLT). The fear of the Lord keeps us in touch with our *actual* image. The opposite is true as well: The more we lack the fear of the Lord, the more we lean upon our *projected* image.

You will serve who you fear. If you fear God, you'll obey God. If you fear man, you'll ultimately obey man's desires. For this reason, Proverbs tells us it is dangerous to be concerned with what others think of you. (see Proverbs 29:25).

*Marked by boldness and passion, **John Bevere** delivers uncompromising truth through his award-winning curriculum and best-selling books now available in over sixty languages. His newest book is Extraordinary: The Life You're Meant to Live. More information is available at .*