

Chameleon Christians

by Dan S. Shipley

The chameleon will be remembered as the small lizard with the remarkable faculty of being able to change its color in such a way as to blend with its surroundings. Some who like to be known as Christians manifest a similar characteristic.

This chameleon Christian assumes the color of those with whom he associates and whose favor he courts, whether saints or sinners. What **they are** governs his words and actions more than what **he is**. His conduct always conforms, even in the company of carnal-minded companions. He blends by proving himself proficient in the smutty language of worldlings and by expressing delight in their vulgar humor. When with the crowd that walks after the flesh, he keeps in-step; he runs with the pack into the same excess of riot (**2 Pet. 2:10; 1 Pet. 1:4**). His abused taffy-like conscience will allow just about anything a situation may seem to justify. He is adept at mixing with the world and identifies with those of darkness with such ease that they never suspect him of being a Christian.

But, there is another kind of chameleon Christian. This one is more subtle and sophisticated and his conforming is less obvious because it is done on a much higher plane. He seeks identity with the successful, the influential, and the elite within the world community. While this blending is often done under the guise of social, civic, or business obligation, it is with careful tact and discretion — and with a view toward gaining approval and acceptance, whether for reasons of pride or profit.

But, regardless of how this blending is motivated or accomplished, it is always hurtful to the believer — whether realized or not. Courting the world's favor means partaking of its flavor. Be not deceived: bad company corrupts good morals (**1 Cor. 15:23, NASV**). One must be *like* the world to be *liked* by the world (**Jn. 15:19**) — and just about anything that gains the approval and esteem of the world can become a hindrance to serving God (Oh, how we need to learn this! — and teach it to our young). Nothing can justify seeking man's approval above God's — it is sinful and so are the motives that prompt it. There are simply no right ways to achieve wrong objectives or to express wrong motives! This urge to please men is not only wrong, it is intensely strong — strong enough to keep some from confessing Christ (**Jn. 12:42**); strong enough to cause another to deny his discipleship while blending by the enemy's campfire (**Jn. 18:17-27**) —and strong enough to tempt any disciple to fashion himself according to this world, wherein he makes wrong friends and wrong enemies. (**James 4:4**).

What most blending believers fail to realize is that their efforts to identify with the world

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