

The Oak Grove Oracle

(Family News & Views of the Oak Grove Church of Christ)

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Walking In Their Shoes

As you all too well know, I have many faults both as a person and a preacher. If I see a crooked picture when I lay down for the night, more times than not I can't sleep until I get up and straighten it. Great modern "art" is often lopsided, but I like symmetry, so sue me! I also tend to be a perfectionist, which can make me an unbearable "boss" to work for when combined with my OCD tendencies. Thankfully, one of my two sons once encouraged me by saying, "Dad, you don't have a really bad case of 'OCD,' because if you did you'd call it 'CDO,' which is in alphabetical order!"

I know I'm a study in contrasts. How can a perfectionist be so imperfect? Trying to analyze me would not be easy. I'm quite sure I'd drive most counselors stark raving mad (watch the Bill Murray movie, "What About Bob?," and you'll see what I mean). If anyone wants to evaluate and pigeonhole my psyche, they'll have to get in line, because I've spent a lifetime trying to figure me out. The best I've been able to come up with is that realizing my own imperfections, I strive to make the world around me perfect, so at least something in my life is straight and symmetrical. Janice always tells me I need more Bible in my articles. OK, here's your proof text. The Apostle Paul wrote, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Romans 7:24). His answer is our only hope - "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin (Rms. 7:25).

I'd like to be able to blame it all on my dad. If I had just a nickel for every time I heard him say, "If a project is worth doing, it's worth doing it right," I'd be a millionaire. If you'll throw in a dime for "measure twice, cut once," then I could give Bill Gates or Warren Buffet a run for richest man in America status, but I digress. Hey, my dad wasn't a perfectionist, he was just perfect in a little boy's eyes, but then I grew up and realized the only real perfection is in Jesus Christ (1 Peter 2:22). So, now you know why I became a preacher.

Understanding, sympathizing and empathizing with others is what this article is all about, but I'm almost out of space, so you'll have to tune in next week for the real meat of this morsel of spiritual encouragement. The Indians called it, "walking a mile in another brave's moccasins." God's Word for it is as follows: "For though I be free from all *men*, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. ...I am made all things to all *men*, that I might by all means save some (1Cor. 9:19-22). Please tune in next week, Lord willing, for "the rest of the story," as Paul Harvey used to say. Until then, read all of the 1 Corinthians 9 citation just above and keep studying!

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