

# The Oak Grove Oracle

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

Meeting Weekly At Our Building Located At:

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## Walking In Their Shoes (#3)

Maybe I can finish up these thoughts today on learning to view things from another's perspective, so we can be more understanding, sympathetic and empathetic of and with others. Whether you realize it or not, the Bible gives us quite a bit of instruction about "walking in another's shoes." In my opinion, the primary text would be found in 1 Corinthians 9:19-22, where the Apostle Paul stated, "...I am made all things to all *men*, that I might by all means save some." If you read the whole passage like I encouraged you to do two weeks ago, you discovered that Paul's evangelistic studies with others were "custom-tailored," in order to fit each individual's situation and needs. In other words, he was always trying to relate to his audience so he would be a more effective evangelist.

Many other passages also shed some light on our need to "get inside another's skin," so we can visualize how something will impact them. For example, everyone knows the "Golden Rule," as we often call it, of: "do unto others, as you would have them do unto you," which is a paraphrase of Matthew 7:12. However, in order to properly fulfill that "rule of thumb," we must first "walk a mile in the other brave's moccasins." For instance, everybody knows I love fried chicken, but I actually know of some "strange folks," who detest it and will not eat it under any circumstances. Taken in context, literally, I might practice the golden rule correctly by taking fried chicken to every sick or bereaved person I visit. However, if I know they hate fried chicken, my gift would likely do more good if I shared with them one of **Ben Shumate's** "fried bologna sandwiches." **Janice** likes to take banana bread, or some other type of cake to the people we go visit who are sick or shut-in at home. Usually, though, she tries to find out before hand whether or not they might be diabetic. If so, then she might carry a fruit-basket, or perhaps make for them some of her delicious sugar-free banana pudding.

Now, here's the conclusion of "the rest of the story," which brought this lesson home to me in a very real way recently. You remember in last week's *Oracle* installment, my relating to you how a couple of weeks ago I attended the planning session for our area's "**Summer Youth Bible Series**" (SYBSNET). After I found out our **Amanda** could not prepare this summer's brochure at her graphic design business, due to her illness, I came home determined to design the best looking brochure I could dream up. The following day, I worked hard all morning on an   idea that would, in my mind, convey our 2018 theme of: **Bible Truths YOU need to Know B4**   **U** . My idea was a play off the old **AMEX** ad, "**Don't Leave Home Without It.**" After laboring diligently over the computer all morning long, I managed to create a "hook" or icon, which looked like a credit card with the name: "**The Master's Card,**" which had a Bible where the holographic image normally is found.

In last week's article, I related how I had e-mailed the rough draft to several "young buck" preachers to get their "take" on what "I thought" was my "masterpiece" (yes, PRIDE had me by the throat). I told the first one I called to be brutally frank and earnest with me, so, he did just that! His exact response is a bit hazy (I've slept since then), but it was something like: "It's lousy, it stinks, it's so outdated that the

kids will never understand it." Ouch! It's a good thing we were talking over the phone, or I might have punched him in the nose (in a Christian sort of way, of course), but I digress.

Listen, my nose was "out-of-joint" for the rest of that day! It was so bad, several people who passed me by said, "what's up with your nose?" Yes, preachers can get our feelings hurt just like all other humans, when we receive stinging criticism. Thankfully, I usually don't pout for long, especially when said criticism is not unjust and was only intended for my benefit. Hey, I asked for it! So, I began to think, I've done this to my own daughter for the last three years, when I asked her to design our advertising brochures for our summer **Gospel Meeting**.

I had always thought my criticisms of her creations were just a little bit of "tweaking" to make it "perfect." "Honey, it's beautiful, **BUT** could you use a different colored picture over here and maybe a bigger font in bold-faced type over there...." etc., etc., ad nauseam. It hit me like a bolt of lightning. I was guilty of the very thing which had made me nauseous earlier that day. So, when I got home that afternoon, I sent her an e-mail to apologize and to ask her to forgive me for being such a perfectionist that I sometimes overlooked her feelings.

Here's a closing Scripture to contemplate: "Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others" (Phil.2:3-4, ESV).

**David A. McCain**