

NOBODY'S PERFECT (Ecclesiastes 7:20)

1. There should be a production of humility.

- a. It seems that most people only admit sin if and when they've been caught.
 - i. David is good example of this (Genesis 12:1-14).
 - ii. It is a very real truth that man may never catch us in a sin, but God knows (Hebrews 4:13; Psalm 69:5).
- b. Jesus taught us to admit our sins when we pray (Luke 11:1-4).
- c. Christians can't be complacent and become self-righteous, but rather confess our sins whenever they occur (1 John 1:9).
- d. Only one who is humbled by his or her state can do this because pride blinds one to his or her faults.

2. There should be a change in perception of others.

- a. There is a fatal flaw that many of us possess: the ability to condone in ourselves what we condemn in others.
 - i. Someone once wrote that this is the idea of "I just make mistakes, but my brother sins."
 - ii. It is like the old lady who said, "I could see my faults as well as anyone, if I had any".
- b. We can never be judgmental of the faults of others in a way that we would refuse to have ourselves reviewed (Matthew 7:1-5).
 - i. Paul commands us to examine ourselves (2 Corinthians 13:5; 1 Corinthians 11:28-32).
 - ii. Forgiveness is a two-sided coin in that we can't be forgiven by God unless we are willing to forgive others (Matthew 6:14-15).
 - iii. We have to develop some understanding and compassion, and learn to be merciful toward the weak and erring (Hebrews 2:17).
- c. We must come to learn that we are no better than anyone else.
- d. However, we have to be careful to not go so far with this attitude that we:
 - i. Become tolerant of sin;
 - ii. Compromise with sinners while they are still in sin;
- e. Peter was stern with the sins of others when they were guilty (Acts 5; Acts 8:18-23).

3. There should be a prevention of certain thinking.

- a. We all have sinned, because people are flawed people.
- b. The phrase "without sin" is used only of Jesus in the Bible (1 Peter 2:22; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 4:15).
 - i. No one else has ever qualified to have this said about them, even the best of those we read of in scripture.
 - ii. There have been those who were called blameless (Luke 1:6; 1 Corinthians 1:8; Philippians 2:15, and others).
 - iii. There is a big difference between blameless and sinless.
 - iv. Blameless means those people were in a right relationship with God.
 - v. We are to follow men only wherein they are following Jesus (1 Corinthians 11:1).
- c. Every human being is going to sin.

- i. There are those who have quit the Lord's church because they have been disappointed by someone in whom they had placed their faith.
 - ii. Their role model did something wrong and it caused them to lose faith.
 - iii. Their disappointment led them away from the Lord and back into the world.
- d. The truth is, if their faith had been solely on Jesus, the whole congregation could have fallen away but they would have stayed faithful (1 Corinthians 2:1-5).
- e. When we realize everyone has faults, we won't be tempted to tie our faith to anyone else.

4. There should be a realization of our dependence on God and his grace.

- a. It is interesting that Paul wrote so much about the grace of God.
 - i. Do you think this might have been important to Paul?
 - ii. Romans 3:24; Romans 5:8-11; Ephesians 2:1-9; Titus 2:11-14.
- b. I don't doubt for a minute that Paul remembered his past life of sin and it caused him to be dependent upon the grace of God.
- c. He knew he was saved because God saved him (1 Corinthians 15:9-10).
- d. There is a story told about an Anglican preacher named John Newton that really shows us the mind set we must have.
 - i. Two or three years before his death, an older friend and fellow preacher called on Mr. Newton at breakfast time.
 - ii. They had prayer, ate and then read scripture together.
 - iii. In that day's scripture reading was 1 Corinthians 15:10, "By the grace of God, I am what I am".
 - iv. After that verse was read Mr. Newton said, "I am not what I ought to be. How imperfect and deficient. I am not what I wish to be. I abhor what is evil and I would cleave to that which is good. I am not what I hope to be. Soon, soon, I shall out off mortality, and, with immortality, all sin and imperfection. Yet though I am not what I ought to be, or what I wish to be, nor what I hope to be, I can truly say I am not what I once was - a slave to sin and Satan; I can heartily join with the apostle and acknowledge, "By the grace of God, I am what I am".
- e. When we come to realize our own sinfulness, we recognize there is no room at all for pride (1 Corinthians 1:30-31).

5. There should be a cultivation of certain traits.

- a. We should cultivate the attitude of watchfulness over ourselves.
 - i. A person who has a tendency to stumble will usually be much more careful how he walks (1 Corinthians 9:27; Philipians 2:12; Romans 11:20).
 - ii. How many times did our Lord tell us to watch, or be on guard?
 - iii. Knowing that we are prone to sin should keep us on guard against such.
- b. It will cause us to cultivate confidence in God.
 - i. God has never cast off His people just because they sinned.
 - ii. God forgives those who repent: He always has and always will.
- c. It will cause us to cultivate patience in order to finish the race.
 - i. Luke 21:19.
 - ii. 2 Timothy 4:8-10.

From an outline by Jeff Asher