

General Topics :: I Forgive You For Not Being Perfect

I Forgive You For Not Being Perfect - posted by moreofHim (), on: 2008/12/31 12:50

I recently read a wonderful article on a blog that I read frequently here at (<http://chatswithanoldlady.blogspot.com/>) Chat s With An Old Lady (She is not old, by the way, but wise :)

I thought it was such a good reminder for us to not idolize or follow any one man's teaching - for all men are imperfect.

I Forgive You For Not Being Perfect
by Gina Smith

Dear Christian authors, speakers and preachers,

I read your books and listened to you speak. You inspired me. I bought more of your books...and listened to as many of your sermons as I could. I became a follower. Many have followed you. The thing is, you have a lot of really good things to share. God is using you. But unfortunately I started to hold on to every word you said. I started to think you could say no wrong. I quoted you, and promoted your writings, and so have a lot of people. In fact, it makes me feel quite "spiritual" when I mention that I love your writings, and am in any way associated with your name. After all, you are highly respected, an "expert"...a "theologian". You are, in many ways, a "Christian celebrity"...many would say you are their "Christian hero". Sometimes you are a bit "radical"...and it kind of makes me feel radical to say that I like what you have to say!

Well, I read something you said and I questioned it. In fact, I really didn't agree with it. I opened my bible and what you said wasn't even completely "biblical". I was shocked. I was disappointed. I shared it with someone, and they defended you. How in the world could YOU be wrong?

Then I looked around me and saw other people following you, reading your books, listening to your sermons. Agreeing with all you say....and not wanting to see that you are human. That you are capable of error! And that all of us have a tendency to want to follow SOMEONE!

Then I sensed God telling me that I had been wrong to "look to" a man. That I had put too much "stock" in what you said. That even though you are godly, and are a gifted teacher and author, the only book out there is without error is HIS book.

I really don't believe that you intend for people to follow you. I think you are very sincere in your attempts to present the truth. That is why I know you will not mind if I don't agree with everything you write. I know you would want me to be a Berean and compare all you write and preach with the Word Of God. Even though I may not agree with everything you say...I promise that I won't "write you off".

You will probably still inspire me in many ways, and yet I will not hold you up as the ultimate authority anymore. I know you wouldn't want me to do that anyway.

I'm not disappointed anymore. I know you are just a man. In fact, I have helped you climb down from the pedestal I put you on. I feel foolish and humbled for putting you there in the first place! I forgive you for not being perfect!

For I am not perfect either!

Sincerely,
One of the sheep who gets easily distracted by "what is seen", but who is trying to keep her eyes on the ONE who is NOT SEEN!

Acts 17:11 "Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true. "

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1 Corinthians 3:4 "For when one says, "I follow Paul," and another, "I follow Apollos," are you not mere men? What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe--as the Lord has assigned to each his task."

Re: I Forgive You For Not Being Perfect - posted by RobertW (), on: 2008/12/31 13:35

I think this is a good post to ponder. The *pressure* to be 'perfect' can be overwhelming. I recently heard an old sermon by Ravi Zacharias along these lines. A lady asked the question after hearing a wonderful and inspiring message, "I wonder if it is true in his private life?"

The message was a call to pray for leaders and those that minister in the Gospel that the words they preach will not just be true in terms of accuracy, but a reality in the lives of the ministers. I say Amen to that.

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2008/12/31 14:02

Amen.

One of the greatness needs in Christianity is to see leaders who are "sincere", "honest", "without guile", not "double-tongued" these are what are needed in our day who walk and talk as Christ did.

We can esteem such highly for the gospel sake. But away with honoring clergy and priestcraft and denominational authority structures. We should only honor and respect those that have "God" given authority. And the best of God's men have many faults and errors and mistakes. This is so very true.

"For every-time we look to men, let us look ten times to Christ" -Robert Murray Mc'Cheyne.

Thanks for the great post Chanin.

Re: - posted by murrcoir (), on: 2008/12/31 14:37

Quote:

RobertW wrote:

I think this is a good post to ponder. The *pressure* to be 'perfect' can be overwhelming. I recently heard an old sermon by Ravi Zacharias along these lines. A lady asked the question after hearing a wonderful and inspiring message, "I wonder if it is true in his private life?"

Hello Robert how are you getting on since the conference it was nice to meet you.

My view on this matter is we must live the message of the gospel or the message you preach or talk about. If not we are only clanging cymbals.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2008/12/31 20:41

Quote:

-----My view on this matter is we must live the message of the gospel or the message you preach or talk about. If not we are only clanging cymbals.

Well, I'm doing my best to continue to walk in the victory and grace of Christ and not allow myself to come under the legalistic load of bondage that kept me in misery.

One aspect that has changed is that I view Christian perfection through the lens of God's grace and not my own attainment. I never was a perfect man. I cannot say I have not needed repentance and forgiveness many times, but I have lived a very strict life relatively. I pretty much mastered the whole, "I don't do that and I don't go there, type holiness thing."

The UK was a wonderful deliverance from legalistic bondage and past wounds that were problematic. I have tried in the

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past to live so perfectly in public that few would know what I was going through privately. I believe I needed to repent of casting a comic book figure image when in reality I am a man like anyone else. I am just a normal Christian man.

Quote:
-----My view on this matter is we must live the message of the gospel or the message you preach or talk about. If not we are only clanging cymbals.

Amen. I would only add to that the spirit of the message of the original post; that is, if one is looking for perfection they will not find it with me and I do ask forgiveness for falling short. I have just come to realize that I am not Jesus. I abide in Him and I seek to walk in the Spirit under His grace and direction; but I am not confused about the fact that I am still a normal Christian man that will still need the blood of Christ and the mercy and grace of God. I think it is sin to project an image or foster a reputation that we cannot live up to. That was part of what I repented of at Greenock.

Truly, if God were to jerk the covers on most people's lives I believe there would be great distress. We ought to bear in mind the scriptures admonition:

Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after. Likewise also the good works of some are manifest beforehand; and they that are otherwise cannot be hid. (1 Timothy 5)

I would rather disappoint everyone here in time than have them disappointed in eternity. I would rather confess openly what is appropriate than to allow a false notion to exist of me that I am somehow something I am not. I would rather my sins go before me than to follow after. I wish for only *pleasant* surprises when we all stand before God. I pray the Lord grant it in all our lives.

Re: - posted by HeartSong, on: 2008/12/31 21:00

Quote:
-----Truly, if God were to jerk the covers on most people's lives I believe there would be great distress.

I asked Him to "jerk the covers" on my life. While there has been great distress, it has only served to make His mercy shine ever brighter. This is how we are released from the bondage - by exposing these things to the light.

(Someone please remind me of this the next time I dive under my Rock).

Re: I Forgive You For Not Being Perfect - posted by JoanM, on: 2009/1/1 1:14

I very much support the "discovery" this woman made that "the best of God's men have many faults and errors and mistakes" as Greg puts it. But **does anyone else notice that something is amiss here?** It's the title: I Forgive You For Not Being Perfect. Did the Christian authors, speakers and preachers sin against her or God?

I appreciate the literary device but it omits/masks some redeeming truth. The body of the letter paints an accurate picture of what occurs. She says: *"I became a follower.... But unfortunately I started to hold on to every word you said. I started to think you could say no wrong. I.... I will not hold you up as the ultimate authority anymore."*

Ex. 34:14b: for the LORD, whose name Jealous, a jealous God. Deut. 4:24: For the LORD thy God a consuming fire, a jealous God.

The author even touches on a possible root of the sin ("bad fortune") against God: *"In fact, it makes me feel quite 'spiritual' when I mention that I love your writings, and am in any way associated with your name"*.

But as it is reported, I don't see the woman dealing biblically with her role and don't see the help/point of avoiding that. Behavior could improve but I don't catch the growth.

God is a God of mercy.

Confidence in God.

PS: As the Brothers say, do I need to get my helmet? :-(

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2009/1/1 5:11

I wanted to come back to these two points because I think we really need to reckon with this:

Quote:
-----My view on this matter is we must live the message of the gospel or the message you preach or talk about. If not we are only clang
ing cymbals.

Quote:
-----I'm not disappointed anymore. I know you are just a man. In fact, I have helped you climb down from the pedestal I put you on. I feel
foolish and humbled for putting you there in the first place! I forgive you for not being perfect! For I am not perfect either

I preached a message in 2004 called, "Put down the comic book!" The message dealt with the disillusionment I had felt at times when some detail about some iconic figure in my life failed to match my exalted perceptions. I had made certain people larger than life and into 'comic book' figures.

Understand that Jimmy Swaggart after he fell made a statement to the effect, "Who could I turn to?" He has taken a lot of abuse over his fall. Perhaps he deserved it? God will judge. But the point always stuck with me, "Who could I turn to?" People had lifted the man into some sort of Pentecostal Hell Fire preaching John Wayne or something. He was so exalted, that I had a cousin in law that actually rejoiced when he fell because my grandmother spoke of him as almost a demigod.

I want to say publicly that I never want to be such a person that is exalted in other peoples eyes with no where to turn. That is a dangerous place to be. When so many people are looking up to you and you are in, "Never let them see you sweat" *mode*, you are a prime target for the enemy. I do not believe that God intended for men and women to live like that.

I believe that much of it is a product of memoirs and movies that always depict men with their best foot forward. You can detect a lot of things about people in their preaching and teaching if you will, "put down the comic book." You must never confuse the man while he is operating in his gift (under an unction from God) with the man himself. Surely this is why many get confused. God touches men and women to do things that they are not normally able to do. We call it the anointing where I am from. And when that unique empowerment for service lifts off...

Should we live the message we preach. Absolutely. Are we perfect in that regard? Absolutely not. Then why do we preach it if we are not perfect? Are we all just hypocrites? I don't think so. Peter and those that were with him in ministry as well as the certain that came from James are all a prime examples of men entrusted with the Gospel and yet they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel. (Galatians 2) Were they to be blamed? Yes and Paul dealt with them. Should they have left preaching the Gospel? I think not.

I find it interesting that Christians almost naturally gravitate to Paul and *not* Peter. Paul never walked on water. And Paul never denied Christ. But there is something in the human nature that desires perfection and wants to model perfection. Truly I think that this tells us more about ourselves than it does other men. I think this is what the article is driving at.

Re: - posted by HeartSong, on: 2009/1/1 5:28

Art Katz often mentioned as he preached "And I am just now learning this." Additionally, he often made mention of the foolish things that he had done until the Lord set him straight, as well as making it clear in almost every sermon that it was the Lord speaking through him, and not the man himself.

These things go a long way in clarifying that all of the good that was being spoken was of the Lord, and that anything bad that might be mixed in was of human effort.

I think that most of the misunderstandings occur when the speaker himself loses sight of these things and this in turn is projected unto the hearers.

Just my opinion.

Re: - posted by psalm1, on: 2009/1/1 11:49

"Art Katz often mentioned as he preached "And I am just now learning this." Additionally, he often made mention of the foolish things that he had done until the Lord set him straight"

I remember when the Lord set me straight.

Now I'm dealing with the foolish things after the Lord set me straight