

Friday Focus

From Emory

Mission-Men-Me

The Marine Corps gets it right. One of the first things ingrained into the hearts and minds of recruits upon their arrival at boot camp is the concept of “Mission-Men-Me.” In other words, ‘it’s not about me.’ For weeks that I am sure seem like months, each recruit is ingrained with the notion that personal sacrifice for the mission or for a fellow soldier is not just noble, it is expected.

The mission is more important than anything else; every single soldier in the platoon must be totally committed to the success of the mission. Secondly, the other men and their needs take priority over one’s own- even to the point of sacrificing one’s own safety.

As a football coach, one of the things that I love about coaching my sport is that we get personally involved with teaching, demonstrating, and exposing this concept of self-sacrifice to boys, likely for the first time in their lives, in a very real and tangible way. To be asked to sacrifice physically for a teammate by throwing a block on offense or filling a hole on defense, even though you are not going to get recognition or accolade for doing so, is a big step for many boys. It fits in with the theme that former NFL running back Gale Sayers wrote about in his book, *I AM Third: J-O-Y* (which stood for Jesus, Others, Yourself).

We definitely live in an ‘all about me’ culture, and some think that culture has evolved in somewhat of a downward spiral. I think that due to our sin nature it’s always been ‘all about me’; we just have access to more leisure time and resources in the 21st century, and that creates more opportunity for self-gratification.

Ultimately, the way we live our lives identifies on whom we depend to fulfill our emotional needs, as well as physical and spiritual ones. Even as Christians it becomes ‘all about me,’ especially as we deal with sin. When focused on our own feelings and how someone has hurt us (or as parents, one of our children) we often want to unravel why someone did what they did. “Justice” for others’ sin is our desire, even in the midst of the hope of grace and forgiveness we have for our own sin.

Perhaps a key to our own contentment (and sanity!) may be our ability to focus on personal holiness, i.e. our need for the Lord’s cleansing forgiveness, and not on others’ sins (especially those committed toward me), but instead our focus should be on forgiveness *outwardly*. (Colossians 3:13; Matthew 6: 14-15)

What if we all worked as hard toward forgiving other people as we did toward ‘righting the wrongs’ that others commit toward us, or in Christian vernacular, “*understanding* why someone has done what they have done to us” when they have wronged us.

One of Charley Chase’s quotes that I like the best is: “The key to the Christian life is remembering what it is we should remember and what it is that we should forget.” We often get it backwards in this life: we keep detailed accounts of the sin others commit toward us and ignore or deny our own.

I think one of the keys to maintaining our joy and our candidacy for the Lord’s sanctification is a clear conscience. Two things prevent that: 1) our own sin and, 2) harboring resentment toward others.

How does this affect our school? **It should be the difference that is most noticeable, measurable, and distinctive about Providence Christian School.**

I was fortunate to have both of my grandmothers live long enough that I was well into adulthood before they died. Among the many wonderful memories I have of them is that I can never recall either one of them ever saying anything negative about another person. If something negative came up, ‘Memaw’ would quickly change the

subject.... "Oh, aren't the azaleas blooming in full color this year?" and 'Mama Latta' would likely look at another person's situation and justify their behavior with ... "Well, we don't know what they are going through. Maybe we should pray for them." What a legacy to leave!

Education is a tough business, even Christian education (or maybe *especially* Christian education). In fact, during our recent visit to Briarwood Christian School, Dr. Barrett Mosbacker, their Head of School, said "I don't know why Christian education is so difficult, we are only dealing with people's children, their religion, and their money?!"

It *is* difficult. It *is* a struggle. And sin gets out of the car and walks into the classroom (and the administrative office) every day. We need Jesus. And as long as we know that and make that a priority, things are not going to just be ok, they are going to be awesome!

If
by Rudyard Kipling

If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you;
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,
But make allowance for their doubting too:
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,
Or, being lied about, don't deal in lies,
Or being hated don't give way to hating,
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise;

If you can dream - and not make dreams your master;
If you can think - and not make thoughts your aim,
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster
And treat those two impostors just the same:
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,
And stoop and build 'em up with worn-out tools;

If you can make one heap of all your winnings
And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,
And lose, and start again at your beginnings,
And never breathe a word about your loss:
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
To serve your turn long after they are gone,
And so hold on when there is nothing in you
Except the Will which says to them: "Hold on!"

If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,
Or walk with Kings - nor lose the common touch,
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,
If all men count with you, but none too much:
If you can fill the unforgiving minute
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,
And - which is more - you'll be a Man, my son!