

WOMEN'S EVENING ON
PERFECTIONISM
24TH FEBRUARY 2017

Fiona Robb
ST PETER'S BARGE

- What questions do you have on this topic?
- How would you define “perfectionism”?
- Write down an incident/behaviour that shows your perfectionism OR someone close to you’s perfectionism.
- Why is it attractive? What benefits does it give you?
- What difficulties does it lead to?

What hope is there in the gospel for the perfectionist?

(1-9) Freedom from your CV; confidence in Christ

So if our life is no longer about building our CV, what is it about now?

(10-11) A new goal – knowing Christ

But isn't that just something else to be perfectionist about?!

(12-16) A new way to pursue the goal – accepting imperfection

A couple of implications:

1)The pressure you're putting on yourself is not from God

Despite.....

Matthew 5:48 "You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."

Romans 12:2 "be transformed by the renewal of your mind,"

2) You and this world are not perfect, but that's ok

Every person, including you, is frail and weak....."dust"

Psalm 103:14 "he [the LORD] knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust."

Fallen

Finite

Response?

Psalm 103:13 and 14 "As a father shows compassion to his children, so the LORD shows compassion to those who fear him....For he knows our frame; he remembers that we are dust."

And linked to human sin and frailty is that the world doesn't work perfectly.

Romans 8:20 "For the creation was subjected to futility"

...and it won't work properly until the day it's "set free from its bondage to decay". Romans 8:21.

Suggestions of steps to take (try to do Nos. 1 and 2, and one other)

1) Take ½ hour sometime soon to meditate on Philippians 3:1-16 – read it over, pray it over. Ask the Lord to help you abandon your CV and imperfectly pursue knowing Christ.

2) Accept your current circumstances as from the Lord's hand, and allow God to work on your perfectionism through them. Accept this will take time and will feel "messy".

3) Listen to those you love and trust who are telling you to "lighten up", "take the pressure off", "that's good enough".

4) Cultivate an attitude of compassion for others, rather than criticism.

5) Practise thankfulness/rejoicing in the Lord.

6) Choose to stop doing a job earlier than you naturally would and see what happens.....(will there be a disaster?!)

7) Do something deliberately imperfectly and see what happens (e.g. wear a top with a stain on it; send an email with a couple of typos in it).

Question Time

Prayer Time

Resources on Perfectionism

Christian resources:

Emma Scrivener's blog "A New Name"

<http://emmascrivener.net/?s=perfectionism>

"Desiring God" website, e.g.

<http://www.desiringgod.org/articles/grace-paced-living-in-a-burnout-culture>

Book "The Ministry of a Messy House – Grace in place of guilt" Amanda Robbie

<https://www.thegoodbook.co.uk/the-ministry-of-a-messy-house>

Secular Resources:

A self-help website on anxiety – includes perfectionism

<https://www.anxietybc.com/>

What some psychologists have written on perfectionism (all kinds of articles and blogs and self-help resources. I haven't read it all!)

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/basics/perfectionism>

If you have trouble figuring out whether you have a problem with perfectionism, you might find answering the following questions helpful:

1. Do I have trouble meeting my own standards?
2. Do I often feel frustrated, depressed, anxious, or angry while trying to meet my standards?
3. Have I been told that my standards are too high?
4. Do my standards get in the way? For example, do they make it difficult for me to meet deadlines, finish a task, trust others, or do anything spontaneously?

If you answered “Yes” to any of these questions you may have a problem with perfectionism.

Examples of perfectionistic behaviour:

- Chronic procrastination, difficulty completing tasks, or giving up easily
- Overly cautious and thorough in tasks (e.g., spending 3 hours on a task that takes others 20 minutes to complete)
- Excessive checking (e.g., spending 30 minutes looking over a brief email to your boss for possible spelling mistakes)
- Constantly trying to improve things by re-doing them (e.g., rewriting a work document several times to make it “perfect”)
- Agonizing over small details (e.g., what movie to rent)
- Making elaborate “to do” lists (e.g., when to get up, brush teeth, shower, etc.)
- Avoiding trying new things and risking making mistakes

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