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Here's Hope
by Rev. Jerry Rea

Someone Beautiful

Realistically speaking, things tear up. We know that but we still expect our washing machines and refrigerators to last for year after year after year. How long can you go at your house without replacing things? What is realistic? How long, for example, do you think that carpet should last? Oh, you've not got carpet in your home? I guess it wore out, huh? I think we're pretty unrealistic about any number of things.

We expect to pick up a new hobby and be really, really good at it in six months or so. How's that working out for you? We expect to fix something that we've never even half looked at. Somehow (it may be our technological age), though we've never picked up a screwdriver we believe we can do this. Congrats on your confidence. Realistically, though, it takes people years to learn a trade or a craft. Those who're really good often had parents who've taught them for years. I love to talk to the 65 and older crowd about how they've morphed into the craftsman they are. The expectation for it to just happen is unrealistic.

Likewise there is an idea that we can be really good at a sport which we picked up the day before yesterday. We assume that the idea of "practice" is for someone else. So, here's our thinking. I'll just show up and it will "happen." It never does. Those who have this unrealistic idea often quit when the going gets tough.

What about the idea that we can understand God's Word without even cracking that book? Many folks think that this will "just happen" as well. Those who're real "spiritual" say things like "God will help me understand." Those who think this way are partially right. The Holy Spirit does open our eyes. That, however, presupposes that you are actually "in" the Book that we expect Him to "open." As you grow with God, He opens your mind, for sure. He also opens your heart. You come to understand the "heartbeat" of God. Then, when you approach His book looking for His truth, you kind of... "get it."

We also expect our churches to be problem free. After all, these are Christian people. You might want to check that expectation by looking at the people in the Old and New Testaments. There's not a person (excepting Jesus of course) that did not have a boat-load of issues. One of the beauties of the Bible is that it shows the flaws of the people God used. So, when you approach God's church, it is highly unrealistic thinking that the problems of those folks are magically checked at the door. The people inside the doors have issues. Incidentally, so do you. Our problems vary. Ego is a big one. A lack of experience working through issues plays into our difficulties. Some people are just not good with others. In elementary school we had a place on the "report card" that said "plays well with others." If you related well with your classmates

you got a good grade. Many people just cannot “play well with others.” Let me be quick to say, just because you are saved, it does not mean you relate well with others.

So, let me sum up. We all have problems. We all have limits to our understanding and a lot of inexperience when it comes to all that life throws at us. We are all a bit lazy when it comes to putting in the time to learn and do better. We have tremendously unrealistic ideas about things being one way or another. We’re all this way.

God takes us in our immaturity and ego and our stubbornness and helps to move toward the standard of Jesus. Jeremiah 18 tells us the story of the potter making something beautiful out of... mud. You’re the mud. God, though, is a wonderful potter. He takes all you are and makes it into something (or someone) beautiful.

Being Molded - Jerry Rea