

The Problem of Perfection

November 2015

The world is full of frustrated perfectionists, and the working world of the airlines is no exception. We may work with perfectionists or have tendencies in that direction ourselves. Either way it can cause problems on the job.

If we are honest with ourselves, we must realize that frustration and perfectionism go hand in hand for one simple reason: human beings cannot reach perfection by their own effort. This fact might seem self evident but it does not keep billions of people from trying and experiencing all the misery that comes from repeated failure. One might ask why they continue to try. What is it that compels us to try to be perfect to begin with?

The theological answer is that all human beings are made in the image of a perfect God and so we are “hardwired” to be perfect beings as well. The very sense we have that things are imperfect points towards the existence of something to which imperfection must be compared. We know there is a sun behind the shadows cast by that which is flawed. The one who believes in the God of the Bible knows what or, more accurately, “Who” this sun is.

There is also an explanation for why imperfection is so inextricably bound up in the human condition. The scripture tells us that the perfect Creator of the universe originally gave the crown of His creation the gift of free will. It goes on to explain that somewhere in antiquity, at the beginning of our race’s existence, the first humans used this free will to turn from the God of perfection in favor of self-sovereignty. A perfect God is worthy of, among other things, perfect obedience. Consequently, a race that rejects such obedience immediately becomes imperfect by definition.

But just because we have fallen into imperfection does not mean we do not have a dim corporate memory of what we once were. In fact, we are acutely aware of what we

were, if often only subconsciously. This is at the core of the pain and bewilderment of human existence. We can use any number of things to dull the ache of our imperfection, but we cannot make it go away, at least not on our own.

The message of Christianity is that we can be individually restored to the flawlessness our God had in mind when he made us. Salvation (and the ultimate perfection it promises we will know in heaven) is a gift, not something imperfectly, and thus impossibly, earned. Since only the divine is perfect, the way back to perfection must pass through the divine...specifically through a particular Man who entered human history 2000 years ago and proceeded to live a perfect life from start to finish. It is identification with that perfect Man, through faith, which is the only path God has given us to regain what we have lost.

Ultimately, the Christian proposition is that the true cure for perfectionism is not obtained by human effort but only by and through the perfect gift embodied in Jesus Christ. This is true not only for the long-suffering perfectionist but also for every one of us because, in a profound sense, it is the essence of the Gospel. (Used by permission from Shea Oakley)

“He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”

2 Corinthians 5:21

The author of this article, Shea Oakley, serves on our FCAP Advisory Board and is also Executive Director of the Aviation Hall of Fame and Museum of NJ. He holds a Certificate of Theological Studies from Alliance Theological Seminary and since 2002 has had over 400 articles on Christian subjects published in print and online publications, including Pulpit Helps and Disciple magazine.

THE FELLOWSHIP OF CHRISTIAN AIRLINE PERSONNEL

History:

The ministry of FCAP began in 1971 and was incorporated in 1973 when 50 people from eight different airlines in the United States and Canada met to consider how God wanted them to serve Christ in and through the airline industry. Since that time, the ministry of FCAP has spread in over 90 areas of the world. We do not have a membership or dues; rather we are a fellowship among Christians in the airline industry worldwide that share a common commitment and focus.



Perspective & Focus:

Most people look at work primarily as a source of income. Some even view it as a curse imposed on them as punishment from God. *The Fellowship of Christian Airline Personnel* believes that God places a high value on work and is deeply interested in our work, our performance on the job and our relationships with our co-workers. We recognize that both our work and the way we relate to people in the workplace are of great importance to God. So it is our mission: *“To represent Christ in the airlines through meaningful relationships and quality work.”*

FCAP’s two-fold purpose encourages people *to know and experience God’s presence with them at work* and *to trust Him for the enabling strength in the responsibilities and challenges of work*. We see authentic ministry in the workplace as a result of our displaying this relationship to our Lord within the sphere of our influence at work, without being coercive or self-serving.

Values:

- We value doing our work wholeheartedly as unto the Lord, knowing we represent Christ by the quality of our performance while on the job (Ephesians 6:6).
- We value intentionally engaging our faith in the workplace by expressing it in both deeds and words (1 Timothy 6:17-19).
- We value influencing the people around us by creatively building relationship with them and looking out for their interest just as we do our own.
- We value connecting the church in the workplace by seeking out other Christians, to mutually show our love for one another and our care for the people God has placed around us (John 13:35).

Making Your Connection:

Like the airline industry is all about making connections, so FCAP is all about Christians making their connection in the workplace in three basic ways:

- Connecting God’s purposes in the details of your work.
- Connecting ministry to God working through you to influence the people and circumstances of work.
- Connecting the church in the workplace in unique and creative ways, in order to extend and strengthen its influence.

- WE OFFER:**
- Training that helps Christians integrate the Christian faith into the everyday details of our work and its challenges.
 - Free publications and weekly thoughts that offer encouragement, gives focus, and provides information.
 - Support and fellowship through local groups, prayer network, training sessions, special events and conferences.



The Fellowship of Christian Airline Personnel

The ministry of FCAP is carried on by everyday ordinary people throughout the airline workplaces of the world who go to work with an extraordinary calling. The FCAP ministry does not focus on specialized people, nor are we a special interest group focusing on certain issues. We do not have a membership nor are we a club with dues. Rather, FCAP is a fellowship of Christians who identify with one another through a common focus and purpose. And we desire to demonstrate how our faith in Jesus Christ can influence the people and circumstances of our workplace. We are blessed to have both airline and non-airline people who encourage and support this ministry.

Your Next Step:

Check on the FCAP website to see if there is a group in your area, or seek out and connect with other Christians at your workplace. Contact us at the international office for further assistance or click on [“Connect With Us”](#) on the website.



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OVER TWO MILLION AIRLINE EMPLOYEES IN THE WORLD