Journey Community Christian Church
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Just Be Nice When You Can by Bobby Duncan



"If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men."
Romans 12:18 NAS

The Bible gives great advice for everything. Try your best to get along with everybody when you can. One of the things about human connection is that people can be hard to get along with. I am NOT Jesus. Neither are YOU. Nobody gets it right all the time.

There are some people we're never going to be able to call our friend. We have too many differences of opinion. There is not enough time to work things out. So be it. Just don't hate the other guy/girl. Our culture has chosen sides on so many issues that divide us. I am in favor of beginning with things we can all agree upon. Just be nice, when you can!

I don't want to sound like I'm tooting my own horn. I've now lived seven decades. I feel like I've earned a couple stars in my crown. I've been on Earth long enough to get better at the really big things. So, I am not a crook. I'm not going to steal your money or try to scam anybody. I am not a "big fat liar." I will try my best to not (purposely) embellish the truth and try to be honest.

I will admit, just like a fisherman who's catch gets longer every time he retells the story, a preachers count of weekly attendance might get stretched a little now and then. Just saying. I like to round numbers off, higher whenever possible. Don't we all, fishermen and preachers alike? I recall Jesus had a tax collector and a couple fishermen on His team. There's hope for us all.

The things where I can still crash and burn are the lesser things; overlooked things. I can be impatient, unkind, opinionated without really trying hard. I can move too fast through conversations and not listen deeply to anything you said to me. Just saying.

As a pastor for more than 45 years, let me confess: I can be both too loud and too quiet in a room full of people. Every Sunday when I have finished another Bible message, I still wonder, "Did I overdo it this time?" Or maybe the complete opposite: "Did I underwhelm the Truth of God with my own words?"

I'm obviously not Jesus. I can be inconsistent. Finding the right balance in my tone, topic, and presentation is a skill only God can provide. I sometimes may get in His way. I am grateful He chooses to guide us all, flawed as we are, prone to over/under perform life each day. Angry tones come out of our mouths, which can distract from the message. Depressed or discouraged, despair may dominate our attitude. We're not Jesus. No one is.

I am 74 years young. I am thinking today that I've finally begun returning to my childhood thoughts and ways of thinking. One of my favorite books, *All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten*, is my story. I no longer need to feel validated by winning everything. I am happy to compete with anyone for my turn at bat. But, I'll also enjoy the game from the dugout if I'm not in the starting lineup.

My newest goal as an old guy is to become young at heart again. Like the kid on the playground in kindergarten. Just be nice, when you can.

Go God.