

Being Proactive with God's Help

Wayne Gretzky's father once told him, when he was first learning to play hockey, "*Skate to where the puck is going to be, not to where it's already been*". Wayne of course became a master at this.

I can see a parallel to this in my relationship with God. This is such a good metaphor, for teachers as well as Christians.

Too often things happen and I react to them. I get angry, or frustrated, and I have to ask God to forgive me, and help me do a better job. I ignore or forget what I should be doing, and then when I discover that I haven't been doing a very good job of things, I turn to God.

Sometimes I've found myself with people who aren't exactly Christian in the things they say or do, and I find myself agreeing with them in order not to 'stand out' ... and have to ask God to forgive me later for not standing up for what I believe in.

Many times I don't do the right thing because it seems like too much work, or I don't care enough, or because I don't know what the right thing is. Sometimes this hurts others. I have to turn to God to ask Him to forgive me, and to help me do a better job.

Mostly I'm not thinking about what God can do for me when I should be, but waiting until I mess up and *then* turning to Him.

All of these things are 'skating to where the puck has already been'. I'm allowing myself to fall into patterns of behaviour that require that I play 'catch up', by going back to God and asking for His forgiveness after the fact.

There's a better way.

Instead of letting things overwhelm me because I'm not prepared, I should be anticipating that there will be situations where I'm going to fall down. I need to be spending more time during the day reflecting on how good God has been to me, and thanking Him for what He has done. I need to make His strength my own, and believe that He will help me when I need it, but more importantly, I need to believe that *He will keep me from falling into the habits of less than Christian behaviour*. I need to put on His armor *before* things happen, so that I am prepared.

If He is always in my thoughts, then it will be so much easier to deal with the causes of frustration and anger when they happen, and to keep me on the right path. I need to ask for His help *beforehand* when I'm about to enter into a situation where I've fallen down before.

I started doing this, as a teacher and Assistant Principal, years ago, by asking for God's help beforehand. It really helped me to deal with students (and the occasional parent) without showing anger or getting upset. I think everyone benefitted. It also helped me get through situations where I was extremely uncomfortable, by giving me confidence.

That's 'skating to where the puck will be'. I know there will be situations where I will need His help. I need to go to Him *ahead of time*, to let Him help me prepare.