



Welcome to Unity's Interactive Worship Service

**Today's Topic: This Or Something
Better**

Power Point notes available at:
www.unityofbakersfield.org

This Or Something Better

During last weeks lesson on The Choice, I touched upon the activity of perfectionism and how it effects the choices we make. So...

Good morning, my name is Rev. Chuck and I'm a recovering perfectionist. Growing up I was trained to do the job right the first time! This training caused me to develop a belief that said, "If you want something done right, you have to do it yourself!"

This Or Something Better

I have chosen not to make my desire to have things perfect in my life be the focal point of my existence. This insight and change did not come to me over night, but instead by a lesson here and a lesson there. By learning from all my experiences, no matter how they showed up for me.

perfectionism
IS TAUGHT TO CHILDREN
WHEN THEY ARE
PUNISHED FOR THEIR
MISTAKES.
WWW.THEORGANICSISTER.COM

This Or Something Better



Rachael Remen in her book Kitchen Table Wisdom wrote:

"A perfectionist sees life as if it were one of those little pictures that used to appear in the newspapers over the caption 'What's wrong with this picture?' If you looked at the picture carefully, you would see that the table only had three legs or the house had no door. I wonder now why anyone would want to take such satisfaction in seeing what is missing, what is wrong, what is broken."

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Julia Cameron, teacher, author, artist, poet, playwright, novelist, filmmaker, composer, and journalist once stated:

Perfectionism is not a quest for the best. It is a pursuit of the worst in ourselves, the part that tells us that nothing we do will ever be good enough-that we should try again.

This Or Something Better

New Thought ministers have often shared with each other the obstacles people place in their way and keeps them from fully embracing the practice of adding, ***This or something better, Thank You, God***, to their prayers.

It seems that while the idea is sound and affirming, the belief that it will really happen for them get's caught up in ego's demand that all things be perfect.

This Or Something Better

Here are some of the stages that perfectionism shows up to create obstacles to “this or something better.”

1. The activity of perfectionism can often times show up as subjective and/or relative experiences. What may be perfect for our self may be mediocre for someone else. Case in point:

Lynn grows up in a station wagon family. When she goes out to live on her own she wants to own a two-door car.

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One evening, she and a few friends decide to go dancing, and she is elected to be the driver. As one of the women was climbing into the back seat of the new car, she said to Lynn, “I used to think I only deserved a two-door car, but now I know better.” Not only was Lynn’s glorious new car not perfect to this woman, but as the owner, she now felt she was a lesser person because of it!

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2. Striving for perfection can lead to disappointment. How many times have we pictured, planned, and waited for an event to take place and then when it did not happen or go the way we planned, became disappointed and looked at it as a disaster? Case in point:

Alex just asked Jean what she’d like for her birthday. Jean says she would like to go boating on her favorite lake. On the day of her birthday a major storm hits the area. Jean then tells her husband that her second choice was to spend time at the museum and have lunch there.

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While walking through the building looking at the exhibits Jean was feeling frustrated and angry because this is not what she had pictured as a perfect birthday for herself. Then she walked into one of the exhibit rooms and was suddenly overcome by the beauty of its objects. She immediately became aware of her husband’s presence, his desire to help her have a nice birthday. Jean realized that she was the one destroying the chance to have a nice time. And so at that moment in time she made the choice to have a joyful experience and trust in the natural flow of the day. It turned out to be one of my best birthdays.

This Or Something Better

3. Perfectionism can block our guidance and the ability to see the bigger picture. How can we be open and receptive to what God has for us if we’re trying to always control the outcome to fit our picture of what is perfect? The answer of course is we can’t! Case in point:

James knows in his heart of hearts that he is to be a Unity minister. He has been studying the principles for years and he knows this is the time to apply to ministerial school. His kids are grown, he’s retired and has a good savings account to pay for his classes, and the sale of the house just went through so he can move.

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James breezes through the interviews feeling pretty good about it all as he heads back home to await his letter of acceptance. When the mail arrived he ripped open the letter and as he read, anger filled his very being. He was not accepted, but he could re-apply if he choose to. Doubt, frustration, anger fill most of his life for the next couple of months. He finally makes an appointment to speak to his Unity minister.

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After dumping out all his rage and frustration, the minister said, “James, remember that God has a plan. So re-apply.”

James re-applied and was accepted. Not on his time line, but God’s. The people that would be his classmates were the very people he needed to be with for this next phase of his spiritual journey.

This Or Something Better

4. Perfectionism causes us to believe that “doing” is more important than “being.” When we spend more time in doing things that will get us praise and to be noticed by others as looking as looking perfect we set ourselves up to fail.



Dr. Thomas S. Greenspon has spent most of his professional life to the study of perfectionism and writes:
Research confirms that the most successful people in any given field are less likely to be perfectionistic, because the anxiety about making mistakes doesn’t get in the way.

This Or Something Better

The Perfectionist <-----> The Optimalist

Journey as a straight line	←-----→	Journey as an irregular spiral
Fear of failure	←-----→	Failure as feedback
Focus on destination	←-----→	Focus on journey and destination
All-or-nothing thinking	←-----→	Nuanced, complex thinking
Defensive	←-----→	Open to suggestions
Faultfinder	←-----→	Benefit finder
Harsh	←-----→	Forgiving
Rigid, static	←-----→	Adaptable, dynamic

Ben-Shahar, T. (2009). *The Pursuit of Perfect - How to Stop Chasing Perfection and Start Living a Richer Happier Life*. USA: McGraw Hill.

This Or Something Better

So how can someone change from being a perfectionist to being an optimalist so that they accept God’s gift of this or something better?

Celestine Chua of Personal Excellence suggests the following:

1. Be aware of your motivations for perfection by cross-checking with them to ensure you’re on track.
2. Recognize that ideals are directions, not absolutes. So don’t attach yourself to them.
3. Respect and love yourself, because you’re the only constant in your world.

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4. Focus on the big picture, and don’t get struck with the nitty-gritty details.
5. Focus on what can be done now, and forget what is already past.
6. Delegate and let go, after all you don’t have to do everything yourself.
7. Enjoy the entire process of being, because the whole point is to be happy.
8. Celebrate the victories and progress made, for every step is a job well done.