



REFLECTIONS

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And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Colossians 3:17

Shoeshine Philosophy

Now, who could forget Jesse. This jovial character served as a fixture in the barbershop I once frequented. He was the drawing card that kept me coming back. I had a favorite barber there, but Jesse gave the place its personality. He offered a good shoeshine; but Jesse was just fun to be with. While the barber clipped my hair, Jesse lowered his head and put all the energy he had into making my shoes look better than new. All the while he was lathering the saddle soap, pasting the polish, swinging his brushes and popping his rag, a continuing a stream of chatter flowed about which teams were going to win in the coming weekend rivalries and which players were the best. I really had fun with Jesse. Health issues eventually forced his retirement, but until then I found myself often stopping by the barbershop just to enjoy his company.

A few years after Jesse retired, the local paper printed a feature story that reminded me of him. The story focused on the proprietor of a shoeshine parlor located in one of our city's poorer neighborhoods. The proprietor's name was Frank Tyrone Jones, and the article told about his place and his philosophy about performing his trade.

Frank began shining shoes at age seven, then ventured into other trades over the years only to return to what he knew the best. Frank's life, though, wasn't a bed of roses. In fact, much of his life was embattled by drugs and alcohol. Then one day, someone who cared about Frank's salvation introduced him to Jesus Christ. Frank's life was never the same.

His encounter with Jesus gave him a fresh purpose in life. He called it his shoeshine philosophy. "When they find me, they stick with me," he says. "I give them Scripture. For those who can't read, I read to them. I'm trying to do as much as I can before my time." Then he added, "Where they go, I go because they're wearing shoes that I shine."¹

Frank's story reminded me of Jesse. Jesse was a bright spot in my life and Frank's shoeshine philosophy tells me why. It doesn't matter whether we speak to crowds with the eloquence of Billy Graham or shine people's shoes like Jesse and Frank Tyrone Jones. In our daily walks, we touch people's lives. Each time they leave us, they walk away with just a little bit of what we gave them. That's the shoeshine philosophy—.

And it applies to more than shoeshines.

You are the light of the world,

Richard +

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¹ San Antonio Express-News, February 18, 2007, by Vincent T. Davis

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