



A MATTER OF FAITH

by Pastor, Joel Lawler
joellawler@yahoo.com

I was a freshman in college when I took the class Painting 1. As an art major, I really enjoyed this class. The first few weeks were all about the study of color and composition. Our first assignment was a group painting. I was in a group of some talented students but there was no chemistry and our painting was horrible. Part of the assignment was to stand up and defend our work. We were all very quiet and could not wait to sit down. That painting did not survive to see the next day.

The final assignment was to create an original work and present it. We were given very little in the way of guidance as to what the

expectations were. I draw up a bunch of different ideas. I also went through

what seems to be a million magazines looking at pictures. I was in Chicago so I spent many hours in the galleries of the Art Institute looking at the works there trying to develop my design for the painting I was to create. When I finally put brush to canvass I was as prepared as I could possibly be. I had spent a great deal more time and effort working the idea than I did actu-

ally completing the painting.

The night prior to our presentations, I was in the studios. It was quite late and I thought I was alone. As I walked the halls, I saw that another artist was there working. I stopped into his studio.

"What does he expect of

are. What will our final judgment be based on? Like the painting class, will our lives be displayed for all to see? Will we have to defend our work? What are the rules and expectations that we will be measured against? How can we be confident ahead of time that we are ready for the final review?

God gives us a blank canvass. To each one of us, he gives different supplies and tools and then He says paint.

Some look to "paint by numbers". They want things drawn out for them. They want to know what colors go where. They make up rules and force the rules on others. Their work will never be original or even close to what it can be.

Some study the masters and try to pattern their art after those who go before them. There is no doubt that there is value in this as long as they don't try to simply

reproduce what has already been created. Each person is called to create their own original piece. Producing knockoffs are not what we are called to do.

Learning from the master artist will always produce incredible results.

Many artists enjoy the community of fellow artists. They enjoy the camaradery of those who are creative. There is much to

be gained by having such connections. There is also a danger in becoming so entrenched in the community that the artist loses what brought them there in the first place.

Some get bogged down in who they are to the point that they stop doing what it is that makes them who they are.

Pick up your brush and paint.

The Gospel of a Blank Canvass

us?" was his first words to me. He was angry and very frustrated. "He gave us little to nothing to go on." He was upset and scared about presenting his work. He disparately wanted to know the rules. He wanted something that he could measure his work against.

I can relate to this. I feel this way about God some times. It is hard to know what God's expectations

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