

## on the corner\_Making errors

*By Robert Docter, Editor-In-Chief*

Shadows slowly envelope the diamond on this late afternoon in mid-October. Some fans move toward the exits. There are two outs in this, the final inning. My team has a one run lead. The opposing team has a man on third. From the stands I watch the highly experienced and revered shortstop—the one who has handled a dozen ground balls in this game with extreme skill and followed each with perfect throws to first base. He exudes a distinguished sense of confidence.

Our pitcher winds up and throws his fastball. It's followed by a loud crack of the bat. The ball travels directly toward the confident shortstop at a rate faster than a speeding bullet. He's ready, positions himself in front of the flying object, and bends to...oops, it's off his glove. He quickly retrieves the ball as the runner on third base heads home. In haste, he throws it into the stands behind first base.

The run scores, and we are tied. Fortunately, we're the home team and have last bats.

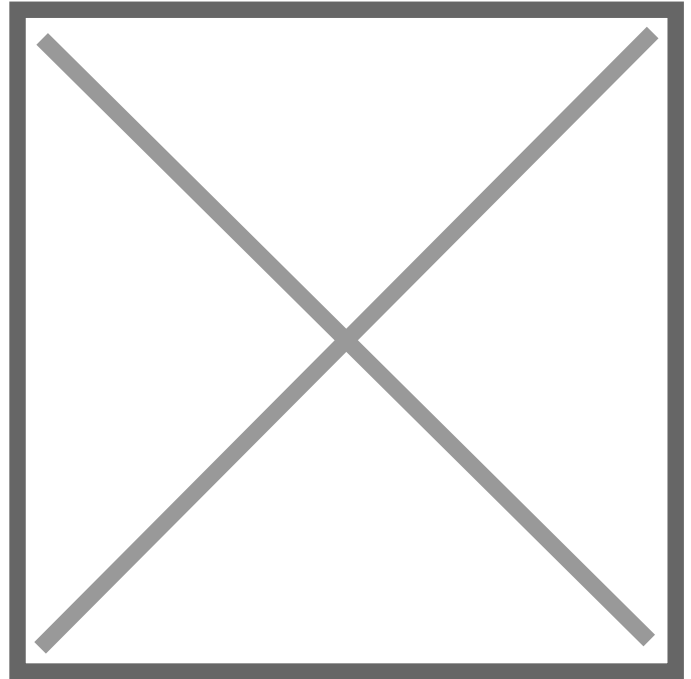
The stadium announcer, with a voice of despondency colored with bright hues of anger, simply says: "error, E6."

I feel the weight of more than 40,000 groans accompanied by the same number of hostile stares as I empathize with the shortstop's despair—feeling his pain, experiencing his self-condemnation and seeking a place to hide.

Errors become a part of life. Nobody claims perfection. None are errorless—especially shortstops. We all make mistakes. Some errors rank higher than others. These separate us from God. Others occur during those times when our emotions supersede our cognitive processing and rationality goes out the window. Sometimes we call it "losing our temper."

At other times, cognition over-operates, and we rationalize things up one side and down the other only to discover we have made a serious error in judgment. Often, the ambitious twins of bad choices and bad errors emanate from an inflated ability to rationalize inaccurately. This symptom is also often labeled "stupidity."

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We all make mistakes: errors in memory, in loss of values, in attitude adjustment, in obedience, in attention to details, in giving in to temptation, and so on.

So, what about God? Did he? Does he? Will he make errors? Is he kind of an umpire? He made us, didn't he—an obvious question in that we are the most imperfect animal he made. Another example is a mystery that has become quite a conundrum for mankind for as long as humans have existed.

First, a little background. Scripture tells us that God created the heavens and the earth. We have a choice about whether we believe this and make it a fact or not. In Genesis, we have the story of Adam and Eve—our first parents, who were expected, over time and generations, to populate the earth.

God gave Adam this lovely Garden of Eden, and told him he could eat anything in it—except fruit from “the tree of the knowledge of good and evil or you will die” (Gen. 2:16, 17). Then, according to Moses—whom I believe is the author of Genesis—God recognized that Adam needed a “helper” (Gen. 2:18). So God made Eve out of Adam's rib and presented her to him.

Now, Eve, sorely tempted by the serpents words, succumbed to his arguments about the fruit on this special tree, loved it and gave some to Adam. Together, they ate it. Their lives changed dramatically, and as a result of their action, so have ours. We are cursed with what we loosely call, these days, “the human condition”: a propensity for yielding to temptation and doing our own thing regardless of that still, small voice that ever warns us. We are forever looking for the wrong tree.

So, did God mean to impose this condition on us? Does Adam's disobedience cause us continued pain, difficulty and grief? Or did he make a mistake in requiring all humanity to bear the punishment of one man? Also, God introduced Adam to the Garden and told him to steer clear of the tree, but Eve hadn't even arrived yet; did she know about its danger?

Let's look at these questions. I assume that genetic and social transmission from these first parents provide the rationale of our thought processes that lead us to difficulties in life. However, we can't explore the Adam and Eve story without including a third name: Jesus. God had this plan all the time. It allows us to escape the human condition with righteousness stimulated by our willingness to believe Christ is the Son of God, Messiah, and that he is our access to salvation. God's grace allows us to bury the negatives and find peace with God.

For if by the trespass of one man [Adam], death reigned through that one man,

How much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ (Rom. 5:17).

Maybe we ought to sing song #823 once in awhile.

Oh, yes—the shortstop was both a defensive and offensive hero with outstanding play in the field...and he hit a game-winning home run in the ninth inning.