

## *Pk's Perspectives ... A New Robe*

Christmas 1999 stands out in my memory. I'm sitting in stunned disbelief, staring at my freshly unwrapped Christmas present, sensing the anticipation of everyone in the room as they wait for me to reveal the contents of my gift. It required all the strength I could muster to lift the box into the air so that everyone could view what was inside; I was afraid my emotions would betray me if I tried to speak. Amid the ooh's and ah's, I was dying on the inside. When everyone shifted their attention to the next gift being ripped open, I silently contemplated the implications of this gift that I neither requested nor desired. You see, staring at me from the shredded remains of Christmas paper and ribbon was a brand new, fresh off the shelf, clean & sterile, richly colored bathrobe.

Oh man, I was in agony! To truly accept this gift would mean having to part with my long-time, comfortable, familiar, odd-scented, ragged, faded blue terry cloth robe. This was more than a dilemma. We're talking crisis. I'd had the same bathrobe for probably 16 or 17 years; at this juncture in my life, my faded relic of a robe had been with me almost as long as my wife! I'm not sure you can fully appreciate all the history represented by my long-standing relationship with my old faded robe. All three of my children had regurgitated on the shoulder of my bathrobe at some point in their baby years. My old robe had doubled as a blanket for my napping wife and a pillow for her napping husband. I'd worn this robe when taking the trash to the curb...while fixing a broken clothes dryer...assembling toys in preparation for Christmas morning...hushing a barking dog in the middle of the night...attempting to dress like one of the Wise Men in a Christmas skit...struggling to quiet a sick child in the middle of the night...driving my kids to school because we woke up late. You get the point? And my old robe knew exactly how to drape itself around my shoulders. It fit perfect. So what if it was a little stained? I washed it at least 4 or 5 times over the years.

Later, I tentatively hung the imposter robe in my closet next to old faithful. I continued to wear my old robe in spite of protests from my wife; I asked her to be patient with me. It took several weeks to make the transition but eventually I dissociated from my familiar faded friend and embarked on a fresh relationship with my new bathrobe. And I eventually came to understand that my new robe was actually superior: it was warmer, easier on the eyes, and smelled better, too!

Listen up. What's humorous when debating the merits of old bathrobes versus new ones becomes serious when the subject changes to a discussion of Christian behavior and practice. The Bible says in 2 Corinthians 5:17, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he a new creation. The old has passed away; behold the new has come." Colossians 3:9-10 instructs us to "put off the old self with its practices and put on the new self." There are times when God wants us to take off an old way of living (a habit, attitude, relationship, etc.) so He can replace it with something wonderful and new. But we resist because the old way has become so familiar, so comfortable. These are the moments we need to trust God's love: the new robe God offers will always be superior to the old, faded way of living which no longer complements your life in Christ. Cya in Sunday School & Worship, PK.