

## Transparency is Tough

*The alternative is building a wall.  
Most teachers [in my opinion, and experience]  
have unintentionally built a hedge of protection around themselves.  
Students have never been in their teachers' homes  
[98% according to my unscientific survey]  
and so they may:*

- *think their teachers float out of their morning prayer closets 6" off the ground*
  - *suppose that their teachers do not have temptations similar to their own*
  - *expect that their teachers never miss a day of earnest prayer [or a week]*
    - *think teachers always speak nicely to their mates*
    - *suppose teachers don't struggle with keeping the speed laws*
- *surmise they couldn't possibly have angst about filling in IRS information*

### BECAUSE

*teachers rarely paint themselves in realistic terms of being vulnerable individuals.  
Yes, they freely admit they are sinners [theologically],  
but many pewsitters think of them as not truly mortal [until they see them on the losing side  
of the volleyball net].*

*Pastors and Sunday School teachers are like  
my second grade teacher. I had no idea that she lived in a house [I think I thought she lived at school].  
Second grade teachers didn't have smelly socks or crabgrass  
or bills they couldn't pay. They lived at school and never left.  
Second grade teachers were not transparent and neither are many Sunday School teachers.*

As often as possible allow your students [*children, youth, or peers*] to crawl into your life. Becoming a transparent friend doesn't mean you must drag out all your flaws for display, nor does it require public confession when private confession is appropriate. But being transparent is not being afraid to share victories as well as defeats. Too often those who are struggling in their walk with God are under the impression that the temptations they face are unique. They don't realize yet that we all face similar difficult decisions—although not the same circumstances or precise conditions, all of us susceptible to situations “such as [*are*] common to man” [*I Cor 10.13*].

You and I have found it helpful to see the stressful circumstances of many Bible characters. We are told that Elijah was a man with a nature just like ours [*Jas 5.17*]. And we have all struggled with good and bad, wise and foolish decisions just as Mary, Saphira, Abraham, Dave, Paul, Joseph, Daniel, Jacob Peter, and others. God has given us the examples of about 100 major friends of ours in Scripture so that we would understand how they handled pressure wisely or not. Counselors tell us that when people choose to sin, they often say, “I had to do it. I had no other choice” or “I couldn't help myself.” Those people are not correct. God says He always provides a choice, “a way of escape” [*I Cor 10.13*].