

Foundation for Perfection:

“Fanning the Flame”

Ranch Roping, Rodeo, and Business

By Wade Black

**“Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you.”
(2 Timothy 1:6)**

Introduction

I shared this story in *Returning to Eden: True Unity and Willing Communication*, and it was from this call that this paper was inspired. In 2007, I was competing at a PRCA rodeo in Miles City, MT and was fighting my head pretty badly before getting on my horse. I was trying to picture a perfect saddle bronc ride and trying to get all the rides of imperfection out of my mind. I was trying to stand on Scripture to psych myself up and give me strength and energy. However, I kept feeling tired and weak, and I could not get my mind off all the rides of imperfection. I knew if I got on my saddle bronc in this mindset it was not going to be very pretty. So I snuck away and laid down in our rodeo rig and submitted everything into the Lord's hands.

I laid everything at His feet and prayed for the Lord's help. As I began to pray, I could feel the Lord's presence start to saturate my body taking away all my cares and worries, leaving me with total peace. I quit looking at everything from my perspective and started to feel total comfort knowing that everything was in God's hands. The Lord redirected my focus from selfish ambitions (riding broncs) to a heavenly perspective (building the Kingdom). The Lord opened my eyes and showed me a vision concerning the hearts of the men behind the bucking chutes.

The Lord showed me how many of them had received a little spark for Him, but the spark had never been fanned or given the opportunity to grow. He told me to "fan the flame." The Holy Spirit is like a mighty wind and will bring life to a tiny spark, igniting an all-consuming fire. As the Lord began to speak to me giving me direction for my life, I became sanctified by the word of God, **"For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer" (1 Timothy 4:5 KJV)**, and empowered by the Holy Spirit. **"For you shall receive power after the Holy Ghost has come upon you" (Acts 1:8)**.

I jumped out of the seat of the car and with a new perspective on life prepared to get on my horse. I was no longer tormented by rides of imperfection, but filled with the all-consuming peace and joy of the Holy Spirit. I climbed on my horse with the mindset of having fun and riding entirely for the Lord. The Lord blessed me with an 83-point ride which won the rodeo and let me take home the first place check.

Although this story ends with victory, over the last ten years I have not been so victorious many times in my bronc riding. Bronc riding is something that I love and something that I feel like I have been called to do. However, this is an area of my life that I have experienced much torment. The Lord called me to bronc riding the same time He called me to be a minister of God. Looking back now I am beginning to see that He called me back to bronc riding after giving it up for two years due to a sickness, to teach me how to die to self in a ministry. The same things that continue to hold me back in my bronc riding and roping are the same things that continue to quench and grieve the Holy Spirit in my ministry. If there is one thing I have learned it is the difference between working at serving God in the flesh and enjoying the freedom of serving Him in the Spirit. I purposely do not explain the parables throughout these pages. Look up the scriptures and let the Holy Spirit draw the parallels to your life and to the body of Christ.

Ranch Roping, Rodeo, and Business

I have been playing sports since I moved from a remote ranch in Nevada to a little town, Homedale, Idaho. I started playing sports in the fourth grade at age ten, and continue to compete at the professional level at age 28. I have competed in football, basketball, wrestling, track, and rodeo. I am not the best athlete in the world by any means; however, I have competed at the high school, collegiate, amateur, and professional levels. I have received numerous individual and team championships. I've been on several teams that placed at the state level, placed and won at the state level individually, have been a part of two national finals teams, placed individually at nationals, been on one collegiate national placing team, competed at amateur finals, and in professional circuit finals.

I also spent the early part of my life on a 1.25 million-acre ranch in Nevada running 15,000 head of cows. After moving to Homedale, Idaho my family rode outside colts for the public and took these colts to as many different brandings as we could find in Nevada, Oregon and Idaho. I have helped people work and brand their calves on many different outfits. Much like a sports team I have seen how people can work together to have things go smoothly and I have seen people not working together leading to total wrecks. I have seen frustrated people, horses, cows, and even some wrecks leading to injured animals and people.

What I have come to realize is that any team or crew regardless of the sport or job, has the potential to operate like a finely-tuned machine, firing on all pistons. Or the team or crew can run like a sputtering, weak machine ready to die at any given moment. From a sports perspective, what I am about to explain is something I have just come to realize after competing for nearly 18 years. Being a "head case" during most of my time competing, I wish I could have applied what I am about to tell you when I was competing through high school and college. However, if I had known then what I know now, I wouldn't have become such an expert on what *not* to do while competing. The same principles in this paper apply to traveling partners going down the road and working with a crew at branding time, to increase effectiveness, fun, and safety.

Any sports team or crew is made up of individuals coming together to make up the entire team or crew (**Romans 12:4-5**). Just like a body it has different parts all coming together to make one unit (**1 Corinthians 12:12-13**). In order for this body to operate properly all the individuals in the body must do their part (**1 Corinthians 12:27-31; Romans 12:6-8; Ephesians 4:11-13**). If one part of the body doesn't do its job, the whole body suffers (**1 Corinthians 12:14-26**). It doesn't matter if it is an entire college rodeo team, your traveling partners going down the road to amateur or professional rodeos, a ranch rodeo team, or a branding crew. With that said, once the individuals have found their part in the body, the machine can still not function unless it has oil and gas.

Instead of using numbers like first gear, second gear, or third gear, I am going to use animals that represent different personalities we must find within ourselves. The four animals we must find within ourselves are the lion, eagle, calf, and man (**Revelation 4:7**). The man represents perfection, the eagle signifies peace, the lion stands for power, and the calf symbolizes fun.

The Perfect Man

To be successful in any sport we have to find the *perfect person* within ourselves. This *person* is not naturally in us; it must be born inside us (**John 3:3; Romans 10:9**), fed daily (**Matthew 6:1**), and given a chance to grow (**2 Peter 2:2**). I will give you an example for bronc riding. A person might have ridden broncs for years or they might be just starting, but a desire is birthed in them that they want to give everything they have to experience the highest level of success (**2 Timothy 4:8**), and be the very best they can be. They not only want to be successful, but experience peace in who they are in their event, have fun in competition, and have an inner drive and determination to succeed no matter what the cost. Once that spark is born (**1 Peter 1:23**), a person must learn to feed the “perfect person” living inside them (**John 6:35**). With the perfect person, the task is possible (**Philippians 4:13**) because the perfect person does nothing wrong (**1 John 3:8-10**), every move he makes is perfect leading to absolute perfection in his or her sport (**1 John 5:4-6**). The trouble is, every one of us is imperfect, and no one is perfect (**Romans 3:23**). You might be the best at what you do, but you are not perfect, there is always room for improvement. No matter what sport you are in, you have areas of imperfection in your event and these imperfections are keeping you from success. This is why I say the perfect person must be born within ourselves (**1 John 5:18-20**) and fed into maturity (**Ephesians 4:13-16**).

This perfect person is formed in our mind (**1 Corinthians 2:16**) and from deep down in our soul (**Colossians 1:28**). If you are a team roper header, find the best header in world and watch him. Watch everything he does; how he rides his horse, how he prepares his horse in the box, and where he positions his horse once the chute opens. Study every minute detail in his swing, delivery and path to his horn. Then study how he shapes his steer and turns to face, absolutely everything he does, and every move he makes. If you are a barrel racer, study the best in the world. Not only the woman with the most world titles, but the woman who continually makes world champion barrel horses. Learn their philosophies and techniques in training. Find out what they do to make and keep the best horses in the world. In whatever event you are competing, form the absolute perfect person in your mind (**Hebrews 4:15**). The best goat tier, bulldogger, breakaway roper, bull rider, bareback rider, whatever your event (**Romans 12:6-8; Ephesians 4:11-12; 1 Corinthians 12:28**) find the closest thing to perfection in as many different people as you can, and piece together the perfect person in your event (**1 Peter 4:10-11**). Once you have formed this person (**Galatians 4:19**), then put yourself inside the person (**Romans 8:10-11**).

Once you have the perfect bronc ride of Billy Etbauer sketched in your mind, now remove Billy and picture yourself making the perfect bronc ride. At first it will be hard to form this perfect person, because your mind will be full of imperfect bronc rides, barrel or calf roping runs, etc. But, if you make sure the perfect person gets fed everyday (take time to picture him or her; **Colossians 3:1-2**), the person will grow into maturity (**Hebrews 5:14**) and take over your mind (**Romans 8:4-6**). Pretty soon, after days, months, or years, the perfect person will take over all areas of imperfection in your mind (**Romans 12:2**). Don't even let thoughts of district, state, and national championships into your mind, because they are a given when the perfect person takes over. You don't have to think about how great it would be to be the champion because you already are; it is already yours (**1 Corinthians 15:57**). The perfect person inside you has already won them, you just have to get out of the way (**Ephesians 4:22-24**). Success is inevitable when the imperfect person has ceased to exist and the perfect person has taken over every area of your life (**Galatians 4:22-31**); mind (**1 Corinthians 2:16**), body (**1 Peter 2:24**), and soul (**1 Thessalonians 5:23**).

It is important to point out that this perfect person does not only live in the arena. To truly be successful, this perfect person must take over every area of your life, from the time you wake up in the morning to the time you go to bed at night. You can be the best calf roper in the world, but what good is it if you can't rope at regionals because you got kicked off the team for getting busted smoking pot, or getting a DUI? You can be on track to be the world champion bronc rider, and if you can't finish the season because of jail time, what good is it? You can have all the potential in the world, but if you have to quit school and rodeo to take care of your unplanned baby, that national championship will never be yours. As we are feeding the perfect sports person within us, it is important that we have found and are feeding the perfect all around person within us as well. If you have not found this person, I suggest that you begin the search today. The key to success in and out of your sport depends on it. I guarantee it.

The Powerful Lion

The second personality we need to find within ourselves is the lion. This is an inner determination that is going to succeed no matter what the cost (**Acts 4:18-20**). Once the lion is in action, he does not feel pain, insult, or injury (**Acts 5:40-41**). No matter what happens to the lion, he will overcome; he will conquer and destroy (**Acts 1:8**), he will finish the task at hand (**Luke 4:18-19**). This thing that rises up in a person almost borders on insanity (**Acts 7:54-60**). It thrives on opposition and punishment to its body (**James 1:2-4**). It is a thought process that might think a great practice is one where you puked at the end of it. In other sports it is a crazy mad man that craves a good hit in football, who gets mad when someone is running at you and then turns and doesn't hit you. It is something that rises up in a person to run as fast as you can at a person twice your size, hit them head to head and feel the pain that shoots throughout your neck and back, and everything goes white for a second. When you gain your senses, it is the lion inside you that wants to roar with satisfaction because that was fun! The lion declares, "Finally, a hit worthy of my drive and determination, finally a match for my primitive nature!" It is the drive of a wrestler who ran cross country in order to come into wrestling season in better shape than anyone on the wrestling team, to work twice as hard as anyone on the team and to push themselves to the point of hyperventilation at the end of practice. It is a fierce nature of fight and determination that gets you out of bed in the morning at 6:30 to go run stairs and lines, do pushups, pull-ups, and sit-ups every morning before school starts, because you know your competition is in bed sleeping, and if you lose a match it *will not be* because you were out of shape.

It something that tells you to get on one more bronc at the end of practice even though you are bleeding, hurt, tired, and sore; to throw one more bulldogging steer after getting creamed by the previous five. It is something that rises up in someone and causes them to lose all track of time and still be roping the dummy at 12:00 at night. It is something inside someone that is still tying calves or goats after the sun goes down and everyone else has gone home. It is something that says when everyone quits I will do a few more, I will go a little further, and I will try that much harder. In every sport I have ever played I have seen people that had twice the talent as everyone on the team, but did not have a lion in them and they didn't amount to much; full of talent and empty of heart.

The Peaceful Eagle

The next personality a person must find in them is an eagle; a place of peace (**John 16:33**). This is a place of perspective (**Isaiah 55:8-9**), where a person flies high above all the chaos and

commotion (**2 Kings 6:15-17**), and sees rodeo for what it is; it is just a sport! Although a particular rodeo may seem like the entire world when it is in front of you, it is not. In the big scheme of things, this rodeo means absolutely nothing. More than likely a year from now, five years, ten years, this moment that is so big in your life will seem so small and insignificant it will likely totally vanish from your memory, and even if it doesn't it's not the end of the world. If the person is defined by the sport and this is the only thing in the person's life, then the person needs to fly a little higher into the heavens. They need to keep flying away from the sport until they get some sense of perspective on life, something that is bigger than the sport and more importantly *bigger than them self* (**Job 42:1-6**).

This place of peace (**John 16:33**) is not only important in sports, but will lead to success in every area of life. This place of peace is where a person goes before the event. If they have worked to instill the perfect person, and the lion is caged up inside them, they do not need to do anything except totally relax and soar up in the clouds where it is nice and peaceful. Don't even think about running barrels, tying goats, roping calves, steers, twisting bulls, or spurring broncs. Whatever you are getting ready to do, take it completely out of your mind and just relax. Visit and converse with people as if it was just another day with absolutely nothing going on. Just like the eagle, soar in the clouds right up until the time you swoop down to destroy your prey. Totally relax and as they run your steer, calf or horse into the chute, you are like an eagle that has just spotted its prey and is ready to strike. You almost feel sorry for this poor little creature because they have no idea what is about to hit them, they are oblivious to the title wave of fury that is about to be unleashed upon them. When you nod your head and the chute gate is opened, the eagle strikes with the precision of the perfect person, and the power and strength of a caged, roaring lion.

The Fun-Loving Calf

Once the ride or run is over and you have given everything (**1 Chronicles 29:17**), we then enter into the calf phase. This is the phase of fun and excitement (**Psalms 28:7**). Once the whistle blows or the flag is dropped totally forget everything that just happened; win, lose or tie, 85 points or drilled out of the chute, fast time or no time, leave it all behind. Calves buck and play and do not have a care in the world (**Malachi 4:2**). If things did not go very well, leave the not very good things behind you and build on your perfect person (**Psalms 5:11**). Why would you want to tear down the perfect person living inside you and replace them with rides or runs of imperfection? Give everything you have, and then find someone to laugh, joke, and be a wise guy with. Lighten up and mess around, have fun (**1 Chronicles 15:28-29**). It is just a sport and we are here to have fun. If you are not having fun, then why are you doing the sport in the first place?

The calf gear is the secret to success, and a person should shift back and forth from the peace gear and fun gear right up until the time of competition. A person does not visit the perfect person gear or the lion gear before competition, keep these caged up and they will explode on their own when the chute gate opens if you did your job throughout the week. Throughout the week of practice it is good to visit the calf and peace gears, but they should mainly be used before and after practice. The primary focus of practice should not be on having fun, but stirring up the roaring lion and feeding the perfect person within. If practice is a place of physical exhaustion and hard work, then the rodeo will be a place of total peace and lots of fun. However, if practice is *only* focused on having fun, the rodeo will not be; that is, unless you enjoy failure.

These four gears are not only gears, but inside these personalities is the fuel that runs the entire machine. In order for a machine to operate properly it must obviously have fuel, but it must also have oil. The oil comes from the words spoken out of each individual's mouth. Any words spoken out of encouragement and motivation from one team member to another team member offers oil to both team members (**Hebrews 10:25**). The team member who spoke the word receives oil, and team member who received the word receives oil. Anyone who speaks positive words about themselves and tries to build themselves up in front of the other teammates drains oil from themselves (**Proverbs 16:18**). This leads to cockiness, pride, a big head, and is not good to the person who spoke the words or the teammates who are receiving them (**Psalms 10:4**).

This is the imperfect person inside the person speaking. The imperfect person has to say he is good because deep down he knows he is not. The imperfect person is insecure and must say he is good. The imperfect person loves to hear others tell them how good they are. A person should never say they are good. Why point out the obvious? This is a "no brainer" and a stupid statement. Everyone on the team has a perfect person growing inside them, just some people have learned to get out of the way more and let the perfect person live through them when they compete. Some people have spent more time feeding their perfect person on the inside, and as a result he is beginning to take over the imperfect person on the outside during competition. In this respect everyone on the team is equal, because everyone on the team has a perfect person living inside them; just some people's perfect person is further along in maturity. Success is not so much a matter of ability, but maturity in the perfect person. There have been countless people though out history that possessed the ability to be a world champion. However, these people lacked the maturity in the perfect person and as a result the imperfect person kept them from the title.

When everyone on the team learns to operate in all four gears and everyone on the team makes sure they are putting oil into the machine every day in practice and during the rodeo, the team will operate like a finely tuned machine and will be an unstoppable force to anything and everything it comes up against.

Fuel for the Motor

I have talked about the four gears we must find within ourselves and how these four gears along with the *oil of encouragement* are the key to having a successful team. I will now go into the fuel that runs these gears. The key to finding and releasing the four gears within ourselves is learning the fuel or "horse power" behind them. Behind the lion is a rider on a white horse, behind the calf is a rider on a red horse, behind the man is a black horse, and behind the eagle is a pale horse (**Revelation 6:1-8**).

White Horse

The man on the white horse carries a *bow*, a *crown* is given to him and he goes out to *conquer* (**Revelation 6:2**). Victory is his and he goes out to get it, absolutely nothing can stand in his way. The power behind the lion (power, drive, and determination to accomplish the task no matter what) comes when a person realizes that it is not about them. It is about the perfect person living inside them (**Galatians 2:20**). The power behind the lion comes when a person has *confidence* in the perfect person living inside them (**2 Corinthians 3:5**), and when they have spent time feeding the perfect person and can just relax and go do their job (**John 6:25-59**).

Let's not confuse the issue at the rodeo. When you go back behind the chutes to get on your horse or bull, you should not be thinking about "how to" ride. You are not at the rodeo to "think" about riding an animal, you are at the rodeo to "ride" your animal (**Luke 12:11-12**). Also, do not worry about what you think your horse is going to do (**Matthew 6:25-34**). Often a person stresses out trying to figure out the "pattern" that the horse may have and by knowing the "pattern" this will give the person a sense of peace (**James 4:13-17**). Be careful being so sure of the pattern that you forget to ride the animal jump for jump (**Matthew 6:34**). It is wise to seek council pertaining to your draw (**1 Timothy 1:18**) from people that you trust (**Proverbs 19:20**), just be careful someone's imperfect man doesn't lead you astray (**1 John 2:18-27**). Just because a horse has had bad trips in the past, doesn't mean that today is not the day that you can get a check on him (**Proverbs 21:31**), and a good horse can have a bad day (**Proverbs 19:21**). I think a person should hold words spoken over your horse loosely and be careful of preconceived ideas you have formed in your mind (good or bad) about the fate of your ride (**Proverbs 3:5-6**).

You are at the rodeo to do a job (**John 4:34**). What is your job? Ride your animal (**Matthew 28:18-20**). Your job is very simple; take your saddle, bareback riggin, bull rope, etc. behind the chute, put it on your animal, ride for eight seconds, get off your animal, walk back behind the chutes, help your buddies, gather your things and go home or to the next rodeo. That is it, this is your job. At the rodeo is not the time to try to *build* on your perfect man. If he is not already inside you, you have no hope of trying to quickly feed him into maturity before you ride. The trouble with this is, as you get on your animal you will be thinking about feeding your perfect man and not riding your animal. You will be thinking about yourself and not about accomplishing the task.

As you get on your horse you will be thinking about "lifting and charging, lifting and charging, lifting and charging, lifting and charging." This is all that will be going through your mind. So as you get on your bronc, your horse is going to come out and he is going to hopefully; jump and kick, jump and kick, jump and kick, jump and kick. This is fine as long as he continues to "jump and kick" and you continue to "lift and charge" in the same line. However, what if the horse decides to duck and dive and you are still thinking about lifting your arm, rolling your hips and setting your feet in the neck? Your horse is going to change directions and continue jumping and kicking, as you continue to lift and charge. As the horse turns, you are no longer *with* the horse; you never really were *with* the horse. The horse goes one way and your entire body goes on lifting and charging head first into the dirt. The entire time you were thinking about bronc *saddle riding*, not saddle *BRONC* riding.

With anything there is a time of learning "how to," but then we *must* go and "do" (**Luke 10:1-24**). When a person first learns to ride a saddle horse someone will tell them the basics; keep your shoulders back, your arms relaxed and out in front of you, put weight in your stirrups and go up and down with the horse. The person thinks about "how to" ride the horse. However, if the person never learns to relax and quit thinking about "how to" and never starts to think about the horse and learns to move with the horse, they will ride tight and stiff for the rest of their life. What's worse, if this person is constantly thinking about their arms, shoulders, legs, and body position, then the horse turns and the person will fall right off the horse. If the person is focused entirely on themselves and what they are *supposed* to do, they can never learn to relax and have fun riding the horse (**Galatians 3:1-6**). Once a person gets the basics of riding whether it is a saddle horse, saddle bronc, or a bull, a person needs to just relax and learn to move with the animal. Set a foundation for perfection throughout the week, and then learn to just move with the animal at the rodeo. Make sure you are comfortable moving and riding a horse in your bronc saddle or bareback rigging period. If you need to, put your bronc saddle or rigging on an

old saddle horse and just think about moving with the horse as you are spurring. Get in time with the horse, move with the horse, relax and let your perfect person go to work.

When you get to the rodeo, remember you are at the rodeo to ride an animal, rope a steer, run a barrel pattern, tie a goat, calf, or throw a steer. Do your job!!!! At the rodeo is not the time to be “thinking” about doing your job, you should be “doing” your job. You should not be thinking about “how to” do it, just go out and do it. Once a person makes a commitment that they are going to feed their perfect person everyday when they are *not* at the rodeo, then when they show up to the rodeo they do not have to “think” about “how to” do their job. They can just relax and go rope the steer, ride the animal, tie the goat, run the barrel pattern and let the perfect person inside them do all the work. Once someone makes this commitment to feed their perfect person everyday and show up at the rodeo determined to do their job no matter what, victory will be theirs; they will *conquer* and be successful (**1 Corinthians 15:57**). It may not be today or maybe not even tomorrow, but the perfect person inside them will eventually get the *crown* (**1 Corinthians 9:24-27**). The *bow* that the man on the white horse carries symbolizes strength (**Psalms 28:7**). When we take the time to feed our perfect person throughout the week (**Psalms 19:14**) we will have *strength* and *confidence* to accomplish the task when we get to the rodeo (**Psalms 18**).

Black Horse

The man on the black horse carries a *pair of balances* in his hand (**Revelation 6:5**). The fuel behind the perfect man is the fulcrum in the center of the pair of balances. The driving force for the perfect man is when a person learns to put their thoughts and emotions in neutral, step back from their event and see themselves as two different people (**Galatians 4:21-31; 1 Corinthians 15:31-50**). As a person standing in the middle on the fulcrum point of the balances, we are able to see that on the right side we have the perfect person within ourselves and on the left side we have the imperfect person (**Romans 8:1-17**). It is either all or nothing. A person can not be operating partly in one and partly in the other at any given moment (**Galatians 5:17**). However, a person can switch back and forth from the perfect person to the imperfect person by the second (**Romans 7:21-23**). The power behind the perfect person taking over in competition comes when a person learns to tip the scale within. This is done by feeding the perfect person and starving the imperfect person living inside us (**Galatians 6:8**).

So how does a person determine whether it is the imperfect person, or the perfect person operating within themselves? Here are a few ways of telling: 1) The perfect person only thinks about how they are going to make perfect rides or runs to please the judge (**John 5:19**). The imperfect person thinks about everything else that goes along with rodeo besides their ride or their run (**1 John 2:15**). 2) The perfect person focuses on everything from the time the chute gate opens until the flag drops or the whistle blows. They visualize jump for jump, stride for stride, every minute detail of the perfect ride or run (**Psalms 1:1-3**). The imperfect person obsesses about *how they are going to look and what people are going to think* before and after their ride or run (**1 Samuel 9:2**). They visualize every possible scenario after they get done competing; the praise and glory if they do good, and the dreaded shame and humiliation if they mess up (**1 Samuel 15:30**). 3) Every thought in your brain that is focused on and only on pleasing the judge and is not worrying about what people think is the perfect person (**1 Samuel 16:7**). Every thought in your brain that is worrying about what you are going to look like and what people are going to think, before and after your event, is the imperfect person (**1 Samuel 13:11-14**).

Another way of telling if it is the perfect person or the imperfect person operating within is how they view their draw at the rodeo. The perfect person focuses on his long term spur ride (**Hebrews 12:1-3**), and as he gains maturity he *craves* the “big scary” that is going to test his growth (**James 1:2-4**) and has the potential of giving him a 23-point spur ride (**Philippians 3:14**). The imperfect person focuses only on short term success and is *always* hoping for the “weak pup” that will give him an easy 18-point spur ride. The perfect person always rides for first and to his highest potential (**1 Corinthians 9:24**); the imperfect person holds back for fear of failure (**2 Timothy 1:7**) and is just happy to get a check. The perfect person wants to score in football after giving everything they have to smash through the opposition on the goal line (**1 Kings 18:21-40**). The imperfect person wants to dance around and trot over the goal line untouched and with the least amount of opposition. The perfect person is not afraid of refinement and failures inspire him to work harder (**1 Peter 1:7**). The imperfect person does not want to go through anything that makes them look bad or that is too difficult, and failures tempt them to quit all together (**1 Kings 19:1-4**).

And a voice in the midst of the four horsemen says, “A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see that you hurt not the oil and the wine” (**Revelation 6:6**). The “oil” symbolizes the lion’s energy, drive, and determination to accomplish the task with power and precision (**Acts 1:8**). The “wine” symbolizes the calf’s fun, joy, and excitement before, during, and after the event (**Acts 13:52**). “A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for penny” symbolize our natural God-given gifts and talents that we were born with. Some people have been given gifts and talents enabling them to compete in several events, and some will have more peace focusing all their energy on one event. In junior rodeos, high school, and college rodeos it is not uncommon for rodeo competitors to compete in several events to help the team, or to be eligible for the all-around. With this there is obviously going to be some events that we excel in more than others. What is important is that we do not begin to “harm the oil and the wine.” This comes when we are forced to do an event that we absolutely dread doing and this event begins to take the fun and excitement away from an event that we loved to do and are gifted and talented in. We know we have “harmed the oil and the wine” when we come to rodeo dreading the events that we do not want to do, instead of being excited about the event (or events) that we have a God-given talent to compete in (**Acts 6:2-4**).

We also harm the oil and the wine whenever the imperfect person begins taking over in competition (**Ephesians 4:30**). It is hard to go out, relax, have fun, and let your God-given talents and abilities go to work if you are scared of failure during competition. Whenever we begin to obsess about what people think, and want to please people, whether it is our parents, coach, friends, or the audience at the rodeo, we begin “harming” the oil (drive and determination) and the wine (fun and excitement). A good way to tell if we have done this is by looking at our energy level before we compete. When a person is *passionate* about doing something they will be full of energy, motivation, and excitement. However, when a person begins to dread doing something all the energy and motivation will be drained from that person. Often we start out being passionate about our event and are filled with energy and motivation to compete. However, as we begin to experience success and the expectations from the people around us begin to increase, we find ourselves sinking into pleasing people bondage and this drains all our energy. If you find yourself no longer energized before competition, ask yourself, “Have I harmed the oil and the wine?” (**1 Thessalonians 5:19**). “Are my thoughts focused more on pleasing the people around me and am I worried about messing up?” If you do not experience any peace when thinking about your event, do not have fun before, during and after competition, and are not filled with energy and passion before and during competition, more than likely the imperfect man has taken over (**Acts 7:51**).

Red Horse

It is granted to the man on the red horse to *take peace from the earth that they should kill one another* and he is given a *mighty sword* (**Revelation 6:4**). The fuel behind the calf, to have fun while competing is: 1) Not searching for peace from earthly prizes, possessions and standings; 2) Surrounding yourself with people that help kill off your negative side; and 3) Learning to have a positive attitude no matter what, and speak words of life, not death, about yourself and those around you.

I think some of the times I had the least fun rodeoing were when I forgot about feeding my perfect person and doing my job, and started focusing on prizes and possessions (**Matthew 6:19-21**). When I started to think that if I could just win that buckle, or saddle, or if I was wearing that state, national, or circuit finals jacket then I would be somebody, then I would have a sense of peace as a bronc rider. Fill in the blank: “If I could just win _____ (district, state, nationals, circuit or amateur finals, the NFR average, the world) then I would have peace as a bronc rider, then I would be somebody.” Well, let me tell you something, it is never enough. If a person thinks that “winning something” is going to give them peace with who they are, if “some accomplishment” is going to fill that empty hole in their heart and give them peace with who they are, this poor individual will be like a person lost in the desert. They will think that just over the hill there is a well with water that will quench their thirst. However, over and over they will be disappointed, finding one empty well after another.

In order to have fun while competing, it is crucial to surround yourself with people that help kill off your imperfect person (your negative side). *That they should kill one another* (**Hebrews 10:25**). After experiencing failure and defeat during competition it is very easy to get down on yourself and start meditating on everything you did wrong and beat yourself up over and over. It is easy to start telling yourself how stupid you are and you can not believe you just did what you did. During these times it is so important that you are rodeoing with people that are willing to grab you by the shirt collar and slap the imperfect person out of you. It is so important to have friends that, wanting the best for you, are willing to tell you to pull your head out of your butt and quit letting your imperfect person take over. Friends that are not going to put up with your head games, who say something to make you laugh, help feed your perfect person and help you tip the scale within, getting you back on track. This is a major key to successful rodeoing, friends that are willing *to kill one another*; good friends that are willing to help kill off their buddies' imperfect person when they see them start to rise up.

The *mighty sword* symbolizes positive words (**John 6:63**). In order to have fun a person has to stay positive. Whenever negative words begin floating into your mind, whether they are from your imperfect person or from other people around you, all hope of having any fun competing vanishes (**Proverbs 18:21**). If a person is not naturally positive it is so important that they surround themselves with people that are positive. Negative words are like a cancer and will eventually over take your entire body, leading to competitive death.

Pale Horse

The name of the man who sits on the pale horse is *Death* and *hell* follows right behind him. Power is given to him over a *fourth part of the earth to kill with sword*, and with *famine*, and with *plague*, and with the *beasts of the earth* (**Revelation 6:8**). The fuel behind the eagle

(having peace while competing) is killing off the imperfect man living within (**Luke 9:23**). Although the pale horse is not fun, his rider “*Death*” is needed when the imperfect man begins taking over in competition.

We often go through this after experiencing success in our event. As more people give us complements and we receive more attention this feeds our imperfect person (remember the imperfect person obsesses about what people think). As the people around us continue to feed our imperfect person, and if we forget to feed our perfect person, pretty soon the scale is tipped and the imperfect person will totally take over in competition. Once this happens, something drastic must take place. It is no longer just enough to feed the perfect person to tip the scale back; the imperfect person must be killed off. Although these times are not fun it is these humbling times that kill off our imperfect person, so our perfect person can come back to life. Remember the perfect person and imperfect person are in total opposition to each other, as one grows the other dies and vice versa (**Galatians 5:17**).

Death is given power over a *fourth part of the earth*. As long as the *perfect person* is in operation, a person will have fun (*Calf*) and have passion, drive, and determination (*Lion*) while competing. However, once the imperfect person takes over, *death* is given power over one of the four competitive personalities, “*peace*” (*power over a fourth part of the earth*). Once the imperfect person takes over all hope of *peace* vanishes (**James 1:2-4**) and the sport, event, or task, that we once loved begins to suck all the life out of us and competing becomes absolute *hell* (**Hebrews 12:5-13**).

Once the imperfect person takes over *death* is turned loose and *hell* begins to kill with *sword*, *famine*, *plague*, and the *beasts of the earth*. *Sword*: The sword represents thoughts that come into our head that do not bring peace, but rather torment us (**1 Samuel 16:14-15**). These thoughts seem to play out the absolute worst things that could happen to us. Thoughts begin coming into our mind involving bad wrecks that end in our destruction. We see bad things happen to other people and this is all we can seem to think about. We begin to envision ourselves in the wrecks that other people have and wrecks from our past seem to flood our mind. *Hell* is turned loose on our mind with a mob of negative thoughts; like a swarm of vultures these thoughts come in and they are unrelenting (**Luke 6:18**).

Famine: These are times of competitive dry spells, injuries, stupid mistakes, bad draws, financial droughts, and weird coincidences keeping us from success. As the imperfect person begins to grow (worrying about what people think), the perfect person begins to die off (focusing on perfect rides to please only the judge). As this begins to happen we will find ourselves in a competitive *famine* (**Proverbs 28:13**). We enter into a drought and nothing we do will bear fruit (**Proverbs 10:16**). Things that we used to do effortlessly will become uncomfortable and awkward. We become self-conscious of the moves that we are making leading to more unproductive behavior and performances.

Plague: As the *sword* begins to cut on our mind and we begin to experience competitive *famine*, a *plague* will start to settle in on our pride. After being humbled by one failure after another, the *plague* begins to eat on our imperfect man (**1 John 2:16**). People quit feeding our imperfect person and the crowd pleasing king begins to be unthroned (**1 Samuel 13:13-14**). We no longer strut around like we are the hottest thing on earth, chomping at the bit to compete so we can be worshiped by men. We begin to walk around a little more gingerly, just hoping that we don't look like an idiot, hoping that we don't get hurt, hoping that we could just win something, anything to pull us out of the slump that we are in.

Beasts of the earth: This is the realm of the “what ifs” and worrying about things that we have no control over. As the *sword, famine, and plague* begin to work on us our whole outlook on life starts to become negative. Our competitive slump begins to take over other areas of our life and it is almost like we look for the absolute worst in everything. We not only begin to experience unfruitfulness in the arena, but we begin to be unfruitful out of the arena as well. We have one bad thing after another happen to us and just can’t seem to catch a break, “When it rains it pours.” The *beasts of the earth* are things that we are drawn to that don’t bring us peace, but for some reason we can’t seem to get them out of our mind; finances, car trouble, house trouble, job trouble, family problems, all around people problems, etc. (**John 16:33**).

It is at this time that a person has a choice. They no longer have any drive, energy, and determination to compete (Lion). They are definitely not having any fun (Calf), and have no peace (Eagle) in or out of the arena. The choice is, they can hang it up and quit competing all together, or they can return to their first love (**Revelation 2:4**). A person has to ask themselves, “Why did I start doing this in the first place?” At one time they were energized to compete and it was fun and it was peaceful. A person has to go back to where they were before the imperfect person started taking over and remember what it was about in the beginning. It is at this point that a person can start feeding their perfect person again, quit worrying about what people think and just go out and have fun again.

Although the pale horse is not fun, if a person competes long enough and starts to experience success, they will eventually go through it. Hopefully, this paper will help you recognize the imperfect person sooner than I did so many times in my life and save you some headache. Trust me; from experience it is so much easier to not let the scale tip early on. When you feel the imperfect person start to rise up in you, kill him off quickly (**1 Corinthians 15:31**) and feed your perfect person. Like I said, I have been a “head case” most of my time competing and have operated primarily in the imperfect person most of my life. But like I said earlier, if I hadn’t, I wouldn’t be such an expert on “what not to do.” I think you can learn a lot by following someone’s successes in life, but never underestimate what you can learn by not following someone’s failures. I hope this paper is able to help you in same way.

God Bless,

Wade Black