



February 19, 2025

MESSENGER

QUOTE FOR TODAY

"Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness, for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the very Spirit intercedes with groanings too deep for words."
Romans 8:26

INFO

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"THE DEVIL MADE ME DO IT!"

Comedian Flip Wilson made this line popular on TV in the early 1970s, when he dressed in drag to play Geraldine Jones. Geraldine presented as a self-respecting young woman who held herself and others to high standards. She also had a naughty streak, but she always explained away that side of her behavior with the phrase, "The Devil made me do it!"

I guess this is one reason Geraldine sticks in the minds of people old enough to remember her TV appearances: like all of us, she tried to blame her dark side on an outside force, rather than accepting responsibility herself. She selected the Prince of Darkness himself to be her villain. She didn't have control of her thoughts and actions; the Devil did.

Who (or what) is your default "Made-Me-Do-It"? Do you blame your parents? Your marriage partner? The President of the U.S.? Your job? The neighborhood you live in? Your addiction? Your genes? Social media? Your bank account?

Actually, the "Made-Me-Do-It" excuse traces right back to the Garden of Eden story in the Bible. When God confronted Adam about eating the forbidden fruit, he blamed it on Eve (Genesis 3:12); when God turned to Eve, she blamed the Serpent (verse 13). But there's a subtle nuance in the literal words of Adam: "The woman **whom YOU gave to be with me**, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate." Do you see how Adam was actually *blaming God himself*? *Could this be true of all our "Made-Me-Do Its"?*

continued on other side...

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(Continued from other side)

There's a song I remember learning in Sunday School when I was a child. It goes like this:*

Chorus: It's me, it's me, O Lord,
Standing in the need
of prayer.

It's me, it's me, O Lord,
Standing in the need
of prayer.

Verse 1: Not my sister, not my
brother,
But it's me, O Lord,
standing in the need
of prayer.

Verse 2: Not my father, not my
mother,
But it's me, O Lord . .

Verse 3: Not the preacher, not
the deacon,
But it's me, O Lord . .

Verse 4: Not the stranger, not
my neighbor,
But it's me, O Lord . .

God is infinitely gracious and forgiving,
but only when we are honest about our
need for grace and forgiveness.

It's me, O Lord!

Pastor George Van Alstine

* You can listen to this song at:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y6NjC4T1Kb0>