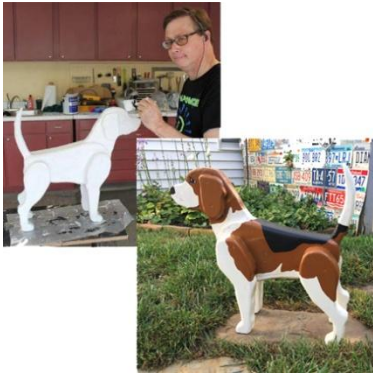


## Restoration Work is Not for Amateurs

My wife said I could have another beagle if it didn't shed. So I made one.



Woody stands guard on our back porch where I often read. I noticed a few weeks ago that, after two years in the sun, he needed a new paint job. He needed restoration.

It happens to all pieces of fine art—including wooden beagles. It even happens to the masters. Colors fade. Smoke and pollutants affect the quality. Leonardo da Vinci's *Mona Lisa* once had bright colors and a detailed background that has faded and taken on a more brownish hue. Another example is da Vinci's *Last Supper*.



The bottom image is a copy painted by Giovanni Pietro Rizzoli, a contemporary of da Vinci's. The copy did not have the same exposure to the elements as the original, and it shows us how much da Vinci's work has faded over time. (Not to mention a later decision to replace Jesus' feet with a door!)

Woody the Beagle looks OK again. But not all restorations go as planned. Take Cecilia Giménez. In 2012, she took it upon herself to restore the fresco *Ecce Homo*, a painting of Jesus crowned with thorns, in her local church in Borja, Spain. She was an amateur painter, and her work was ... well, you be the judge.



Cecelia meant well, but as we say in the South, "Bless her heart." Her well-meaning but botched attempt has drawn worldwide attention. The one good thing is that people come from all over the world to gawk at this fresco, and the little town is now thriving from tourism.

Art restoration should not be in the hands of amateurs.

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We're amateurs when it comes to restoring our lives.

We don't simply fade over time. With the brush of our sin, we blur the vivid colors of God's image in our lives. Even when we try to make things right, the brush of our good efforts and self-righteousness is still tainted with flecks of sin, and we just can't restore ourselves. Try as we may, we fail—and we look pathetic.

Restoration of our lives only comes at the hands of the One who created us. Jesus removes the layers of sin with which we've coated our lives, washes us clean with the blood of His sacrifice, forgives, and restores us to the life and image He created us for.

We fail, but Jesus restores.

*"We are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do" (Eph. 2:10).*

Let Christ do His work of restoration. Be the masterpiece He created you to be—and people will marvel at the vibrant colors of love, grace, and forgiveness you display in Christ.