

The Christ Follower's Hall of Reclaimed Failures

Written by Bob Stone

Monday, 02 August 2010 00:00

I would really like to meet a person who could say the following; "I have walked perfectly with my God; I have never failed in my understanding of His plan, and my motives have always been completely pure."

Most of us couldn't say that, could we? In fact, only Jesus could. Our lives at this point are not perfect reflections of our God. We're growing and being conformed more and more to Christ's likeness each day, but only when we stand in eternity will we perfectly mirror our Lord--1 Cor. 13:12; Rom. 8:29, etc. If that's the case, then it's going to be a common problem for all of us as believers, to live in the tension of not having our act totally together while attempting to walk with a holy and perfect God.

In the preface of a book about Bob Pearce, the author identifies and illustrates this common dilemma and tension. "This book is Bob Pearce in the raw, as he was, and as God used him. He was a sinner, and no one knew it better than he. But he knew also the exceeding gracious forgiveness of our Lord. He was extraordinarily gifted, but he was never impressed by his gifts. He was simply grateful."

The results of this outlook are incredible! The author continues: "From God's standpoint, he was an earthen vessel available at all times for the exclusive use of his Lord. And the Lord certainly did use this man; he was responsible for founding World Vision and the Samaritan's Purse, and many other ministries..."

A prayer of Bob Pearce written at the beginning of his ministry life further describes why God chose to use this failing, imperfect Christian: "Lord, I don't know how to run my life. I'm second rate. But will you let me have a chance at doing the best a second rater can do? And if you will help me, I will promise that I won't say no. I will sign a contract with you right now, and let the angels record it forever in heaven, that I give you a license to do Your will with me whether I like it or not, irrevocable for the rest of my life. YOU CAN WRITE IT on anything you want, and I can scream my head off and beg and deny it and say I want out, but I give you authority forever to do your will in my life."

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Do we need any further confirmation of the power of this kind of prayer? In a study of the life of Samson, we can easily see how God was present in the midst of a colossal failure, to restore and use a repentant and imperfect Samson.

A lot of us could illustrate this experience with our lives as well. We know all too well what it is to fail as Samson failed. But like Samson, we have discovered our spiritual life can grow again. Even in our failures, God did not abandon us. Because we were able to “fail forward” and claim His forgiveness, we have seen His healing grace work in our life too.

Failure is one of the realities of life, especially being a follower of Jesus. There is not a single Christian, even the most mature, who does not experience significant failure in his or her walk with the Lord Jesus. Hebrews 11, often celebrated as “God's Hall of Faith,” could equally well be entitled, “God's Hall of Reclaimed Failures.” There is scarcely an individual in that chapter without a serious blemish in their life. But God is in the business of restoring failures.

I invite you to join “The Christ Follower's Hall of Reclaimed Failures.”

We pray that God will enable us to “fail forward.”

We believe as members of this hall that human failures can become God's heroes of faith.

We won't be able to avoid failure, but we pledge ourselves to learn how to truly repent of our sins and accept God's remedy for failure, i.e., His forgiveness.

We trust in His timing, and will find ourselves useful and productive as we are changed day by day into Christ's image.

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