

4 Things to Remember When You've Failed

I'm sitting here typing with a heavy heart.

I've been carrying it around for a day and a half now ... it's kind of a heavy load to bear.

You see, yesterday I messed up.

I'm in a tough place momentarily because I need an operation that I have to wait for (*please don't worry too much, I'll be OK. Really. I promise*).

I thought I was going to have the operation Monday, but instead I spent the day having tests and getting medicated. My type-A personality was getting stomped all over because I wanted to get it done.

Don't waste time.

Just do what needs to be done and let me recover, because I have super-important things to do and this is just in the way.

Get me?

I am a doer. I am a get-'er-done-er type person. I don't saunter. I march.

The problem is that I wanted to march in and take control of a situation over which I have no control.

And that's where I messed up first.

I lost control over my schedule and that made me crazy.

I spent a whole day subjected to someone else's schedule, which to me equated wasting time. I actually laid there in the hospital bed counting how many hours I'd wasted on this

“fool’s errand.” That made me super cray-cray!

And rather than allowing the peace of the Lord to calm my heart (*because, let’s face it, I was in a situation where someone else was in control. So I should have just sat back and enjoyed a day off.*), I allowed the loss of control to not only steal my peace, but my joy and my testimony.

By the time I arrived home, I was not only in physical pain, but I was tired, cranky and bitter.

May I give you a piece of unsolicited advice?

When you are in pain, tired, cranky and bitter ***do not talk to anyone but Jesus.***

Whenever we are these things, our tongue has a way of running away with itself and if the only person we talk to in that unbridled moment is Jesus, we at least still have our testimony and reputation intact.

Unfortunately, I had a moment of temporary amnesia and forgot to only talk to the Lord and I went on ...

wait for it ...

Facebook.

I can hear the collective groan right now.

Fortunately for me, the amnesia wasn’t so bad that I posted to my wall. No, but to whom I posted was bad enough. In my anger and bitterness I made a few insulting remarks about the country I live in, shut the laptop and went to bed.

I wish I could erase that moment.

I really do.

It was beneath me to say what I said, and you’re probably thinking, “Don’t be so hard on yourself. We’ve all done it.

People get over it and move on.”

That’s true.

But, the one who made the mistake sometimes has trouble moving on.

I’m that type of person.

I’m harder on myself than I am on anyone else I know.

I extend grace liberally to those around me, but I’m very stingy with myself. Everyone else is allowed second, third, fourth, 20th chances, but I have only one chance to get it right.

Zero tolerance for mistakes.

What do you do when you’ve messed up and you feel like you can’t move on from it?

1. Realize that your guilt is probably really pride. My inability to grant myself grace is really pride. I have to be perfect. You know why? Because I have to be the best. I have to be 100 percent on my game all the time because I only want people to see the best of me now.

I know, I’m also very self-deprecating. It’s an odd balancing act of sharing my past faults, “but look at me now. Now I’m perfect. I’ve moved on. Improved.”

Not so much. Because yesterday I proved that I still haven’t bridled my anger nor my tongue!

2. Realize that fruit takes time to grow. The fruit of the Spirit can’t be ordered at a drive thru as you sail through life. “Ummmm ... yes, hello. I’d like an order of self-control, meekness and could you throw in some joy with that too? Thank you!”

Wouldn't that be nice?

But no. When you plant a tree, you don't get fruit on it for several years. And the first year, you may get just a few apples. It takes time, growth, pruning and a lot of care to grow fruit.

So we need to be patient with ourselves, because God is obviously patient with us. Otherwise, He'd have used a different illustration, such as vegetables. You can plant vegetables and have a harvest in just a matter of months, as opposed to fruit that takes years!

3. Forgiveness is extended in two directions. Sometimes the hardest person to forgive is yourself. Especially when you have high expectations of yourself. Sometimes it's easier to forgive others because you don't expect as much from them as you do yourself. But when you don't allow yourself to fail, you have trouble extending forgiveness to yourself when you do.

But refusal to extend forgiveness to yourself will drive you into a rut of self-condemnation.

As you rehearse your failure, you continue to heap condemnation on yourself until you stumble under the sheer magnitude of its load.

Let. It. Go.

Forgive yourself.

Surely others have forgiven you. And if they haven't, then that's an issue between God and them because God has forgiven you.

I'm writing this to myself tonight and already I feel better.

But the best thing we can do for ourselves when we've failed is:

4. Learn from our mistakes. Don't use your failure as a switch to constantly batter yourself, use your failure as a pointer to teach yourself a lesson.

Same tool, different purpose!

God wants to use our failures as launching pads, if we'll just surrender them into His hands.

I have.

Will you?

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