

Why God Lets You Fall Flat on Your Face Sometimes

Sometimes God lets us fall flat on our face, just so we realize we can't do it without Him.

Such was the case when Peter momentarily walked on water and then abruptly sank. Jesus sent His disciples across the Sea of Galilee while He went up into a mountain to pray. They did exactly what He told them to do but they still sailed headlong into a storm. Remember, Jesus never promised trouble-free living. In fact, He predicted the opposite—"In the world you will have tribulation. But be of good cheer. I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). Since faith only grows to the level of conflict we face, we can count on our faith being tested. If, as Paul Evans suggests, "Adversity is God's university," then even in the center of His will, we will face occasional storms.

Turbulence turned their calm cruise into chaos. Fierce winds and violent waves tossed their ship like a toy. These normally tough sailors and rough fishermen fell into panic mode fearing they'd drown. Suddenly, "During the fourth watch of the night Jesus went to them, walking on the sea. But when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, 'It is a spirit.' And they cried out in fear" (Matt. 14:25-26). After Jesus identified Himself, Peter boldly said, "Lord, if it is You, bid me come to You on the water" (Matt. 13:28b). When Jesus said "come," Peter jumped overboard.

Conventional wisdom says, "Don't go overboard, especially in a storm," but Peter had the experience of a lifetime when he dared to go overboard. While it's easy to criticize him for sinking, don't forget he did something no one else (besides Jesus) had ever done—walk on water. The other disciples stayed in the security of the ship. It's easy to sit in our comfort

zone and criticize those who attempt (and sometimes fail) to do great things for God. Fear says it's too risky to venture beyond the confines of the status quo. Faith says it's time to step out of the man-made boat of church tradition and walk on the water with Jesus.

Imagine Peter literally walking on water as his 11 comrades stared in total shock and disbelief. The Bible doesn't say how far he went before he took his eyes off Jesus and started sinking, which begs the question "Why did Jesus let him sink?" Perhaps Peter thought after taking a few steps, "I've got this, I can handle this on my own?" But when he focused on the whipping wind and waves, gravity reclaimed its grip on him. Peter was raised on the water as a fisherman and was probably a good swimmer, but now he was in way over his head. "But when he saw the strong wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink, he cried out, 'Lord, save me!'"

"Immediately Jesus reached out His hand and caught him, and said to him, 'O you of little faith, why did you doubt?'" (Matt. 14:30-31).

Jesus allowed Peter to sink so he would realize how much he needed Him. If Jesus hadn't reached out and rescued him, Peter would have drowned—curtains, game over! His simple, three-word prayer changed everything—"Save me, Lord!" Peter saw how much he needed a Savior. We should too; we cannot save ourselves. We not only need Jesus to save our souls from sin, but to save us from the negative situations of life. We should all pray periodically, "Save me, Lord! Deliver me from this predicament I find myself or put myself in."

Jesus provided a vivid analogy of how dependent we are upon Him. "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who remains in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit. For without Me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). Being raised on an orange grove in Florida, I've seen my share of broken branches. Occasionally, in our orchard, a windstorm, lawnmower or truck would break

off a branch from an orange tree. The disconnected branch quickly became a dead stick as the fruit and leaves on it withered and dried up. That's a picture of us without Christ—a dead, lifeless, fruitless stick. You see, the same life-giving sap that flows through the trunk of a tree also flows through its branches. If a branch is severed from its source, it will die. We must realize that we can't get saved or stay saved without Jesus. We can't survive, much less thrive, spiritually without staying connected to Christ who is our source. It is impossible to be a Christian and live a victorious life without God's help.

Jesus made it very clear, "Without Me you can do nothing." One of Satan's biggest lies, and one of man's biggest deceptions, is to presume that we can make it apart from God. A popular gospel song dispels that notion: "O Lord, I can't even walk without You holding my hand/ the mountain's too high and valley's too wide/ down on my knees, that's where I learned to stand/ O Lord, I can't even walk without you holding my hand."

Another reason God will let us sink is to prepare us to help rescue others. Jesus told Peter who betrayed Him and then sunk into despair, "I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have repented, strengthen your brothers" (Luke 22:32). Jesus allowed Peter to fail and, by overcoming that negative experience, he emerged stronger in his faith. Afterward, he was able to relate to others with more compassion and help them overcome by God's grace. Incidentally, both Peter and his other name, Cephas, mean "a rock." After sinking like a rock literally and figuratively, Peter became a rock-solid leader in the New Testament Church with unshakable faith. Peter is positive proof that even if God lets you sink, it doesn't necessarily mean you're sunk! {eoa}

Ben Godwin is the author of four books and pastors the Goodsprings Full Gospel Church. To read more articles, visit his website at [www.bengodwin.com](#) and take advantage of his 4-book bundle for

\$25.