

Moral Failure in Leadership: Don't Throw the Baby Out With the Bathwater

I have been serving in ministry for over 40 years now, and during this time, I can't count the number of ministry leaders who have fallen to sin's temptation. Because of modern technology, many of these men and women have been well known, so their transgressions have been very public. The notoriety of these leaders resulted in their failures and immorality having an impact upon a large segment of the body of believers, which has caused many not only to question these leaders themselves, but also the entirety of their ministry.

People begin to ask questions, such as, "Was any of it real? Were they even called to ministry in the first place? Can I trust anything they ever said or did?" These questions may even lead some to question the very foundations of their belief in G-D.

As leaders, we have a responsibility to answer these questions and many others that people have asked and will ask over the years we serve. Thankfully, we don't have to wonder how to answer these questions because the Bible provides the answers for us. While the answer is within the Bible, we may not have noticed it because it is found within one of the most powerful events in the Bible, in Exodus 24 where Moses is called to come up Mount Sinai to receive the tablets of stone.

Our answer to these questions is found in Exodus 24:1 (TLV): "Then to Moses He said, 'Come up to Adonai, you and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and the seventy elders of Israel, and worship from afar.'"

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Notice in this verse who is called by G-D to go up the mountain: Moses, Aaron, Nadab and Abihu. Yes, this is the same Nadab and Abihu about whom we read in Leviticus 10:1-2: "Now Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu each took his own censer, put fire in it, laid incense over it, and offered unauthorized fire before Adonai—which He had not commanded them. So fire came out from the presence of Adonai and consumed them. So they died before Adonai."

So, we see that in Exodus 24, G-D specifically called Nadab and Abihu, and from that time until Leviticus 9, they faithfully walked in their calling and served G-D. Then, in Leviticus 10, we find them committing such a sin that G-D consumes them with fire.

From the text of the Bible, we are shown without any doubt that G-D had called Nadab and Abihu to the ministry. From the Bible, we see that they faithfully served G-D in that ministry for a period of time, and from the Bible, we see them willfully sin against G-D while actively serving in their ministry roles.

From this biblical narrative, we learn that someone can be called by G-D to the ministry, serve faithfully and then fall into sin. Their sin may disqualify them from future service, but their sin doesn't invalidate the fact that they were called, nor does it invalidate any of the righteous ministry they performed between their calling to ministry and their fall into sin. We cannot judge G-D's choice to call them by their choice to sin.

If the example of Nadab and Abihu isn't enough, just look at Abraham, who was called by G-D to be the father of a great nation, but displayed a lack of faith when he lied twice about his wife and slept with his maid. Or Moses who was called to

lead the children of Israel into the promised land only to sin by beating the rock, thus becoming unable to fulfill his calling. Even Judas was called to be a disciple only to betray Yeshua for 30 pieces of silver.

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If we were to take the time to look, we would find time after time in the Scriptures men and women who were called by G-D to ministry but fell into sin. Yet, each and every one of them was truly called by G-D to serve, and not one of their sins invalidated the righteous ministry they performed before their fall into sin.

Please don't misunderstand my point as I write this. I am not excusing nor diminishing their sin nor saying that their sins should be ignored in any way. Those who fall into sin should be removed from ministry until true meaningful repentance takes place, and the truth is that some may never be eligible to serve in the ministry again.

However, regardless of whether these fallen leaders can be restored to the ministry, we need to be careful not to judge G-D's calling based upon the failures of those who were called. Over the years, lots of people have been hurt by the sins of ministers they trusted and believed to be called men and women of G-D. Many of those who have been hurt not only were hurt by the sins of these leaders, but they were also hurt because the sins of these leaders caused them to question every word spoken, every action taken, every sermon preached and every prophetic word given.

My purpose in writing this isn't to diminish the sins of the leaders; it is to point out that while the sins of these leaders were a result of their choices, like Nadab and Abihu, their calling was the choice of G-D Himself. It is very possible that someone can be called by G-D, serve G-D and G-

D's people faithfully and then willfully sin.

If you are one of the many people who have been hurt by the sins of a ministry leader, please don't throw out the baby with the bathwater. Rather, hold onto all of the blessings that G-D provided through those who were called and served faithfully—until they didn't. Make a choice to not invalidate what was righteous and holy (sometimes for many years) because the person G-D used chose to be unrighteous. To say it another way, don't rob yourself of years of blessings because of the failure of someone else.

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