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FALLING DOWN, WE GO FOWARD!

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“The difference between excellence and mediocrity is often how an individual views a mistake.” — Nelson Boswell

For a righteous [man] may fall seven times
And rise again, But the wicked shall fall by
calamity. (Proverbs 24:16)

We all know that, as people, we make mistakes and fall. If we claim to be people who do not make mistakes, our life will become hypocritical, a lie, and a failure. People who make mistakes and view it as a part of life are living, successful people; because, if we do not make mistakes it means that we are not doing anything and if we are not doing anything, but only existing in our selfish environment watching out for life's mistakes, it will be difficult to accomplish our visions and dreams.

It is simple, as righteous people, as God's people, we are not preserved from falling and from sin, but it is important how we rise after a fall and that we continue going forward.

1. RIGHTEOUS MEN AND THE UNGODLY
FALL – THE DIFFERENCE IS IN THE
VIEWPOINT AND ATTITUDE YOU HAVE
WHEN YOU FALL.

The fact is that we all make mistakes; whether you are a believer or an unbeliever. Believers

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are not excluded from sin just because they are believers. People simply make mistakes. I think that Christians sometimes falsely take pride in their positions, thinking that they cannot sin and make wrong choices. Actually, if there are these types of Christians I assume that they are living in a bubble of religiosity and often do nothing of value. Because only if you do nothing and say nothing, can you be sure that you will not make a mistake. Therefore, both the righteous and the ungodly sin and in both instances there is a difference in the viewpoint and attitude toward sin. The ungodly have a wrong understanding of sin, while believers have a wrong understanding of sin and God.

The distorted picture that many Christians have, and that Satan uses in instances of sin or a failure, is perfectionism. This is an attitude of pride that somewhere in their subconscious tells them not to make the same mistakes that others are making. When they awaken at once to reality, recognizing

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that they have fallen, they often do not view that fall as “life’s companion and teacher”, rather they view themselves as losers because they could not maintain one perfect level that they expected of themselves. This often replaces a living relationship with God; and when people begin to follow their own principles without a relationship with God, it is only a question of when they will fall. But when they fall they often wonder how it could have happened to them.

Whatever viewpoint they may have had, the Bible is filled with examples of wrong decisions made by God’s people. Starting with Adam and Eve all the way to Peter and Paul, the fact is that they were all believers who make many mistakes. However, what is interesting is that some of them had a different attitude and viewpoint of God and, despite their mistakes, were not enslaved to their past, instead they continued on toward the dreams and visions God had given them.

Solomon gave us a “prescription” for our falls, the cure is called, “Get Up!” It doesn’t say that the righteous man continues to lie on the floor because of his past wrongdoings, instead he will get up “seven times” if necessary. David, who sinned, didn’t remain emotionally tied to the past and paralyzed; he repented, trusted in God and got up on his feet. Of course, this does not mean that consequences will automatically disappear, because sometimes we must pay the prices for our wrong

decisions. Yet, it does not mean we are losers. Despite falling down, there is a great difference between believers and unbelievers in that we know that we have someone who will rescue us. This is why David, himself, said in the Psalms, "Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; For the LORD upholds [him with] His hand." (37:24) In other words, David confirmed for us the fact that though we stumble it doesn't mean that we fail completely. Actually, in the original Hebrew it states that a man may fall, but he will not be completely destroyed because "God holds his hand".

Therefore, the fact is that if we are living beings we will surely make mistakes but what is important is our attitude and viewpoint of falling down. How do we respond? In whom do we trust? Will we allow Satan to paralyze us and bind us to our past failures so that we cannot go forward? Actually, many books on leadership confirm for us that every successful person has many failures that lie behind them, but the difference between losers and winners is that the winners had a different attitude about themselves. When they fell they didn't look at themselves as losers, instead they continued going forward.

Mozart, for example, a musical genius, received critique from Archduke Ferdinand of Austria about his opera "The Marriage of Figaro". The Archduke told him that it was "far too noisy" and that it had "far too many notes." The painter Vincent Van Gogh, whose work today reaches in the millions, only sold one

painting in his lifetime. Thomas Edison, one of the greatest inventors of all time, was very uneducated as a young child. About Albert Einstein, one of the greatest minds, it was said by one of his teachers in Munich that he was "not worth anything."

Many great and successful people have countless reasons to believe in their failures, but the differences was their perseverance despite trouble, rejection and mistakes. Despite everything, they believed in themselves and rejected the idea that they were losers. If so many ungodly people could fall and rise again, how much more can we rise when we fall if we believe in a living God?

The prophet Micah gave us an example of his own great patience and faith in God as he waited knowing that He would take His people through hard times as punishment. He clearly said that he would not feel like a loser, instead, if he fell he would have a positive attitude, arise, and believe in Him "Therefore I will look to the LORD; I will wait for the God of my salvation; My God will hear me. Do not rejoice over me, my enemy; When I fall, I will arise; When I sit in darkness, The LORD [will be] a light to me." (Micah 7:7-8)

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**2. PERSEVERANCE IS KEY TO GETTING UP
AND MOVING ON.**

Have you ever asked yourself what would happen if God were to limit how often we could get up after we've fallen? I personally think that we are sometimes more strict with ourselves than God is as far as this is concerned. By this I am not justifying nor encouraging anyone to willfully sin, but when we sin repeatedly, do we think that after the third or fourth time that we no longer have the right to seek God for forgiveness and to arise once again? Because of this many Christians are bound by fear, failures, and a false view of God's grace; they have put up boundaries behind which they no longer forgive themselves and after some time they fall away from God because they think that God has limited how many times they can arise from sin and the mire of bad decisions.

The fact is this - and we must remember this so that Satan cannot deceive us - if we sincerely repent and turn from our sin, in the

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strength of the Holy Spirit, God is faithful and will always forgive us our sin without limit while we are on this earth. This is why the Apostle John said in his first epistle, "My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world." (1 John 2:1-2)

Along with this we find a second fact that cannot be separated from the first, we are aware that despite forgiveness and arising after we fall, dependent on how we fell, forgiveness cannot erase some of the consequences of sin and wrong decisions. However, regardless of the circumstances, it is still up to us to continue trusting in God and not living in the past. When we fall we must understand God, his mercy and forgiveness; we must forgive ourselves and understand what it means to persevere so we can move on. Many successful people in the world succeeded not because of their wisdom and knowledge but because they persevered despite trouble, failure, and bad decisions.

We have all heard of the Wright brothers, who were bicycle mechanics in their day. Everyone remembers them for pioneering the first motorized flight during the first half of the twentieth century, but few know circumstances that took place around that first flight on December 17 1903. Many do not know that before that day the Wright brothers were not known as leaders in aviation. They also did

not have a university diploma; actually no one expected this of them because all eyes were focused on another man who was to be the first to fly an airplane. His name was Dr. Samuel P. Langley, a well-known former professor of mathematics and astronomy who was at that time a director of the Smithsonian Institute (named after the well-known British scientist James Smithson, who left bequest in his will to the United States of America to use \$500,000 to “increase knowledge among mankind”). Dr. Langley was a scientist and an innovator; he wrote many articles on aerodynamics and had a vision to fly in the air. In 1890 he made several attempts with large models that were in some ways successful. In 1898 he received \$50,000 from the American Ministry of Defense to build the first passenger aircraft. In 1903 he built his first plane, which he called “Aerodrome”. The plane was special because of its great catapult that was to propel the plane into the air. However, at the moment when the plane was to be thrust into the air, parts of the plane got tangled in a cable and the airplane crashed. Critics and journalists were fairly brutal in their criticisms about his failure. All the papers wrote about him from a negative standpoint.

However, he did not become discouraged, and after only eight weeks once again launched an airplane, but this time he was once again unsuccessful when the airplane spun around after launching. Critics were once again merciless. They accused him of wasting public money. After that Dr. Langley stated that

maybe the world needed to look to other people for this invention. He was completely defeated and at that moment forsook his dream. He quit. He fell and no longer got up. However, only a few days later Orville and Wilbur Wright – two unknown men, without training or money – flew their first airplane “Flyer I” above a sandy beach in North Carolina. They didn’t just fly and remain satisfied thinking that they had attained something; instead they continued experimenting and working to reach better results. Langley allowed that one moment of desperation and failure to cause him to think that it was the end. He left his project and two years later had a stroke and died. Today, when we speak about aviation people rarely remember Dr. Langley.

What happened to him is what happens to many people who fail, because they don’t know how to handle mistakes; they allow loss

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and failure to emotionally bind them and keep them from achieving their dreams and visions. It is true that when we fall or make wrong decisions it can be painful, sometimes physically but more so emotionally. When our visions are destroyed it is painful, but we must not take it seriously, we ought to not allow our fall make us losers! Pain of sin or wrong decisions lead people to fear of failure and if they allow their fears to reign it is very difficult to continue going on.

This is why it is important for us to persevere and in those moments trust in the Lord and His great mercy that covers a multitude of sins; to learn something from our failures and simply forgive ourselves and accept our circumstances by looking at them from God's perspective. By this I do not meant that are free to sin and make unbiblical decisions; rather, after falling we ought not feel like losers and being paralyzed, forsake everything and cease being used in our gifts and callings. In these

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moments we ought to seek the Lord, ask for forgiveness, and continue going forward, because those who tear away from fear and continue on, knowing that they will likely fall and fall again, will be victorious!

3. ACCEPT OUR FAILURES AS OPPORTUNITIES.

The Apostle Paul considered life's troubles and pressure as a part of the life of every believer. He was not negative or cynical about them, which is why he said in Thessalonians that trouble was his destiny, or a part of life on earth. If we try to live in an imaginary world of perfectionism and self-righteousness, the day will come when we will be broken. This is why it is important to accept our failures as friends and as a part of life and the process of growth.

David was broken before the Lord and confessed his sin when he was faced with the things he had done. Some of the consequences came late in his life; he lost the child that had been in Bathsheba's womb because he had scorned God, "So David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD." And Nathan said to David, "The LORD also has put away your sin; you shall not die. So David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD." And Nathan said to David, "The LORD also has put away your sin; you shall not die." (2 Samuel 12:13-14) David knew that he had sinned, he knew that he had made a bad decision that did not please God, he knew that he had fallen, but he still trusted

God and sought His face. He didn't turn away from the place of his failure, rather went on in God's grace. Apart from fasting and crying out to the Lord for his child, we see that after the baby died he simply arose and ate. Usually in these situations people would break emotionally and give up on everything. Yet, he went on and accepted that sin that is a part of every life, that cannot be erased. Later with Bathsheba he had another child whom they called Solomon (2 Samuel 12:24). The name Solomon comes from the biblical male name "Shelemo" stemming from the word "Shalom" meaning peace.

I believe that despite sin he committed, for which he repented, he received peace from God. He did not allow emotions to bind him to the past, rather he stoically bore the consequences God gave and accepted the sin as a friend and as a part of life from which he learned a lesson. David was the one who wrote, "Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; for the Lord upholds [him with] His hand (Psalm 37:24)

In other words, if we fall, trust in the Lord and move on; it does not mean that we have completely failed because we are God's righteous ones – people who believe in the Lord, people who can "fall seven times" but seven times arise again. This is the attitude of those who succeed in life. People who are successful often have difficult moments and trouble. The Apostle Paul bore troubles and problems and he was able to do this because Christ was his strength.

This is why we must accept our mistakes and failures as friends. Let us look at which course we must take; let us learn from them something and be thankful for the experience because only by falling can we go forward to new victory. In every fall we are offered the ability to accept responsibility and go forward.

The life if Emma Bombeck was filled with trouble, starting with her career. From her early childhood she loved to write newspaper articles. When she began at the University of Ohio, her mentors discouraged her from writing, but she rejected their discouragement. Later, at another university, she completed a course in English and began writing articles for women. Life was not easy. She had always wanted to be a mother, but her doctor told her she would never conceive. However, she did not give up; her husband and she adopted a little girl. Yet, after two years she conceived. During the next two years she conceived four times, two pregnancies ending in miscarriage. In 1964 she began to write a humorous column for a newspaper. For this she received \$3.00

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per article, yet she continued on regardless; this simply opened a door. The next year she received the opportunity to write for a magazine three times a week. In 1967 her column was received in over 900 magazines and newspapers. Later she published fifteen books, was on the cover of Times Magazine, was a guest on the largest television show, and received fifteen honorable titles and diplomas. During that time she also experienced breast cancer and kidney failure. In of her speeches, upon handing out a diploma, she said, "I love giving out diplomas, because I love to tell everyone that the reason I am up here is not because of my success, rather my failure. What you need to say is, "I am not a loser because I have lost something or failed in something. There is a great difference. Personally, in regards to my career, for me the path was hard. I have buried my children, lost my parents, had cancer, and raised children. The trick of it all is putting it all in proper perspective and that is what I do."

We must look at our failures and mistakes from a different angle, looking at them through God's prism of grace as a part of life. This is the only way we are able to learn from troubles and failures and go forward, leaving the past behind and saying together with David (which he wrote after his affair with Bathsheba) "[As for] God, His way [is] perfect; The word of the LORD [is] proven; He [is] a shield to all who trust in Him. "For who [is] God, except the LORD? And who [is] a rock, except our God?" (2 Samuel 22: 31-32)

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