

Extraordinary Living: Lessons In Faith From Ordinary People Obedience Despite Failure

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You ever fail at anything? Of course you have. We have all experienced failure. The question is what happens when we do?

Imagine what life would be like if everyone quit after failure. If after a failed attempt at something great, people simply quit.

Think about this...

If Thomas Edison had quit after failure we might still be living in darkness

If Henry Ford had given up, we might still be riding on horseback.

If Alexander Graham Bell had decided to quit after failure, we might be spending a lot less time staring at our devices today. (Might not be a bad thing!)

Thomas Edison was quoted saying, *"I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work."*

Henry Ford said, *"Failure is only the opportunity to begin again, only this time more wisely."*

No one is perfect. As much as we may try, we are not.

When you think about the greats in the basketball world, who comes to mind? Michael Jordan. He is truly one of the best players, but it did not come without failure.

"I've missed more than 9000 shots in my career. I've lost almost 300 games. Twenty-six times I've been trusted to take the game winning shot and missed. I've failed over and over and over again in my life. And that is why I succeed."

Michael Jordan

To often we think if I fail, I'm not good enough, I'm not worthy enough, and therefore I should just quit.

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Quitting brings to a halt what God is trying to accomplish in our lives. God may be trying to use you to accomplish something that only you can do, if you quit it may never happen, at least not with you.

There is no place in life in which this kind of thinking is more dangerous than in our relationship with Jesus. And the enemy knows it!

Jesus has called us into a life of obedience; an extraordinary life of obedience.

Here is how that is often lived out, at least at times in my life.

Jesus has called us to follow Him. He has gifted us with unique gifts, abilities, personalities, experiences, so that He is able to accomplish His specific purpose for our lives, and then something happens We sin.

We blow it. We mess up. And then enemy gets into our heads and convinces us that God can no longer use us. Or that God no longer even wants us near Him. I have seen it time and time again.

The thinking goes something like this, *"Why would God want to use me, when I can't even seem to get a handle on my own sinful hang ups?"*

"I have sinned so bad that there is no way God would ever use me, forgive me, or even love me."

These are all lies designed to stop us in our tracks as opposed to continuing to live our lives of obedience.

King David is one of the greatest characters in the Bible. David, was Israel's second king, he was a mighty warrior, a loyal friend, a gifted poet, called a "Man after God's own heart" yet he was definitely not one without faults.

David a man after God's heart dealt with some major moral failure. There is much we can learn from his story. We find his story in 2 Samuel.

Let me first real quickly summarize his story.

David as a young boy, was anointed by Samuel as Israel's second king, though it wasn't for nearly 20 years before he assumed the throne.

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It was soon after he was anointed as the next king, that he had a run in with a giant in which he took out with a sling and a stone.

As he grew older and became a military leader, he entered into a game of cat and mouse with the then sitting king, Saul. He escaped Saul's pursuit to kill him with the help of his best friend Jonathan, Saul's son.

At the age of 30 David finally assumed the throne, and it was then he experienced a great failure. Not a failure as a king, or a military leader, but a failure in his relationship with God.

Let's pick up the story...

2 Samuel 11:2-4a

² Late one afternoon, after his midday rest, David got out of bed and was walking on the roof of the palace. As he looked out over the city, he noticed a woman of unusual beauty taking a bath. ³ He sent someone to find out who she was, and he was told, "She is Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite." ⁴ Then David sent messengers to get her; and when she came to the palace, he slept with her. 2 Samuel 11:2-4a (NLT)

Shortly after that she finds that she is pregnant. Oops! Hard to cover that one up!

Suddenly David's purpose in life that being a strong leader comes to a halt as he now has to give himself to figuring out a way to clean up the mess he has created.

We don't have time to cover all the details of his story, but he went so far as to have Bathsheba's husband killed just cover up his sin. He was scrambling!

What David is learning....

1. Sin undermines our purpose.

God had a plan and a purpose for David. He was chosen by God, because of what God saw in his heart.

We read in Acts 13:22,

But God removed Saul and replaced him with David, a man about whom God said, "I have found David son of Jesse, a man after my own heart. He will do everything I want him to do."

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God has given each of us a purpose as well. He has chosen us and has a plan for us to live out His will for our lives.

What is our purpose? Jesus summed up when He said,

“You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind. ³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹ A second is equally important: Love your neighbor as yourself.” Matthew 22:37-38 (NLT)

This is what we are called to obediently live out, and this is what sin will keep us from doing.

Nothing will do a better job at keeping us from loving God and loving others than sin.

Here’s what often happens. We are going about our life living in obedience to God, serving, making a difference when out of nowhere, like David, we look up and are confronted with a temptation. What we do in that moment makes all the difference!

Often times when we give in, our tendency is to pass the blame, it was the devils, fault, it was my friends fault, it was my spouses fault, it was God’s fault.

It has been this way from the very beginning. When asked about eating the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden, Adam quickly put the blame on Eve. When God asked Eve about what she had done, she immediately blamed the serpent. We can do the same.

Here is what we need to remember, it’s no one’s fault but our own and we have the power to turn from it.

James 1:13-15

And remember, when you are being tempted, do not say, “God is tempting me.” God is never tempted to do wrong, and he never tempts anyone else. ¹⁴ Temptation comes from our own desires, which entice us and drag us away. ¹⁵ These desires give birth to sinful actions. And when sin is allowed to grow, it gives birth to death. James 1:13-15 (NLT)

This is the exact process that took place in David’s life.

He saw the beautiful woman, desired her and then he inquired about her and then took the next step, and took her. This was followed immediately by the act, and suddenly David, the man after God's own heart, is involved in the ugly sin of adultery.

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David's story would have turned out very differently had he resisted.

- When we resist sin blessing will come.

God blesses those who patiently endure testing and temptation. Afterward they will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him. James 1:12 (NLT)

But what happens if we do blow it? Is there still opportunity for blessing? Yes!

I have met with so many people who feel utterly defeated because of their past mistakes.

The thinking usually goes something like this: I have sinned so bad, that there is no way God will forgive me and even if He did, He could not possible use me again. I will never again experience the blessing I once knew.

Our enemy wants to keep us in that place.

He tried to do so in David's life, but he was unable. Let's take a look...

God had a message for David. A message delivered by a prophet named Nathan.

Nathan knowing the kind of man David was had to come at him from the "back door". Instead of just calling David out on his sin, he shares a story with him; a story about a rich man and a poor man.

The rich man owned many sheep and cattle and the poor man owned nothing but one little lamb; a lamb that he and his children dearly loved and took care of.

One day a guest arrived at the home of the rich man and instead of killing an animal from his own flock to serve the guest, he took the poor man's lamb and killed and served it.

David was naturally enraged at the rich man's actions and vowed that if any man would do such a thing in his kingdom, he deserved to die.

Nathan then replied to David, "*You are that man!*" He reminded David of all that God had done for him and given him and yet he chose to steal another man's wife and then have her husband killed.

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At that point we read in verse 13 of 2 Samuel 12, ¹³ *Then David confessed to Nathan, "I have sinned against the Lord."*

God used Nathan in his life to bring him to a point of confession.

In that moment David experienced forgiveness.

2. With confession comes forgiveness.

But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness. 1 John 1:9 (NLT)

Incredible promise!

This promise of forgiveness and cleansing comes with a very specific instruction ...
Confess.

When we mess up, when we sin, we don't need to make excuses, or blame somebody else, or try to wiggle out of it.

We need to simply say, *"God, this was sin. You call it sin; I call it sin, and that's all there is to it. Please forgive me."*

Instead what do we often times do? We hold it in. We try to deal with it on our own. That never ends well!

Unconfessed sin just festers in our souls. It keeps us in bondage and sucks the life out of us.

With confession and God's forgiveness, we experience life! It's our choice.

It's a lot like those movie scenes in which a character is in a car that had just gone over a cliff, and they are too scared to move, and the only way they will live is if they deal with their fear, and make a move. Usually when they do they get away from the car just in time for it to fall off the cliff and blow up.

Because the person made their move, they lived!

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Confessing sin is a lot like that. Until we own up to our sin and confess it, we will not find forgiveness.

Something really cool happens when we confess, and experience God's forgiveness. David understood this as well when he penned the words of Psalm 25:11.

For the good of Your name, O Lord, forgive my sin, even as big as it is. Psalm 25:11 (NLV)

- When we experience God's forgiveness, God's glory is put on display.

That is the beautiful thing about sharing your testimony. When we share how God has changed our lives, it is not our story, but rather, God's. It is a story of God's great love for us.

David also wrote in Psalm 23...

He makes me strong again. He leads me in the way of living right with Himself which brings honor to His name. Psalm 23:3 (NLV)

How thankful I am for God's leadership in my life!

He leads our lives and renews our strength, but that doesn't mean that He makes our lives easy all the time. In fact often times our sin accompanies great consequences.

Even though we are forgiven, as David found out, we are still faced with the ugly consequences that come with sin.

Let's revisit the story...

After David confess we read.

... And Nathan said to him, "The Lord has taken away your sin. You will not die. ¹⁴ But by this act you have given those who hate the Lord a reason to speak against the Lord. The child that is born to you will die for sure." 2 Samuel 12:13b-14 (NLT)

Seven days later his son died.

There is a life principle that applies here, that is the law of Cause and Effect. Every action has a reaction or consequence. This applies to sin. We reap what we sow.

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Ralph Waldo Emerson said, “The Law of Cause and Effect is the ‘law of laws.’”

It can’t be denied.

So when faced with the temptation to sin, we must remember...

3. When we sow sin we reap the consequences.

Galatians 6:7-8

Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. ⁸ Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. Galatians 6:7-8 (NIV)

David was forgiven, yes, but his sin still came with consequences.

He faced great discipline (consequences) for his sin, more so than what we will take the time to look at this morning.

The same is true for us.

Here is what we must remember the consequences we face for our sin are not some sort of pay back or retribution, rather they are to show that God does not take sin lightly and to humble and grow the sinner.

Ultimately they reveal His love.

- Sins consequences are a demonstration of God’s love for us.

For the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes each one he accepts as his child.
Hebrews 12:6 (NLT)

When speaking to the church in Laodicea a group of people that were not living the life that Jesus called them to He said this,

I correct and discipline everyone I love. So be diligent and turn from your indifference.
Revelation 3:19 (NLT)

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If you are a parent you understand this.

I have always hated to discipline my children. To see them behave in a disobedient matter always breaks my heart. It saddens me, but never changes my love for them.

If I did not love my children, I would not discipline them. But because I do and because I want them to be the people God has created them to be, I discipline them.

God feels the same for you and I.

While discipline is not fun to endure, there is something very good and beautiful that comes from it.

Look at David's story.

Samuel 12:24-25

Then David comforted Bathsheba, his wife, and slept with her. She became pregnant and gave birth to a son, and David named him Solomon. The Lord loved the child ²⁵ and sent word through Nathan the prophet that they should name him Jedidiah (which means "beloved of the Lord"), as the Lord had commanded. 2 Samuel 12:24-25 (NLT)

As we confess and deal with our sin there is a closeness that takes place between us and God

And here is the good news to all of this. Our confessed sin does not end with discipline.

4. With confession comes restoration

Restoration is exactly what David experienced. He experienced a restoration of his family and more than that a restoration and cleansing of his very soul.

Listen to what he wrote of his experience, found in Psalm 51.

¹ Have mercy on me, O God,
because of your unfailing love.
Because of your great compassion,

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blot out the stain of my sins.
² Wash me clean from my guilt.
Purify me from my sin.
³ For I recognize my rebellion;
it haunts me day and night.
⁴ Against you, and you alone, have I sinned;
I have done what is evil in your sight.
You will be proved right in what you say,
and your judgment against me is just.
⁵ For I was born a sinner—
yes, from the moment my mother conceived me.
⁶ But you desire honesty from the womb,
teaching me wisdom even there.
⁷ Purify me from my sins, and I will be clean;
wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.
⁸ Oh, give me back my joy again;
you have broken me—
now let me rejoice.
⁹ Don't keep looking at my sins.
Remove the stain of my guilt.
¹⁰ Create in me a clean heart, O God.
Renew a loyal spirit within me.
¹¹ Do not banish me from your presence,
and don't take your Holy Spirit from me.
¹² Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and make me willing to obey you.
¹³ Then I will teach your ways to rebels,
and they will return to you.
¹⁴ Forgive me for shedding blood, O God who saves;
then I will joyfully sing of your forgiveness.
¹⁵ Unseal my lips, O Lord,
that my mouth may praise you.
¹⁶ You do not desire a sacrifice, or I would offer one.
You do not want a burnt offering.
¹⁷ The sacrifice you desire is a broken spirit.
You will not reject a broken and repentant heart, O God.
¹⁸ Look with favor on Zion and help her;
rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.
¹⁹ Then you will be pleased with sacrifices offered in the right spirit—

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with burnt offerings and whole burnt offerings.
Then bulls will again be sacrificed on your altar.
Psalm 51 (NLT)

Beautiful.

What David experienced is what we will experience, God's faithfulness.

"You will not reject a broken and repentant heart, O God." He said.

- God is faithful to restore our souls and our ministries.

Remember...

But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness 1 John 1:9 (NLT)

The enemy wants to derail you. He wants you to believe that you are a mess up, that you are a failure, that you have lost your usefulness, that there is no way you can lead an extraordinary life.

Don't believe the lie.

God uses the ordinary for the extraordinary. That is you and I, flaws and all.

WORSHIP TEAM RETURN

Because of God's great love for us, he will not leave us in our messed up state. When we confess, He will forgive and He will restore!

Is there something you need to confess now?

Have a moment of silent prayer to give opportunity for confession.

Pray.

Find someone you can go to and share what you have confessed. Let people see the change in your life and then move forward in the calling God has on your life.

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