

**General Topics :: Setting up for failure**

**Setting up for failure - posted by DEADn (), on: 2011/12/31 19:53**

Have you ever set yourself up for failure and not even realized it until the brutal truth came to you? It seems to me it happens a lot in Christianity and most likely within America.

I have a hard time listening to christian radio because so many programs come across as having the perfect (fill in the blank) and then later you hear stories of people who maybe thought they had it all or thought they were supposed to do certain things as a preacher and found out they become disillusioned as a result. I seem to hear these types of things ALOT on christian radio.

Sometimes I feel it is like a revolving wheel of instruction, inspiration, direction (maybe false direction), doing God's will (thinking so at least) and then somehow it crashes all down because we did it wrong or it just didn't go the way we thought it would or the way people said it would. Does this make sense?

When I have to work every other weekend sometimes I put Moody Bible radio on and they have this focus on the family program. I hear a lot of these types of experiences on there and I wonder, what is wrong in our lives that we as Christians put ourselves in such a circle of disappointment and we seem to never learn. Does this make sense at all?

I think it is a reason why many get disillusioned with God and with the church. I know for me I have many battles inside as a result because there are so many voices within Christianity that say certain things and because they are of the church you would be inclined to take them as Godly counsel. Yet, you can turn into a Job type character so easy.

Funny that this post coincides with New Years- how many people set themselves up for failure by making resolutions that they don't have any discipline to carry out?

Something to think about.

**Re: Setting up for failure - posted by ET101, on: 2012/1/5 6:19**

I wonder what role God has in all of this - I mean, can it even be that God inspires someone to something that God knows will end in failure? Is that really entirely outside of God's character to do?

I suppose it depends entirely on what I mean by 'failure.' Yet consider this; can God inspire someone to be a missionary to a region in the full knowledge that the missionary will never see a soul saved? Why not? And if so, then there is a higher logic at work in the seeming 'circle of disappointment.'

I don't mean to just put a shallow positive spin on things - I'm sure there are lots of people who zeal up to 'do something for God' when He's not in it - didn't command it - and it comes to an expectable disappointment.

I wonder whether Job himself is an example of failure that isn't necessarily associated with 'missing God' in life/duty. . .

**Re: - posted by DEADn (), on: 2012/1/5 8:45**

ET101

I see where you are going with your comments and I would agree with you. Mine are on a smaller scale. I speak to the art of hearing so many messages about why we don't do certain things in our lives and hearing it over and over. Sort of like having a parent scold you because you constantly didn't do certain things. Then we hear 'family' shows in which people grew up thinking they were doing the right things because they heard it from christian radio so they played the part. Maybe they really tried the part but they ended up falling apart in the process and then hearing those words on radio turns into condemnation rather than comfort.

I have heard this ALOT within how family units should operate, how families should look especially when the dad becomes a preacher or missionary and the expectations of the family.

Then there is the individual person who sometimes hears all the things they should be doing in their christian walk and soon they may find themselves paranoid because everything negative seems to be satan in their lives and they 'pray' it away because they heard it exhorted from christian radio somewhere. They eventually fall into depression and then fall away from the faith.

Then what I see is a split road in the lives of these individuals. One road leads some of these people to get on radio, or in the pulpit and tell how they went down the wrong road and listened to wrong voices in their christian walk but now they have learned and are back on the right road. I ask 'Really, for how long?'

Then we have the others who took the other turn who lost all faith in God as a result of the mixed messages and the paranoia they felt inside and have become atheists or agnostics and sometimes rail against Christianity. I have come across ALOT of bloggers in this 2nd scenerio and I have been investigating what led these people down their road. What I mentioned is part of it.

I hope this post make some sense-I am still learning to be better articulate myself in getting my thoughts across. I have a tendency to ramble a bit and allow my thoughts to flow unstructured at times which does no one any good in reading.

**Re: - posted by Compton (), on: 2012/1/5 9:28**

Great question DEADn.

It is easy to be crushed by the idealized version we hold of ourselves.

You might be interested in checking out a good book by Larry Crabb, "The Pressure's Off: There's a New Way to Live."

In the book, Larry discusses important differences between the Old and New Covenants, and how confusing the two can lead to the feeling that the Gospel is simply another legal economy wherein we trade our good behavior for God's favor and blessings.

MC

**Re: Setting up for failure - posted by ccchhhrrriiiss (), on: 2012/1/5 12:28**

Interesting points.

I once heard a minister (Ben Jordan from Missouri) speak about a wealthy man who was going to hire a driver. He found the three best candidates and asked them to test drive him around a set of directions as he sat in the back.

The first driver was doing well until he came upon a curve on the side of the mountain. He wanted to impress the man, so he accelerated around the curve as closely as he could to the edge. When the ride was over, the rich man remarked, "Wow -- you were very close to the edge during that curve and I hardly felt it."

The second driver was driving well until he saw the same curve and the fresh tracks near the edge. He realized that the previous candidate had approached the curve very closely; so, he decided to drive even closer. He accelerated around the curve next to the edge of the road and cliff -- even closer than the previous candidate. When the ride was completed, the rich man remarked how close this driver got to the edge.

The third and final driver was also driving extremely well when he saw the same dangerous curve and the two sets of tracks that went very near the cliffs edge. He thought to himself, "I want to really impress this driver."

So what did he do?

He stayed as far away from that curve as he possibly could while staying in his own lane! And, of course, he was the driver that the rich man hired. Why? Because, the third driver was the one who stayed furthest away from danger!

I think that this is an important principle to remember when it comes with people living their lives with "freedom" under Christ. They often use their freedom to get close to danger...thinking that their "security in Christ" will keep them out of (spiritual, mental, physical, emotional, relational) harm's way. Like DEADn said, they literally set themselves up for "failure"

by doing things, going places or getting close enough to the "edge."

Now, the "edge" doesn't have to be a blatant sin. It can be a dangerous "omission" (failure to spend time with Christ or His Word). During college (at a secular school), I knew a few Christians who were majoring in Human Biology. Two of them wanted to eventually go to medical school and become medical doctors.

During a Bible study on campus, I was telling them the importance of staying in communication with the Lord through prayer and study of his Word. I explained how we are often taught things that contradict God's Word, so we must counter it by remaining steadfast and diligent through fellowship with the Lord. One of them was a new believer and eagerly took that advice. The other was a long-time Christian, raised in church, and very active with Christian activities (including missionary and evangelical activities). She wanted to become a medical doctor because she wanted to utilize such skill on the mission field.

Sadly, the long-time Christian eventually took several wrong turns in her life. She started privately believing in evolution. ..and then almost tried to justify the theory by saying that it doesn't conflict with Biblical creation. Eventually, she stopped going to Bible studies, then church and started hanging out with the "wrong" people from fraternities and sororities. People tried to warn her, but she just kept moving closer and closer to the edge. During her junior year, she became impregnated from a casual relationship with an athlete who didn't even want to maintain a serious relationship with her (baby or not).

She spoke with me about this (before her parents even knew) because she wanted prayer and advice. The impact of her pregnancy and the fear associated with it (and the fear of others finding out) caused her to run back to Christ. Thank God that she realized that abortion was NOT an option. Eventually, she told her parents. She dropped out of school and we never saw her again.

However, the other girl (the new believer) -- who was just as intelligent and gifted -- remained steadfast in seeking the Lord. Both girls attended the same classes, but only the one who stayed in the Word and stayed away from bad worldly associations (whenever possible) kept her testimony. She kept in contact with my wife. We found out that her entire family came to Christ. This young woman went on to medical school and married a man from her home church.

This may have been a bit of an extreme anecdote. Of course, like DEADn said, there are also individuals who are doing and saying all of the "right" things yet still spiral out of what is right for other reasons. I suppose that the reasons may be just as mentioned before, but I believe that the underlying principle is still the same: Remain steadfast in prayer and God's Word. That communication with Christ is vital in maintaining our faith -- because it is exactly what our "faith" is in that we trust in Who we cannot see.

I think that we all go through experiences on both mountaintops and valleys that are as egregiously disheartening as the "valley of the shadow of death" mentioned by David. When I experience those "seasons," I do my best to share my testimony with someone (usually an unbeliever). I have felt my passion and love for Christ rekindled when I share my testimony with others.

I suppose that this is because there is a joy and power associated with ministering to someone. It makes me think of the encouragement that Paul received as he shared his testimony while standing trial (at least twice). There is an encouragement that cannot be felt in any other way than sharing Christ -- and how we came to know Him -- with others. However, I also think that it also serves as a personal reminder (by listening to our own words) of what Christ has done for us...and what He has taken us through.

So, whenever I feel that "disappointment," I make the extra effort to find someone and share Christ with them. Sometimes, it might be online; but, most of the time, it is in person. Words cannot express how "strengthened" that I feel when that happens.

Anyway, thanks for sharing these thoughts. I agree that this disillusionment is a common thing in many, many believers and that the best way out is by steadfastly maintaining open (and HONEST) prayer with the Lord, reading His Word and sharing our testimony with others.

**Re: - posted by ET101, on: 2012/1/6 6:42**

Thanks Chris. That helps me too when I reflect on a season in my own life when I strayed away. . .it was basically inching away little by little. .. coming back involved a lot of one-on-One time with God and regaining basic disciplines.

DeadN; I hear you. Yes, I see it in Christendom too - there's a sense that people are more living off of a 'Christian script' (written by radio, church etc) than from the life of Christ within them. So they feel a certain social pressure to conform to holiness, church attendance, bible study and prayer. . .because that's what their 'club' / 'circle' is doing. It seems to me it stems more from the social pressure of their peers than from a grounded relationship and understanding in Christ.

I suppose ultimately, it will always really be about knowing Christ for yourself. . .otherwise, in the long-run, people tend to fall away. . .I think this was true of me.

**Re: - posted by DEADn (), on: 2012/1/6 7:29**

Yesterday I heard a podcast of a lady who I have been following who used to be living according to the quiverful movement. She was raised in a family which was chaotic and she ended up being the 'preacher' telling her siblings and parents to stop smoking, stop cussing, etc even though there was no religious background. She eventually went to church and heard some buzz words church and eventually became a christian and went to the Assemblies of God. She got married at age 16 as well. She eventually found herself having a few kids and getting involved in homeschooling as a result of some in the church where she was met with quiverful movement. One thing led to another and she found her kids spiraling and her husband being abusive as a result of his 'role' within the movement.

This is only a small sphere of a 'setting up to failure'. We all mean so well when it comes to christianity in our own lives but how often do we go overboard and fall overboard and fail. Blame it on satan, condemn ourselves and either fall away from God as a result or run ourselves in cycle and giving these testimonies of how we were once deceived by we came back only to do it again but maybe in another arena.

I often wonder how much christian radio plays a part in this venture by offering up the 'utopia' of christian life by constant calls to prayer, reading the Bible, fellowshiping as so forth. It is asking to you telling someone you are hurting and they tell you 'I will pray for you brother' when they should either take time to listen to you or help you get some help.

btw, the earlier lady has now become an atheist as a result of what she went through. I have crossed paths with a number of people similar to her in which they seemed set up to failure. This is a reason why I bring this information to the forefront. It upsets me and this was really brought forward to me first by christian radio. It seems to set up a utopia idea of doing things the 'right' way and it will all work out. No, that is a paper strategy and has no bearing in reality.

Sorry for the rant but these things weigh deeply in my heart and it grieves me deeply to see people sucked in and spit out because of disillusionment. I have been through this myself in the last 10 years but never turned to atheism. More on the edge of hedonism. Thus the name DEADn for it keeps my darkness in front of me as a reminder that God is there-so where am I type of thing.