

Articles and Sermons :: Top 4 Reasons Why Christian Leaders Fall by Shane Idleman

Top 4 Reasons Why Christian Leaders Fall by Shane Idleman - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2014/4/7 17:52

These points are nothing new, but they will help us stay the course.

1. Many say, "It will never happen to me." 1 Corinthians 10:12 reminds us that if we think that we are standing firm, we should be careful that we don't fall. Years ago, I stumbled across a journal entry from my wife that broke my heart, but first I felt betrayed and angry. She wrote, "I married a man who doesn't care about my dreams and goals in life. I've learned to live with this since separation isn't an option, but I will not allow him to do this to our kids." I was angry because the truth hurt, but after a long drive I began to realize that she was right. I was a controlling man with no regard for the dreams, ambitions, and goals of my family. Granted, I was not mean-spirited about their dreams, but I was controlling. I felt terrible and asked for forgiveness. I was breaking the spirit of my family because of pride and how things would make me look. I learned a valuable lesson: the higher you think you are, the farther you can fall. One of the first steps toward change is in recognizing and admitting this destructive area of pride. C.H. Spurgeon rightly noted, "We are never, never so much in danger of being proud as when we think we are humble."

2. Many become "too busy." As ministry grows, we are susceptible to putting God second and ministry first. Men would live better if they prayed better. Moral failing cannot gain a stronghold in a broken, praying heart. Nine times out of ten, when a leader falls, he or she has no meaningful prayer life. If we're too busy to cultivate a prayer life that places God first, we're too busy. We're often too busy because we're doing too much. "When faith ceases to pray, it ceases to live" (E.M. Bounds). We should never allow our relationship with God to suffer because we're too busy. Praying and reading the Word helps overcome sin. It instills into our lives discipline, commitment, patience, peace, joy, and contentment; it fills us with the Spirit. We must spend much time on our knees before God if we are to overcome temptation.

3. Many fall as the result of counseling the opposite sex. This is a no brainer, but it bears repeating. We must be on high alert in this area and have tremendous steps of accountability in place. The devil doesn't show those involved in a counseling appointment the pain and anguish and the years of regret that moral failure brings; he deceives them with a false sense of freedom in ministry...that we are simply "helping" the other person. The door of temptation swings both ways—we can enter or exit. The pull of sex is everywhere, and like a fishing lure, we don't notice the hook until we take the bait. Scan the TV and the Internet, view the covers of most magazines, listen to the radio, glance at the billboards that line our freeways and at the movies we view—sex surrounds us, and it's not getting any better. Consequently, the more we feed this desire, the more we'll have to fight this desire. Don't fight sexual desires; flee them (cf. 1 Corinthians 6:18).

4. They allow a liberty to cross the line. Alcohol, for example, is a dangerous liberty. I learned this lesson the hard way, even as a Christian involved in ministry. I could have a beer or two on special occasions, but because of my past problem with alcohol as a young adult, the addiction was always ready to take hold of me again. It took an embarrassing situation for me to realize that my supposed "liberty" was really an opportunity to awaken a dormant addiction. I apologized to those I affected. I also told my wife and a few trusted friends that I could no longer exercise this liberty; it was too easy to digress beyond the boundaries of responsibility. Although a moral failing did not occur, abusing this liberty often opens the door to temptation. God used this situation to reveal my blind-spots and to warn others. God may use this article to speak to you as well, but we must be humble and teachable.

The demands of life often tempt us to seek gratification in alcohol and other things. We must be on high alert. The enemy uses "opportune times" to draw us away from God. (cf. Luke 4:13.) The line is so thin that it is often hard to determine when we cross over.

If you are heading toward failure, take time now and repent. A penitent person turns from sin. They accept full responsibility for their actions without blame, resentment, or bitterness. When repentance is genuine, we want to be reconciled with those we've injured. We seek forgiveness without conditions and stipulations. We take full (not partial) responsibility for our actions. We don't say, "But this and that..." There can be no "but" when repentance is genuine. "I am sorry. I was wrong. Please forgive me," are often (although not always) healing words and signs of repentance. If this is not occurring, repentance has not taken place. Excuses need to stop before change and restoration can occur.

Suggested Sermon: <http://vimeo.com/90493238>

Re: The Top 4 Reasons Why Christian Leaders Fall by Shane Idleman - posted by Yeshuasboy (), on: 2014/4/7 20:52

In quick response to the headings listed:

1) Any professing christian that hasn't come to the revelation by experience that in their flesh dwells no good thing is headed for a fall sooner or later. This is God's doing. He brings us to this point, because He is good and loving and knows what is best for His children. This is one of the great paradoxes of the Spiritual life, and is not a contradiction, although the devil may say at these times, "God doesn't care for you; if He did, you wouldn't feel like this, or be going through this, etc., etc." Kiss the rod, and Praise your God. When we know this, we know we have nothing to glory in in ourselves, and many times have to be constantly reminded of this.

2) I vaguely recall Leonard Ravenhill saying once (and I'm badly paraphrasing what he said) that there was a pastor (I think he said his name was Bruce, perhaps a Scottish pastor a few hundred years back), who went off and communed with God in some remote place 6 days a week, got His message from the Lord, and then returned and preached it to his flock on the Lord's Day.

I believe pastors are responsible for going "house to house" to see how their flock is doing - and will, if the pastor is really concerned for their souls. Even Paul, would send his brothers whom he thought were worthy to visit the churches that were started when he couldn't be there himself. He loved his flock more than his own life, and travailed until Christ was formed in them - how few get their examples from the Scriptures and the Spirit of the Scriptures, then wonder why they're not getting positive, fruit-bearing "scriptural results".

Also, another quick example, is when one reads "A Pastor's Sketches" by Ichabod Spencer (the Bunyan of Brooklyn), here you see a man concerned with his flock, going out and doing the Lord's business, in the Spirit and not in the flesh, wholly relying upon God.... and the result - God moved.

3) A real professing christian knows their weaknesses, and takes nothing for granted. Pride goes before a fall, a haughty spirit before destruction. Real wisdom comes from God. It is good to fear the Lord, and abide in Him. Test the spirits to see if they be of God or not. When one sees properly they do not walk into a snare or a ditch.

4) I think what's more important here, is that we are living epistles, read by men and women, whether we believe it or not. We must learn to walk in the Spirit in all occasions. We must suffer. If we are strong in faith, and like a beer now and then, we should remember that we could and will in time most certainly cause another to stumble that sees us even just drink a beer, and say within themselves, "well, I saw brother so and so do this, or watch that, or listen to this, so it can't be that bad"... oh, we are responsible for the lives of others whether we realize it or not.

PS. This quick post is in no way a rebuttal or rebuke of Mr Idleman's message or the original post. I quite like the very few messages I have heard from this man. The truth is, without God, I, nor Mr Idleman, nor any, can without God do anything. The Lord help us to be sincere in all things, and really examine our own selves for His Name's Sake.