



(pie in the face)

Failure: Opportunity for the Hungry

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Preface

The one thing besides death that all people have in common is failure. Everyone has experienced it to some degree in their lives. For some, failure changes them and instills a black cloud over them for the rest of their lives. Their life is foundationally directed by failure, which directs or influences a major part of their decision making process. Some live their lives in defeat through the memory of a losing event, divorce, death of a mate or child, bankruptcy, war, abuse, etc. Others plan to live life devoid of success by following a plan whereby their actions lead them to be knocked down and continually trounced. They live from one defeat to the next; it is a way of life for those who are on this treadmill and cannot get off.

Other people, through their own failure or an inequitable loss, gain knowledge and wisdom. For those who learn through failure, failure can bring a better way of life through seeing higher purposes. Loss can produce good fruit for the person who learns through failure. The person awaking to and acknowledging his weaknesses can be the first and biggest step to finding the purpose of God for his life. The person who acknowledges failure and wants God's answer will be on the road to a new life in fellowship with his Creator.

1. Failure, the key to Success

“As it is written: there is none righteous; no not one; there is none who understand; there is none who seeks after God. They have all turned aside; they have together become unprofitable; there is none who does good, no, not one” (Romans 3:10-12).

Have you ever heard this statement? “I have tried the Christian life, but it does not work.” Many people have thought these words, and sometimes spoke and acted upon them. These thoughts come about because of failure in a person’s life to achieve what he thought should happen within a certain time period. The same could be said of many marriages that end in divorce. The marriage did not work; the Christian life did not work.

Failure is common for all men; however, failure is increased where faith is not in evidence. All people are part of a failed human race that live in a failed world. Scripture tells us, “...the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one: (1 John 5:19). Satan, who is the father and power of human failure, works through a person’s Adamic nature. The Apostle Paul gives understanding to the Ephesian believers as to the source of their failure before they became Christians. “And you He made alive who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the

prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience” (Ephesians 2:1-2).

God’s people, Israel, also lived in failure. God gave Israel 613 commandments to follow, knowing that they would fail to keep them. The question is why would God give them these commandments when He knew they would utterly fail to do what He told them to do? What is true of Israel is also true of all people; that is, all have and will fail to live according to God’s plan and purpose for His creation. Why do all men fail to fulfill God’s purpose for them in this world? The answer to these questions will be seen in the following chapters.

2. How hard is it to do the wrong thing?

Jesus said to His disciples, “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him” (Luke 11:13).

Scripture tells us that all people have Adam’s nature, and this nature is contrary to God and is aimed toward evil (Psalms 14:1-3; 58:1-3). It is normal for a lion to eat meat or sheep to eat grass; it is what their nature is programmed to do. So it is with every person born, they have within their nature that which is comfortable to receive and produce evil.

Scripture tells us about this propensity to do evil even when good or the law of God is sought after, “For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do. If then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good. But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice. Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me” (Romans 7:15-20).

If Jesus told His own disciples, that they were evil (Luke 11:13), how much more it is with us who have ignored God’s word and walked and lived after the desires of our own hearts. The prophet Isaiah reveals what is in our nature, “But we are all like an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags; we fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away” (Isaiah 64:6).

How hard is it to live contrary to the Creator, His word, His righteousness, His purpose for you? The answer is, not hard at all, for we are all sons of Adam and have inherited Adam’s spiritual nature, a sin nature.

Jesus was born into this world of a virgin (Mary) as prophesied by the prophet Isaiah in 742 B. C. (Isaiah

7:14). Seven hundred and forty two years later the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary to tell her about God's purpose for her and gives her another prophecy. "And having come in, the angel said to her, rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women" (Luke 1:28). "And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus" (Luke 1:31). "Then Mary said to the angel, how can this be, since I do not know a man? And the angel answered and said to her, The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:34-35).

Jesus, born of the Holy Spirit, inherited His Father's nature, a nature not capable of committing sin or evil (1 Peter 2:22; 1 John 3:5; 5:18). Jesus, the second Adam (1 Corinthians 15:45), followed His divine nature for He had no other nature. He was a perfect reflection of His Father (John 14:9). He always did His Father's will (John 8:29). Jesus is God's complete and perfect righteousness (1 Corinthians 1:30; Colossians 1:19).

**3. If you were arrested for being a Christian,
would there be any evidence to convict you?**

"We have found this man (the Apostle Paul) a plague, a creator of dissension among all the Jews throughout the

world, a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes” (Acts 24:5).

“And they realized that they (he) had been with Jesus” (Acts 4:13).

The apostles of Jesus were arrested and suffered many harsh things. They were accused of being followers of Jesus; all were convicted and found guilty by the evidence of their life.

If you were accused and arrested for being a Christian today, as many people are in other countries, would you be acquitted or found guilty? Jesus gave evidences for all to see of those who are His followers and disciples. One of these is; keeping (following) the commandments (words) of Jesus (John 15:14). Following His words will bring that person into walking in the love of God (John 15:10). In John 8:31 Jesus said, “If you abide (live in) My word, you are My disciples indeed.” The person who is a Christian is one who abides (lives) in the Word of God. The proof of whether a person is abiding in the word of God is found in the next verse. “And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32). We are told in verse 34 that the evidence of being a follower of Jesus is a person set free of a life-style of sin. Scripture gives us a further definition of sin, “...for whatever is not from faith is sin” (Romans 14:23).

Romans 8:9, tells us that only a Christian has the Spirit of God living in him. The Apostle John says the evidence of whether a person is indwelt by the Holy Spirit is if that person lives according to God's words (John 8:47; 1 John 3:24). The Apostle John also shows us that keeping God's commandments (words) are not burdensome to the one who has Jesus living in Him (1 John 5:3). Following and living unto Jesus is not burdensome because God's love is living within and leading that person (Romans 5:5). A person who is not a Christian will not find the word of God that important to follow.

The Holy Spirit bears witness within the spirit of a follower of Jesus, that he is a child of God (Romans 8:16).

Scripture tells us the Christian is led by the Spirit of God (Romans 8:14). This is not a deep or complicated truth; it simply means that the one who believes and follows what God has told us in Scripture will be led by the Holy Spirit.

The preceding Scriptures are evidences of a Christian life, which a person can look upon to examine himself to see if he is in the faith, a Christian. "Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? — unless indeed you are disqualified" (2 Corinthians 13:5).

The testimony in a court of law of witnesses is very important to finding out the truth of a case. So, if you were arrested and brought into court, to stand trial, for being a

Christian, and witnesses were brought in to testify as to your being a Christian, would the judge convict you for being a Christian or acquit you for lack of evidence in your life? Even more important than man's testimony of your life is the testimony of Christ, what would His testimony be of you, "are you known by God?" (Galatians 4:9), "But if anyone loves God, this one is known by Him" (1 Corinthians 8:3).

The court of God will convene one day and the testimony of Christ will either convict you of being false (not His) or receive you into the eternal heavens. "Not everyone who says to Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in your name, and done many wonders in your name? And then I will declare to them, I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness" (Matthew 7:21-23).

For those who follow Jesus, the true Shepherd of God's sheep, these words are His promises, "I will never leave you, nor forsake you. So we may boldly say: the Lord is my helper I will not fear. What can men do to me?" (Hebrews 13:5-6). "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand" (John 10:27-28).

4. Those who fail to plan, plan to fail

“But everyone who hears these sayings of mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on sand: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall” (Matthew 7:26-27).

Every day living requires planning, whether it is for the minute, hour, or day. A child enrolled in school for 12 years or longer is in a training plan for his or her future. A farmer plans, plows, discs, plants seed, harvests, and builds barns to receive the rewards of his planning. A concert pianist plans and trains for hours every day for years to achieve success.

We can see great tragedy of past events that have befallen people or nations that did not plan for future events. For example in 1941, the military of the United States knew that war with Japan was eminent and that Pearl Harbor could be the target of attack. Yet because of their lack of planning, almost all of the Naval Pacific Fleet was destroyed by Japan’s attack. A few days later the Air Force in the Philippines suffered the same fate, for the same reason, lack of planning.

General George Custer lost his life and the lives of his entire force of soldiers in the battle at the Little Big Horn because of his failure to follow the battle plan.

On a more personal level today, statistic's reports that up to 50% of marriages in this country end in failure. When these couples got married, they did not plan to divorce. However, they did not follow God's divine plan for marriage; their lack of following the divine plan ended in failure. No drug addict or alcoholic planned to be an alcoholic or drug addict. They simply failed to plan for the results of their actions.

Jesus gave a parable about a prodigal son in Luke 15:11-17. This son asked and received from his father his inheritance. Upon receiving it he went to a far country and spent it on riotous living (drinking, women, and good times). But he failed to plan for the result of his actions, which brought disaster upon him.

Jesus said, eternal disaster awaits all who fail to plan for eternity (Matthew 5:27-30). Jesus stated this truth in all four of the gospels; He gives an illustration of this in the gospel of Luke, "And I will say to my soul, soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry. But God said to him, fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?" (Luke 12:19-20).

Whether a person is rich in this world's goods, or poor, makes no difference if he does not plan for eternity. The person who does not pay heed and follow the voice and word of God is planning for eternal failure. If he does not

follow his Creator, he is planning to follow the world, the flesh, and the devil. This is true whether the person is aware of it or not. Such a person is planning for eternal failure through rejection of the gift of God (John 3:16; 2 Corinthians 9:15).

5. God's plan for success

“These things I have spoken to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).

“Yet in all those things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us” (Roman 8:37).

Men measure success according to man's standards. The standards of men change with different nations, people groups, religious sects, philosophies, political purposes, cultures and the like. Men see men as successful or failures according to human temporal achievements and purposes (2 Corinthians 10:12).

“I have made the earth, and created man on it. I—My hands —stretched out the heavens and their host I have commanded” (Isaiah 45:12).

God created man (Adam) on the earth, put him in the garden and gave him a plan for success. Adam, with his wife, took a different course of action; that action was to fulfill Satan's instigated plan for them. God's plan for success for Adam and his wife was for them to eat and live

from the life giving tree of life, Christ (Genesis 2:9, 16). Satan's choice for them was, "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." Adam in partaking of this tree (good and evil) received the knowledge and the desire to pursue sin and evil, hence sin and death (Genesis 3:22).

This plan of Satan has led Adam and his offspring into the present chaos that prevails in the world today. In the world's chaotic condition, there is no answer of man capable of bringing peace in the world. This is because man's plan for peace in the world, is taken from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

It is also true on an individual level as well. Man pursues success, happiness, and fulfillment in temporal and in immediate things. These pursuits are natural to man living on the earth. Acquiring success in temporal achievements does not insure peace or tranquility of life. Many people who have found success in the wealth of this world, have little peace or rest of soul. The wisdom of Solomon reveals a truth about those who have achieved great success, "the abundance of the rich will not permit him to sleep" (Ecclesiastes 5:12). Solomon was the wisest of all men, and the richest; he had everything a man could have. He said, "Whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them. I did not withhold my heart from any pleasure..." (Ecclesiastes 2:10). Solomon speaks to the result of his

success in this world, “Vanity of vanities, says the preacher; vanities of vanities, all is vanity” (Ecclesiastes 1:2).

God’s plan of success starts with man gaining a free conscience and total and complete peace with God. Scripture shows us the plan of God for arriving at this place of success, “Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 5:1). Peace with God puts us into the place of success, no matter whether we are looked at by people as successful or not.

Jesus, in His day, was seen by the Jewish leaders as a person outside of God’s will and purpose, and against the religion of the Jews (Mark 14:56-65), the laws of the Jews (Matthew 12:2), against Caesar (Luke 23:2), and the authoritative hierarchy of the temple (Matthew 26:59-68). He was arrested and tried by the Roman Governor Pontius Pilate and found innocent (Matthew 27:20-26; John 19:4), nevertheless, He was mocked and beaten, (Matthew 27:20-30), sentenced to death (Matthew 27:26), and was crucified with common criminals (Matthew 27:44). All of the disciples of Jesus either ran away from Him or denied being His friend (Matthew 26:69-75).

The religious authorities thought of Jesus as the lowest element in society (John 9:24). As far as men were concerned Jesus’ life was a failure of the worst kind. Men in authority accused Him of sedition (Matthew 26:63-69;

27:11), of refusing to accept the religion of the Jews, of influencing the people contrary to Jewish tradition (Mark 7:6-13), of blasphemy (Matthew 26:65), and of every kind of evil (Matthew 4:28-30). He failed every standard of success that men measured and judged men's lives by.

However, the divine measurement of success found Jesus to be everything that pleased God, as seen in this Scripture. "And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, this is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, hear Him" (Matthew 3:17; 17:5). Jesus lived His whole life in success and favor of God, even though rejected of men (Isaiah 53:3; John 7:48).

Scripture teaches us that everyone who in faith receives Jesus into the heart to follow Him is "in Christ" (Ephesians 1:4, 10; Colossians 2:6).

God's favor bestowed upon Jesus was total and complete. How does this affect us now? In this way, everyone found "in Christ" has received this total and complete favor of God. This favor of God, upon the believer who is in Christ, allows him access into the very presence and throne of God (Hebrews 4:16; 10:19-20). This favor of God on the believer is without limitations, in Christ he possesses the riches of God. The believer will enter into the experience of the riches and fruit of God's favor as he walks and lives in faith to Christ (Ephesians 1:3-9, 18-21; 2:7; 3:8, 16; Colossians 1:27; 2:2).

God's plan is to make all who believe in Jesus, sons of God, rich in the kingdom of God, and successful "in Christ" where there is no failure. The believer, in occupying this God given place, receives, "righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Romans 14:17), and the reward of being, "in Your presence (which) is fullness of joy" (Psalms 16:11).

Faith in the work of Christ on Calvary, where He shed His blood for our sins, went into the grave, and rose on the third day (1 Corinthians 15:1-4), is God's plan for our eternal success. Those who enter into this plan will never fail (John 10:28-29). "You will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You" (Isaiah 26:3). "...and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and made us kings' and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen (Revelation 1:4-6). "...For we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us" (Romans 8:37). This is God's plan of success for all men who will receive His gift..

6. What is God's purpose in man's failure?

Adam's eating of the prohibited "tree of the knowledge of good and evil" has brought death upon all men, as all men die (Romans 5:12). Had Adam eaten of the tree of life

(Christ) instead, he would have lived on the earth forever (Genesis 3:22). Adam's failure made his offspring's failure complete and brought eternal death upon all men. God's purpose in man's fallen state is to again offer the Tree of Life to all men.

The kindness of God toward His creation is seen in sending His Son into the world, to redeem man, at the cross of Calvary, from his hopelessly fallen state. Christ, who is the Tree of Life (Revelation 22:1-2), is also a life giving Spirit (1 Corinthians 15:45), who came into the world that all men may eat of Him and live. Jesus made it clear when He said, "Most assuredly, I say to you unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him" (John 6:53-56). Jesus said these words which He spoke are spiritual words; they are not the partaking of physical objects or doing material things or doing religious acts. Eternal life is given and received by grace alone through the gift of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 2:8-9). "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life" (John 6:63). The truth of this statement is that flesh (man's

Adamic nature), or physical objects cannot bring or create spiritual life (John 1:12-13; 1 Corinthians 8:8).

This eating and drinking of the Son of Man is accomplished by faith in receiving Him into your spirit, spiritually eating Him, the Word of God (Isaiah 55:1-3; Ezekiel 1:1-4; Revelation 2:7), and spiritually drinking of the blood of His finished redemption (Colossians 1:20). For His flesh and His blood are life giving to all who will believe and receive His new life, which He came to give (2 Corinthians 5:17). He is the Tree of Life (Revelation 22:1-2), the Water of Life (John 7:37-38), the ever Existent One (Micah 5:2), the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End (Revelation 1:8), the Word of God (John 1:1), and His name is called The Word of God (Revelation 19:13).

The Apostle John shows what it means to overcome, “For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world —— our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?” (1 John 5:3-4). Jesus gives this promise to the person who hears His words to overcome, “To him that overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God” (Revelation 2:7). And again the promise of God is to any and all people, “Blessed are those who do His commandments (words), that they may have the right to the

tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city
(Revelation 22:14).

“And the Spirit and the bride say, Come! And let him
who hears say, Come! And let him who thirsts come.
Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely”
(Revelation 22:17).

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