

Failure Is Not Final

Carl H. Stevens Jr. is pastor of Greater Grace Church located in Baltimore, Maryland. Pastor Stevens is also chancellor of Maryland Bible College & Seminary and host of the international Christian radio program "The Grace Hour." This booklet was created from a message preached by Pastor Stevens.

Pastor Stevens can be seen weekly on cable television stations throughout the United States. Call us for information regarding programming in your area.

All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.

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INTRODUCTION

During the course of a week, I receive many letters from people across America and throughout the world that say in one way or another, “I feel rejected. I feel like a failure.” In all these letters, I consistently see a mystery: people who do not apply the Finished Work and who cannot comprehend what they have in Christ. These are not bad people. They have sincere hearts, and from the standpoint of the flesh, they really want to succeed.

I believe the reason that many of us have the problems we do is because we do not know what we already have in Christ. And because of that, we have difficulty doing what is right when failure comes. This booklet will show how no one in Christ is a *failure*—we only have isolated times of failure. Let the words on these pages instruct and encourage as we leave the past and our failures behind once and for all.

Chapter One

GOD'S PROTECTION FOR US

God asks His people some very crucial questions in Isaiah 5:4-5. "What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes? And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down."

Mark 12:1 says, "A certain man planted a vineyard, and set an hedge about it, and digged a place for the winefat, and built a tower..." (see also Matthew 21:33).

The Lord carefully planted a vineyard (speaking of Israel) and put a hedge and a wall around it. That's exactly what He has done for every believer. He saved us, paid for everything, and put a Finished Work wall around our lives. This means that He will not impute iniquity or sin to

us, but He will chastise. He will discipline, first with warnings, then mentally, emotionally, and physically. Chastisement will intensify into scourging, until finally it leads to an early death if the believer refuses to get right.

Yet, every believer has a wall of fire and a hedge around him. The wall of fire speaks of positional truth (the Christian is *in* Christ), and the hedge represents Bible doctrine. As we will see, Job was protected by this hedge (see Job 1:10).

Why God Takes Away the Hedge

Why do people experience rejection? Why can't they handle circumstances when people go against them and do bad things? Why don't they have the ability to immediately handle their own failure? It's because they don't understand that God cannot do any more for them than He has already done: He paid for all our sins; He won't impute sin; He has given us eternal security; He will never leave us or forsake us; His love will follow us through all our days to our new life in heaven; He will go with us to the end of the world—*what more could He do?*

In Psalm 80:12, the psalmist asked God, "Why hast thou then broken down her hedges, so that all they which pass by the way do *pluck*

her” (Hebrew: *hurt* or *offend* her). It is *God* who breaks down the hedge.

Why did God break down the wall and take away the hedge, in Isaiah 5? Because the vines brought forth wild grapes. The principle of “wild” grapes is derived from what God said about Ishmael in Genesis 16:12, “He will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man’s hand against him.” Ishmael is a graphic representation of the old sin nature that can’t be tamed by any man.

In Genesis 21:9, Ishmael mocked his brother, Isaac, Abraham’s promised seed. Ishmael actually found recreation and pleasure in mocking and reacting to his brother.

Today the story is no different. Ishmael—the old sin nature—tries to gain access to the Christian’s life. But in order for God to keep the hedge up continually, He would have to take away our free volition.

If we don’t take in doctrine daily then our hedge will be broken down. According to Ecclesiastes 10:8, when the hedge is broken, the serpent will bite. We’ve got to receive the Word of God *daily*—that’s what Jesus taught; that’s what the apostle Paul taught. I’ll guarantee that even if a Christian goes to church services three times

a week but doesn't receive the Word daily through hearing tapes, his spirit will not be as quickened as it could be.

Ordained to Bring Forth Fruit

In Song of Solomon 6:2, we see our "Beloved" going down into His garden of spices to gather the lilies. This is a picture of Jesus inspecting the fruit of His people. He wants to inspect my life to see if I am producing fruit. He tells each of us in John 15:16, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain...." And in James 3:18, God wants us to have the fruit of *His* righteousness, which is sown in peace.

Think of a marriage that turned bad and ended in divorce. The woman feels rejected. She feels like a failure. And she feels hated. This woman has been taught Bible doctrine. She has had every opportunity to receive truth, yet she has a terrible self-image. She reacts easily, and she's living in self-imposed misery.

Jesus says, "I expect fruit from you, but you have none. Still, you don't have to condemn yourself. What more can I do for you that I haven't already done? I am living inside of you.

Why don't you let Me be released in the circumstances of your life? I will never violate your will or go against the choices you make mentally. I can't do anything more for you. Neither can the pastor of the church, his staff, or the Body. They will love you. They will be available to pray for you, to build you up, and to give you promises. But beyond that, there is not a single thing they can do."

The saddest thing in the world is a Christian who has been in a grace ministry for years, whom no one—not even God—can help. The Lord said to His people in Micah 6:3, "Wherein have I wearied thee?" The answer: in the way you listen to the Word of God. The original Hebrew translates, "Why did you testify against me?" People like this will always say, "We didn't say you wearied us." But God answers, "You should see how disinterested and distracted you look when you're listening to My Word. The truth is, I weary you."

No Remedy

The Bible says in 2 Chronicles 36:15 that over and over, God sent His messengers to His people because He had compassion on them. Sadly, verse 16 reveals that "they mocked the messen-

gers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against his people, till there was no remedy." God was saying, "You were distracted from the messengers of God by other things. You failed to utilize My Word, and you misused my preachers until My wrath came upon you. Now there is no remedy for your life. I'm sorry, there is no remedy."

Picture this. You're saved, Jesus is inside you, and you are going to heaven. Your sins are forgiven, forgotten, and will never be imputed. Here you are in your daily life and there is no remedy for your mind, your emotions, your marriage, your situations. *God Almighty is inside you, yet there is no remedy!*

And it's all because you didn't receive the words of God's messengers as being from God Himself. You didn't submit to God's messenger in a spirit of meekness or mix faith with what he said.

Jesus is saying to us, "What more can I do for you that I have not already done? I came to preach the Gospel to the poor (all of us), to heal the brokenhearted, to set the prisoners free, and to set at liberty them that are bruised" (see Luke 4:18). "I came to do all of those things, but don't

you understand that your free volition is between Me and your liberation?" Your free volition is between Jesus Christ and you being blessed beyond anything you ever imagined.

Receive Grace and Live by Faith

"Thus saith the Lord, What iniquity have your fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me, and have walked after vanity, and are become vain?" (Jeremiah 2:5). This is another great question that God asked of His people. It is as if God was saying, "They don't seem to like Me. And I can't recall that I have ever committed iniquity. But the way they act, they think they must have found iniquity in me. They just don't seem to get along with Me."

When Christians don't get along with God, they are saying that God isn't enough, and they are failing the grace of God (Hebrews 12:15).

God is not interested in our sins. He paid for them. They will break our fellowship with Him, but He is not interested in *why* we failed. He is just there with us to help us get up (see Micah 7:8-9). God is *very* interested in what we think of His provision for our lives. He wants us to walk by faith—not by sight—so that our volition will not be negative toward the solution. Of course

the Word of God says four times, "The just shall live by faith" (Habakkuk 2:4; Romans 1:17; Galatians 3:11; Hebrews 10:38). And Romans 6:17 says that we are to obey doctrine *from the heart*: "Ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you."

God has ordained us, through His Holy Spirit and His Holy Word, to bring forth the fruit of love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, and temperance (Galatians 5:22-23a). Jesus Christ walks in the midst of His candlesticks, which represent the Church (Revelation 1:20-2:1), to see how we are doing. He comes into His garden to look for fruit, but sometimes He finds no fruit, only negativity. Then He says, "What more could I have done for this person?" God says, "I'll have to do something else in this believer's life. Because the wall of doctrine isn't up today, I'm going to have to give the devil access to his life. I will allow him to go through a trial by making some wrong choices. Eventually, he will come to a place where he doesn't like what's going on.

This is different than what Job went through. Job's trial involved the angelic conflict. But for the believer whose wall of doctrine has been

broken down, it's a matter of a personal relationship with God that is void of faith, rest, peace, and wisdom to apply knowledge through the power of love.

Ishmael, the old man, will never change nor can he be tamed. But he will cooperate with us in self-imposed misery as he promotes our pity parties. And he will make excuses to defend us and make us think that nobody really cares for us or loves us.

I read in the Bible that in order to have friends, a person must show himself friendly (Proverbs 18:24). Yet, instead of showing themselves friendly, many Christians fail the grace of God that would give them something they don't deserve. Then they receive the grace of God in vain, or in "emptiness" (2 Corinthians 6:1). In other words, grace doesn't have an entrance, and even if it does, the bottle is broken and it goes right out (Jeremiah 2:13). The next thing they do is fall from the grace of God. God catches them, but as far as their experience goes, they have fallen from grace. The whole problem with people like this is that they don't know how to receive grace for everything.

Chapter Two

NO FAILURES IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD

The Finished Work means that we can receive grace for everything—even in suffering (1 Peter 5:10). But because people don't receive the grace of God for everything, they receive grace in vain, and they fall short of it. Then a root of bitterness springs up (Hebrews 12:15), and their tongue defiles many people because those people can't do a thing for them. And the reason people can't do anything for them is that *God* can't do anything for them.

It's a terrible thing to have to look a person in the face and say, "I have to tell you something. I want to help you, but I can't. And what is worse, God can't help you either." If that person came into my office feeling bad, just think how he would feel now!

But then we would get on our knees and begin to pray. The Spirit breaks both of us. I en-

courage him to receive love, and I tell him not to live in failure because there are no failures in the Kingdom of God—just people who fail. They themselves are not *failures*. They just fail, but they don't remain failures.

You can't be a failure in the Finished Work. You can make a lot of mistakes and lose a lot of blessings, but a Finished Work Christian who has a wall of positional truth around him can never be labeled as a failure, though he may fail.

No Rejection in Christ

How can I feel rejected when God has accepted me forever in the Beloved (Ephesians 1:6)? How can I feel rejected when I have been forgiven through the blood of Jesus Christ to the praise of His glory? How can I feel rejected when I have been chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:4)? How is it possible for me to feel rejected when the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit all dwell in me (John 14:23; 1 Corinthians 6:19; Romans 8:11)? I can't feel rejected when I've got 7,834 promises directed toward me as a son or daughter of God. He has all power, all love, all mercy, all forgiveness, all patience, and it's directed toward me. He calls me by my name. Should I feel rejected

because of my spouse, my friend, or something people are doing to me? Should I feel rejected because people don't like me? Well, Jesus wasn't too well-liked either.

The first thing a Christian should know is that he is never rejected, and never can be, because he is hid with Christ in God (Colossians 3:3). No one can ever take a believer out of that place of total acceptance.

Don't Let the Devil Get at You

One thing I hate is knowing that Satan has a legal right to get at our lives when we don't receive God's provision. We have enough problems without God saying to the devil, "Go after 'so-and-so' today. He's not making right choices. His hedge isn't working because he is not applying doctrine." God allows this so when we are down, we will finally look at Him.

"A garden inclosed is my sister, my spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed" (Song of Solomon 4:12).

In this verse, God is saying, "As far as eternity goes, I have enclosed you. The devil can't ever have you. I have shut up the spring so your resources can come directly from the Word and the Spirit. I have sealed the fountain so you can

have only My resources.” But for some, knowing this is not enough.

God will not let the devil have you for eternity, but He may have to turn you over to him in time. You are God’s child. Don’t let God turn you over to the devil or you’ll reap what you and the devil are sowing in your negativity toward the provisions and promises of God.

When we go through the fire and the water, instead of becoming fearful and insecure, it’s vital that we confess what the psalmist did: “Thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place” (Psalm 66:12*b*). If you do, you’ll be able to say, “I went through the fire and water, but look at me now. God brought me through. I didn’t stay in. I wasn’t defeated. I made mistakes and God had to help me, but I got through.”

Job failed six times in his third trial, then he came through and was blessed doubly over what he had before. Perhaps he said, “I’m in a large place now because tribulation has worked patience, and patience experience. Tribulation brought me into a large place where I know more about God’s nature and God’s promises. More than ever before, I know how to utilize the Word of God.”

In Proverbs 15:19*a*, “The way of the slothful

man is as an hedge of thorns.” Here is a man who is mentally slothful toward the Word and the Spirit. If he goes to the left or the right he will be pricked by the thorns. In 2 Corinthians 12, Paul had a thorn in his flesh—a demon who was sent to buffet him. The thorn is a demon.

Though God may turn a Christian over to demons, the demons cannot have him, but they’re sure going to have some fun. Why would God do that? Because of everything He has done for us. He is with us forever. We can never lose our salvation. When we sin, we can rebound and be forgiven. But our old sin nature, circumstances, or people should not control us when God is just waiting to bless us with grace (Isaiah 30:18).

The Test for Mature Believers

“This land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden” (Ezekiel 36:35). God takes an old desolate soul and causes it to bud and produce fruit. In a day, He turns the old desolate garden into a garden of Eden as we fellowship with Him through the Word and the Spirit. He comes in to sup with us (Revelation 3:20). This is what God desires in us, for “The fruit of the

Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth" (Ephesians 5:9).

When Satan challenged God to touch all that Job had (Job 1:10-11), God said, "Okay, devil, you can have Job, but I'm going to watch him produce fruit in the midst of his trials because of his maturity."

Today, Satan also challenges God to turn mature believers over to him. The devil may say, "I'd like that person for three months."

God might answer, "I'll let you have him for three months, but you can't take his life. My servant is going to show you something about My nature while you're attacking him. Of course I'm not going to tell him that I have turned him over to you. And remember, I'm not turning him over to you because he's being chastised, but because he is mature. A little man on the earth is better than you and all the supernatural angels who went against Me in heaven.

"I'm going to show you, Satan, how a man, made lower than the angels, will make far better choices than you made when you fell. This man will trust in My character and My character will come through."

You may say, "But didn't Job fail six times in his third trial?"

Yes he did, but that's wonderful, because God also forgave him six times. It's not wonderful that he failed, but it *is* wonderful that God forgave him six times, restored him six times, built him up and got him to pray for his friends. And God gave Job twice as much as he had before.

Chapter Three

LEAVE THE PAST BEHIND

When our hedge of doctrine is up, we may fail, but our failure will be isolated. We don't choose the road of failure. Because we are human and have not been perfected yet, we may fail, but we don't have to live in failure. We don't have to stay down. We can rebound and get right out of it. If it happens again, we rebound again—we name it and move on.

I recently spoke to a precious woman of God who could not forgive herself for her past. She's a wonderful Christian. She's been in our ministry for years, but she just cannot forgive herself, even though she has not failed in this area for a long time. Here's what I said to her.

"Just forget your past." Now isn't that deep?

I told her, "You're forgiven. God has forgotten it" (and she knows that). Then I said, "Now just live in it."

She said to me, "I guess it's really quite sim-

ple.”

Then we went over some wonderful things from the Word of God, things that were profound, correct, and fresh. And just as sure as you’re breathing, this woman has forgotten her past. A hedge of doctrine went up and the protection of the wall of fire became her experience.

And when we can forgive ourselves, it should be easy to forgive others with the same love that forgave us.

God Is Enough

“O generation, see ye the word of the LORD. Have I been a wilderness unto Israel? a land of darkness?” (Jeremiah 2:31). To some Christians, God’s life and His Finished Work have become a wilderness to them. The way they act, you would think God is barren, having nothing to offer. They act as though God isn’t enough to supply their need. God is saying, “Has My life been darkness to you though I live inside you?”

If we can’t conquer through Him that has conquered, if we can’t be in union with His victory and go from victory to victory, then in all honesty we are saying with a tone of sarcasm, “Those promises? Ha! They’re really working for me!” But we never dare to say that, or even

think it, because we reverence God.

What happened? God's light became darkness. We did not allow Him to lead us on into victory after victory from faith to faith, glory to glory, and grace to grace.

It is vital that every child of God realizes that "The king's daughter is all glorious within" (Psalm 45:13). We (the Church) are the king's daughter. But how can the king's daughter be all glorious within when she's failing God? It's simple. Because of the needlework of the precious Holy Spirit glorifying Christ in the Finished Work, the failure isn't recorded (see verse 14). The failure only breaks our fellowship with God, but it is not recorded.

Judges 5:12 says, "Awake, awake, Deborah: awake, awake, utter a song...." When we do this, we are free to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ.

The Fruit of God's Righteousness

Remember that a man in his best state is no better than a man in his worst state as far as their value is concerned. "Verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity" (Psalm 39:5b). Consider a person who is doing well in Adam. He doesn't curse, drink, smoke, or eat fattening

foods. He holds nothing against anyone. But at best, he is imitating victory through an angel of light. And God says to him, "Your life is just vanity to Me."

On the other end of the spectrum, here is a man like Micah who failed utterly. Micah admitted he was down because of his sin, but he knew Jesus Christ was with him. In Micah 7:8-9, he hadn't gotten up yet, but he was about ready to "arise." In essence, he said, "Jesus and I are going to mock you for persecuting me while I was down" (see Micah 7:10).

In Micah's worst state, Jesus was with him, blessing him, and helping him to get up. But the man in his best state in Adam is only vanity because he lives his life in human good and self-righteousness.

"Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him: for they shall eat the fruit of their doings" (Isaiah 3:10). Glory be to God if you have accepted His righteousness and you refuse to trust in your own. You know you're not perfect experientially, but you're growing. At times, you're down, but you always get up. You rebound quickly and isolate your past. You have determined to pursue Jesus Christ and eat the fruit of trusting in His grace.

The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, not a tree of good and evil (Proverbs 11:30). By eating from the Tree of Knowledge, we experience something as men that only God should know *as God*. Proverbs 11:30*b* says “he that winneth souls is wise.” The one who wins souls is an old-fashioned, God-fearing, Christ-loving, sin-hating believer who builds himself up on his most holy faith, and takes great steps of faith to obey God’s great commandment to love and God’s great commission to reach the lost.

CONCLUSION

There is nothing better in this world than to be a person who receives grace, experiences grace, thinks in grace, loves in grace, gives in grace, behaves in grace, grows in grace, rebounds in grace, and is purified by grace through faith. There's nothing better than saying, "Whatever happens, I'm going to be God's grace man, or God's grace woman."

Grace will not teach us to sin that grace may abound or to live in antinomianism (professing God, but in our works denying Him, Titus 1:16), but grace will teach us that whatever our weakness may be, we will gain ground little by little until the final day comes when we will be just like Jesus, because He will perfect us.