

“I’ve Failed; How Can I Start Over?”

1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

INTRODUCTION:

- A. Life in Jesus Christ is designed to be lived abundantly. Once you have been saved from your sins, you don’t stop living. Rather, you actually pass from spiritual death to spiritual life. Nonetheless, failure in Christian experience is possible.
- B. Brothers and sisters in Christ
1. Failure in living the Christian life need not be fatal.
 2. Failure in living the Christian life need not be permanent.
 3. Failure to grow in Christ need not be a life-long failure.
 4. Failure in a given area does not mean that you are a failure . . . But rather it means there is room for improvement . . . An opportunity to start over again, wiser and more determined to succeed.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO WHEN I’VE REALLY BLOWN IT?

- A. **1 John 1:7-9** – “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.
- 8 If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.
- 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”
- B. What should I do when I’ve failed?
1. When I’ve failed Appeal to God for help.
 - a. It is obvious that your own strength has not been sufficient.
 - b. **Psalms 22:19** – “But you, O LORD, be not far off; O my Strength, come quickly to help me.”
 2. When I’ve failed Confess the sinful behavior.
 - a. **1 John 1:9** – “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”
 - c. God saw that confession would be good for the soul.
 3. Repent of my failures.
 - a. Before one can go in a new direction, one must stop traveling in his present direction.
 - b. Repent means to turn around.

4. Accept God’s forgiveness.
 - a. **Psalm 130:3-4** – “If you, O LORD, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand? But with you there is forgiveness; therefore you are feared.”
 - b. Daniel stated it eloquently in **Daniel 9:9** – “The Lord our God is merciful and forgiving, even though we have rebelled against him.”
4. Renew my commitment to God . . . A commitment to do better.
5. Give thanks for His mercy.
 - a. Isn’t it good manners to say “thank you” to others? Say it to God.
 - b. **Psalm 136:26** – “Give thanks to the God of Heaven. His love endures forever.
 - c. **Psalm 51:14-15** – “Save me from bloodguilt, O God, the God who saves me, and my tongue will sing of your righteousness. O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise.”
6. Forgive myself.
 - a. When God forgives you, move one with your life.
 - b. Don’t let your sins of yesterday deprive you of the joy of your salvation today.
 - c. “Begin each day anew and forgive yourself for yesterday.”
 - d. Borrow a lesson from David in **Psalm 51:12** – “Restore to me the joy of your salvation . . .”

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I HAVE BEEN RESTORED?

- A. **2 Corinthians 5:17** – “Therefore, if any man is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come.”
 1. Don’t live as the old has not gone.
 2. Don’t think as if the old has not gone.
 3. Don’t talk as if the old has not gone
 4. Don’t behave as if the old has not gone.
- B. When I have been restored
 1. I have a change of heart to a pure heart
 - a. **Matthew 5:8** – Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.”
 - b. In the Wizard of Oz, the tin man just wanted a heart. In obedience and restoration we want a pure heart so we can see God.
 2. I have a change of mind.
 - a. **Romans 12:2** - “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is-his good, pleasing and perfect will.”
 - b. The mind I had led me to where I was. A renewed mind will keep me away from where I was.

3. I have a change of direction. **Jeremiah 29:11** – “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.’”

HOW CAN I LIVE FAITHFULLY?

A. **1 Thessalonians 1:1-10** – “Paul, Silas and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace and peace to you.

2 We always thank God for all of you, mentioning you in our prayers.

3 We continually remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

4 For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you,

5 because our gospel came to you not simply with words, but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction. You know how we lived among you for your sake.

6 You became imitators of us and of the Lord; in spite of severe suffering, you welcomed the message with the joy given by the Holy Spirit.

7 And so you became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia.

8 The Lord's message rang out from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia-your faith in God has become known everywhere. Therefore we do not need to say anything about it,

9 for they themselves report what kind of reception you gave us. They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God,

10 and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead-Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.”

B. I can live faithfully by

1. I can live faithfully by **POSITIONAL** living . . . I must live in Christ and His church.
2. I can live faithfully by **PATTERN** living . . . I must follow in the footsteps of my Lord.
3. I can live faithfully by **PURPOSEFUL** living . . . I must determine daily to walk in the path of faithfulness.
4. I can live faithfully by **PRINCIPLED** living . . . I must live by the standard of the Word of God.
5. I can live faithfully by **PREPARED** living . . . I must strive daily to grow and serve so as not to slip back into unfaithfulness.

CONCLUSION:

- A. Where there is failure AND repentance . . . There is forgiveness AND restoration.
- B. You have not done anything that God cannot or will not forgive you of if you Will only make it right with Him.
- C. God’s Plan for Man’s Salvation.
 - 1. Alien sinner
 - 2. Unfaithful sinner