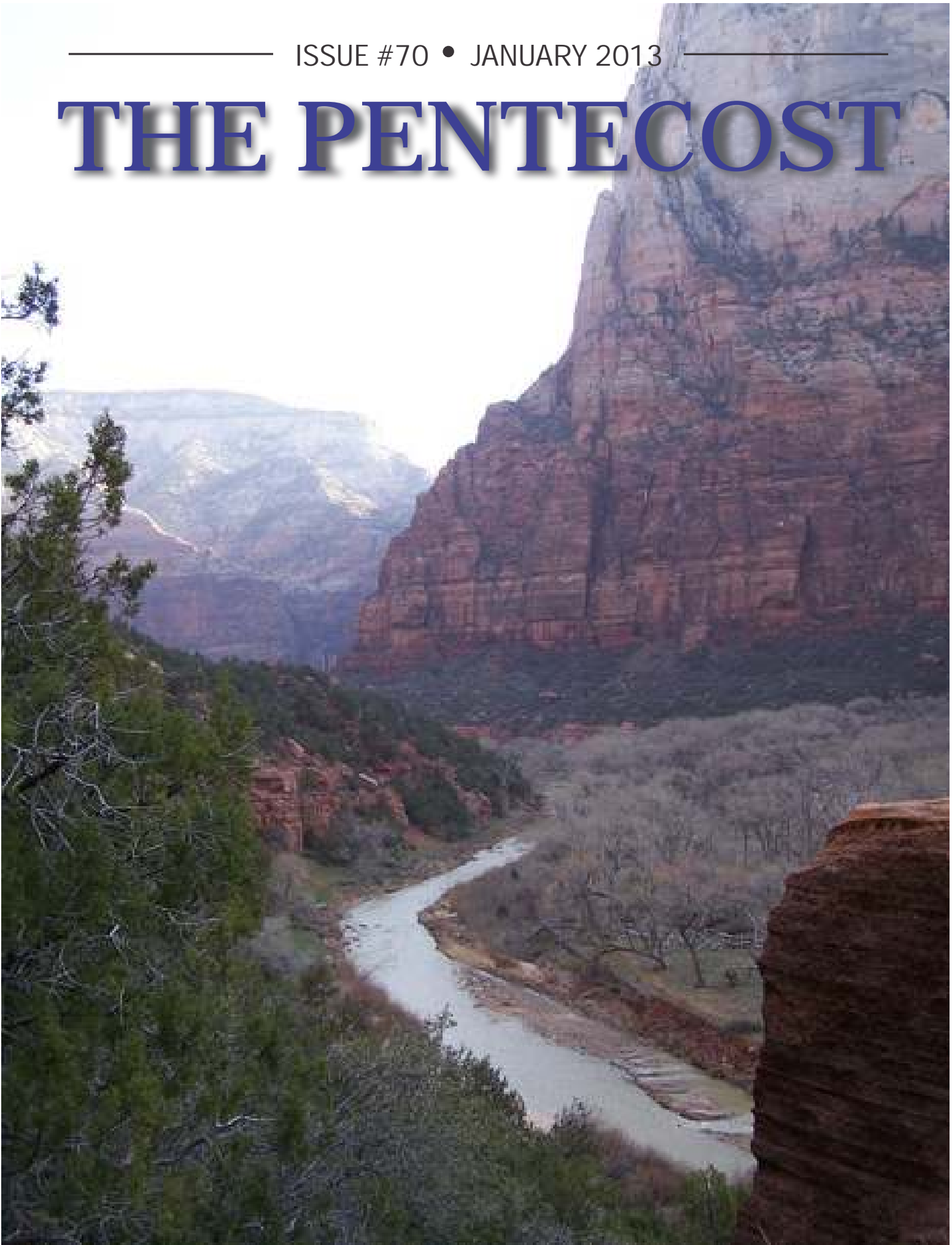


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THE PENTECOST



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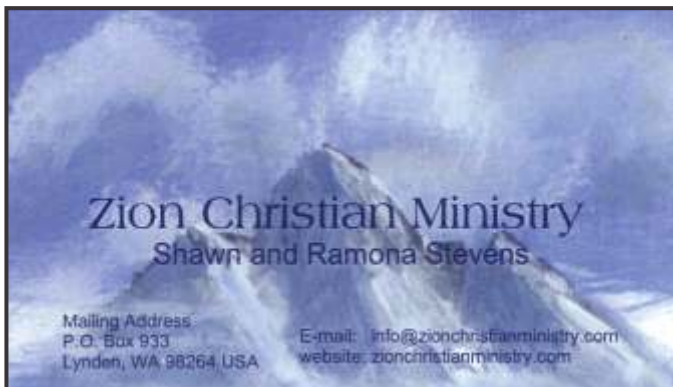
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In Darkest England And The Way Out is one of the foremost Christian humanitarian books ever written. Its author is the founder of The Salvation Army, William Booth. I invite you to read my article discussing this work and may God speak to our hearts. My father-in-law, Jake Balzer, also has words for us on resolving personal failures. I will also talk about illicit drug use in this January, 2013, issue of The Pentecost. God bless you.

Shawn Stevens

As human beings we are all imperfect. We fail at times, but what do we do about that and does it affect our value as a person? I hope that you will be encouraged as you read this issue. God bless you.

Ramona Stevens



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WILLIAM'S WAY OUT

He was called "The General." General William Booth was a man on a mission, a mission of salvation. He had a vision for both the spiritual and temporal salvation of nineteenth-century England's poorest citizens. There were many who stood with him, fully embracing his vision, and bore the name he chose for them, "The Salvation Army." How was Booth's vision expressed? It was expressed in many ways, but one very significant way that his heart and mission were revealed was in the publication of his book, "In Darkest England and The Way Out." (Published in 1890).

What was "Darkest England?" Nineteenth-century Englishmen had a fascination with the continent of Africa. This fascination was fed by the well-known book, "Darkest Africa," written by Sir Henry Morton Stanley (1841-1904). This book captured the intrigue and sense of mystery which surrounded the largely unexplored dark continent of Africa. Stanley described in vivid language his journeys into the untamed forests, jungles and rolling plains of this adventure-rich land. Africa was considered to be "dark" because it was so under-explored, underdeveloped and dangerous. Ironically, England, which was in so many ways progressive, had its own dark corners. It is these dark corners that General Booth spent his life shedding light into. To Booth, Darkest England was the desperate world of England's slums. His book not only drew attention to this desperate world, but proposed a way out.

Booth's burden for England's poor, his efforts to draw attention to their desperate plight, and his optimism and hope for their deliverance is encapsulated in these gripping words taken from the preface to his book:

When but a mere child the degradation and helpless misery of the poor Stockingers of my native town, wandering gaunt and hunger-stricken through the streets droning out their melancholy ditties, crowding the Union or toiling like galley slaves on relief works for a bare subsistence, kindled in my heart yearnings to help the poor which have continued to this day and which have had a powerful influence on my whole life. At last I may be going to see my longings to help the workless realized. I think I am. The commiseration then awakened by the misery of this class has been an impelling force which has never ceased to make itself felt during forty years of active service in the salvation of men. During this time I am thankful that I have been able, by the good hand of God upon me, to do something in mitigation of the miseries of this class, and to bring not only heavenly hopes and earthly gladness to the hearts of multitudes of these wretched crowds, but also many material blessings, including such commonplace things as food, raiment, home, and work, the parent of so many other temporal benefits. And thus many poor creatures have proved Godliness to be '...godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.'

These results have been mainly attained by spiritual means. I have boldly asserted that whatever his peculiar character or circumstances might be, if the prodigal would come home to his Heavenly Father, he would

find enough and to spare in the Father's house to supply all his need both for this world and the next, and I have known thousands, nay, I can say tens of thousands, who have literally proved this to be true, having, with little or no temporal assistance, come out of the darkest depths of destitution, vice and crime, to be happy and honest citizens and true sons and servants of God.

And yet all the way through my career I have keenly felt the remedial measures usually enunciated in Christian programs and ordinarily employed by Christian philanthropy to be lamentably inadequate for any effectual dealing with the despairing miseries of these outcast classes. The rescued are appallingly few – a ghastly minority compared with the multitudes who struggle and sink in the open-mouthed abyss. Alike, therefore, my humanity and my Christianity, if I may speak of them in any way as separate one from the other, have cried out for some more comprehensive method of reaching and saving the perishing crowds.

No doubt it is good for men to climb unaided out of the whirlpool on to the rock of deliverance in the very presence of the temptations which have hitherto mastered them, and to maintain a footing there with the same billows of temptation washing over them. But, alas! with many this seems to be literally impossible. That decisiveness of character, that moral nerve which takes hold of the rope thrown for the rescue and keeps its hold amidst all the resistances that have to be encountered, is wanting. It is gone. The general wreck has shattered and disorganized the whole man. Alas, what multitudes there are around us everywhere, many known to my readers personally, and any number who may be known to them by a very short walk from their own dwellings, who are in this very plight! Their vicious habits and destitute circumstances make it certain that, without some kind of extraordinary help, they must

hunger and sin, and sin and hunger; until, having multiplied their kind, and filled up the measure of their miseries, the gaunt fingers of death will close upon them and terminate their wretchedness. And all this will happen this very winter in the midst of the unparalleled wealth, and civilization, and philanthropy of this professedly most Christian land.

Now, I propose to go straight for these sinking classes, and in doing so shall continue to aim at the heart. ... My only hope for the permanent deliverance of mankind from misery, either in this world or the next, is the regeneration or remaking of the individual by the power of the Holy Ghost through Jesus Christ. But in providing for the relief of temporal misery I reckon that I am only making it easy where it is now difficult, and possible where it is now all but impossible, for men and women to find their way to the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

That I have confidence in my proposals goes without saying. I believe they will work. In miniature many of them are working already. But I do not claim that my Scheme is either perfect in its details or complete in the sense of being adequate to combat all forms of the gigantic evils against which it is in the main directed. Like other human things it must be perfected through suffering. But it is a sincere endeavor to do something, and to do it on principles which can be instantly applied and universally developed. Time, experience, criticism, and, above all, the guidance of God will enable us, I hope, to advance on the lines here laid down to a true and practical application of the words of the Hebrew Prophet: '... loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?'

Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to

thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?

Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the LORD shall be thy reward.

Then shalt thou call, and the LORD shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity;

And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon day:

And the LORD shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.

And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; ...'² (I have corrected Booth's misquote of 1 Timothy 4:8 and Isaiah 58:6-12)

So, in trudging, foraging and bushwhacking his way through the social jungle of Darkest England, Booth did so, with a hopeful heart that expected to see God's victory. In writing his book, he explained his optimism in these words:

But this book is no mere lamentation of despair. For Darkest England, as for Darkest Africa, there is a light beyond. I think I see my way out, a way by which these wretched ones may escape from the gloom of their miserable existence into a higher and happier life. Long wandering in the Forest of the Shadow of Death at our doors, has familiarized me with its horrors; but while the realization is a

vigorous spur to action it has never been so oppressive as to extinguish hope. Mr. Stanley never succumbed to the terrors which oppressed his followers. He had lived in a larger life, and knew that the forest, though long, was not interminable. Every step forward brought him nearer his destined goal, nearer to the light of the sun, the clear sky, and the rolling uplands of the grazing land. Therefore he did not despair. The Equatorial Forest was, after all, a mere corner of one quarter of the world. In the knowledge of the light outside, in the confidence begotten by past experience of successful endeavor, he pressed forward; and when the hundred and sixty days' struggle was over, he and his men came out into a pleasant place where the land smiled with peace and plenty, and their hardships and hunger were forgotten in the joy of a great deliverance. So I venture to believe it will be with us.³

Having declared his optimism for change, Booth reminded his readers that they had not yet achieved the victory. They were still in the spot where the jungle was densest and the scene was darkest. Booth was not writing with light-heartedness but, instead, would use every word he knew to communicate the pain of England's poor and to communicate the call to action on their behalf. "Is it not time?" Booth asked and "Can nothing be done?" Those who considered the plight of the poor to be hopeless would accept as fate the condition of England's poor. However, Booth, and others like him, who saw the hope of help to be bright, would act on this belief and lead a "revolt against the fatalism of despair." They would call fatalism what it was, an unacceptable excuse. They would declare that "it is time, and high time, that the question were faced in no mere

dilettante spirit, but with a resolute determination to make an end of the crying scandal of our age.”⁴

Booth was calling for immediate action. To all who would listen, Booth gave the illustration of a London cab horse who, while pulling a coach-load of passengers down a busy street, all of a sudden stumbles and collapses onto the hard road. The cab horse represented broken-down humanity which needed thorough, complete and practical aid. Booth said; “If you put him on his feet without altering his conditions, it would only be to give him another dose of agony; but first of all you'll have to pick him up again. It may have been through overwork or underfeeding, or it may have been all his own fault that he has broken his knees and smashed the shaft, but that does not matter.”⁵ How is the horse helped? Booth said; “The load is taken off, the harness is unbuckled, or, if need be, cut, and everything is done to help him up.”⁶ Then, the horse can return to his round of work. Again, the horse represented the struggling poor. A literal cab horse had the provision of “a shelter for the night, food for its stomach, and work allotted to it by which it can earn its corn.”⁷ Not all of England's poor had these necessities.

While they didn't have these basic necessities, they did have a friend in William Booth who was doing everything he could to make their plight known. According to Booth, Darkest England, this shunned sub-culture within larger England, was numbered at three million persons. Booth describes them as “men, women, and children, a

vast despairing multitude in a condition nominally free, but really enslaved.”⁸ It was these, he said, “whom we have to save.” Booth pictured Darkest England as three circles, one within the other. The outer and widest circle represented the starving and homeless poor who lived honest, law-respecting lives. The second, smaller circle represented those who survived by adopting sinful practices. The third, and smallest, circle represented those who survived by out-and-out criminal activities. Booth maintained that “the borders of this great lost land are not sharply defined. They are continually expanding or contracting.”⁹ In times of depression, the borders of the dark forest of Darkest England would expand, pulling into the outer circle many who previously led self-sufficient lives. There was no class of persons that could not fall into this situation. Booth cautioned:

So far as individuals are concerned, there are none among the hundreds of thousands who live upon the outskirts of the dark forest who can truly say that they or their children are secure from being hopelessly entangled in its labyrinth. The death of the bread-winner, a long illness, a failure in the city, or any one of a thousand other causes which might be named, will bring within the first circle those who at present imagine themselves free from all danger of actual want.”¹⁰

Want and need were not only a danger but a reality for multitudes in England. Booth was a loud voice on their behalf. He declared that:

There is hardly any more pathetic figure than that of the strong, able worker crying

*plaintively in the midst of our palaces and churches, not for charity, but for work, asking only to be allowed the privilege of perpetual hard labor that, thereby he may earn wherewith to fill his empty belly and silence the cry of his children for food. Crying for it and not getting it, seeking for labor as lost treasure and finding it not, until at last, all spirit and vigor worn out in the weary quest, the once willing worker becomes a broken-down drudge, sodden with wretchedness and despairing of all help in this world or in that which is to come.*¹¹

They could not be ignored; their situation was too desperate and their plight too serious. Again, Booth said of the desperate; “They die and make no sign, or, worse still, they continue to exist, carrying about with them, year after year, the bitter ashes of a life from which the furnace of misfortune has burnt away all joy, and hope, and strength.”¹²

William Booth simply had a tremendous heart for the poor. He was the General who would sound the charge into the battle of saving England's poor. They were to him the sinking ones who were reaching for help. They needed help to rescue them from impossible situations which were pulling them deeper and deeper into poverty, and also into crime, as many desperately tried anything they could to survive. Booth wrote a book to trumpet their needs to all who would hear and to extend to them the message that there is a way out.

Shawn Stevens

ENDNOTES :

2. William Booth, In Darkest England and The Way Out (Atlanta: The Salvation Army, 1984), Preface.
3. Ibid., 21-22.
4. Ibid., 22-23.
5. Ibid., 26
6. Ibid., 27.
7. Ibid., 27.
8. Ibid., 31.
9. Ibid., 32.
10. Ibid., 32.
11. Ibid., 40.
12. Ibid., 50.

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- Barnes, Cyril. God's Army. Illinois: David Cook Publishing Co., 1978.
- Booth, William. In Darkest England and The Way Out. Atlanta: The Salvation Army, 1984.
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RESOLVING PERSONAL FAILURES

Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me—to keep me from exalting myself! Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me. And He has said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.' Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.

2 Corinthians 12:7-10

INTRODUCTION :

An engineer had a very responsible position. He was involved with space-connected industries. However, one day he made some serious blunders in his calculations concerning the launching of one of the large rockets. One mistake led to another and soon there was a reaction against his work in the whole department. He was fired from his job because of his mistake in calculation. He went home that evening, a broken man. Everything he had ever dreamed of had been taken away from him. And all because he had made a mistake. If only they would have given him another chance. But that was now too late.

Early the next morning the telephone rang.

It was the manager of a large corporation that had been in competition with his former company. The caller got right to the point; “I understand that you were fired yesterday. Why?” The engineer tried to be truthful about it and explained that he had made some serious blunder in his calculations and judgement and that the company had lost hundreds of man-hours and thousands of dollars. “Good,” the man replied, “I want you to come to work for us tomorrow morning.” But the engineer objected, “I just told you I made a horrible mess out of my last job.” “I know that,” the manager replied. “That's the reason I want you. I don't want to fool around with someone who hasn't had a chance to benefit from his previous mistakes.”

Making mistakes is a vital part of life. This is especially true in Church work where almost all the work is with people. The manager of a large industrial corporation has said that ninety-five percent of the mistakes that are made are made in, and with, personnel. To master the art of working with people takes time and much graciousness.

There is a difference in being a failure and experiencing failure. You can fail without being a failure. We can learn from our failures much more than from our successes. We often think “FAILURE” is our greatest enemy. To fail is something too awful to face, according to some people. If, however, we learn to catch ourselves in the act of failing, that is half the battle. Recognizing our failures is recognizing we are not fully mature in some areas. And that is

necessary in order to grow. If you and I had not, by the grace of God, recognized our failure to meet God's standards, we would have not sensed the need of accepting Christ as our Saviour. Failure is a very definite part of life, even for a Christian. But what are we doing about our failures?

I would like to suggest some specific steps in learning how to resolve personal failures:

I. PERSONAL FAILURES ARE NOT THE END OF THE ROAD.

When we fail it does not mean we are finished for the rest of our lives. We must learn to accept our failures and the responsibility to do something about them. There are many examples in King David's life where he failed very seriously but he did not give up in despair.

a. When David brought the Ark of God to Jerusalem. (See 2 Samuel, Chapter 6).

– the oxen stumbled and Uzzah reached to steady the Ark. But God struck him dead. What did David, who was in charge, do? “ David became angry because of the LORD'S outburst against Uzzah, ...” (vs 8).

A very common response when we are suddenly faced with failure and punishment.

But later David realized his *wrong approach in bringing the Ark of God*. He then bought the Ark the way God had outlined and was successful.

David did not give up because of the serious mistake he made.

You may have tried to do something for the Lord, or in your church, and it turned out to be a mistake. People got hurt through it even though it was not intended that way. Are you willing to try again by the grace of God?

b. *David got involved in immorality* and, in covering it up, resorted to murder. A very serious mistake and sin against God. He was king of Israel. He was a spiritual leader also. What did David do about this mistake and terrible sin?

He accepted Nathan's rebuke from God and repented. But David did not give up in despair, throw in the towel, and quit serving the LORD and his people.

Immorality is sin. But it is forgivable. When God forgives such a sin, who are we to hold it against each other or not be about to forgive ourselves?

c. David counted his potential soldiers, when God had told him *not to depend upon his own ability to fight for him*. Consequently, God judged David severely and many people died as a result. What did David do? He admitted his sin and said that he would depend on God's mercy to help him go on from there.

Maybe we have not committed such far reaching sins as David, but, where we have failed and sinned and others have been affected, what do we do about it? It is not the end of the road. Let's face

our failures, receive forgiveness, make restitution and move on with Christ's enabling.

Personal failures are not the end of the road.

II. PERSONAL FAILURES ARE FORGIVABLE.

When it comes to obtaining forgiveness for personal failures, there are three areas where we need to obtain forgiveness.

a. Forgiveness from Jesus Christ

If we have failed Jesus Christ, we need to ask Him for forgiveness. Any failure that is sin needs to be confessed to Jesus Christ. (Not all failure is sin).

- Judas failed Jesus Christ by becoming His traitor. Judas was remorseful, but failed to confess his sin to Jesus Christ.

- Peter failed Jesus Christ by denying Him three times in one day. He was sorry for his wrong and obtained forgiveness from Jesus.

- Paul failed Jesus Christ. He repented and obtained forgiveness.

b. Forgiveness from ourselves

We not only need to obtain forgiveness from Jesus Christ where our failures are sin, but also from ourselves.

Forgiving ourselves is one very difficult thing to do. What does it mean? To forgive yourself for your personal failures is not excusing yourself,

but squarely facing up to your failures and taking responsibility for them. But it also involves resolving them personally. What does that mean? It means to stop blaming yourself or feeling sorry for yourself. This gets you nowhere but despondency. When you receive Jesus Christ's forgiveness for your failures, you can forgive yourself and learn from your failures.

c. Forgiveness from others.

We need to obtain forgiveness from others for our failures.

This is sometimes not possible. We can ask individuals we have hurt for forgiveness, but they don't always give it.

- When Albert Einstein went to school he faced some hard decisions. He was dismissed from school in Munich because he lacked interest in his studies. Later, he failed an entrance exam for another program in school. When he applied for assistantship in teaching he was rejected. He tried tutoring boys and was fired. But failures did not keep him defeated. Even though others did not give him a chance, he moved on and became one of the greatest scientists.

- Beethoven faced repeated rejection. One of his teachers said that Beethoven would never learn anything and, what is more, he never would write anything worthwhile. But you know, as well as I do, that Beethoven wrote many pieces of music that we enjoy even today.

Obtaining forgiveness for our failures is very essential to *resolving them*. We need to obtain Jesus Christ's forgiveness for failures that are sin and we need to forgive ourselves and not excuse ourselves or feel sorry for ourselves. We also need to get forgiveness from others whenever possible.

Thus, to learn to resolve our personal failures the first step is to:

- remember that personal failures are not the end of the road

- the second step is to remember personal failures can be forgiven

- the third step is learning to resolve them

III. PERSONAL FAILURES CAN BECOME STEPPING STONES.

That is, squarely facing up to our personal failures and receiving forgiveness helps us then to begin reinforcing our areas of weakness. How do I know where I need help unless I fail to succeed in a given area. So when you fail, regardless of what area - personal, physical, emotional, or spiritual - you know that you need help in that area. In other words, you can become stronger in the area in which you failed, if you choose to, by the help of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

A boy was leading his sister up a rough mountain trail. His sister found it very difficult and

complained, "It's not a path at all. It's all rocky and bumpy." "Sure," answered her brother, "the bumps are what you climb on."

We too can climb on our failures if we honestly face them and resolve them.

Edison, working on the incandescent bulb, said in spite of hundreds of experiments which failed, they taught him many ways that would not work. Often, a failure is a blessing in disguise. Very often, God can use our failures to guide us along new paths.

The Apostle Paul faced failure in getting from God what he felt he desperately needed. (See 2 Corinthians 12:7-10).

Paul faced failure. He had a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan who repeatedly tormented him. We don't know what it was, but it seemed to be a repeated problem to Paul, so much so that he earnestly prayed that God would remove it from him.

What did God tell him?

And He has said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.' Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.

2 Corinthians 12:9

God's grace, moment by moment, would help Paul to resolve this problem that was like an ugly

failure. In fact, God said that Paul would experience more of God's power if he accepted this weakness or thorn in his flesh.

Now, wait a minute. What does that mean? We don't know if Paul's thorn in the flesh was a consequence of his failures, or past life of sin, or not. But whatever it was, God seemed to say, don't ask Me to remove it, but ask Me for strength to live with it and, thereby, experience more of My power in your life, moment by moment. What was Paul's response?

Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.

2 Corinthians 12:10

Paul said that he would be content with his weakness that he experiences through this thorn. Yes, he even went on to say that he would be content with more than weakness - insults, distresses, persecutions and difficulties - for Christ's sake, for then he would experience God's power in his life.

CONCLUSION :

Who has not failed seriously in some area of his life? Who has not even now faced consequences because of their failures? But, let's recall how we can learn to resolve our failures:

step 1: face up to your failures and accept the

responsibility for them.

step 2: work toward obtaining forgiveness from Jesus Christ, yourself, and others for your failures where need be.

step 3: change your failure from defeat to stepping stones, that is, begin to experience God's power in the areas you have failed, and follow Jesus' example.

Jake Balzer

ILLEGAL DRUG USE

Drugs, popularized by rock stars and mass media, and other means, have taken a hold of the lives of millions in our world today. According to a 2008 United Nations' report, worldwide, an estimated 208 million people, between the ages of fifteen and sixty-four, use drugs illegally.¹ Cannabis is consumed by an estimated 162 million adults and is the most abused drug, after alcohol, followed by amphetamine type drugs (35 million), opiates (16 million) and cocaine (13 million). Abuse of alcohol and drugs costs society an estimated 276 billion dollars per year. As a whole, substance abusers run up medical expenses 300 times greater than non-abusers.

If illegal drugs are such a danger, why is it that people are using them? Usually, people begin using illicit drugs because of peer pressure. They

want to fit in with others who also use drugs, or they use drugs to relax or to escape boredom or simply to rebel. Whatever the reason, drugs quickly go from being a means of relaxation, or a thrill, to putting people in horrible bondage. Narcotic drugs are essentially poisons. Small amounts will either stimulate or sedate their users but too large a quantity will kill them. Drugs do more than stimulate or sedate users. Illicit drugs damage the mind. They greatly affect the mental processes and cause memory loss. Drugs distort their user's perception of reality, leading them to act irrationally or even violently. Despite claims to the contrary, drugs also destroy a person's creativity. Dealers will tell you that it is okay to try drugs out, that they will make you popular and that their damaging effects are greatly exaggerated. However, dealers don't care about your life; they care about your money. If they can get you hooked, they soon will have great sums of your money.

What different types of drugs are sold today and what are their effects? Marijuana, also known as weed, blunt, grass, herb, reefer, pot, smoke, skunk, Mary Jane, bloom, gangster, quiff, chronic, dope and super skunk, is usually rolled up into a cigarette, or joint, and smoked. According to an American National Household Survey On Drug Abuse, children who use marijuana have been found to be nearly four times more likely to become violent than children who don't and they are five times more likely to steal than those who don't. Many people think of marijuana as being a soft drug but the truth is that this drug is being

made more potent through new growing techniques. Short-term effects may include loss of co-ordination and disorientation. Long-term effects can result in psychotic symptoms, lung damage, heart damage and, possibly, weakening of the immune system.

Ecstasy, also known as E, XTC, X, Adam, hug, beans or love drug, is a synthetic drug made in a laboratory. It causes chills, sweating, impaired discernment, confusion, blurred vision, and more. The long-term effect of this drug is long-lasting, or permanent, brain damage. The drug becomes even more dangerous if mixed with alcohol or other drugs. Hallucinations are common. It is called the love drug because some have said that it enhances romantic feelings but the truth is that this drug is very harmful to one's emotional well-being. It causes depression, anxiety and paranoia, as well as long-lasting brain damage.

Cocaine and crack, also known as coke, snow and snuff, is an extremely addictive drug which can be snorted, injected or, in the case of crack, inhaled. Cocaine gives a short high, followed by a crash. It can leave its user with feelings of paranoia, anger, violence, anxiety and depression. It also can produce muscle spasms. Long-term use can cause paranoia and hallucinations as well as intense depression. It is responsible for many heart attacks, strokes and breathing problems and it also causes injury to the kidneys and the liver. It causes severe tooth decay, infertility and sexual problems.

Cocaine is one of the most destructive drugs known to mankind. It is sometimes mixed with other drugs and this recipe can be fatal. Crack is the most potent form of cocaine and the deadliest.

Methamphetamine, also known as crystal meth, speed, crank, quartz and tweak, is inhaled, smoked or injected. It is highly addictive and often results in psychotic behaviour. In the short-term, it may cause hyperactivity, insomnia, hallucinations, anxiety and paranoia. Long-term affects include damage to blood vessels, increased heart rate, heart damage, liver and kidney damage and memory loss. It is considered to be one of the hardest drug habits to treat. It speeds up aging dramatically.

Inhalants, also called poppers, laughing gas, rush, etcetera, are chemical poisons which people inhale. These cause brain damage and, sometimes, lung and kidney damage. They also can lead to muscle damage. They are poisonous and can result in immediate death.

Heroin, horse, skog or junk is a drug that is usually injected, smoked or snorted and it produces mental fuzziness, heart rate slowing and upset stomach. Long-term effects produce scarred or collapsed veins, bacterial infections and liver and kidney disease. This drug is responsible for countless overdose deaths. It is very potent and just one use can lead to being addicted.

LSD (Lysergic Acid Diethylamide), also called acid or purple heart, is a very potent mood-changing drug derived from an extremely poisonous fungus. Effects of the drug can vary and are unpredictable but may include high body-temperature, dry mouth, terror and despair. Long-term effects may include flashbacks and long-lasting psychoses.

All of these substances ruin the lives of those who are addicted to them. That is why it is so important to avoid using them or, if you do use them, to break free from your addiction. Jesus Christ can set a man or woman free from drug addiction. There are countless testimonies of those who have put their lives into His hands and found deliverance. Don't let illicit drugs rob from you the happiness and freedom that can only be found in Jesus Christ.

If you have not done so already, turn to Him today. Many who have been bound by addiction to drugs are free today because they made the courageous choice to surrender their lives to Christ and begin rehabilitation. Whether you are an addict or someone who is contemplating starting the addict lifestyle, I plead with you to, instead, give your life to Jesus Christ Who loves you more than you realize. God bless you.

Shawn Stevens

ENDNOTE

1. The Truth About Drugs (Los Angeles: Foundation for a Drug-Free World, 2008).

Reach The Mountain Top



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