

Why Men Fail Us

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Study by W. D. Frazee—October 17,

As we turn to the Word I would like to study a very practical subject. Why does God allow men to fail us? Were you ever disappointed in human beings?

I got a letter not long ago from someone explaining the great disappointment they were going through because someone they had confidence in was doing things they could not understand. They were wondering what it all meant. I suppose there is hardly anyone here this morning but what has gone through an experience of that kind. If you haven't, you will.

There are three reasons why God allows that to happen to you and me. There are three reasons why He lets people we have confidence in fail us and disappoint us.

"Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish"
Psalm 146:3-4.

One reason God allows men to fail us is so we will understand that they are fallible. One reason we can't depend upon them is so we won't depend upon them. Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. No lasting help. No security. Nothing to count on. Nothing to build on.

What happens to the man you put confidence in? He may die. And when he dies all his help is gone. But even while he lives his purposes may change. The politician who votes for the measure we wish today may vote against us tomorrow. The church officer or minister whom we have selected with a pattern of piety may next week or next month greatly disappoint us by some lapse, some failure.

If you and I had been living back in the days when Jesus was on the earth we doubtless would have been greatly surprised to learn that Judas had betrayed the Lord for thirty pieces of silver, and that he had been stealing from the bag before that. If we would have been putting our trust and confidence in Judas we would have been terribly shaken.

Who would have thought that Peter would deny his Lord with cursing and swearing? Jesus knew so. Nobody else did. Not even Peter.

There are those today who say the church is built on Peter. I would hate to be a part of a church built on Peter, wouldn't you? Yes. I would hate to be a part of a

church built on any man, wouldn't you? Put not your trust in princes, neither in the son of man, in whom there is no help.

We have a picture of the Christian experience of those who trust in man:

"Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD. For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited" Jeremiah 17:5-6.

Do you trust in man? The plant of Christian experience is not growing on good soil. God may allow you to have a great disappointment in men in order that you may learn how foolish it is to trust in man.

"In His mercy and faithfulness, God often permits those in whom we place confidence to fail us, in order that we may learn the folly of trusting in man, and making flesh our arm" *Ministry of Healing*, page 486.

Einstein was a great mathematician. He is considered to be the greatest one in recent times. But suppose that Einstein, with all his wisdom, should come to you and say two and two is not four. Would you believe it? Or would you go on believing that two and two is four?

God wants you and me to be so sure of some things that no matter who goes back on them we still stand right there.

In the first World War in England some of our Seventh-day Adventist young men had a very hard time for awhile over the question of Sabbath keeping and consciously objecting to bearing arms. The British government had apparently not become acquainted with our position on those two important points.

As our men were drafted into the army and confronted with these matters, they nobly took their stand. They suffered imprisonment. Finally a group of them were brought to a very serious court martial. It looked as if they were to be martyred for their faith. They were put into solitary confinement.

After a period of time one of the officers visited one of the soldiers and said, "It is time for you to give up this foolishness. We have talked to the other young men, and they have decided that rather than to be killed, the sensible thing for them is to do what their country tells them. You are the only one who is holding out. You had better go along with the rest."

This young man looked at the officer and said, "I am sorry to hear that about my fellows, but no matter what they do I must be true for God. If I am the only one standing, I will stand."

The officer went to another soldier and told him the same thing. It was a lie, of course. The second young man made the same answer.

The officer went around to each member of the group, and thank God, after every one of those young men who had been told the others had deserted nobly said, "I must obey God."

The sequel of it is very interesting. When the officers found that each man was prepared to stand alone regardless of what the others did, they took them out of prison, and said to them, "The country needs men of principle like you." They were allowed their exemptions.

Unless each of those men had learned not to trust in man, what would he have done? He would have gone the way that he heard the others were going. Somewhere along the line God had prepared each of those men to not place confidence in man.

You and I are going into a crisis. If we stand we will stand alone. We are going into a time of sifting when the chaff will be borne away on the wind from places where we have seen only floors of rich wheat. We are going into a night of darkness when many a star we have admired will go out.

Oh friend, let God prepare you for that now. How? By giving you experiences where men disappoint you. Where men seem to fail you. If there is something you think someone else ought to do for you, and they don't do it, God may be allowing that failure. It may be known to the other party. It may be unknown. But God may be allowing it for the purpose of leading you to trust somewhere else than in man.

The second great reason why God leads men to fail us is that we may learn the blessed security of trusting in God alone. That we may know the joy of being anchored in Jesus Christ.

After having pictured the pitiful plight of those who trust in man, notice how Jeremiah describes the case of those who trust in the Lord:

"Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit" Jeremiah 17:7-8.

On our trip recently we passed through dry sections of the country where for months there had been no rain. Occasionally we would see a line of green. It was a stream of water running. A river or creek. Jesus says that green tree with its roots by the river represents the man that trusts in God rather than in his fellow human beings. That tree is not anxious or worried in the year of drought. If other plants had intelligence, they would be looking anxiously at the sky. When is it going to rain?

People today are saying, When is so and so going to visit me? I am so discouraged. When is somebody coming around to revive my drooping spirits. I wonder when I am going to get a letter of comfort and courage. I wonder why so and so doesn't write to me. Why do they forget me? Why indeed?

You must learn to put your roots where the water will always be running. God is near you when men are not. You can find Him with your Bible and prayer. He will speak to you through that Word when there is no human to comfort you. Can you not talk to Him and pour out your soul to Him?

Somebody says, I can't see Him. I need somebody I can see.

Certainly. When I say certainly, I mean that is the way the human mind works. And it is the basis of idolatry. That is what the children of Israel argued when they built the golden calf. We have got to have something we can see. And when you and I put our faith and pin our hopes on poor, weak, erring men because we can see them, and turn away from Jesus, the unseen, we are entering into idolatry.

"We are prone to look to our fellow men for sympathy and uplifting, instead of looking to Jesus. In His mercy and faithfulness, God often permits those in whom we place confidence to fail us, in order that we may learn the folly of trusting in man, and making flesh our arm. Let us trust fully, humbly, unselfishly in God. He knows the sorrows that we feel to the depths of our being, but which we cannot express. When all things seem dark and unexplainable, remember the words of Christ, 'What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.'"

Ministry of Healing, page 486.

Who sold Joseph into Egypt? His brothers. Were they older or younger brothers? Older. If that is what Christianity is, I don't want anymore to do with it, do you? If that is the way the older members of the church do, there is no use for me to make any effort. I had just as well give up everything.

Is that what Joseph said? Thank God, no. The very fact that he was cut off from all human help caused him to flee to God and throw himself into the arms of everlasting love. Did God take care of Him? Yes. God took care of him through those years of slavery and imprisonment, but not by taking him out of trial. For thirteen years he was a slave. The last three years of that he was in prison. Every human help was cut off.

God allowed him to see some men who were kind to him. Potiphar trusted him with his house. Then suddenly that foundation was taken out from under him.

If Joseph had been building on Potiphar, what would have happened when Potiphar failed him? He would have gone down in utter despair.

But no. When Potiphar took his hand out from under him, Joseph stood erect, cheerful in God because he was upheld by God and God's promises. It is all very

well to be thankful when friends appreciate us. It is very well to rejoice in the love of our dear ones. But we must never build our Christian experience on them. Never.

Why are you a Christian? If it is just because your father or neighbor or friend has been so nice to you, you will be disappointed. That will be cut out from under you. Men will fail you. But if you are anchored in God, every tie cut away on earth will cause you to strengthen those ties that bind you to the throne of God.

"What a friend we have in Jesus,
All our sins and griefs to bear;
What a privilege to carry
Everything to God in prayer.

Do thy friends despise, forsake thee?
Take it to the Lord in prayer;
In His arms He'll take and shield thee,
Thou wilt find a solace there."

Have you found that? Have you found that Jesus is a friend and a solace when every human support is cut off? God says:

"As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort
you" Isaiah 66:13.

Did you ever see a little child come in from play disappointed in the way his playmates treated him? He comes crying to mother. Mother takes the little one in her arms and soothes and comforts. The little one drops off to sleep. It is all right. What those bad boys and unkind girls have done is all out there. The little one has solace now in mother's arms.

God wants us to flee to Him as the little one does to mother.

There is a third reason why God allows men to fail us, why He allows us to go through these experiences. I think it is a wonderful reason. I trust God will give us all a real appreciation of it.

"Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus
Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort;
Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be
able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the
comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God" 2
Corinthians 1:3-4.

Would you like to comfort someone else? Well, you will have to get some comfort before you can give it to them. And one of the ways God has to prepare you to comfort someone else is to first let you go through an experience like they are going to have.

If you go through it, you can turn and say, Brother, be of good comfort. God will help you. I know it, because He helped me.

Do you think Joseph could comfort someone after thirteen years? Yes. It didn't take thirteen years. After eleven years we see him in the prison visiting and looking for someone to cheer and comfort. That is what brought about the contact that finally took him out of prison.

So today God is leading you and me through experiences that will prepare us to be good counselors, helpful comforters.

Are we willing to pay the price? Are we willing to be disappointed that we may encourage others who are disappointed? Are we willing to comfort them which are in trouble by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God?

I would like to have us notice how Christ Himself entered into these experiences. Did Jesus know the disappointment that comes through the failures of human beings? Yes, He did. Hear this sad heart pouring itself out on the cross:

"Reproach hath broken My heart; and I am full of heaviness: and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none. They gave Me also gall for My meat; and in My thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink" Psalm 69:20-21.

Forsaken by every human being Jesus hangs there and says, "Reproach hath broken My heart." He drank to the last drop that bitter cup of suffering that comes from the failure of human beings. Yet all that was accepted willingly by Him that He might enter into our experiences.

He also knew through His life disappointment again. In the synagog at Capernaum He preached that sermon to thousands of people who the day before had been ready to crown Him king. But as He preached the straight truth what did they do? They left Him. He finally said to the twelve, Will ye also go away? He was forsaken by ninety-eight percent of His followers that day.

What a tremendous disappointment. Yet He did not allow His spirit to be crushed by those experiences. When He came to the last hour He told them of the coming crisis, and told them they would all forsake Him. Notice where He was anchored:

"Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave Me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me" John 16:32.

He was anchored in His Father. Though men forsook Him and denied Him and betrayed Him, thank God, there was One in whom He could trust. Even on the cross, though He felt forsaken of God, He was so acquainted with His Father's character that in faith and faith alone He cast Himself upon the Lord and said, "Father, into Thy hands I commit My spirit." I commend My life to You.

It was beautiful trust. When all men had forsaken Him, and it even seemed that God had, nevertheless He was so rooted in the assurance of the Father's love that He was able to go through that awful crisis.

We must have that experience.

Why did Jesus go through these experiences? In order that He might receive this ministry of consolation. Just as we have studied that God sometimes leads us through experiences of disappointment in order that we may be able to comfort others, so we read concerning Jesus:

"For in that He himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted" Hebrews 2:18.

Succour means to help, to save, to deliver. Why can He do it? Because He has gone through that suffering.

"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" Hebrews 4:15-16.

He suffered because of human failure. And because of that He is able to help and bless others. We may come to Him in perfect confidence. In every trial and disappointment we may cast our helpless souls on Him and receive from Him the consolation which we in turn can share with others; the courage and comfort which will be to them the river of the water of life.

Oh, let us be willing to share in His ministry of consolation by being willing to enter into the fellowship of His sufferings.

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