

Relating to Others' Failures

#0064

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—October 1, 1971

One of the greatest practical problems that the young Christian meets is how to relate himself to the weaknesses, the faults, the lack of vision and the other apparent and obvious inadequacies of older Christians.

A number of students have come to this campus within the last few weeks. Doubtless many of you have come with a vision in your hearts of why the Lord has brought you here, the training that you wish to get, and the inspiration that you expect to receive in the classes, in the missionary endeavors, in the homes, and in contact with your fellow Christians. Human nature being what it is, some of you have already been disappointed. Others of you will be disappointed next week or the week after. And I'm speaking on this practical matter tonight, not merely for the new students that are here, but for *everyone* that is here. Everyone has problems. And one of the problems that everyone has sooner or later is the disappointment in not finding in the lives of other Christians what he is expected to find.

"The gospel is a wonderful simplifier of life's problems"
Ministry of Healing, page 363.

Do you have any problems? There is a simple solution. In fact, if you find the right solution, it will be a simple solution. And someone here tonight is going to get some problems solved. If you don't have any problems of your own right now, pray for those who do and take notes so that you can use these principles when you do run into problems either of your own or others.

Now, we're on this specific problem of how do we relate ourselves to the faults, failings, weaknesses, inadequacies of others who disappoint us. I invite your attention to the Master's words:

"Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh" Matthew 18:7.

Offence is rendered in other translations as occasions of stumbling. The idea is that I am walking along the path, and someone has carelessly or deliberately put a log in the road, and I stumble over it.

Whose fault is it? It's my fault for not watching better, isn't it? But too bad that fellow was either careless or malicious that left the piece of lumber there in my road. Isn't it? "Woe unto the world because of offences!" Occasions of stumbling: things that make people fall headlong in sin, in failure, in disappointment, in discouragement. "Woe unto the world because of [those things]," Jesus says. And "Woe to that man by whom the offence cometh." All that's easy to understand; it's

what he puts in the middle of the verse that's hard to understand. What does he say? "For it *must needs be* that offenses [occasions of stumbling] come." It *must needs be*. Well, I wonder why?

Wouldn't life be better all around if there was never anything to stumble over? Yes, it would, *provided*. And when those provisions are met, God is going to take us to a world where there'll never be any occasions of stumbling. We're not going to have to be watching to beware of stumbling blocks when we get to Heaven. Right? We're not going to, a thousand years from now and a million years from now and a billion years from now, have to be watching lest we fall; watching lest we misunderstand others or *be* misunderstood; watching lest we follow somebody's wrong example.

No. All of that belongs down here in this little planet, and right *now*. Those opportunities are not going to last very long, friends. The only chance we'll have to deal with problems like this is right now. Right now. The chance will soon be over. And Jesus says that it *must needs be* that these opportunities come—these occasions of stumbling.

Notice that Jesus doesn't say that it *must needs be* that we fall over the stumbling blocks, not at all. But it *must needs be* that we *meet* those occasions of stumbling.

And you say why? Well, let's think of the example, the illustration, in the life of a man who heard Jesus *speak* these words. Jesus tried to help him again and again. You remember, his name was Peter. Jesus told him repeatedly, "Peter, you need to watch and pray." And finally, the last evening before the Cross, as they were together, Jesus said, "Peter, you need to be converted, and then you can strengthen your brethren." There are going to come some problems tonight, and you'd better watch and pray." And Peter got offended, and Jesus said, "Peter, before the cock crows tomorrow morning, you'll be denying Me." "

"Oh, no, I won't do that. Even if all the others forsake You, I will be true."

Did Peter really mean it? Yes, he did. But Peter's problem was that he didn't know what was inside. For this reason, it *must needs be* that something would happen that would cause him to fall headlong, and what was *inside* would come *outside*. What for? So it could be *dealt* with.

In certain conditions, the physician will say, "That boil must be lanced."

Well, we say, "My, won't that hurt?"

Sure it'll hurt, but that corruption's got to get *out*. And do you know *why* it comes running out when the incision is made? Because it was *in* there. The doctor didn't make that corruption, but his knife *revealed* it.

If Peter had not been soundly converted as the result of this fall and his repentance afterward as he saw the Savior's loving look, if Peter had not been soundly converted, do you know how he would have reacted to all that? Picture it if

you will: He comes around among the brethren and John says, "Peter, old fellow, what's the matter? Whatever happened to you the other night when you cursed and swore and denied the Lord?"

Peter says, "John, don't bring that up. That's the trouble with people. They can't let me alone. I would have been all right the other night if that maid hadn't pointed her finger at me, and if that man hadn't asked me if I was a follower of Christ. I wasn't hurting anyone; I wasn't bothering anyone. If they had just let me alone, I would have been all right."

Did Peter talk that way? No. Why not? He fell so far and so flat. When the look of Jesus melted his heart, he knew that the trouble wasn't with the maid who pointed her finger, and it wasn't with the man who asked him. The trouble was with *Peter*. And do you know, just a few weeks later, in that very same courtroom before those very same people, that man, Peter, got up and eloquently expressed his faith in Jesus even though he was beaten as the result and later put in prison, they were ready to kill him. What made the change? He quit blaming circumstances, he quit blaming people, and he sought the Lord for an *experience*, and he got the victory over Peter. Once he got the victory over *Peter*, what people did, didn't make any difference. Do you see, friends? My point is: what was it *revealed* [inaudible word] to him?

Christ tried for three years and a half to get Peter ready for that examination, and then Peter flunked it. The best teacher this world ever saw drilled him day after day, and still he *missed* it. With such a man with such an attitude, it *must needs be* that offenses come. It must needs be that a stumbling block be in his way that he can stumble over and find out what's inside.

Here's a beautiful vase, and I knock it over and water runs all over the floor. Here's another vase. I knock it over and not a drop of water comes out. What's the difference? Just what was inside, that's all. Both had exactly the same treatment.

And if when you are turned over and something comes out, remember it was in there all the time. It was in there all the time. The circumstances didn't make it; they merely revealed it. So you see that one of the most important things in dealing with problems that come to us, the disappointments that other people don't measure up to our expectations, I say the basic thing is to understand this: God in His mercy *allows* us to come in contact with those situations in order to teach us certain lessons to reveal to us what is in our own hearts that we can get the victory and blessing of perfect harmony with God and perfect peace.

So, we're never to blame circumstances. We're not to blame other people. Not at all. Not at all.

Here's a statement in the book *Ministry of Healing* that I like very much. Oh, what a wonderful book this *Ministry of Healing* is. It isn't just a book on how to keep well; it's that. It's a great handbook for every Christian in how to live the life of peace in a world of confusion. Page 489:

“All experiences and circumstances are God's workmen whereby good is brought to us” *Ministry of Healing*, page 489.

Here is the Biblical statement of that same principle:

“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God” Romans 8:28.

Now, let me ask you something, friend. Do you love God? Do you? If you do, what are all things doing?

“But Brother Frazee, if you only knew.”

Brother Frazee doesn't know. But Who does know? God knows. And He's making all things do what? Work together for good. Notice it doesn't say all things are good. It says that all things *work* together for good. God is able—don't miss this—to take the very disappointment that you feel because someone doesn't measure up to your expectations, and use that to bring you a wonderful blessing.

Now, it doesn't necessarily follow. The same sunshine that ripens the grain ripens the weeds. The thorns and briars thrive in the same opportunities that the good crops do. In fact, often the weeds grow easier than the good crops. Don't they? So these things that I'm talking about do not of themselves *guarantee* that you will develop a good character. Coming here to this campus and finding help in the classes, help in the chapel talk, help in the home, help in the mission endeavor, and at the same time having these disappointing experiences because people don't measure up to their expectations. Neither one of those things will in itself develop a character. It's what you do about them that makes the difference.

Will you accept those things as God's providence and say, “Lord, what lesson are you seeking to teach me in this?” All experiences and circumstances are God's workmen, whereby good is brought to us. What is brought to us? Good. If we will let God operate on us. No surgeon is going to catch you and drag you into surgery and tie you down and put you under an anesthetic against your will and start carving on you because it might save your life. No, he won't do that.

Oh, let's let the Great Physician and Surgeon operate on us. What tools will He use? In many cases, He uses the mistakes and failures and inadequacies of others as tools to operate on us. What a shame if we insist that we choose the tools. The man who's doing the work ought to choose the tools. Don't you think so? And who's doing the work? God. Will you let Him use the tools He sees fit? Will you let Him use a supervisor, a home head, a church pastor, a teacher, or anyone He chooses to use in spite of their inadequacies, and perhaps even in and *through* their inadequacies? Will you?

God has been running this sort of program for 6,000 years. Look down through the history of the Bible and tell me if you find very many people whose lives are lives you would want to follow exactly? You will not find very many. We love to read about the life of Enoch that walked with God all those years, but we get

disappointed with the mistakes of Noah and Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and Moses and David and Solomon and on down through. But did God use those men? Every one I've mentioned. And God intends that as we study the lives of these men in the Bible, and as we look at our fellow Christians and see these weaknesses, we shall not copy them, not stumble over them, but we shall learn to look to *Jesus* and believe that every one of these experiences is an opportunity to press close to God and get a great blessing.

You remember that God led the nation of Israel out of Egypt, about two million souls—men, women and children. They spent 40 years in the desert and finally came across Jordan and into the Promised Land. They saw the walls of Jericho fall flat by a mighty miracle. They conquered the different nations and cities. Finally, Joshua divided the land among the 12 tribes, and they were settled in their lovely new situation. But God deliberately left some of those heathen nations here and there in the land. Why? That's what I want you to see, and it may shed light on someone's problems here tonight. Here is a very interesting verse tucked away in the pages of the Old Testament.

“Now these are the nations which the LORD left, to prove Israel by them, even as many of Israel as had not known all the wars of Canaan; Only that the generations of the children of Israel might know, to teach them war, at the least such as before knew nothing thereof” Judges 3:1–2.

Notice that God's program is to eventually conquer all of Canaan. But He conquers enough to get the children of Israel located, one tribe here and another there and another there, and then He deliberately leads nation after nation of these heathen to *prove* Israel. To teach them what? War. To teach them war; especially the ones that hadn't had the opportunity to learn it, such as the youngsters coming along.

How do you learn cooking? In the kitchen. How do you learn nursing? In a hospital or sanitarium. How do you learn agriculture? On a farm or in a garden. How do you learn war? On a battlefield. And God wanted these children of Israel to be experts in fighting the wars of the Lord.

You might have some questions about why He had them in warfare. That's another subject. They were fighting directly under God's leadership. He was calling the signals and giving the directions. This was a theocracy, they were soldiers of God and He wanted them to be successful and expert. And the way He had to teach them was to leave some of these heathen, wicked, apostate, rebellious nations that needed to be blotted out. He could have done it all at once when Joshua was there, but God said, “No. Joshua, I'm going to use you to get Israel started. I'm going to leave some of these problems so that the children and grandchildren, as they come along, will have a chance to get some exercise dealing with problems.

If you have come to Wildwood and found some problems left on this campus, I suggest that you would be greatly cheated if there weren't some around. Now there's no danger: besides all the ones you see, I could tell you some more. Many of you are lacking exercise along this line. Please let me know because I can turn you

loose on several that I know of: some Hivites, or Jebusites or Philistines that are just waiting to have someone tackle them with a spirit of Caleb. "We're well able to go up and take this fortress (or this nation, or that tribe)." Do you see what I'm getting at, dear friends?

Sometimes when I see the problems that baffle some people, I wish they could have the opportunity of being on this campus when we really had problems. But I recognize that there are different kinds of problems. What may be a problem to one, will not be a problem to another. Who is it that guides in selecting the kind of problem that you run into? God. Do you believe that? There are some of you that the very reason you are here and facing the problems that you see and that you recognize is because God sees that this is your opportunity to learn war.

You may be looking for a peace treaty, but God says, "No. I want you to learn war." Fight the good fight of faith is the message of God. That's Paul's words to Timothy: "Fight the good fight of faith." (1 Timothy 6:12) Look friend: how are you going to have a war if there's no enemy? How are you going to have a battle if there are no horses drawn up against you? How are you going to learn war if there's no war going on? I suggest to you that this is not a parade ground. It is a *battlefield*. Things are happening. Things are *popping*. Things are booming—the boom of cannons and the explosion of hand grenades. Oh friends, what a wonderful privilege to be called into the army of God and know that you're on the winning side.

When you see those problems, don't say, "What have I gotten into anyway"? You got into a war when you enlisted in the army of God. Didn't you know that?

Someone says, "Brother Frazee, when I became a Christian, I thought I was going to get along better, but it seems to me that I have more problems than ever.

That's all right. When you become a Christian, every problem is an opportunity to learn a precious lesson and develop a character to fit you for eternal life. Every one, no exception. Therefore there's nothing to complain about. There's nothing, in a sense, to be disappointed about. The whole question should be, "Lord, what are you trying to teach me?"

When my home head does something that disappoints me, and I wonder if I'm in the right place, what should I say? "Lord, what lessons have you in this thing for me?" If the Sabbath School teacher doesn't do things the way I think they should, what shall I say? "Lord, I'm here to learn war. I'm here to learn to pray. I'm here to learn to exercise faith. I'm here to learn to use circumstances as instruments with which to work instead of complaining about it." Oh friends, it's a wonderful thing to take that attitude.

This is our privilege. This is our destiny. This is why we're called here. And if something miraculously should happen overnight that should change every faltering, weak person on this place except you, and make them fully perfected saints, do you know what God would have to do? He'd have to move you fast. That's right. If you were the only one who hadn't been perfected yet, God would have to move you fast into a situation. And what is my proof for that? I read it in my opening text: "It must needs be that offenses come."

When God put Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden and gave them that beautiful home, there wasn't a thorn in the whole world at that time. There wasn't a briar or a weed. Every plant was in place. What a beautiful home it was. Oh, what a present it was to them from their Creator, their Friend. But when they sinned, even though they repented, God said, "Adam and Eve, you're going to have to go out from the Garden of Eden, and where you're going the thorns are going to scratch you, the thistles are going to hurt, and the weeds are going to get into your garden, and you're going to have to work hard until you sweat."

Adam and Eve *begged* to stay in the Garden of Eden, but they had to go. God put an angel there with a flaming sword to keep them away from the tree of life. Why? Not to get even with them. Not to punish them. "Cursed is the ground for thy sake. Adam, I'm sending you out to where the thorns grow, and the briars hurt for *your* sake." We are told by Inspiration that Eden no longer furnished the conditions for the development of their character. Having fallen into sin with their poor human natures, they had to be out where they had to tussle and wrestle with circumstances in order to develop character. To learn war, if you please.

And so, my dear friends, there are *weeds* at Wildwood, literal and figurative. There are thorns and briars at Wildwood. I know for I've been over these 600 acres. All the thorns and briars aren't out in the fields and forests. Some of them are in the homes and departments of this institution. Wherever you came from, there are some thorns and briars. There are some problems where you are. There are some people who rub you the wrong way. Perhaps you rub them the wrong way too. What is it all for? Cursed is the ground for thy sake. Oh, to learn to do what Adam and Eve learned to do and accept it as a dispensation of providence and say, "Lord, if the best way to get back to the garden home is to be out where the thorns and briars and the hard work and the sweat are, so be it, Lord. Help us to learn our lesson as quickly as possible."

So, my friends, there are problems where you are. If you are where God has placed you, there are problems. There must needs be that offenses come. They are not to discourage and dishearten you, and not to make you wonder what it all means. Here is the chance to learn war. Here is the chance to learn to pray. Here is the opportunity to develop a *faith* that you can go through anything.

Do you think we're going to jump from an easy life to Jacob's trouble in one leap? No. We're going to go through short division into long division and on into square root and cube root and on beyond. Where are you? Whatever the problem you have today, there's a bigger one coming next week or next month. Most of our problems come from people, but oh, the joy of knowing that *God* has chosen our changes, appointed our problems and is ready to be with us and help us.

Now I want to give you a prescription:

"Worry is blind, and cannot discern the future; but Jesus sees the end from the beginning. In every difficulty He has His way prepared to bring relief" *Ministry of Healing*, page 481.

Let me stop on that before I come on to the prescription. “In every difficulty He has His way prepared to bring relief.” Will you repeat that with me? “In every difficulty He has His way prepared to bring relief.”

If I run away from difficulty, what do I also run away from? The way to bring relief, because they all come in the same package.

Jesus brought water out of a *rock* and rained manna out of the *sky*. Two very unlikely places. Wherever God has put you, He has His way prepared to bring relief.

“Our heavenly Father has a thousand ways to provide for us of which we know nothing. Those who accept the one principle of making the service of God supreme, will find perplexities vanish, and a plain path before their feet”
Ibid.

It sounds too good to be true, but friends, it's too good not to be true.

“Those who accept the one principle of making the service of God supreme, will find perplexities vanish, and a plain path before their feet” *Ibid.*

This is the key: What does supreme mean? On top, overpowering. *The* thing in life. What is it? The service of God. Let me put it in another way: Your success depends on which is more important to you—solving *your* problems or helping God solve *God's* problems. Which is it?

I was talking to someone and asked them, “What would you like to have the folks who assign work consider when they come to your name? Would you like to have them consider what you think would best develop you and best prepare you for what you would like to do later, or would you like to have them consider what most needs to be done that you know how to do?”

I left them to think about it for a few days. They came back to me and said, “Brother Frazee, I have decided that the thing I want those who administer the program to consider is where I can best meet the need and what most needs to be done that I can best help in.”

You know that made me very happy. Because I *know*. This is the point of the whole thing. I know that that attitude opens the way for that worker to get the best development. How do I know? Because I read the very next sentence on page 481 of the *Ministry of Healing*.

“The faithful discharge of today's duties is the best preparation for tomorrow's trials” *Ibid.*

The thing that will best prepare me for tomorrow is to do the thing that meets the need the best today. This is the paradox of the Christian life. This is made possible *only* because God is on His throne and is running this universe, and making all things work together for good in this world. If *you* had been preparing the Son of

God, who took our nature and came to this world, if you had been preparing Him to be a physician, a minister, a teacher, would you have put Him for the first 30 years of His life in a little, humble home at Nazareth and had Him spend most of His time either in home duties or working in a carpenter shop? Would you have done that? God did. Was it successful? Yes.

If you had been preparing Joseph to be the savior of Egypt and the savior of his own brethren, would you have allowed him to be a slave for ten years in Potiphar's house and then three years as a captive unjustly accused, confined in prison? Would you have put him through that kind of apprenticeship? No, you wouldn't. I wouldn't either. But the dear Lord, Who was guiding and controlling his life, made all those circumstances work together for good. And when it was all over, *Joseph* could say to his brothers, "You meant it for evil, but God meant it for good."

Friends, listen, you will never have an experience like Joseph. No two lives are ever alike. There are never two cut after the same pattern. The thing I would like to have God impress your life with is that our troubles do not spring up out of the ground. Our problems are not just helter-skelter, hit and miss. The particular problems you are facing, in your home life, in your finances, in health, in education, in relations, in missionary endeavors, on this campus or off it, those problems are your glorious opportunity to learn war, to learn to be on the winning side. And the way to learn war is not to be without battles.

God help everyone to see that the way to be victorious is to have problems. See that the way to win the victory is to start right where you are and meet life as it is and ask God to help you to learn how, and He will help you.

Now a promise for you. Oh, what a wonderful, wonderful promise this is:

"Call unto Me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee
great and mighty things, which thou knowest not"
Jeremiah 33:3.

God is speaking here. Brethren, students, there are problems on this place that have baffled the minds of people for *years* that some student here could solve by a season of wrestling with God in prayer. I am just as sure of that as I stand here. Some baby coming in from the shepherd's life with his sling may slay a Goliath who has challenged the armies of Israel for 40 days and more. You don't have to be weak in the face of difficulty. You don't have to be baffled in the face of problems. To your knees, my dear friend, young and old, and *believe* that God will fulfill His promise. "Call unto Me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not."

I was talking with someone a few days ago. I told them that their problem was feeling sorry for themselves. Now I don't always talk to people that frankly, most people can't stand it, but this needed to be said. And the person looked up to me and said, "Why do you say *that*?" I said, "Well, because it's the truth." You have to see your problem in order to get help. If we will lay aside all self-pity, all feeling sorry for ourselves, and meet the giant with faith in God and a little sling, we shall see

glorious victories in every problem in life. The life of the trusting disciples is like that of his Master, a *series* of uninterrupted victories. Let's claim the promise.

“Call unto Me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee
great and mighty things, which thou knowest not”
Jeremiah 33:3.

I'd like to hear some young Calebs and older ones too. Come up to this platform, one after the other, and in one sentence, express your faith, your courage, your determination. If you feel like doing it, do it because God says so; not because you feel it. If you *don't* feel like doing it, then do it anyway, *if* you see that this is God's promise and you're going to take hold of it by faith.

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