

Hope When You Feel Like You're Failing



David Wilkerson (1931-2011) September 25, 2020

Do you ever feel as though you haven't accomplished much in life, and many promises are unfulfilled? If so, you're in good company; in fact, you are standing among spiritual giants.

Many great servants of God throughout history ended up feeling that they failed in their calling. The prophet Elijah looked at his life and cried, "Lord, take me home! I'm no better than my fathers, and all of them failed you. Please, take my life! Everything has been in vain" (see 1 Kings 19:4).

David Livingstone, one of the world's most useful missionaries, opened up the African continent to the gospel, sowing much seed and being used by God to awaken England for missions. Yet, during his twenty-third year on the mission field, Livingstone expressed the same awful doubts as other great servants. His biographer quotes him in his despondency: "All my work seems to be in vain."

George Bowen's book, *Love Revealed*, is one of the greatest books on Christ ever written. A single man, Bowen turned away from wealth and fame to become a missionary in Bombay, India, in the mid-1800s. He chose to live among the very poorest, preaching on the streets in sweltering weather, distributing gospel literature and weeping over the lost.

This amazingly devoted man had gone to India with high hopes for the ministry of the gospel. Yet, in his forty-plus years of ministry, Bowen had not one convert. It was only after his death that mission societies discovered he was one of the most beloved missionaries in the nation.

Like so many before him, Bowen endured a terrible sense of failure. He wrote, "I am the most useless being in the church ... I would like to sit with Job, and I sympathize with Elijah. My labor has all been in vain."

It is no sin to endure such thoughts, or to be cast down with a sense of failure. But it is dangerous to allow these hellish lies to fester and enflame your soul. Jesus showed us the way out of such despondency with this statement: "I have labored in vain ... yet surely my just reward is with the Lord, and my work with my God" (Isaiah 49:4). Christ is saying, in effect, "The Father alone passes judgment on all that we've done and how effective we've been."

The Lord wants you to leave all that "failure thinking" behind and get back to work. Nothing has been in vain! He is going to do abundantly more than you could think or ask!

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