



GUIDELINES DAILY COMMENTARY ON LIVING WITH DR. HAROLD J. SALA

Subject: Pastors' failures

Release date: October 7, 2016

WHY DOES A MAN OF GOD FALL?

...I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him until that day. 2 Timothy 1:12

"Dear Dr. Sala," writes a college student, "Why have so many pastors and Christian leaders fallen in recent days?" The question on the heart of that young man, who listens to *Guidelines* in Manila, has been on the minds of many people who have cried out in both anger and hurt, "Why?" Long ago Paul wrote, "So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!" (1 Corinthians 10:12.)

In recent days, I've known and have talked with more than a few men who cut short fruitful ministries and ruined their lives with poor choices which deeply hurt wives and children, and I've asked that same question, "Why? You had so much going for you. How could you have done this?" While there are many variations to the answer, I'll give you some reasons as to why men of God fall.

(1) Busyness causes men of God to lose touch with reality. "Too busy!" The end result is you lose touch with your own feelings, your wife and children, and with God as well. Most men accomplishing things feel the pressures of ministry, the push to produce, the urgency of rushing over there to counsel this person, and put out that fire so the work can run smoothly. A boat in the harbor drifts with the tide when it isn't properly anchored, and, frankly, it takes time to keep relationships right--first with God, with our wives and families, and even with ourselves. Pastors need time, unstructured, uncluttered time for this, and often that time just isn't there, so it has to be taken at the cost of something.

(2) Men of God get into trouble when they focus on the immediate as opposed to long-term consequences. It's at this point that you get the response, "I don't know why I did it. I know better. I just didn't think!" It's always easy to come up with some rationalization: "My wife didn't meet my needs." "She was always busy, and she didn't understand what was going on in my life." "It's my mid-life crisis." Every man of God who falls knows better. He knows of others who have ruined their marriages and ministries, but the thought, "It *could* happen to me too!" is pushed aside by the warm feelings and emotions of the immediate.

(3) Another reason for failure is that success brings a sense of entitlement with it that conveys the message, "Who can challenge me --look what I have done!" It's another version of the theme that power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely! Most men who have succeeded in building large churches or organizations, get their way. They are successful and nothing succeeds like success; so when they want something badly, they aren't used to being denied, and unfortunately God doesn't protect us from the bitterness of wrong choices which are sinful.

(4) There's one more factor that I'd like you to consider, and this doesn't point the finger at fallen men as much as it implicates the rest of us in the process. Men and women who are on the front lines of Christian service are engaged in a spiritual battle, and are sustained by our prayers and encouragement. Satan is alive and well and often targets the body of Christ by hitting its leaders, but prayer for Christian leaders helps in this sustained spiritual battle.

Having served as a pastor myself, and being involved in the lives of Christian leaders, I can tell you for a fact--the life of a Christian servant is often a pretty lonely one. Many remind you of your failures, but few of what you do right. May God help us to stand strong and remember we represent the King.

Resource Reading: 1 Corinthians 10