

Learning How To Handle Mistakes

Proverbs 24:16 - NKJV - 16 For a righteous man may fall seven times and rise again, but the wicked shall fall by calamity.

It would be wonderful if we could live life mistake free. If we could wake up every morning with the assurance that we will think, say, do everything correctly. Unfortunately, that is not the case - we all make mistakes. It is well-known that we are not perfect beings and sometimes stray from the way of righteousness. I, yes, even I have made my fair share of mistakes and I have my wife who will gladly witness to the fact that I have. No one intentionally wants to make a mistake, but they happen. What we want to avoid is making the same mistake over and over again.

Now, I don't want you to conclude that your life has to be lived with a myriad of mistakes. Jesus died and rose again so that we might live the abundant life, life to the full, which means as a born-again believer we can wake up viewing life from the standpoint of an overcomer and not as someone who is constantly overwhelmed by mistakes. We must get to a place in our life where we can honestly realize that there are areas we have authority over. The Word of God lets us know that we can live life in this manner. We can overcome in areas where we have made mistakes.

Mistake is defined in Websters Dictionary as making a wrong judgement about something, or to identify someone or something incorrectly. Personally, a mistake is something that has happened without the full knowledge of the doer, or something that resulted in consequence.

Proverbs 24:16 lets us know that every time a righteous man falls he will learn from his mistakes and try not to fall in the same trap again. When we are committed to learning from a mistake, it eases the discomfort the mistake causes. We can get past our feelings of disappointment with the lessons we learn. We can gain wisdom from our past and move forward to our future with a better understanding.

The enormity of a mistake is often viewed and based upon the situation in which it happens. What would normally be trivial in one setting now becomes extremely blown out of proportion in another. The insignificant becomes significant from another person's perspective. Regardless of the size of the mistake, we have to learn how to deal with it and move on from our it. Otherwise, we will allow the enemy to keep us captive in continual cycle of blame, condemnation, and criticism - whether it is concerning the mistake of ourselves or others. There are Christians who are living their lives like a car stuck in a mud puddle. They are spinning their wheels in anger and frustration rehashing and holding onto their mistakes or the mistakes of others that impacted their life and they're effortlessly getting nowhere. Forgiveness is the order of the day. We must forgive ourselves and forgive others.

How to Learn from Your Mistakes and Move On

1. If You Make A Mistake - Deal With It - Don't Deny It

It is hard to obtain help when you are in the wrong and in denial of your mistake. There is always the temptation to blame others and not take personal responsibility.

Psalms 69:5 - ESV - O God, you know my folly; the wrongs I have done are not hidden from you. We must accept the consequences of bad choices which lead to our mistakes and come clean with Jesus Christ and others. David found himself in this predicament. After experiencing the fallout from adultery, murder and a rebellious child, he discovered one common denominator, himself.

Psalms 51:1-4, 10-12 - 1 Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your steadfast love; according to the multitude of Your tender mercy and loving-kindness blot out my transgressions. 2 Wash me thoroughly [and repeatedly] from my iniquity and guilt and cleanse me and make me wholly pure from my sin! 3 For I am conscious of my transgressions and I acknowledge them; my sin is ever before me. 4 Against You, You only, have I sinned and done that which is evil in Your sight, so that You are justified in Your sentence and faultless in Your judgment. 10 Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right, persevering, and steadfast spirit within me. 11 Cast me not away from Your presence and take not Your Holy Spirit from me. 12 Restore to me the joy of Your salvation and uphold me with a willing spirit. TV personality and psychologist Dr Phil says, "You can't change what you don't acknowledge." Denying you made a mistake is lying to yourself.

2. If You Make A Mistake - Don't Dwell On It

Philippians 3:13 - AMP - 13 Brothers and sisters, I do not consider that I have made it my own yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead. The Apostle Paul realized that in order to obtain the levels in Christ that were before him, he would have to forget the mistakes of the past. He realized that he would have to see himself from a different viewpoint regardless of how others saw him. We are talking about a man who would round up Christians and have them executed. A man who would do what every he could to stop the cause of Christ. Yet, now, this same man could declare to the church of Corinth in **II Corinthians 7:2 (MES)** - 2 Trust us. We've never hurt a soul, never exploited or taken advantage of anyone.

Isaiah 43:18 - NIV - 18 Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past.

Satan is the mastermind at bringing our past mistakes to the forefront of our thoughts. He tends to remind us right before we are ready to take steps of faith to accomplish great things. We must resist dwelling on our past mistakes and continue to speak the word of God to opposing thoughts.

II Corinthians 10:4-5 - KJV - 4 (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds) 5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

Ephesians 4:27 - KJV - 27 Neither give place to the devil.

James 4:7 - KJV - Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

3. If You Make A Mistake - Don't Return To It

You don't want to be a repeat offender. Our legal system will often provide leniency for first time offenders, but if someone continually commits a crime or an act that is chargeable by law, the penalty is enforced and usually greater.

Proverbs 26:11-12 - Like a dog that returns to its vomit, a fool does the same foolish things again and again. People who think they are wise when they are not are worse than fools.

2 Peter 2:22 - Of them the proverbs are true: "A dog returns to its vomit," and, "A sow that is washed returns to her wallowing in the mud."

Know this, even if you are a repeat offender, making the same mistakes, Jesus paid the price for every one of those mistakes. He loves you and will forgive you if you ask.

4. If You Make A Mistake - Gain Wisdom From It

Proverbs 4:7 - Wisdom is the principal thing; Therefore get wisdom. And in all your getting, get understanding.

Wisdom is the just judgement on the best way to act on knowledge. Understanding is the difference between having a loose familiarity with something and knowing it intimately. Knowing what to do is good. But knowing why and how it should be done is even better.

Godly wisdom provides divine direction on what to do, why to do, when to do, and how to do a thing. Acquiring godly wisdom can be the key to avoiding a mistake. How do I obtain wisdom?

James 1:5 - NASB - 5 But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

When you realize you've made a mistake, see what you have learned so that you can apply them the next time you face a similar situation. Ask the Holy Spirit to teach you what you should learn from the situation.

John 14:26 - "the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you"

5. If You Make A Mistake - Don't Give Up, Rise Up

Proverbs 24:16 - NIV - for though the righteous fall seven times, they rise again...

Psalms 37:23-24 - AMP - 23 The steps of a [good] man are directed and established by the Lord when He delights in his way [and He busies Himself with his every step]. 24 Though he falls, he shall not be utterly cast down, for the Lord grasps his hand in support and upholds him. Forgive yourself when you make a mistake and be quick to forgive others for their mistakes.

If Satan had his way, he would use your mistake to make a rut for you. Someone once described a rut as a grave with the ends kicked away. In other words, you can move but you end up going nowhere. That's what mistakes try to do. But I want you to know that the Word of God in Proverbs 24:16 lets us know that even though we may fall that we have not failed. As Bishop told us Sunday, don't allow a mistake to define you. You may have made it, but that's not who you are. You are an overcomer, you are the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus. Now use your mistakes to be the stepping stones to get you out of the rut of life in Jesus Name.