

## How Should We Respond When a Brother Falls?

Have you ever been disappointed by people you thought were close to the Lord? In our growth in grace, it will be a trial when those we look up to fall. What do we do? To whom do we go? What do we say? How do we respond? What should we do?

### 1. Lift the fallen if we are able.

The Bible says, *“Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted”* (Galatians 6:1). When a brother or sister in Christ falls, we are to restore them. The word “restore” in Greek is the word that means to set the bone that has been broken. Setting a broken bone takes time, skill and patience to recover. Healing rarely takes place overnight. We live in a culture that wants everything done right now. We cannot speed through the healing process. Although forgiveness is instant the moment we truly repent and ask God to forgive us, restoration still takes time. A person doesn’t just jump into a serious sin; they have been contemplating and laying the groundwork in that direction for some time. So, it will take time for groundwork to be done to shift into a perpetual mode of obedient living for Christ.

Strong and continual doses of the Word of God will bolster us against the evil day. Therefore, we need to study and memorize the Scriptures. *“Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word”* (Psalm 119:9). *“Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee”* (Psalm 119:11). *“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth”* (II Timothy 2:15). Let us instruct our fallen to return to the Word and do more than “get into the Word”; we need to remind them to be so saturated with the Bible that the Word will be getting into them! *“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another...”* (Colossians 3:16).

Praying will build up the Christian to resist future bouts with temptation. *“But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost”* (Jude 1:20). In the same way that someone who wins gold at the Olympics has built himself or herself up to win, praying builds up the believer to resist temptation. Let us “pray the price” and teach the hurting to do the same.

I have made the statement “if we are able.” It is important to know that we must be advanced in the ways and Word of God if we are going to help others. *“And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also”* (II Timothy 2:2).

### 2. Learn from the mistakes of the fallen.

Again, I bring to your attention Galatians 6:1: *“Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.”* The Bible is teaching us to consider ourselves, realizing that until we get to Heaven no one is immune from backsliding. Re-evaluation is good for all of us. Where are we, spiritually speaking? We should check ourselves out and repair what is broken down and rebuild our walk with God. Listen to what those who have fallen have said. One of the most oft heard statements from the fallen I have heard is, “I did not believe it could happen to me.” Paul said, *“But by the grace of God I am what I am...”* (I Corinthians 15:10). It is by God’s unmerited favor that we are anything! Pride is an awful thing. *“Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall”* (I Corinthians 10:12). *“Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall”* (Proverbs 16:18).

God never tells us we are “home free”; au contraire! In the matter of our discipleship we are to constantly look inside ourselves and see if there is the least leaning or propensity toward the wrong and turn away from the wrong and turn toward the right. *“But let a man examine himself...”* (I Corinthians 11:28). *“Examine yourselves...prove your own selves...”* (II Corinthians 13:5). Sometimes we can get so quickly distant from the Lord, we may not readily spot the early advance of inclination toward evil, therefore, above all, we should pray with the Psalmist, *“Examine me, O LORD, and prove me; try my reins and my heart”* (Psalm 26:2). *“Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting”* (Psalm 139:23,24).

### **3. Rely on the Lord.**

*“Blessed is that man that maketh the LORD his trust, and respecteth not the proud...”* (Psalm 40:4). *“O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps”* (Jeremiah 10:23). Our hope in is the Lord. We dare not trust man; our trust is in the Lord. He will never let you down; He will never disappoint you!

The Church is not built upon man. It is built upon Jesus Christ and no one will bring her down! Our Lord gave us His promise: *“And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it”* (Matthew 16:18).

### **4. Regard the Unfallen.**

When a brother or sister falls, we have a tendency to take the attitude of Chicken Little in the nursery rhyme. If you recall, an acorn fell on the chick’s head and she then presumed the world was coming to an end and began to tell everyone, “The sky is falling; the sky is falling!” We laugh at this, but so often people develop the “Chicken Little Syndrome” -- when someone who is very visible and pronounced takes a dive. We need to not underestimate the fall of anyone, but we need not overestimate it either. The Church will go on; the kingdom of God will survive and thrive! God is bigger than man or his failures. When we witness others fall, it would serve all of us well to consider those who have not fallen and be encouraged by their faithfulness. The Apostle Paul who

lived so faithfully, was able to say by God's grace, "*Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ*" (I Corinthians 11:1).

A little boy saw his first falling star and in a panic began to run into the house screaming, "The stars are falling!" His patient father held tightly to his hand and said, "Son, look up into the sky and tell me what you see!" The boy replied, "Stars, bright shining stars...and they are not falling, Daddy!" "That's right boy; the sky is full of them." I would ask all of us to take a second look back up into the sky of God's plan and purposes. The sky is full of unfallen stars, still faithfully shining -- illuminating this dark night! The Lord Jesus said, "... *The seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches...*" (Revelation 1:20). In the book of the Revelation, the stars are the messengers or pastors to the seven local church of Asia Minor. What a blessing to know that God still has His preachers in His right hand. Oh yes! The stars are still shining!

-Pastor Pope-

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