

Why Christian Ministries Fail

'Have this in your mind, which was also in Jesus' mind. Existing in the form of God, He did not consider equality with God a privilege to be grasped, but He emptied Himself taking the form of a servant, made in the likeness of men in human form, He humbled Himself becoming obedient to death, yes even to the death of the cross. Therefore God highly exalted Him and gave to Him the name above every name' (Philippians 2:5 to 9). 'Be of the same mind one toward another. Do not set your mind on high things but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own conceits' (Romans 12:16). 'Yes, all of you clothe yourselves with humility. Subject yourselves to one another for, "God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble." Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God so He may exalt you in due time' (1 Peter 5:5 & 6).

Why do Christian ministries fail? There are several reasons. One reason is **Pride**. Men who were once humble servants of God find themselves honoured in churches, clapped, applauded and given cash 'love offerings' whether they need it or not. If they are not careful to keep focused on God, over time those once humble men become proud. The humility is overcome by the pride of their status among other church leaders. Some ministers will not preach unless a cash 'donation' is given to them. Many have fallen into sexual sin as younger women become star struck by the 'mighty man of God'. Some end up in prison. Some end up divorced from their faithful wives. Some repent and try to bounce back in an attempt to start their ministries all over again, but the stain of their sin follows them wherever they go and their second attempt to minister is not as powerful as the first because when God removes His anointing, it may be gone forever just as it was with King Saul. Saul repented of his sin and tried again but once the anointing was taken from him, he never got it back. Samuel said to Saul, "Though you were little in your own sight (humble), you were made the head of the tribes of Israel. God anointed you king over Israel and He sent you on a journey (mission) ... Why then did you not obey the voice of God, but flew on the spoil (became greedy) and did what was evil in the sight of the Lord?" (1 Samuel 15:17 to 19). When discerning Christians can see a leader going awry and try to warn him, the leader often refuses to listen so the genuine believers begin to leave the church. Instead of putting his life right with God, the leader often resorts to gimmicks – pushing people over, having plastic 'gold dust' falling from the ceiling, taking more and more money from the congregation, having false 'healings' by asking healthy people to pretend to be lame so they can be miraculously 'healed' in front of thousands. That is spiritual 'fraud'. To remain in ministry we need to be humble or God Himself will resist us. 'Pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit (attitude) before a fall' (Proverbs 16:18).

Corruption. The revivals that have taken place in waves around the world have mostly been corrupted by false prophets and sinful leaders. Jesus is coming back for churches and assemblies without spots or blemishes, in other words, holy and without sin. Leaders are to uphold the Word of God by their behaviour. 'Jesus came so He might sanctify the church, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the Word so He might present the assembly to Himself gloriously, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but it should be holy and without blemish' (Ephesians 5:26 & 27). 'Keep the commandment without spot (sin), blameless, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus' (1 Timothy 6:14). Leaders with powerful ministries need to remain holy and blameless to show the Light of the Lord to this generation. 'Become blameless and harmless, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you are seen as lights in the world, upholding the Word of Life (the Bible)' (Philippians 2:15 & 16). Revivals will continue to unravel until leaders improve their behaviour. We all need to learn from the mistakes made in previous revivals. The Holy Spirit did marvellous things during the revivals but those marvels were soon forgotten because of a lack of integrity amongst the leaders. None of us are perfect people, but the way some modern churches behave is overtly sinful. Leaders need to repent, restore their churches before it is too late and guide their congregations on the right path to holiness and pure, Godly love.

Wealth. Some leaders have become like charlatans taking vast amounts of money from both their own congregations and unsuspecting audiences from around the world. Like Saul, they are overcome by greed. The television 'evangelists' are the worst. Some leaders and television evangelists peddle the Gospel for money. Their ungodly greed has sullied the name of God and stopped some genuine believers attending church altogether. When challenged about their greed, they become angry and try to claim it is God who has told them to ask for money, and they end up very wealthy but have lost their close relationship with the Lord, preaching without any anointing. They end up with huge homes, expensive cars, boats, jets then beg for more money to fund their extravagant lifestyles. God gives them what they want in the way of material possessions but He also gives them 'leanness into their soul' or a greatly diminished relationship with Him, dissatisfied and discontent with living by faith (Psalm 106:15). Money in itself is not the problem. It is the love of money that reduces these men to being people filled with greed and sorrow. 'Godliness with contentment is great gain for we brought nothing into the world and we certainly cannot carry anything out, but be content having food and clothing. But (sadly) those who are determined to be rich fall into temptation and are snared with many foolish and harmful lusts, such as drowning men in ruin and destruction. The love of money is a

root of all kinds of evil. Some have been led astray from the faith in their greed and have pierced themselves through with many sorrows' (1 Timothy 6:6 to 10).

Sin. God does not bless sin and will remove His Holy Spirit from people who act in this manner and will give the anointing to another. When King Saul had been called and anointed by the Lord, he began his mission well but he later sinned and his anointing was removed and given to David, even though Saul repented and Samuel prayed and wept for him all night. 'Samuel said to Saul, "You have done foolishly. You have not kept the commandment of God. He would have established your kingdom over Israel but now your kingdom will not continue. Because you have not kept God's command, God has sought for Himself a man after His own heart and has appointed him to be prince over His people"' (1 Samuel 13:13 & 14). The Lord said to Samuel, "It grieves Me that I have set up Saul to be king, for he has turned back from following Me and has not performed My commandments." Samuel was angry and he cried to the Lord all night' (1 Samuel 15:10 & 11). Far too many ministers who have fallen into sin blame the devil. That attitude is wrong. The devil can tempt people to sin but he cannot force them to sin. People have to take responsibility for their own actions. If we stay grounded in God with all our hearts, He can keep us from falling into sin (Jude 1:24). If we stay focused on God, sin cannot have dominion over us (Romans 6:14).

Fear of disapproval. Even though Saul repented, his leadership was permanently destroyed because he rejected the Word of God, then he denied his disobedience and blamed the people for his sin. Modern Christians and their leaders sometimes reject the Word of God then attempt to justify their sin. 'Saul said to Samuel, "Yes I have obeyed the voice of God and have gone the way He sent me ... But the people took of the spoil, sheep and cattle ... to sacrifice to God." Samuel said, "Does God delight more in burnt offerings and sacrifices, than in you obeying the voice of God? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to listen better than the fat of rams. Rebellion is as evil the sin of witchcraft and stubbornness is as evil as idolatry. Because you have rejected the Word of God, He has rejected you from being king (or church leader)." Saul said to Samuel, "I have sinned for I have transgressed the commandment of God and your words because I feared the people and obeyed their voice. Please pardon my sin and return with me so I may worship God." Samuel said to Saul, "I will not return with you for you have rejected the Word of the Lord and God has rejected you from being king over Israel." As Samuel turned to leave, Saul grabbed the skirt of his robe and it tore. Samuel said to him, "God has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today and has given it to a neighbour of yours who is better than you. The Strength of Israel (Jesus) will not lie nor repent for He is not a man that He should repent." Saul again said, "I have sinned yet honour me now, please, before the elders of my people and before Israel and return with me so I may worship the Lord your God"' (1 Samuel 15:20 to 30). Notice Saul's confession. He sinned because he wanted the approval of the people more than he wanted God's approval. That same situation is described in the New Testament. 'The time will come when they (Christians) will not listen to sound doctrine but having itching ears, will heap up for themselves teachers after their own lusts and will turn their ears away from the Truth (the Bible) and turn aside to fables' (2 Timothy 4:3 & 4). Notice too, Samuel said Saul had rejected God's Word. Jesus is the Word of God (Revelation 19:13). That was why Saul was rejected. No one can reject Jesus and expect favour from God. When corrupt leaders reject the Word of God and preach their own message, they are indirectly rejecting Jesus and so their ministries are doomed to fail. God will tear a ministry from a disobedient leader and give it to another, more genuine servant. Jesus is the Strength of Israel and at that time He was not yet a human man because He had not yet come to earth. We can see the desperation Saul was feeling. He wanted the honour of the people and the elders and pleaded for Samuel to honour him in the people's sight. How like a fallen evangelist is that behaviour? They publicly plead for forgiveness and declare they have sinned, but when God tears a ministry from a fallen leader, he does not restore the honour they once had. The anointing is gone forever. 'The Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul (1 Samuel 16:14). The long passage of scripture describing the rise and fall of Saul should serve as a warning to leaders who are erring.

Lack of humility. We are reminded in the scriptures, we are to be servants. If it was good enough for Jesus to humble Himself when He is the Lord of glory, then as His servants, we must also humble ourselves and serve both God and the community in which we live because, "A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his Lord. It is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher and for the servant to be like his Lord" (Matthew 10:24 & 25). Being a servant is the biggest requirement for any leader. Many leaders today have huge egos and demand special treatment in the same way many movie stars demand ridiculously personal treatment. Like the carnal world of movie stars, some preachers send long lists of their requirements before they will speak. They demand luxurious accommodation. They demand cronies accompany them like 'roadies' to carry their briefcase, to provide them with water and the preacher walks up with a huge Bible under his arm to make himself look very important. They stand up soaking in the applause before they begin talking about themselves, their families, their ministry, their travels and all the wonderful things they are doing, then in the last five minutes they happen to mention a verse or two from the Bible, written on a sheet of paper they grandiosely slide out of their huge Bible with pretended nonchalance, all pre-typed and written by someone else. Are these men humble servants? Not at all. They are attention seekers,

puffed up with pride, deceived and they lead others astray. 'These things I have written to you concerning those who would lead you astray' (1 John 2:26). Teachers are servants and are the chosen vessels God uses to teach His Word (Acts 9:15). No teacher, preacher, leader or evangelist should take any time talking about themselves. Their ministry is not all about them – it is about teaching the Word and showing Jesus to this dark world. They should spend all the time they have teaching the Word of God. 'We do not preach (about) ourselves but Jesus as Lord and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake ... We have this treasure in clay vessels so the exceeding greatness of the power may be of God, and not from ourselves' (2 Corinthians 4:5 & 7). 'If anyone purges themselves from sin, they will be a vessel for honour, sanctified and suitable for the Master's use, prepared for every good work. Flee from worldly desires and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace with those who call on the Lord with a pure heart' (2 Timothy 2:21 & 22).

Arrogance. Many preachers and leaders are very arrogant and rude. They show little respect for people, especially the poor and they sometimes criticise people who come for prayer. The preachers believe they are better or on a 'higher plane' than other people. Sometimes when they preach, to sound 'cool' they make jokes of the Bible and even mock Jesus and other people mentioned in the Bible. When the apostles travelled around preaching and teaching, they had fellow team workers with them, not cronies to do their bidding. We are not to 'lord' it over any person but to be a comfort to those who are suffering. 'Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Jesus ... Greet Urbanus, our fellow worker in Jesus ... Timothy, my fellow worker greets you' (Romans 16:3, 9 & 21). 'We are God's fellow workers' (1 Corinthians 3:9) 'We have no lordship over your faith, but we are fellow workers with you ... Titus is my partner and fellow worker' (2 Corinthians 1:24; 8:23). Notice what the Lord says about the humble people who consider all other believers as fellow workers, not minions. Their names are written in the Book of Life. 'Yes, I ask you also true yokefellows, help these women for they laboured with me in the Gospel with the rest of my fellow workers whose names are written in the Book of Life' (Philippians 4:3). 'These are my fellow workers for the Kingdom of God, men who have been a comfort to me' (Colossians 4:11). Preachers are not honoured men of distinction, they are people who are saved by the grace of God and who are called to minister the Word of God. They are set apart to teach the Word. They are not set apart to exalt themselves. It is the Lord Who will exalt us in due time, if we are found worthy. If men are exalted by other people, that is truly all the reward they will ever get. It is the quiet, humble person who goes about their business of serving God in secret who will be exalted. These are the last days and this is the time when some Christian leaders will have a form of godliness but deny His power, lovers of themselves, lovers of money rather than loving our God. The following verse tells us why life will be so grievous in the future for genuine believers – because of religious hypocrites. 'Know this, in the last days grievous times will come. Men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, fierce, no lovers of good, traitors, headstrong, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, holding a form of godliness but denying the power thereof. Turn away from these' (2 Timothy 3:1 to 5). Remember what Jesus taught us. "When you are invited to a marriage feast (or any occasion), do not sit in the best seat since perhaps someone more honourable than you might be invited and he who invited both of you would come and tell you, 'Make room for this person.' Then you would, with shame, take the lowest place. When you are invited, go and sit in the lowest place so when he who invited you comes, he may tell you, 'Friend, move up higher.' Then you will be honoured in the presence of all who sit at the table with you. Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted. When you make a dinner do not call your friends or family nor rich neighbours because they might return the favour and pay you back. When you make a feast, ask the poor, the maimed, the lame or the blind and you will be blessed, because they do not have the resources to repay you. You will be repaid in the resurrection of the righteous" (Luke 14:8 to 14). Do wealthy, arrogant, international preachers ever invite the poor to their luxurious homes for a meal? Pride, arrogance and wealth turns weak men of God into spiritually detached leaders who no longer shine God's light on the world, nor does their behaviour honour the Word of God.

Carnality. Some churches are not managed like holy assemblies, created by God with Jesus as the Head to teach the saved and reach the lost to increase the Kingdom of God. They are managed like money-making, profit-making businesses with very wealthy pastors who never pay tax. Various congregations in neighbouring towns or suburbs compete with one another. They try to outdo each other with the biggest churches, fanciest buildings, loudest music, most popular trendy sermons, the best coffee shop, the most professional movie-like notices blasted across screens. They give the church a silly, modern name and they use the most exciting gimmicks. They 'honour' the weirdest preachers who should in all reality, be ignored. God cannot possibly be in those carnal churches. He is holy, quiet, gentle, His presence is like a refreshing drink of sweet cool water on a hot day. If we compare some modern churches with Scripture, we will be able to see how far removed from God's reality some churches are. God is not in wind (air conditioning, fog machines), earth shaking racket and thunder (loud music that shakes the building), lightning or fire (strobe lights), His voice is quiet, still, very small and so awe-inspiring we want to cover our faces in shame (1 Kings 19:11 to 13). There are some people in those big churches who have never experienced the voice of God

because of all the hype and nonsense within the church. The churches have got their theology all wrong. A church's success is not measured in numbers in seats, money, noise, the most modern fashions or how big the building is, success is measured in how many disciples are being groomed to go out and preach; how many of societies wretched are having their lives changed by the love of God flowing through the congregation; how many broken lives are being mended by church support; how many dedicated missionaries are being supported by the church in relation to the size of the congregation; how much genuine pastoral care the assembly gives to those who need it; how many elderly are being cared for; how many young mothers who live away from their families are receiving support and Godly advice from older women; how many widows are receiving the help they need; how many people are receiving deliverance from evil spirits; how many healings are happening on a regular basis; how many hospital patients are being visited; how many sick and injured are being visited and helped in their homes; how many prisoners are being visited; are new-comers genuinely welcomed; are there close fellowships growing between people; is anyone on the 'outer' perimeters of the structure of the church; is the pastor able to delegate authority wisely and does he listen to people's concerns; most importantly, is the Word of God being taught and does the church fully support Israel? These things are signs of success and are all far more important than a building or loud music. Church leaders need to get their priorities in order and remove carnality from their church.

Lack of discipleship. People who choose to be shallow will not grow into Godly disciples. New Christians need to see real people who are humble, who are prepared to lie down in a gutter with an alcoholic to show God's love to them. We all need to be real people who do not wear a 'Sunday mask', but be consistent in our behaviour. Our ministries, whatever God has called us to do, must flow out of a pure heart, a passionate love for the Lord and a genuine Godly love for our fellow man. We need to be approachable, affectionate and kind without going through mere motions of Christianity. We should do nothing to discredit the Lord, our calling, our service or our ministry (2 Corinthians 6:3). We are nothing without God. He is our everything. He prepares us for His service, sometimes before we are saved, then He equips us so we can do whatever good work He lays before us, but to do that we must be strongly grounded in the Word of God. 'We are His workmanship, created in Jesus for good works which God prepared before we would walk in them (before we were saved)' (Ephesians 2:10). 'Every Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for teaching, reproof, correction, for instruction in righteousness so the man (or woman) of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work' (2 Timothy 3:16 & 17).

A weak, watery Gospel. Some pastors are so afraid of offending people they refuse to allow true worship or the gifts of the Holy Spirit to flow in the services. Too many pastors, leaders, teachers and preachers have led millions astray by preaching a 'peaceful, calm, trouble free, happy, clappy' Gospel where God gives us everything we want like spoilt children. That is misleading. God provides our needs, but He does not always give us what we want. Only through suffering many afflictions can we enter the Kingdom of God (Acts 14:22). If we read the New Testament, we can see the apostles went through fiery trials, ordeals, persecutions, violence, ship wrecks, beatings, afflictions, hunger, thirst, imprisonment, freezing weather and other sufferings. 'We are pressed on every side yet are not crushed. We are perplexed yet not to despair. We are pursued yet not forsaken. We are struck down yet not destroyed. We are always carrying in the body the putting to death of the Lord Jesus so the life of Jesus may be revealed in our body' (2 Corinthians 4:8 to 10). 'Beloved, do not be astonished at the fiery trial which has come upon you to test you, as though a strange thing happened to you. Because you are partakers of Jesus' sufferings, rejoice. At the revelation of His glory you will rejoice with exceeding joy. If you are insulted for the name of Jesus, you are blessed because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you ... If one of you suffers for being a Christian, let him not be ashamed but let him glorify God in this matter' (1 Peter 4:12 to 16). Jesus warned us, "They will lay their hands on you and will persecute you, delivering you up to synagogues and prisons, bringing you before kings and governors for My name's sake ... You will be handed over by parents, brothers, relatives and friends. They will cause some of you to be put to death. You will be hated by all men for my name's sake" (Luke 21:12 to 17). 'All who desire to live Godly in Jesus will suffer persecution' (2 Timothy 3:12). Jesus said, "A servant is not greater than his Lord. If they persecuted Me they will also persecute you" (John 15:20). People who have been taught their lives will be wonderfully joyous and carefree, often end up terribly disillusioned when reality hits and God begins to chastise them. Many fall away from God. When people take up a ministry that successfully disturbs the kingdom of darkness, they will find themselves under pressure and sometimes under attack. Many good ministries fail because the people find themselves unable to cope with the persecution or the pressure. When we preach the Gospel, we are endeavouring to take people out of the kingdom of darkness, into the Kingdom of God. That can bring problems in the spiritual realm. We can almost say, if people are not having a difficult time, then they are not successfully shaking the kingdom of darkness. If we are successful in our ministry, then we will face trials, persecution, ordeals and other suffering like the apostles and the early church did. That is the truth of the Gospel.

Lack of individual relationship with God. As much as revivals have often ended in corruption because of bad leadership, the individual person has to make their own choices. No person should lean on a pastor or

anyone else for spiritual growth. We are all called to form a relationship with God the Father through Jesus for ourselves. We have to exercise good wisdom and good choices. We have to remain adhered to God through all kinds of difficulties we might face. We cannot exist without Him so building our faith on rock and not on sand is imperative for our spiritual growth. Even children as young as four-years-old in an atheist, occultic home can form a close, loving relationship with God for themselves. That happened when a young girl had a chance encounter with a Godly man who led her to Jesus then he prayed for her to receive the Holy Spirit. That child did not meet another Christian for nineteen long years and thought she was the only person in the world who could speak with various tongues. At age twenty-three, she was amazed to find a whole church full of people who spoke in tongues. If a young child in the terrible circumstances of her home life, who suffered dreadful persecution and punishment if she was caught praying could maintain her close relationship with God without any other fellowship at all, then every adult can walk in tune with God and they have no excuse. We have to read the Bible, seek out fellowship with other believers, worship the Lord in private and in the assembly, we have to take time to pray and spent time in the Lord's presence ourselves. No church can do those things for us. Where those things are concerned, the Lord leaves them up to us. When we as individuals draw close to God, He comes down and draws closer to us (James 4:8). Our relationship with God does not depend on a church, it depends on us seeking God for ourselves, seeking His will for ourselves, embracing His direction for our lives and those things are vitally important if we are to fulfil a ministry He has chosen us to do. A lack of a close relationship with God can cause a ministry to fail.

All those who are called to the ministry need to have a very close relationship with God, spending hours of solitude with Him, they need integrity, humility, honesty, purity, to be servants of God and of people, they need to keep money as a necessity not a goal, they need to reflect the character of God through their ministry. If people who are called to minister keep their spiritual eyes on God and on His Word, extolling the name and role of Jesus and continually pray in the Holy Spirit, they will not fall and their ministry will not fail. 'Beloved, we are children of God and it is not yet revealed what we will be, but we know when He is revealed, we will be like Him for we will see Him just as He is' (1 John 3:2). 'As for me, I know my Redeemer lives. In the end He will stand on the earth. After this body is destroyed, in my new body I will see God, Whom I will see is on my side. My eyes will see Him and not as a stranger' (Job 19:25 to 27).

Amen and God bless you.

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