



The Bulletin

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“Seeking Bible
authority for
all things.”

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WHAT DO YOU DO WITH FAILURE?

By Kent Heaton, Sr.

When he was just a young man, he ran for the Legislature in Illinois and was badly swamped. He next entered business, failed, and spent seventeen years of his life paying up the debts of a worthless partner. He was in love with a beautiful young woman, to whom he became engaged - then she died. Entering politics again, he ran for Congress and was badly defeated. He became a candidate for the U. S. Senate and was badly defeated. In 1856 he became a candidate for the Vice Presidency and was again defeated. One failure after another - bad failures - great setbacks. In the face of all this, he eventually became one of our country's greatest leaders. His name was Abraham Lincoln.

“Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong” (2 Corinthians 12:10). I wonder how often I have failed and thought that there would be no reason to continue! How easy it is to see only with the eyes of today and the defeats of yesterday that hamper our victories of tomorrow. We have all had failures in life, some big, some small. It is not the size of the failure that matters because many small ones can destroy our faith and zeal. It matters whether we believe the words of the apostle Paul (as seen above) to let the trials and failures of life make us to be better people. Abraham Lincoln was great not because of his failures but because he knew the price to be paid to attain victory. The price to be paid to attain victory for the Christian is to be *“steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the*

Lord” (1 Corinthians 15:58).

Consider Joseph who as a young man had everything to live for (Gen. 37ff.). Yet, in the prime of his life he was betrayed by his brothers and sold into slavery. As he made the trip to Egypt, he could have thought his life was over and a failure. But he kept his faith in God. On the slave block, again he could have seen failure. Through his eyes of faith, he saw not failure but opportunity. Joseph became great in his new master's home until the master's wife tried to seduce him. Falsely charged, he was thrown into prison. Would he think of his life as a failure? Again, Joseph had faith in God and served Him diligently and was put in charge of the prison. The butler and baker of the Pharaoh came to prison and Joseph interpreted their dreams with a hope of them remembering him to seek his freedom. Three years passed before he was remembered. Yet, God rewarded him for his faithfulness by making him second in power in Egypt because he never gave up on God.

Joseph and so many like him did not view their lives as failures because they were always successes in the eyes of God. You see, that is all that matters in this life (see Eccl. 12:13-14). It is not to find success or failure in this life that matters. The only thing that matters is not to fail before God. This is the characteristic of perseverance and staying power.

Satan seeks for us to look upon our failures and bring us down. But, God gives us the assurance that if we confess our sins, he is just and willing to

(Continued on page 2)

THE FRIENDLINESS TEST

By Rodney Pitts

Several years ago there was a man who wrote an article about how he visited 18 different churches and scored them on their friendliness. His point scoring method was as follows:

- ◆ 10 – for a smile from a worshipper
- ◆ 10 – for a greeting from someone sitting nearby
- ◆ 100 – for an exchange of names
- ◆ 200 – for an invitation to return
- ◆ 1000 – for an introduction to another worshipper

Of the 18 churches visited, 11 scored less than 1000, and five less than 20! What a shame for the people of God who have been blessed with God's wonderful love, His grace, and His truth that bring true happiness to be so unfriendly, or at least so unaware.

Of course, the question that we should ask ourselves here at Colonial Heights is how well we would have scored in such a test? To answer this, I would like to say that I have no doubt, and I say this in your praise, that we would score much higher today that we would have even a couple of months ago. We are definitely working to improve this aspect of our service to Christ and you are to be commended. We this in mind, let us strive to grow even more because we are blessed with a great amount of visitors throughout the year. And, how we respond to their presence will determine their perception of us and, likely, whether they will return. This is especially true when these visitors are non-Christians.

I realize that it is easy to quickly become involved in a conversation with those with whom we are accustomed to associating. And, such interest in one another is commendable. Yet, we must not allow our love for one another to keep us from making the efforts needed to greet our visitors *first*. We must strive to be hospitable (1 Pet. 4:9). And, this includes friendliness and hospitality to strangers that come into our midst, as the writer of Hebrews states: "*Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels*" (Heb. 13:2).

Finally, brethren, since God places the responsibility of showing hospitality on the individual Chris-

tian, the friendliness and warmth of this congregation will depend upon your commitment as individuals to do this work. Think about that the next time you walk in the door of the church building, during the time between classes and worship, or just after the last "amen" is said. Your actions during those moments may be the determining factor for a soul being saved, a new member being added to this congregation, or a brother or sister in Christ receiving the encouragement they need. By the way, I have presented these thoughts to you, not because you do not know them, but because "I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding you" (2 Pet. 1:13). ■

(Continued from page 1)

forgive us of our sins (1 John 1:9). We should not look upon our failures except to learn from them and to see them as stepping stones to gain the victory in the end. Romans 2:7 says, "*Eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality.*" ■

Our Times of Meeting

Sunday Bible Classes - 9:00 a.m.

Sunday Worship - 10:00 - 11:45 a.m.

Wednesday Bible Classes - 7:00 p.m.

Sentence Sermons

- A Christian is free from sin, but not free to sin.
- True grace does not nullify or make void anything taught in the N.T., including obedience.
- "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God." (Psa. 9:17)
- A bible that is falling apart is a pretty good indication that its owner is not.
- Most are concerned about the purity of their daily food, but not about the purity of the food for their souls.

Its Free...Use It!

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