

# Success and Failure

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Steve discussed the topic of temptation during his lesson last Wednesday and one of his points caused me to consider something. He stated that when we are successful at overcoming temptation we keep it to ourselves. If we have successes in other aspects of our lives, we share the details, but not when we have won a major battle with the adversary. I then thought that perhaps we don't share our successes because we don't share our failures. Could it be that when we are strong enough to overcome one – or even several attempts – from the adversary to tempt us to sin, we only consider our failures instead? That we could offset our victory with a failure? We all have personal stories of failure. This includes preachers, elders, deacons, Bible class teachers, everyone.

The end result is that all of us, at one time or another, have lamented the inability to stop sinning. When we do not credit His power to save, forgive, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9), we can get caught in a destructive cycle of sin, guilt, and fear, which leads to a lack of joy in our salvation. We have to remember that we are on a system of grace, not a point system of good points and bad points, hoping to tip the scale to the good side.

Satan wants us to believe in the point system. He wants us to believe we are not good Christians. He wants us to give up. Paul warns us not to give up (Gal. 6:9). We must believe that if we confess our sins, God is faithful to forgive us (1 John 1:9). Jesus taught the disciples to forgive people who sinned against them "7 times 70 times" (not a literal 490 times, but unlimited forgiveness). If he expected his impatient and flawed disciples to forgive that many times, we can be sure God will forgive us as often as we come humbly and confess our shortcomings to him with a truly penitent, contrite heart.

We only really fail when we stop returning to God after sinning and start pretending like our sins are o.k. Or, we give up and cease to care what God wants and only do what we desire. As Steve aptly put it, we are to prepare ourselves for temptation in order to fight against it.

In the words of Winston Churchill, "Never, never, never, give up!"

By Tony Williams  
For the elders