

"In the beginning  
was the Word,  
and the Word was  
with God, and the  
Word was God."  
~John 1:1

# The Lord's Flock *Growth* DIGEST PASTORAL GROWTH SERIES



## “Learning from the Mistakes of Others”

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**All of us have committed some mistakes in our life.** We are always admonished to avoid making mistakes. One way to do so is by learning from the mistakes of others.

**Biblical personalities and their characters are worth emulating.** They were not perfect individuals; they also committed some mistakes. We can learn from them and even from their mistakes.

**Among the biblical characters and their mistakes are the following:**

1. **Abraham is the father of the Hebrew nation, the people of God.** When he went to Egypt in a time of famine, he passed off his wife Sarai as his sister hoping to purchase his own safety at her expense (Genesis 12:10-20).
2. **Noah built the ark according to God's exact instructions.** He and his family (and animals) were saved from the Flood. He planted a vineyard, drank himself into a drunken stupor, and shamefully exposed himself in his tent (Genesis 9:20-21). His son, Ham, made fun of Noah. His two other sons, Shem and Japheth, respected him and received rich blessings from God for their descendants. (Genesis 9:22-27).
3. **Samson is one of the judges of Israel (Judges 13-16).** He was known for his fighting strength. Despite his failings, lack of self-control, and disobedience of God, he
4. is listed with the heroes of faith in Hebrews 11:32.
5. **David is known as a man after God's own heart** (1 Samuel 13:14). He became Israel's greatest king. He committed adultery with Bathsheba and the murder of her husband. (2 Samuel 11:1-26). He repented and asked forgiveness from God.
6. **Jeremiah is one of the greatest Hebrew prophets.** At first, he did not want to obey the Lord and said: "I know not how to speak; I am too young." (Jeremiah 1:6). He eventually became a great and influential prophet.
7. **Jonah is one of the prophets of Israel.** He originally disobeyed God's command for him to preach to the Ninevites (Jonah 1:1-3). After being swallowed by a large fish, remaining in its belly for three days, and being spewed upon the shore (Jonah 2:1-11), Jonah finally obeyed the Lord and preached in Nineveh (Jonah 3:1-10).
8. **Peter, a fisherman, became the most prominent of the 12 apostles of Jesus despite his failings and mistakes.** He did not have enough faith, doubted, got frightened by the strong wind, and began to sink in the water (Matthew 14:22-33). He shamefully denied the Lord three times (Matthew 26:69-75). He was forgiven by Jesus and became the head of the church.
9. **Paul, a tentmaker and a Jewish leader, was a person of Greek culture, Roman citizenship, and Hebrew religion.** Perhaps his only mistake was being a severe
10. persecutor of Christians (Acts 26:10-11). After his encounter with Jesus and conversion during his journey to Damascus (Acts 9:3-9), he became a great apostle and evangelist to the Gentiles.

**We should all learn from the mistakes of these biblical characters.** God's words spare no details as they candidly revealed to us the shortcomings of these persons. Let us find out the lessons that can be derived from their mistakes. God restored all of them.

**The stories of these biblical personalities should serve as inspirations to all of us.** Their mistakes should serve as warnings for us to avoid committing similar mistakes. We should never desire evil things and commit disobedience and other evil acts.

*“For whatever was written previously was written for our instruction, that by endurance and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope.”* (Romans 15:4).

*“All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for refutation, for correction, and for training in righteousness.”* (2 Timothy 3:16).

**THE BOOK OF JOB is very inspiring.**

**The Lord was very proud of Job because he was a righteous man and God-fearing.** His good attitudes did not spare him from testings. Satan accused the Lord that Job only loved Him because he was highly favored by God. Satan dared the Lord to remove all favors given to Job and that Job would desert and curse Him. The Lord told Satan: *“Behold all that he has is in your power only do not lay a hand upon this person.”* (Job 1:6-12). God had allowed Job to be tested. He successfully endured many severe trials.

**The trials of Job are very good examples for all of us.** We may be serving God whole-heartedly and yet, He may subject us to tests. The Lord wants to check if we would remain faithful to Him despite trials.

**Let us all learn from Job.** We should not be discouraged during times of trials and difficulties: the Lord will remain in control even when we are being tested. Like Job, we should praise and glorify God despite hardships and pain during trials.

**The restoration of Job is truly inspiring.** The Lord blessed him much more in his later days than in his earlier ones. He lived 140 years more after his trials.

**In the Old Testament, trials and hardships were considered punishments.** In the New Testament, they were considered joys that produce perseverance.

*“Consider it all joy, my brothers, when you encounter various trials for you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. And let perseverance be perfect, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.”* (James 1:2-4).

*“Blessed is the man who perseveres in temptation for when he has been proved he will receive the crown of life that he promised to those who love him.”* (James 1:12).

**The story of Peter (Matthew 14) gives us more lessons to learn.** God wants us to walk over our problems and for us not to be overwhelmed with our problems. We should *rejoice in the Lord always* (Philippians 4:4). We should persevere and not get discouraged when God wants us to do something. Our faith in the Lord should not waiver. He wants us to get *to the other side and nearby villages* (Mark 1:37) *to preach* and to do more work.

**The principal reason why Peter began sinking in the water is his failure to focus his eyes on Jesus (instead of being afraid of the strong wind).** For all of us, let us remember to *persevere in running the race that lies before us while keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus, the leader and perfecter of faith.* (Hebrews 12:1-2).

**Peter failed and made mistakes many times, but like Job he was restored by the Lord.** He was entrusted by God to take care of the church:

he became the first Pope of the Roman Catholic Church.

**We should all be inspired and learn from biblical stories of God’s restoration from disobedience and other mistakes.** In our own lives let us not forget the many favors that God has been bestowing upon us. We may face trials but let us be firm in believing that God will never forsake us (Hebrews 13:5). The Lord is our intercessor to His Father. The Holy Spirit is always present to teach and remind us of everything Jesus has taught us (John 14:26).

**Conclusion:** **The Holy Bible has revealed to us God’s truth as well as inspiring stories from many biblical characters. God also wants us to learn from their mistakes. Let us all live a spirit-filled life in holiness.**

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