

WHEN YOU FACE FAILURE

It's hard to look objectively at things when one has failed. When Millais first exhibited his "Ophelia" in 1852 one critic dubbed it "O Failure!" It is said that Millais was plagued by these words for the rest of his life.

When overtaken by failure sit down as soon as possible and prayerfully begin to analyse the reason for the failure. Consider the possibility that God may have allowed this failure because it was part of His purpose for your life. Many have discovered that God allowed failure in their life to turn their thoughts in a new direction of service for Him.

If, however, *after prayer* and careful consideration of this possibility you are sure you have God's approval for continuing along the same lines, then ask yourself: Have I contributed to this failure by my inattention to detail, lack of preparation, naivety, wrong timing, failure to weigh up the pros and cons, disregard of moral principles, insensitivity to other people's feelings ... and so on? Having learned the lessons that come from failure – try again.

A Christian poster I once saw in a bookshop showed the picture of a man with his arms folded and a look of resignation on his face. Printed on his T-shirt was the admission "I gave up." In the corner of the poster, barely visible, was a drawing of a little black hill and on it a very tiny cross. These words were printed beneath it: "*I didn't.*" The One who triumphed over all obstacles holds out His hands to you. Take His hand and if another purpose has not been shown you – try again.

Father, I see that no failure is a failure if it succeeds in driving me to Your side. Show me Your will and purposes for my life, and if it be that I should try again – then help me do it in Your strength and not in my own. In Christ's name I pray. Amen.

SCRIPTURES ON WHICH TO REFLECT

1. **God knows your situation and feels for you in your pain.**
O Lord, you have searched me and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; You perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; You are familiar with all my ways. (Psalm 139: 1 - 3)
2. **A promise to hold on to.**
If the Lord delights in a man's way, he makes his steps firm; though he stumble, he will not fall, for the Lord upholds him with his hand.
(Psalm 37: 23 - 24)

3. **His attention never wavers.**
For the eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him. (2 Chronicles 16: 9).
4. **Use discouraging situations to draw closer to God.**
One thing I ask of the Lord, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple. (Psalm 27: 4)
5. **Consider the power which is at your disposal.**
... and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms ...
(Ephesians 1: 19 - 20)
6. **Focus on finding God's purposes for your life.**
If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. (James 1: 5)
7. **He promises help and guidance for a better future.**
My son, do not forget my teaching, but keep my commands in your heart, for they will prolong your life many years and bring you prosperity.
(Proverbs 3: 1 - 3)

