

# Wednesday Night BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday, July 9, 2014 – First Baptist Church Buda  
Midweek Prayer Meeting & Bible Study

## A LOOK AT PSALM 31 “A Stand Alone Study of Psalm 31”

*“Even a mistake may turn out to be the one thing necessary to a worthwhile achievement.”  
-Henry Ford*

More often than any of us like to admit, three small words usually express the truth of our lives, “I blew it!” In lighter and stronger moments, we adopt the philosophy of the late Oscar Wilde and simply rename our mistakes “experiences.” Others who become celebrities rephrase their faults and, as George Eliot suggests, publicize their string of mistakes... calling them “memoirs.” But the cold, hard facts of life cannot be erased, we are all imperfect, faulty, mistake-prone people. And often those mistakes can be costly, humiliating, and demoralizing. They occasionally bring serious consequences that are hard to bear.

### I. CATEGORIES AND EXAMPLES OF MISTAKES (Selected Passages)

We think of sin in terms of those choices and actions related to rebellion, deception, and willful disobedience. However, the mistakes we’re considering here are not to be equated with sin, but rather are wrong choices and judgments resulting from inattention or inadequate knowledge.

#### 5 Categories of Mistakes:

##### 1. Panic-Prompted Mistakes –

- **Example** – Abraham (*Genesis 12:10-13/black*) A Biblical example of “panic-prompted” mistakes is Abraham. Abraham had received an unprecedented promise from God that through him would come a nation that would receive His favor and care. God led him to the land, defined its borders, and it was to be the home for His people. A drought occurred, a famine resulted. Instead of trusting his promising God to provide... Abraham panicked and headed to Egypt. His decision resulted in other foolish mistakes as well. *Also consider the example of the 12 spies and the people’s decision not to enter the promised land in Numbers 13-14.*
- **Principle** - Don’t panic, wait and trust!
- **Observation** – Invariably, these result from fear... hurry... worry. Panic-prompted mistakes often show up in important areas of our life where decisions are being made that can greatly affect us. Two realms of our lives where this is particularly true is in the area of romance and finances.

## 2. Good-Intentioned Mistakes –

- **Example** – Moses (*Exodus 2:11-14/gold*) Forty years old and sensing himself to be capable of delivering his people from bondage, when Moses saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, he intervened to protect his racial brother... and in doing so killed the aggressor. Much to his dismay, the one he protected became fearful of him. Moses was forced to flee for safety. Right motive, maybe... wrong method.
- **Principle** – Dependence upon God rather than self is always best!
- **Observation** – These are usually made from pure motives, but are ill-timed and are sometimes accompanied by poor methods of implementation. Trying to take matters in our own hands, no matter how well intentioned, will often result in costly and sometimes painful mistakes.

## 3. Negligent-Induced Mistakes –

- **Example** - David (*1 Kings 1:5-6/green*) Adonijah was apparently David's oldest living son. The rebellious son wished to have his dad's throne over Israel. David's problem was that he had been passive and had failed to correct (discipline) his son. "... his father had never interfered with him by asking, 'why do you behave as you do?' ..." The same was also true with his sons Amnon and Absalom.
- **Principle** – Be diligent in what God has given you to do and do it!
- **Observation** – These often result from laziness, and lack of necessary discipline and consistency.

## 4. Unrestrained-Curiosity Mistakes –

- **Example** – Solomon (*Ecclesiastes 12:1-8/red*) Due to boredom and futility, he chased and tried all sorts of stimulating activities that led to further futility in his thinking, depression, emptiness, meaninglessness and discouragement. This unrestrained curiosity that seemed to characterize Solomon (which by the way he inherited from his father, David) more often led him away from God rather than to Him.
- **Principle** – Beware curiosity and seeking after the world and things of the world rather than seeking after God and the thing of God.
- **Observation** – Mistakes of this nature will often follow the unrestrained urge to explore and discover going where we know better than to go.

## 5. Blind-Spot Mistakes –

- **Example** – Paul (*Acts 15:36-41/white*) John Mark accompanied Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey, which impacted Galatia. Somewhere along the way, for unrecorded reasons, John Mark returned home... leaving the other two to go on ahead alone. When Barnabas suggested John Mark as a traveling companion for the second missionary journey, Paul insistently said, "no." He viewed the man, John Mark, as lacking commitment and wanted nothing to do with him. Paul obviously was mistaken in his judgment, because he later realized John Mark's value to him personally. In 2 Timothy 4:11 Paul wrote, "Only Luke is with me. Get Mark (John Mark) and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry."

- **Principle** – God’s **discernment** is always better than ours. Be prayerful and open to where God is working and **join** Him there.
- **Observation** – These often happen as a result of ignorance, habit, and misjudgment, family influence, and character weakness

## II. PERSPECTIVE ON MISTAKES (Psalm 31)

At the time David penned this psalm, it appears he was broken, disappointed in himself, under the gun of recent mistakes made, humiliated, and discouraged. His prayer to the Lord was, “*In you, O Lord, I have taken refuge; let me never be put to shame; deliver me in your righteousness... free me from the trap that is set for me, for you are my refuge. Into your hands I commit my spirit; redeem me, O Lord, the God of truth.*” (vv.1,4,5) David’s words reveal to us God’s ways of handling us when we’ve messed up and made mistakes... when we have to admit... “God, I blew it!”

1. **How He views us when we make mistakes (Ps. 31:7-10)** – If we keep in mind the way David himself viewed his circumstances, then we will better appreciate how David saw God looking at this situation. Key words or phrases tell David’s perspective; “*anguish*” (v.7), “*distress*” and “*my eyes grow weak with sorrow*” and “*grief*” (v.9), “*my life is consumed by anguish*” and “*groaning*” and “*my bones grow weak*” (v.10).

But what about God and how He views us when we make mistakes? Two truths emerge about how David saw God viewing his situation...

### 2 Hints at How God Views Us When We Make Mistakes:

- (1) **God views our mistakes realistically (v.7)** – Nothing hidden! David wrote, “*I will be glad and rejoice in your love, for you saw my affliction...*” He saw! He sees! Nothing is hidden from Him... not even your mistakes and He still loves you despite them. Do you still love your children when they make a mistake? And how much more does God!
- (2) **God views our mistakes thoroughly (v.7)** – Nothing ignored! “*I will be glad and rejoice in your love, for you... knew the anguish of my soul.*” He knew! He knows! Nothing escapes Him! He knows every detail and still loves you!

2. **How He treats us when we make mistakes (Ps. 31:8)** –

### 2 Reflections of God’s Treatment of Us When We Make Mistakes:

- (1) **He does not reject us – a reflection of His love** - He, God, doesn’t turn us “*over to the enemy.*” When we fail, and fall, and make mistakes, man discards us... gives up on us... throws us out... rejects us... Not so with God! God draws us to Himself! Wow! What a beautiful thought, and that’s consistent with the Moses’, and Abraham’s, and David’s, and Peter’s, and Paul’s of the Bible who like us sometimes made mistakes.
- (2) **He gives us space - a reflection of His understanding** – “*... but (You, God) have set my feet in a spacious place.*” Whereas man crowds and rushes, wanting answers and explanations for our mistakes, expecting retribution for our mistakes and fixes for our failures, God draws back, allowing us to grow. He gives us room

to breathe... space to take in our mistakes and learn, and see, and grow. I love that!

### 3. How He instructs us when we make mistakes (Ps. 31:14-21) –

#### **3 Methods of God’s Teaching When We Make Mistakes:**

- (1) **In a context of trust, not suspicion (v.14)** – David said, *“But I trust You, O Lord; I say, ‘You are my God.’”* When we fail and fall and make mistakes there must be a trust in Him throughout and a trust in His goodness.
- (2) **In all of life, not just some of life (v.15)** – David’s words are, *“My times are in your hands; deliver me from my enemies and from those who pursue me.”* Remember that God is still in control when you make mistakes and nothing is amiss with God... He knows our faults and failings and mistakes. He knows all about them, after all, our times are in His hands.
- (3) **In the secret place, not out in public (vv.19-21)** – David says in verse 20, *“In the shelter of Your presence You hide them (those who trust and fear the Lord) from the intrigues of men; in your dwelling you keep them safe from accusing tongues.”* Interesting how God deals with us when we fail and fall and make mistakes... not in open public disgrace, but with grace. In the shelter of His presence He hides us and keep us safe so that we can learn and grow and deepen our life in Him.

### III. INSIGHT ABOUT MISTAKES

Because mistakes are often costly and painful with tremendous consequences, as in David’s case, a few suggestions may help us to navigate the minefield of mistakes a little better. This is the who to prepare yourself before mistakes and how to survive after you made them...

1. **Before... try this** – The following check list may prove a helpful tool in avoiding many mistakes before they happen. Notice how each one could have been a great help to David had he put them to use.

#### **Check-list for Avoiding Mistakes:**

- (1) **The motive** - Checking your motives... the “whys” of what you are doing before you do it can save you a lot of heart ache and misery and pain, and prevent costly mistakes. Boy would this one have helped David from making the biggest mistake of his life.
- (2) **The moment** – Timing can be extremely important... the “when” of what you are doing can be a deterrent of some mistakes. If David had just considered the moment he was in when his downfall began... at home (should have been with his fighting men), alone, bore, voyeuristically watching beautiful women from his roof... he could have fled from and avoided his mistake. Same is true for us.
- (3) **The method** – The “what”... the “how” of what we do can also be a help in avoiding mistakes. Is it flat wrong and we know it? Then run from it? Boy, would that have saved David.

2. **Afterwards... think this** – Despite our best effort, mistakes still happen sometimes... some that could have been avoided and some that couldn't have been avoided... some that we just messed up and let happened and some that were somewhat innocently slipped up on us. Now that they have happened how do we survive them?

**Reminders When We Have Failed:**

- (1) **“I am human”** – This is always a good perspective reminder for us, yet it shouldn't be used as an excuse. “Well, I'm only human, so it's okay!” No, it's not okay, but it does happen that we fail sometimes and make mistakes. Allow room for God's forgiveness. Some people won't let God forgive them, so their mistakes become a death blow to their lives mentally, physically, emotionally and most certainly spiritually. We are human and we are going to make mistakes! No one is perfect! We don't want to fail and we should strive for perfection... *“be holy because He is holy.”* But the reality is we are human... dust...
- (2) **“I have learned”** – Or maybe better stated I will learn from my mistake! So important! Honestly, mistakes can be the best teacher we have if we will use them as stepping stone for better things. Don't repeat them! Learn from them.
- (3) **“I will recover”** – With God's help, we will survive and can recover fully from our mistakes. That doesn't mean that they won't sometimes have consequences and some lasting, but despite those consequences we can recover and survive and go on to be a man or woman after God's own heart like David.
- (4) **“I am still loved”** – Always remember that God's love for you is unconditional. No matter what you do He will never stop loving you. When you feel your lowest and most defeated and despondent from mistakes made remember always that you are loved. Even when all else fails you and everyone else abandons you to your mistakes, God never will. Even in our mistakes He loves us!

***“Our greatest problem is not mistakes, but that we fail to learn and grow from them.”***