



## GUIDELINES DAILY COMMENTARY ON LIVING WITH DR. HAROLD J. SALA

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Subject: Failure

# OVERCOMING A MAJOR BLUNDER

*A man who refuses to admit his mistakes can never be successful. But if he confesses and forsakes them, he gets another chance. Proverbs 28:13, Living Bible*

Long ago the writer of Scripture told us that he who does not offend in word or deed is a perfect man; and obviously, none of us qualifies. No matter how loving or kind you are, sooner or later you offend someone. You say or do something you know is wrong. More likely it is a protracted dalliance with your conscience, but then you crash and burn. That's when you come to the fork in the road. Do you do what is convenient and try to deny the whole issue, or admit it and find help? Sweeping the wrong aside, justifying yourself as being "human," is the path of convenience, and it's a well trod one, but it isn't a lasting solution which heals your brokenness.

The first major hurdle which you have to cross when you have violated your conscience is to admit your wrongdoing—something which a lot of people will never do. "He who conceals his sins does not prosper," wrote Solomon long ago, adding, "but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy" (Proverbs 28:13).

He knew first-hand because his own father, David, had been down that path. Glossing over wrong-doing, lying to protect yourself or keep your mate from knowing about something is never a solution. William Peterson paraphrases Proverbs 28:13, saying, "You can't whitewash your sins and get by with it; you find mercy by admitting and leaving them."

Long ago the prophet Samuel outlined the steps beyond confession, important ones which provide guidelines for us today. You find these in 1 Samuel 12.

**Guideline #1: Don't fear that God will abandon you.** (See 1 Samuel 12:20). When there is a spiritual awakening, it is usually the devil who is first to wake up, and he tells you, "There's no way out of this but to lie. You've gone so far that God won't help so don't even try." That's all untrue. God always hears the prayer of the person who is sincere in turning to Him.

**Guideline #2: Don't give up, thinking that you have gone too far astray to come back.** "For the sake of his great name the LORD will not reject his people, because the LORD was pleased to make you his own," Samuel told those who had turned their backs on God (1 Samuel 12:22). "As for me," he added, "far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD by failing to pray for you." Not bad. He wasn't there as a critic, but as a friend who wanted to help.

**Guideline #3: Turn from what you know is wrong, and start doing what is right.** Tough? Yes. Impossible? No. "You have done all this evil," said Samuel, adding, "yet do not turn away from the LORD, but serve the LORD with all your heart" (1 Samuel 12:20). OK, you blew it. You failed. In a moment of weakness, you violated your conscience. OK, don't keep on doing wrong but turn back and pick up the pieces. Get going on the right path. Almost always, those who really love you will forgive you and stand with you.

**Guideline #4: Realize God wants to make you a person for Himself.** He understands brokenness, human failure, and the sinfulness of the heart. He knows better than anyone else, but He's in the business of restoration and healing—not condemnation and judgment, at least not yet.

**Guideline #5: Focus on the positive and remind yourself of what God has done in the past.** Here's the word of encouragement from Scripture: "But be sure to fear the LORD and serve him faithfully with all your heart; consider what great things he has done for you" (1 Samuel 12:24). Redefining the point of your focus is vital. Get your eyes off your failure and remind yourself that God is faithful, that He has met you in the past, and that He will meet you today.

The future can be brighter because of the failure of the past, but only if you admit it, seek the help of others, and then let God's Holy Spirit restore you as His child.

Resource reading: 1 Samuel 12:18-25.