

A Study in Failure, Part 4

In response to God's call, we had started a small company to publish pocket-size books to draw people to Christ. In spite of excellent product, we were failing to attract a broad enough market to support the company. (See "A Study in Failure, Part 1"; "A Study in Failure, Part 2"; "A Study in Failure, Part 3".)

Our financial concerns about our struggling young company grew to a crushing certainty: it would not be profitable. Indeed, it would not be sustainable at all. From the beginning, my wife and I had been supporting it from our personal incomes, but we simply couldn't continue.

By early 2008, the company was hundreds of thousands of dollars behind and bleeding more red ink every month. The time had come. We set 8/31/2008 as the date we would quit selling any physical product, then spent most of 2008 selling off as much stock as possible at a huge discount. After that, for two months we tried donating product to selected ministries if they would simply pay shipping cost. At the end of October, it was all over but the nagging questions.

Fortunately, the company had no debt. It had never taken out any loans. Gloria and I had always taken a "pay as you go approach". But there was no hope of recouping the mountain of money we had poured in. And the book publishing ministry to which God had called us was no more. We had to give up.

Had I mistaken God's call to this publishing ministry? Had I let my personal desires cloud my judgment?

Or had I simply been a personal failure?