

A Study in Failure, Part 1

A few months ago I told the story of how God called my wife and me to involvement in our local church evangelism program. (See [What Could You Do If Nothing Else Mattered?](#) [scroll down] and [What Could You Do if Nothing Else Mattered? cont.](#)) I wrote monthly mailers as part of Neighbor to Neighbor, an effort to draw our church's neighborhood to Christ.

As that program wound down, the Lord began speaking to me about continuing to draw people to Him. My training, gifts, and God-given interests are in writing and publishing. Yes, I want to stay available to God in all areas, and He does sometimes lead me into unfamiliar and uncomfortable territory. I thank Him for that. Life in God is an adventure, and I don't want to fearfully draw borders around where I'll follow Him. But I do find that the bulk of the work He leads me to do is in areas where He has called and prepared me. For me, that means writing and publishing.

So at this point, He had me thinking about how I could write and publish materials to draw people to Him. I thank God for Christian publishers and all the suppliers, distributors, and stores who work with them. I've spent my life in this field. But I also know that Christian bookstores effectively reach only a tiny part of the population. Over time, it became clear that God was calling me to provide materials for people who wouldn't walk into a Christian bookstore and buy and read a book. He was calling me to start my own specialized publishing venture.

I am not an entrepreneur by nature! Some people are energized by the process of starting and building their own companies. Not me! Give me a steady job and a predictable routine.

What's more, I know that publishing is a hectic business. Wow, do I know that! I've spent my life in a publishing office. You're constantly loaded with more work than you can possibly handle. And by the time you have one success, you're already late for the next one. Publishing programs are voraciously hungry and must be fed more often than a newborn. The pressure is relentless.

Add to that the demands of starting a new business, and I just didn't see how I could possibly do it. What's more, I had gone through a serious burnout less than ten years before. If you've ever had that experience, you know that once is enough. I simply couldn't make myself face all that stress and overload again. I couldn't! It's like lying down in a blazing fire. You just can't force yourself to do it.

I told the Lord that He had the wrong person. I told Him that I wanted to obey Him, but I just didn't see how I could possibly start my own publishing company.

Then came one of those times of communication from the Lord that were crystal clear. Usually He guides me by strong impressions on my heart and mind. I've never heard

His voice audibly, but on a few occasions He's clearly spoken specific words in my heart.

This is what He said: "Do what I tell you to do one day at a time, and leave everything else to Me." I've tried to live by that wisdom ever since.

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