

An Expensive Mistake: Part II

n/a

Ready:

“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him,[a] who[b] have been called according to his purpose.”

-Romans 8:28 (NIV)

Set

When I was 17, I was a young, brash, three-sport athlete who took any challenge that came my way. My aggressive personality allowed me to “hang with the big-dogs” on the court, in the field and on the track. That personality, however, also caused many setbacks.

That summer I attended a camp. During one of the breaks, some of the campers and I were goofing off and I nonchalantly leapt off a small hill. One of my friends dared me to try the same thing off a larger hill. Not one to back down from a challenge, I promptly went to the top, backed up, took a few steps and jumped. The exhilaration of flying lasted for a few seconds. And the excitement of meeting the challenge lasted just as long...until I hit the ground. I knew I had done something seriously wrong when my leg turned outward on impact. Later in the emergency room, the ER doctor told me that it looked like I'd been in a car accident: torn ligaments, cartilage and broken bones.

Two days ago, I wrote a devotion that talked about the expensive mistake of an Olympic speed skater—a simple lane change that cost him a record and a medal. Well, that one jump was my own expensive mistake. I lost any opportunity to earn an athletic scholarship in the sport I loved most, and I also had to walk away from the competitive component of my second sport. I spent four months in a cast, another two in a brace, four months in rehab, and experienced a painful track season the next spring. To say the least, it was a humbling experience, and I had no one to blame but myself. And, through the process, I was forced to acknowledge my own reckless decision and reminded that I needed to learn from what I'd done.

In Romans 8:28 we find these words: “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.” God did not spare me from the consequences of my choice. However, He did take my mistake and turn it into a career opportunity. You see, the parent of a friend was the director of the local youth basketball league. He came to me during the fall and asked if I wanted to coach. I was reluctant at first, but when he informed me that I'd get to coach my little brother's team, I tried it and had an enjoyable experience. The next year I coached again, this time leading an eighth-grade team, and this time I found a new direction in life.

As the grace-covered result of an expensive mistake, God kick-started a 27-year coaching career. Throughout my career, He has allowed me to experience championships, personal honors and many players' honors, but He's also given me the privilege of touching lives in a way that I couldn't have as an athlete.

Do you realize and believe that God is seeking to give us His best? If we humble ourselves before Him and acknowledge the errors of our ways, He will still use us, no matter what we've done. Much like a dirty plate being cleaned in a dishwasher, we can—according to His promise in 1 John 1:9—be cleansed of all unrighteousness and made useful again for His purposes.

Perhaps you've already committed some act that you regret. Acknowledge your behavior and action as wrong in God's eyes and accept His forgiveness. Also, accept whatever earthly consequences that may come. But don't count yourself as useless for His Kingdom. God is still God. He still loves you and still has a plan for you. If you humble yourself, He will lift you up! He'll set you back on your feet and set you on the right path.

Go

1. Can you think of any “expensive mistakes” in your own life, either past or present?
2. Do you fear that God won't be able to use you as a result or that He will love you less?
3. What does Scripture say about God's grace?
4. Why is humility such a crucial part of repentance?
5. Are there areas in your life that you need to surrender to God in humility?

Workout

2 Chronicles 7:14

Psalm 51

James 4:6-10



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