

When a Leader Falls

Context: Responding to What Is Happening with Mike Bickle and IHOPKC

Thesis: Today, I want to talk about how we as followers of Jesus are to respond when a leader fails or falls. And, I want to process what is going on with Mike Bickle and IHOPKC in particular.

How do we handle ourselves? How do we hold our hearts? How do we navigate through such times?

At this point, let me say something about accountability. What is true, healthy accountability? We need people to remind us of who we are in Christ and how our actions impact those downstream from us: the impact on friends, family, co-workers, ministries, careers, jobs, careers, others around us, and the impact on the cause of Christ.

Here are some principles gleaned from Scripture concerning leaders.

1. **God calls leaders, uses leaders, and sets leaders in positions of influence.**
 - a. *Psalm 78:70–72 (NIV84): He chose David his servant and took him from the sheep pens; 71 from tending the sheep he brought him to be the shepherd of his people Jacob, of Israel his inheritance. 72 And David shepherded them with integrity of heart; with skillful hands he led them.*
 - b. Calling (chosen by God), character (integrity of heart), capacity (skillful hands), and Christlikeness are key leadership qualifications for leaders in God's church.
2. **We are called to follow the leaders God puts in our lives.**
 - a. *Hebrews 13:17 (NIV84): Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.*
3. **Leaders are called by God and confirmed by the body.**
 - a. Confirmation: The body will affirm what God is working out with a person.
4. **Leaders are held to a higher standard.**
 - a. *James 3:1 (NIV84): Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly.*
 - b. *1 Timothy 5:17–20 (NIV84): The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is*

preaching and teaching. 18 For the Scripture says, "Do not muzzle the ox while it is treading out the grain," and "The worker deserves his wages." 19 Do not entertain an accusation against an elder unless it is brought by two or three witnesses. 20 Those who sin are to be rebuked publicly, so that the others may take warning.

5. **The enemy wants to take out the leader/ shepherd in order to scatter the sheep.**
 - a. *Zechariah 13:7 (NIV84): Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.*
6. **When a leader falls, that failure can shake the faith and foundations of the followers and the organization.**
7. **Fallen leaders can be restored if they respond in humility, repentance, and submission to those who are assigned to oversee their restoration.**
 - a. *Galatians 6:1 (NIV84): Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted.*
8. **While we follow leaders, we do not put leaders on pedestals.**
 - a. We are not to put our leaders on pedestals to the degree that their failure destroys our faith in God or gives us an excuse to stop following the leadership of Jesus in our lives.
 - b. Beth Moore, X (Twitter), 1'13'24. There is such tragic irony in losing our faith in Christ because we placed our faith in people who failed us. The beauty rising from the ashes of our burned down idols is that Jesus is the only one left standing. "When they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus alone." Mt 17:8.
9. **Pray for your leaders.**
 - a. *Hebrews 13:17–19 (NIV84): Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you. 18 Pray for us. We are sure that we have a clear conscience and desire to live honorably in every way. 19 I particularly urge you to pray so that I may be restored to you soon.*
 - b. It is better to pray than to criticize, attack, and/or share gossip.
10. **Remember: leaders will disappoint you and do things unintentionally that offend you.**
 - a. We need to learn how to walk through issues, conflict, and disappointments in a Christlike way.
 - b. What are our knee jerk reactions to such issues or problems?
 - c. We need to be equipped how to deal with leaders when they disappoint us, when they offend us, or when we disagree with the way they handle things. How will we respond?

- d. Four Stages of Church life: initiation (honeymoon stage), alienation (desert, brokenness, discovering what was already there), transformation (learning to love that which is broken), incarnation (embodying the life of Jesus).
- e. We need to develop muscles for how to respond well when we are disappointed with leaders in the church universal and in the church locally.

Regarding what has happened with Mike Bickle and IHOPKC specifically.

1. **God has blessed Calvary greatly with our relationship with Kansas City Fellowship/ Metro Christian Fellowship, IHOPKC, and Forerunner Church since the late 1980's.**
 - a. We have benefited significantly from the teaching and ministry of Mike Bickle, Michael Sullivant, David Parker, John Paul Jackson, Dean Briggs, Kurt Bennett, Sam Storms, and many, many other ministers from Kansas City regarding passion for Jesus, prophetic ministry, worship and prayer, intercession, etc.
 - b. God used the Vineyard Christian Movement, John Wimber, and Jack Deere significantly in the life of Calvary in the areas of power ministry (compassion) and worship since 1985.
 - c. God has used Mike Bickle and the ministry in Kansas City powerfully in the life of Calvary in the areas of intercession and the prophetic since 1988.
 - d. Through the decades, members of Calvary have attended conferences, trainings, events, and ministry in Kansas City.
2. **It became public in October 2023 that Mike Bickle was accused of pastoral abuse and sexual immorality that goes back for decades.**
 - a. In mid-October, [news](#) broke that Mike Bickle faced allegations of sexual abuse from several women over a span of decades. (See Public Statement below.)
 - b. On October 29, the International House of Prayer [announced](#) that Bickle had been removed from leadership and that the church had begun an investigation into the allegations.
 - c. On November 30, 2023, "Jane Doe" alleged that Bickle sexually abused her from 1996 to 1999, starting when she was 19 and he was 42.
 - d. On December 12, 2023, Bickle confessed to past misconduct, while denying some of the allegations. (See Mike Bickle's statement below.)
 - e. IHOPKC leadership said that they have fully, completely, and permanently disassociated from Mike Bickle because of new details.

- f. And, there are new details and accusations coming out all the time. The issue is: **how do we hold our hearts when leaders fail?**
 - i. Avoid creating a culture that puts leaders on pedestals.
 - ii. We need a culture that promotes authenticity, walking in the light, and that allows for leaders to struggle and even be restored in a healthy way.
 - iii. The church as a whole needs to reflect on the kind of atmosphere we have created where so many leaders have fallen and are falling.
 - iv. A cover-up-culture comes from a punishment culture. Leaders feel like they have to get better at covering up things instead of walking in the light and working toward restoration and wholeness when a culture focuses on punishing and exposing rather than redeeming and restoring.
 - v. Trust that the Lord is at work in this process, and that the Lord will use the investigations and process to bring to light what needs to be known. Avoid drawing conclusions or choosing sides until the process is complete.
3. **The impacts on IHOPKC and Forerunner Church are significant concerning Mike Bickle's failure, the allegations, and the fallout.**
 - a. They are trying to pastor their community well in the midst of severe trial.
 - b. They are trying to communicate clearly in the midst of complicated legal and moral issues in which every word and response possibly have an impact on the investigations and the victims.
 - c. And, the enemy takes advantage of people when they are down, hurting, or grieving, because the devil is out to steal, kill, and destroy.
 - d. So, this time is difficult for our friends associated with IHOPKC around the world.
4. **I am grateful for how IHOPKC and Forerunner Church have tried to process what is going on with Mike Bickle and the allegations.**
 - a. I am sure that they haven't done everything perfectly, but they are doing their best to take all allegations seriously, to hire a third party to investigate, and to seek to come to the unvarnished truth.
 - b. They are addressing organizational and structural issues concerning the ways that they have handled allegations in the past and will handle such allegations going forward.
 - c. And, they are trying to follow the leadership of Jesus, to pastor people well, and to stay true to their calling regarding day and night prayer. The leadership team wrote on [November 5, 2023](#):
 - i. Firstly, we want to impress upon you that IHOPKC's mission remains the same as it has always been for over 24 years, which

is to engage in the great commission through 24/7 prayer with worship and the proclamation of the Beauty of Jesus.

5. I am also grateful for the [statement posted by Sam Storms and Michael Sullivant](#). (See statement posted below.)
6. Lee Grady wrote an excellent article about [One Leader's Failure Isn't an Excuse to Leave the Faith](#). (See the article by Lee Grady below.)

Around December 24, I had a dream. I was preaching and addressing the Mike Bickle situation. I was sharing about our own journey as a church regarding the impact of broken leaders.

Here are some things that I wanted to highlight in the message to Calvary.

1. Walking the light takes courage and is transformational. Choosing to hide and walk in the dark leads to hurting yourself and hurting others. I want to urge all of us to live authentically and to walk in the light with others.
2. The letter from Sam Storms, and Michael Sullivant was very helpful. I was grateful for their courage to speak out.
3. We believe in the vision of the house of prayer for all nations, not because it is Mike Bickle's vision, but because it is the Lord's vision. We believe in IHOPKC, not because it is the work of one man, because it is the work of Jesus, raising up a house of prayer for all nations in the Earth. Calvary Community Church is a part of a movement in the earth, led by the Lord Jesus Christ.
4. When a leader falls, there are many ripple effects and repercussions. When our first pastor at Calvary failed morally, many of the people that he led to the Lord wondered if their salvation counted. As a brand-new church (1.5 years old), Calvary was not expected to survive such a crisis. But, God....
5. I want to state clearly again that Calvary has been impacted for good by the ministry of our friends in Kansas City. Our lives have been impacted powerfully through the decades by the teachings of Mike Bickle and the staff there.
6. I still personally support IHOPKC. Calvary, with our missions dollars, supports IHOPKC. Yes, there has been a huge setback to the house of prayer movement in the Earth. **But we, and other houses of prayer and intercessory missionaries all across the Earth, are following the leadership of Jesus, not just a man.**

So, the vision and the calling remain sure because God has declared: "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations."

1. **God has declared that his house shall be a house of prayer for all nations** (Isaiah 56:7).

- a. *"...these I will bring to my holy mountain and give them joy in my house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations" (Isaiah 56:7).*
 - b. God declares that his house is a house of prayer for all nations.
 - c. God promises to bring us into his presence (my holy mountain) and to give us joy in his house of prayer. There is joy in the house of the Lord.
 - d. Our offerings of our lives and our lips, and our sacrifices of praise, thanks, and worship... our offerings and sacrifices honor the Lord.
 - e. Jesus reminds us of that high calling in Matthew 21:13.
 - i. *Jesus entered the temple area and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves. 13 "It is written," he said to them, " 'My house will be called a house of prayer,' but you are making it a 'den of robbers'" (Matthew 21:12-13).*
 - ii. **Unfortunately, the church throughout history has left its high calling as a house of prayer for all nations for the enterprises and programs of men that take advantage of others and that promote its own selfish agendas.**
 - f. We want to live lives that embrace our calling to be a house of prayer for all nations, both individually and corporately.
2. **God desires and has ordained that there is ongoing worship and prayer around his throne for eternity (Revelation 5:8).**
- a. *Revelation 5:6–8 (NIV84): Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. He had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. 7 He came and took the scroll from the right hand of him who sat on the throne. 8 And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. **Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.***
 - b. God desires and has ordained that there is ongoing worship and prayer around his throne for eternity.
 - c. May it be so on earth as it is in heaven.

Ministry Time:

1. Pray for healing for those who have been hurt, abused, or traumatized by a leader.
2. Pray for the grace to forgive and to become a wounded healer.

3. Pray for protection for leaders all across the body of Christ in the world.

Public Statement concerning recent allegations on Mike Bickle

October 28, 2023

A few days ago, we made the leadership team of the International House of Prayer in Kansas City (IHOPKC) aware of serious allegations spanning several decades concerning its founder, Mike Bickle. Without going into details to protect the privacy of the victims' identities, we have found these allegations of clergy sexual abuse by Mike Bickle to be credible and long-standing. The credibility of these allegations is not based on any one experience or any one victim, but on the collective and corroborating testimony of the experiences of several victims.

Prior to meeting with the leadership team of IHOP, we attempted to bring the allegations and the testimony of one of the victims directly to Mike Bickle in the spirit of Matthew 18:15-17. However, we were repeatedly rebuffed by Mike Bickle and we were refused any sort of meeting. Instead, Mike used manipulating and intimidating tactics towards the victims to isolate them and discredit them. To avoid further wounding of victims, we met with several members of IHOPKC's Executive Leadership Team. There, we shared testimonies of these victims of Mike's inappropriate words and actions.

When these allegations were brought to our attention, we were shocked. We could never have imagined that inappropriate conduct with women as something we would ever need to be concerned about. The allegations seemed out of character to the man we thought we knew, but they were so serious we could not ignore them.

The Scriptures inform us that leaders in the church, especially those who teach the Word of God, are held to a higher standard and stricter judgment. We believe that Mike Bickle's actions were not above reproach and fall short of biblical standards for leaders in the church. To be clear, the allegations made about Mike Bickle's misconduct were sexual in nature where the marriage covenant was not honored. Furthermore, the allegations made also reveal that Mike Bickle used his position of spiritual authority over the victims to manipulate them.

We do not share this process to fill in salacious details, but to protect the integrity of the victims and their experiences that were shared. We appeal to you to refrain from using names of any victims. These are women who have always been viewed as credible, trustworthy, and courageous. None of these victims had any intention to punish Mike Bickle and they had nothing to gain by sharing their experiences except the pursuit of truth, repentance, mercy, and grace.

Dwayne Roberts

Former Executive Leadership Team and Board Member, IHOPKC

Brian Kim

Former Executive Leadership Team and Board Member, IHOPKC

Wes Martin

Former Pastor, Forerunner Christian Fellowship and Former Vice President of Student Affairs, IHOPU

Mike Bickle's Personal Statement

To my Family and Friends,

December 12, 2023

With a very heavy heart I want to express how deeply grieved I am that my past sins have led to so much pain, confusion, and division in the body of Christ in this hour. I sadly admit that 20+ years ago, I sinned by engaging in inappropriate behavior—my moral failures were real. (I am not admitting to the more intense sexual activities that some are suggesting). I hate my sin and I see it as serious and grievous before a holy God. I take all sin seriously, so on those occasions I quickly and sincerely repented in a way that resulted in receiving assurance from God followed by a daily resolve to live holy in all of my ways. God graciously helped me to respond in those times with a broken and contrite heart that was filled with godly sorrow. To this day, I remain sorrowful about those past failures.

I am anguished that my past sins have caused great pain for my wife and family along with the IHOPKC family, and others. I am deeply sorry that my sin put the IHOPKC leadership and community in a very painful and difficult position. I asked my family for forgiveness. I now ask for forgiveness from the IHOPKC family and many in the body of Christ.

Some may wonder why I am just now making a public statement 20+ years later? It is because I was recently confronted about things that I said or did 20+ years ago—things I believed were dealt with and under the blood of Jesus. Since this has now become public, I want to repent publicly. On October 28, 2023, I wrote the first draft of this statement but at that very same time, false allegations of sexual abuse were being circulated against me. I was given legal advice to wait to make my statement public for several important reasons—including creating the misunderstanding that I was confessing to the false allegations that were circulating. I am very sorry that it took so long for this personal statement to come out. This delay created additional pain, anguish, division, and more for so many people that I love. I am deeply sorry for this.

Since late October terrible things have been written against me in various communications (blogs, articles, posts, etc.) that describe me and various sinful things that I allegedly did. There are many misrepresentations of my words and actions in these communications including statements that are out of context, greatly exaggerated, or blatantly false.

I ask that my family and friends do not defend me. I have confidence that the Lord will speak concerning what He sees and says about me in His timing. Please do not engage in debates on social media to defend me and please do not criticize those who are voicing their disdain for me. Please only speak blessing to them and about them (Mt. 5:44). In this way, we can minimize some of the divisiveness that the enemy has planned—and we can continue to stay focused on loving Jesus and one another. I am deeply committed to respond to those with complaints against me in the spirit of Psalm 18:35—both now and in the years to come. Some who have spoken against me are friends (I will continue to view them as friends).

For an extended season, I will not engage in my public preaching ministry (conferences, social media, zooms, etc.)—I see this as God's “delayed” loving discipline on my life (Heb. 12:6, 11). I will look to other leaders to determine how long this season will last—it may be long and it may even be permanent. I will only reengage in my public preaching ministry, if God confirms it through others. I am at peace with whatever He wants (2 Sam. 15:25-26). Jesus, I love and trust You!

I honor and love the IHOPKC community and will forever be grateful for them. They are a most remarkable people—they are truly marvelous comrades. I know the Lord is with them and that His favor and grace will continue to rest on them.

Pray for me, Diane, and my beloved family. They have expressed their love and support for me in extravagant ways.

With much sorrow yet with prayerful confidence in God's perfect leadership,

Mike Bickle

[A Response to the Allegations against Mike Bickle from two former Colleagues](#)

December 18, 2023, by Sam Storms and Michael Sullivant

Dear Friends,

We write to you today with sorrowful hearts. As many of you know, we both served on the senior leadership team at Metro Christian Fellowship (MCF) alongside Mike Bickle – Michael from 1987-2000 and Sam from 1993-2000. During those years, we were in (what we felt was) close fellowship with Mike and Diane - meeting as couples multiple times every month. This camaraderie continued until such time as Mike stepped down as lead pastor at MCF to form IHOPKC as an independent ministry.

We were unaware of Mike meeting with or traveling in the company of young women during this time. Mike was able to successfully hide from us this dimension of his life. He never came to us with a request for prayer or with some confession of weakness and an appeal to hold him accountable. If he had, we would have faithfully stepped in to help our friend in whatever way we could.

We were made aware of the allegations of clergy sexual abuse at different times over the past several months. We have now both spoken extensively with one of the primary Jane Does and her husband and believe what she has said about the sexual nature of their interaction. In her own words, it involved everything short of sexual intercourse. There is no reason to doubt the accuracy of her testimony. Our hearts break for what she suffered and for the ongoing grief this horrific injustice has caused her and her family.

Sam and Francis Chan attempted to visit Mike at his home on October 31 where Chris Reed turned them away at the door. He said that Mike had been instructed not to meet or speak with anyone, which Mike later confirmed in a brief email to Sam. We were subsequently informed that Mike was following the counsel of Eric Volz.

As a matter of conscience, we write now to publicly state that we believe Jane Doe. We deeply regret not being aware of her situation at the time it occurred. We have now been made aware of additional allegations directed at Mike for behavior subsequent to his relationship with Jane Doe. These are grievous and weighty. However, it is not our intent to address the legitimacy of those charges. That is the responsibility of whatever third party is secured to conduct a thorough investigation of what may or may not have happened in the context of IHOPKC for the past 23 years.

It is our opinion that Mike's most recent statement, while potentially a step in the right direction, is woefully inadequate. What is most lacking in it is explicitly owning the sin

he committed against Jane Doe(s), repenting, and asking for forgiveness. Regrettably, Jane Doe is nowhere mentioned in the written statement he released.

We appeal to Mike, as long-standing friends and colleagues who have loved him and Diane, to search his heart and plead with the Holy Spirit to disclose any other sins committed. We pray that by God's grace he will find the spiritual courage to confess such sins, wholeheartedly repent, face the consequences, and humbly pursue the restoration and healing of anyone he has wounded. It is our love for Mike that constrains us to write this letter and call him to more open and vulnerable official examination for his confessed duplicity and moral failures as a Christian and a ministry leader.

Our sincere and heartfelt appeal is that the ELT at IHOPKC and the Advocate group will together pursue an acceptable independent, third-party investigation. There is little hope that the truth will come to light, leading to a resolution of this matter, until such time as everyone involved cooperates fully with the investigative body.

Mature and compassionate spiritual leadership requires that we do not hurt those entrusted to our care. Lying when confronted with the truth, creating division in the body of Christ by intentionally preaching about betrayal and false accusation after being informed that allegations were forthcoming, lawyering up, making minimal concessions in lieu of true confession, and indiscriminately managing an image of oneself is the opposite of what a spiritually mature response should be to a crisis of this nature.

Christian leaders steward a holy calling and are held to a higher standard by God for living above reproach. By this, a leader embraces the risk that any undealt with and/or unconfessed sin patterns may be publicly exposed if they are disqualifying in nature and scope. Beyond this, leaders ought to welcome a lifestyle of transparency before family, friends, governing boards, and constituents. We believe Mike has had every opportunity to vulnerably share any temptations or struggles with sin with fellow leaders in order to find God's mercy and pathway to wholeness. Sadly, we believe he has not remained faithful to this commitment, but rather engaged in deceptive and manipulative actions to exploit the vulnerability of a godly young woman. As such, we are in firm agreement with Mike stepping down from Christian ministry.

The painful ripple effects of this sin have been felt far and wide. We grieve hearing the voices of hurt, angry, confused, and disillusioned current and former members of IHOPKC, and its related ministries. We urge you all to find safe people in your life to pray for you and support you as you process your experience. We pray for the peace and grace of God to be with you and upon you all.

Bearing with you in spirit, Sam Storms and Michael Sullivant

[One Leader's Failure Isn't an Excuse to Leave the Faith](#)

Posted by [J. Lee Grady](#)

January 3, 2024

I started seriously following Jesus in the 1970s. From those early days until now, I've watched many leaders fail.

During the days of the Jesus movement, we learned that [Lonnie Frisbee](#)—the hippie evangelist portrayed in the movie "[Jesus Revolution](#)"—got divorced because of sexual immorality and had to break ties with Calvary Chapel pastor Chuck Smith. In the 1980s, evangelists Jimmy Swaggart and Marvin Gorman were on the evening news because of sex scandals. Then, after PTL founder Jim Bakker had an extramarital affair, he went to prison for misusing donor funds.

In the 1990s, when I became an editor at Charisma, I lost count of the scandals involving bishops, pastors, false prophets, gospel singers and charlatans who preyed on the faithful. I'm old enough to remember W.V. Grant, who was exposed on "Nightline" for faking healings; Robert Tilton, who bilked donors and threw their prayer requests in the trash; Earl Paulk, who sexually abused dozens of women in his Atlanta church; and Bernard Jordan, who had the gall to charge people \$365 to get a prophetic word.

The failures continued into the next decade. I can remember times when there were four or five ministry failures happening at the same time, all involving high-profile pastors. Even in recent years we've seen a global spiritual shaking because of scandals involving revivalist Todd Bentley, [charismatic prophet Paul Cain](#), Nigerian pastor Sunday Adelaja, [apologist Ravi Zacharias](#), Bishop Eddie Long of Atlanta and Hillsong pastors Carl Lentz and Brian Houston.

And now, the International House of Prayer movement is reeling because of [Mike Bickle's confession on Dec. 12, 2023](#), of inappropriate conduct with a woman. Add to this the reports of sexual abuse in the Southern Baptist Convention and the cover-up of child sex abuse in the Catholic Church, and it's easy to understand why some people think Christianity is a mess.

Here's a simple reminder: There's no problem with the gospel. There's nothing wrong with God. He's perfect, but since the beginning of time His followers have struggled with their flaws and sinful tendencies. Jesus gave us the power to avoid sin, but not every follower of Jesus fully embraces that power.

Years ago, a pastor in Australia asked me why I didn't have a sour attitude toward ministry leaders. "Lee, you've had to report on all these church scandals," he said. "How have you not become a cynic?"

My reply was honest: "Because I know I'm capable of doing the things they did." In other words, I know I'm standing today only because of the grace and mercy of God.

During the current Bickle scandal, I've heard people say that many Christians will backslide because of his mistakes. But I don't understand this reasoning. In all my years of watching ministry scandals, not once have I said, "I'm going to abandon my faith because of what that person did." Why would I give a person so much power over my life? Here are three truths that guide me when servants of God fail:

1. Church leaders don't belong on pedestals. Paul and Barnabas rebuked the people of Lystra when they called them gods (Acts 14:14). I respect anointed ministers, but I also know every Christian has feet of clay, including me. Only Jesus deserves worship. Some of the godliest pastors I know have shared with me their private struggles. The apostle Paul was a spiritual giant, but he was painfully aware of his weaknesses when he said, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—and I am the worst of them all" (1 Tim. 1:15b, NLT).

2. Just because one leader messed up doesn't mean everyone is failing. I know hundreds of pastors and ministry leaders who have walked with the Lord for decades. God's grace has kept them on the narrow path. Their exemplary lives show me it's possible to finish well. Instead of focusing on the negatives, identify the true heroes who are steady and stable. They may not be the loudest or the flashiest preachers, and they may not have the biggest social media followings, but they have track records of faithfulness.

3. It's better to pray than to criticize. The longer I live, the more I realize that a wise man is quick to hear and slow to speak. I haven't said anything in print until today about the Bickle situation because I care about him, regardless of what he's done. I'm praying for him, as well as for all the people in the House of Prayer movement who have been affected by this tragedy. God will bring His correction as well as His healing in this situation. And if they hurt other people, pray for them, too.

Having a merciful and prayerful attitude doesn't mean we avoid confrontation, or that we compromise with sin. But when I confront, I want my heart to be bathed in grace. Pray for all leaders who fail—and ask God to extend the same mercy to them that you need every day.

The devil wants to use other people's failures to discourage us. Resist the enemy's manipulation. Keep your eyes on Jesus, and trust in His amazing grace. He is able to keep you from stumbling.