

This week I heard sad news about one of my spiritual heroes



Have mercy on me, O God, because of your unfailing love. Because of your great compassion, blot out the stain of my sins. Psalm 51:1

When a Hero Falls

This past week has been a very sad one for me. On Sunday morning I heard of multiple, credible, longstanding allegations of immorality against one of my heroes of the faith, Mike Bickle. Because of the integrity of the ones bringing the allegations and the IHOP leadership pulling Mike out of all ministry functions, I believe it very likely that at least a measure of the heart of these allegations are true. If you had told me before this past week that this would have happened I would have told you “not a chance.” As most of you know I have been significantly impacted by Mike’s messages for over thirty years. I have listened to well over a thousand of his sermons over that thirty year period

because of my desire to grow in his emphasis on prioritizing the first commandment, following the sermon on the mount lifestyle, and studying what the Bible states about the days that precede Yeshua's return. I will never throw out the importance of what I've learned from Mike in these areas, but I'm grieved about what now appears to be a striking measure of duplicity in his life. I'm still hoping against hope that none of these things are true, but I don't think that to be likely. So this week I've been grieving...as well as thinking.

At the end of the day, I'm confident that if these allegations are true, what will be discovered will be that Mike habitually violated some basic principles of biblical wisdom and godly parameters. This is meant to encourage us to stay the course and not to lose heart in following the LORD. These types of sins do not happen in a vacuum without these violations. I'm reminded of Billy Graham's commitment that he made with other evangelists to safeguard himself in this area. From his autobiography, he stated, *"From that day on, I did not travel, meet or eat alone with a woman other than my wife."* It's hard to have issues with immorality if this is a conviction that a person is committed to walking in. While I have not been a teetotaler with Graham's commitment, I have purposed to walk in the heart of this principle and on the rare occasions when I have met alone with a woman other than my wife it's been in a public setting and with my wife's prior knowledge and agreement. Especially in this time of growing lawlessness, these and other godly commitments like it are important for us to talk about and prayerfully implement in our lives.

A second thing I've thought about is the importance of accountability. I remember the disarming statement "if you never want to be free, just tell God." I know of the truth of this in my life. There have been sins that I haven't been able to get free of until I made it consistently accountable to other godly brothers to pray with me about. I heard a friend this week bring up John Wesley's accountability questions. One of the things that John encouraged was to form homogeneous groups divided according to gender, age, and marital status....*Wesley's rules of the [group] states, "The design of our meeting is to obey that command of God, 'Confess your faults one to another, and pray for one another that ye may be healed' (James 5:16)."...To speak to each of us in order, freely and plainly, the true state of our souls, with the faults*

we have committed in thought, word and deed, and the temptations we have felt since our last meeting...To desire some person among us to speak his own state first, and then to ask the rest in order, as many and as searching questions as may be, concerning their state, sins, and temptations. (as found in Ajith Fernando's *Jesus-Driven Ministry* pg. 148, 149). I feel a greater sobriety to increase the scope of accountability in my life. I know I need a greater measure of the fear of God because I well-know the seed-bed for significant sins are lurking within me. I have to consistently commit to walking in obedience, and yesterday's success doesn't promise the same for the future.

In closing, there's something in me that wants to believe in someone noble and right and to have heroes that I can look up to and emulate--and this is biblical (Philippians 4:8-9). Unfortunately we live in a broken world made up of broken people--so this certainly won't be the last Christian leader to fall, and we must ultimately look to Yeshua as the only One who is perfect and doesn't need forgiveness. This is the second of my biggest heroes that I had as a young man that currently looks to have fallen. So, presently I'm out of heroes (at least living ones!). But, I'm praying and believing that out of the ashes of this moment that I and others will have a greater resolve to be **heroic** in small, consistent ways as we continue to seek God more wholeheartedly; to grow in a practical love for our spouses, kids, and friends; to repent freely and quickly when we mess up; to be drawn to deeper and more regular accountability with others seeking God; and to pursue the purity of heart that Yeshua calls us to. I have a resolve to learn from this moment and to ultimately be a better man because of it...but, right now I have a lump in my throat--and will have for some time.