

Fresh Start

By Jerry Bader

What If I Fail?

November 11, 2018

I recently watched the movie “First Man,” which chronicles the U.S. space program that put a man on the moon in 1969. The story is built around the first man to set foot on the moon, Neil Armstrong. Perhaps the most jarring scene in the movie comes when two NASA officials are proofing a speech President Richard Nixon was to deliver in the event Armstrong and fellow astronaut Buzz Aldrin became stranded on the moon with no chance of rescue. It read, in part:

Fate has ordained that the men who went to the moon to explore in peace will stay on the moon to rest in peace.

These brave men, Neil Armstrong and Edwin Aldrin, know that there is no hope for their recovery. But they also know that there is hope for mankind in their sacrifice.

These two men are laying down their lives in mankind's most noble goal – the search for truth and understanding.

General Dwight Eisenhower had prepared a similar “contingency speech” in the event the Allied invasion at Normandy, France during World War II failed:

Our landings in the Cherbourg-Havre area have failed to gain a satisfactory foothold and I have withdrawn the troops. My decision to attack at this time and place was based on the best information available. The troops, the air and the Navy did all that bravery and devotion to duty could do. If any blame or fault attaches to the attempt, it is mine alone.

Because both endeavors would come to be considered among the greatest accomplishments of the 20th century, it’s almost impossible to imagine either of them ending in failure. Everyone involved in both efforts knew that they could fail. And they were prepared for failure. But the possibility of failing didn’t stop either campaign from going forward. How often do we, as Christ-followers, hold a contingency speech in our minds that keeps us from taking a step out in faith that God is asking of us?

Sure, fear can be a healthy safeguard against reckless behavior. But when we let fear of losing security, income and other comforts from answering God’s call, we disobey Him and deprive ourselves of fully experiencing His perfect plan for us. It might be fear of accepting new people or traveling to new places when He prompts us to. Or it could be fear of moving across town or across the country. When this fear paralyzes us, we can turn to God’s word for reassurance – *There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear.* 1 John 4:18

This is not to say that we’ll never fail when we follow God’s promptings. Eisenhower was so prepared to fail, he was ready to accept responsibility for a failure that hadn’t happened! Yet he went ahead with the plan nonetheless. If we trust God and take steps to know we are hearing from Him, we also know he’ll turn any failure into something good for us and for His plan.

Jesus knew Peter was going to fail. Jesus told Peter he was going to fail. And Peter did fail, spectacularly. But Peter repented and was restored. July 20, 2019 will mark the 50th anniversary of Armstrong’s “one giant leap for mankind.” Every June 6, Americans remember the sacrifice of those who slammed the beaches of

Normandy in June 1944 and what it means for our freedom today. Few will take time to consider what failure for either would have looked like.

When you believe God is calling you to a campaign, listen to Him carefully. When you are confident you know exactly what He is asking of you, trust Him and don't let fear keep you from fulfilling the great plan He has for you!