

**PHILIPPIANS Part 3:
5 Setback Lessons Dads Should Teach Their Children - 06.20.10**

Play: "In His Shoes" Video Clip [2:21]

Intro – This video is so powerful, isn't it? Dads - Your children really do follow you... everywhere! Scary thought isn't it? But this is the great calling of being a parent - to raise children to follow you AS YOU FOLLOW THE LORD... and eventually get them to the place where they walk the path and follow the Lord on their own.

Tonight, as we come to the passage in Philippians that we're going to study tonight it occurs to me that these verses contain some great parenting lessons. In fact, I've titled this sermon, "5 Setback Lessons Dads Should Teach Their Children."

READ: Philippians 1:12-18a ESV

Set the Scene: Paul in prison. Not where he intends to be. Rather be planting churches and preaching. But we see in these verse 5 great lessons of how to deal with setbacks... the first of which is...

Lesson #1: Life includes both **PROGRESS** and **SETBACKS**

We do have the tendency to want to ignore the setbacks, as if they were an unusual or exceptional, occasional happening. The reality is that setbacks are just as common as progress. In fact progress isn't even as easy as we'd like to think.

Word study: advance (ESV, NIV), progress (NASB, GNT)
προκοπή (prokopé)- describes not merely moving ahead but *doing so against obstacles*. The related verb was used of an explorer or of army-advance-team hacking a path through dense trees and underbrush, moving ahead slowly and with considerable effort. Resistance is inherent with this kind of progress.

True in life, isn't it? Progress itself is not easy. We often feel as if we're hacking our path through the jungle of life. But we like to make things easy for the kids. Right? And that's a good thing. Childhood is a wonderful thing... protected from realities. However we should be teaching our children that life isn't always easy, that progress takes lots of effort. AND THAT...

Life INCLUDES setbacks. Each adult here knows this. Perhaps you don't like to think about it. Maybe you'd like to ignore them. For some of you, maybe you're struggling through a setback right now. You need to know... and Dads, you need to teach... that setbacks are normal and expected. Life is much more of a two-step forward and one step back process. Sometimes it's even more one step forward and two steps back.

How do you teach this principle to your children?

- A.** As they stumble, fail, suffer setback - accept them, love them, but verbalize the truth that this is normal... AND
- B.** Allow them to see you when you're vulnerable, when you suffer setbacks in work, career, relationships. It's during these times when you really have the opportunity to teach these other 4 lessons *by your living example!*

Lesson #2: Setbacks in life are not the **RESULT** of the gospel,
but may be a new means of **PROCLAIMING** the gospel.

Paul is in prison *because he preached the gospel*. It would be so easy for him to lick his wounds. Cry out, "Oh woe is me!" God, why have you left me here to rot away in this prison? Instead he makes this incredible statement: "What has happened to me (PRISON) has really served to advance the gospel!" The Roman Imperial guard and all of Caesar's household heard the gospel because of Paul's imprisonment. AND we have much of the NT that Paul wouldn't have written had he not been in prison.

If we are not careful, we can fall into the trap of playing the victim because of our Christianity. Instead, we should follow Paul's example and look to see how our setbacks can really be used to advance the gospel.

Can we be honest for just a moment? People will not be more likely to think your faith something special because good things happen to you. Where people will be impressed with the claims of Christ are found when you are up against it, when setbacks are all around, when nothing is going as planned AND you still give glory to God. THIS is how the gospel moves forward.

Consider every chapter of Acts!

- Jesus ascends in 1, but H.S. comes in 2...
- Peter accused of drunkenness, preaches & 3,000 saved
- Peter / John heal and preach in 3, jailed as a result... but released in 4, believers have even more boldness /share
- Saul executes Steven, Saul becomes Paul
- Paul beaten, shipwrecked, imprisoned & church explodes!

Makes us ask - How do you view setbacks in your life?

Lesson #3: Each setback **CONTAINS THE SEED** for progress.

Paul didn't just allow himself to wallow within his imprisonment. He looked for the seeds of progress. Ok... I can't do anything now. I'm in prison. No, he looked for where progress could be made. Roman guard and Caesar's household.

This has been true of every great man of faith in the Bible, not just Jesus and Paul and Peter and James, but even 1700 years earlier. Joseph's brothers sell him off to be a slave, and Joseph turns it into the seed of progress, becoming the 2nd most powerful...

Joseph: "You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive."
Genesis 50:20 ESV

This is one of those universal principles. It's true both within the faith and without. And it's something that we should be teaching our children on a regular basis. When things don't go our way, we adjust, we look for plan B, we ask "What's the next opportunity?"

"I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work."
Thomas Edison, inventor of the light bulb

The greatest evangelist of our century - Billy Graham, said: “Comfort and prosperity have never enriched the world as much as adversity has.”

I’m sure I’m not telling you anything you don’t already know. But we have the tendency to compartmentalize our lives. We think in terms of our business lives, or our professional lives, or our academic life as being somehow separate and apart from our personal lives. We tend to accept setbacks in some areas of life but can’t understand them in others. When it gets personal... when it becomes “Why did this have to happen to me?” OR “This is just so unfair!”... Especially when tragedy hits us from out of no where, we don’t tend to think of it as a setback where there is the “seed for progress.” But trust me when I tell you that the seed of progress is there, if we will look for it.

GOD NEVER WASTES A HURT. He doesn’t allow you to experience a setback without being able to use it for your benefit and the benefit of those around you!

ILLUSTRATION: Bethany Hamilton Shark Attack. 13-year old girl, lives in Hawaii, great surfer - future bright. 10/31/2003 14-foot tiger shark attacked her, literally ripping off her left arm just below the shoulder. If the shark had bitten two inches further in, the attack would have been fatal. Friends rushed her to hospital. Lost 60% of her blood.

What would YOU have done if you were Bethany? Less than a month later she went surfing again. Figured out a way. Became competitive. In 2004 won ESPY award for comeback athlete of the year and in 2005 Bethany took 1st place in the NSSA Nat’l Championship.

Now you might say that’s a great story - what an exception Bethany is... but my whole point this evening is that while a shark attack is exceptional, setbacks aren’t. It’s what we do during the setbacks that makes the world perk up and listen to our claims of the gospel. Take a look...

PLAY Video: “Heart of a Surfer” [1:59]

Isn’t that an incredible attitude? When you are a Christ-follower, you have within you the ability to have a “shark-proof” attitude...

Lesson #4: MY ATTITUDE about setbacks determines MY DISCOVERY of progress.

Bethany has a unique opportunity to tell her story and the story of Christ. We would never say that God caused the shark to bite Bethany. But Bethany was confident that she was God’s and that God could use her unique circumstances. **Paul writes later that...**

**“The attitude you should have is the one that Christ Jesus had.”
Philippians 2:5 GNT**

And what was Christ’s attitude? Fully committed to the Father. Willing to give up Heaven to come to earth. Willing to give up deity in exchange for humanity. At every point in his ministry, Jesus was focused on HIS PURPOSE - THE CROSS!

Paul also had this same sense of purpose, created for this moment:

“I have been put here for the defense of the gospel.” Phil 1:16 NRSV

“God in his grace chose me even before I was born...” Galatians 1:15 GNT

“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born
I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.”
Jeremiah 1:5 NIV

TRANSITION: If we're not careful, we could fall into the trap of letting this talk become a success talk, that you can overcome anything, that you can achieve your dreams. This is not the case. Paul did not desire to be in prison. In fact Paul may have been executed there. But God (and Paul) used the prison experience for building God's kingdom.

Lesson #5: _____ **PERSONAL SETBACKS** _____ should be viewed

against backdrop of _____ **CHRIST'S PROGRESS** _____

“So how am I to respond? I've decided that I really don't care about their motives, whether mixed, bad, or indifferent. Every time one of them opens his mouth, Christ is proclaimed, so I just cheer them on!”
Philippians 1:18a The Message

Background: Some preaching Christ from “envy,” “rivalry,” “... thinking to afflict Paul in his imprisonment.” And how does Paul respond? BY LOOKING AT THE BIGGEST POSSIBLE PICTURE. Against the backdrop of Christ's progress. No matter what Christ was being proclaimed AND THAT was a good thing!

As hard as it is to understand, sometimes, we are not really at the center of the universe. God is. We are here for HIS pleasure, to serve HIM! If we can have that understanding down to the core of our being, then it is possible to have this attitude that Jesus had, that Paul had, that even 13-year-old Bethany Hamilton had - that my personal setback right now isn't the most important thing - it's what I do with it.

IS THERE A SEED OF OPPORTUNITY HERE SOMEPLACE?

DO I HAVE AN ATTITUDE OF NEW DISCOVERY OF PURPOSE?

IS THERE SOME WAY CHRIST'S KINGDOM CAN ADVANCE?

Conclusion: Dads (and Moms), you more than any other human being on the planet have the best opportunity to teach these 5 lessons of setbacks to you children. If you do, they will grow up (a) not fearing failure, (b) they'll grow up knowing they're accepted and loved no matter what, and (c) they'll develop a humility and a character of living that is rare and desperately needed in our world today.