

A Study in Failure, Part 6

In response to God's call, we had published a line of pocket-size books for evangelism and spiritual growth. Sales never grew strong enough to sustain the company, and we had to quit selling the books after ten years. But God miraculously fulfilled His calling and purpose through us, getting many thousands of books into the hands of soldiers, inmates, and hungry readers in poorer countries around the world. (See "A Study in Failure", Parts 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5)

The company that God had called us to start, Living the Natural Way, didn't die when we stopped selling physical product. We simply switched our focus to online resources, especially hymns. Back when I was still in my 20's, God had called me to write hymns. Throughout all the seasons of my life, He had kept His thumb in my back regarding that call. Now, with the pocket-size books having run their course, He had freed me to focus on my first love: hymns.

Today, the website that started as LNWbooks.com is now LNWhymns.com. It currently offers over 900 of my hymns, with recordings of over 800 of them, plus a variety of companion resources. The site includes thousands of devotional readings, fully indexed, and everything on the site is free. We have returning visitors from all fifty states and 135 countries.

In spite of all the red ink generated by the pocket-size books, God was faithful to supply all our needs. We've never missed paying a bill. We've never even been late, as best I remember.

During those years, we had refinanced our house in order to support the publishing ministry. But a few years ago God directed us to a beautiful, spacious house here in Olathe, Kansas, just five minutes from a Christian college. I'm sitting here in a comfortable, roomy study where I'm blessed to sit and write all day, every day. The mortgage is paid off. Our publishing ministry still isn't self-supporting, but it's moving that way, and I'm confident it will get there. In the meantime, God is generously meeting our needs through my wife, who is a successful real estate agent.

Have I answered my earlier question—did I fail? If my goal was profit, I certainly did. If it weren't for my weaknesses, perhaps our publishing ministry would have been financially viable. But I'm encouraged by this verse:

We have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. (2 Corinthians 4:7, NIV)

Like Paul, I had prayed that God would take away my weakness and make me "successful" as a publisher. But His response was, and is:

"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."

(2 Corinthians 12:9, NIV)

Remember, God spoke our entire physical reality out of nothing. He never runs low on resources. What He wants, what He is constantly seeking, is people who will love Him, trust Him, and obey Him, people who will do what He says one day at a time and leave everything else to Him. Weak people. Ordinary people. Human people. Obedient people.

Lord, I'm available! Count me in!

*We will only realize
the true value of our earthly resources
when we put them
in God's hands.*

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