

Published based on [5 Pitfalls For Pastors to Avoid](#)

5 Pitfalls For Pastors to Avoid



Five Pitfalls for Pastors to Avoid

by Eddie Lawrence

Introduction- As I typed the title to this post in the form of a sermon outline, I must admit that it was a little scary. Why? I am a pastor that has experienced great pain due to falling into more than one of these pits. I take full responsibility for my own actions which is necessary in order for healing and restoration to take place.

However in addition to our own mistakes and sinfulness, the enemy is also at work against the life of every servant of Christ. The Scripture bears this out. Jesus was tempted of the Devil. David sinned greatly. Peter denied Christ. Paul was buffeted. Some of our heroes in the Scripture fought valiantly and endured the temptation. Others caved in. We can learn lessons from them all.

Take Peter for example. Jesus told Peter that Satan has asked for him. That's interesting in and of itself. How does that work? Why is this possible? Jesus also told Peter that restoration would be necessary. This was before Peter ever fell. Jesus told Peter he had prayed for him that through it all, his faith would not fail him. You know the story. Peter was sifted like wheat. The end result was Peter was sifted of a presumptuous pride that had led him into trouble more than once. Yes, God can use the attack of the Devil to bring about good in our lives. At the resurrection, Jesus sent word by the women to Peter. Jesus went to Peter to restore him at the seaside. Peter was chosen 50 days after his fall to preach the first sermon at Pentecost. This ought to encourage every servant of Christ who is aware of their own fallen humanity.

Here is a short list of five areas that every pastor should be vigilant about, because the enemy of our souls is lurking around these areas just waiting for the opportunity to bring you down.

1. Pride

-The Scripture is clear. Pride precedes destruction and a fall. As a pastor, you are in a situation to be unwittingly elevated in the minds of men. People will unintentionally set you on a pedestal. If you are not careful, it can affect the way you begin to think about yourself.

-You may begin to struggle with feeling too self-important. We must remember that Jesus has run the church for almost 2000 years just fine without any of us. We are servants not tyrants.

-You may begin to struggle with entitlement. This is the "I'm special, therefore I deserve this or that!" attitude. This creates fertile ground for the enemy to poison you and others. He had much rather leave you in the pulpit with this kind of attitude that to pull you out of it. Why? Because you lead the people to focus on you instead of Christ.

-You may struggle with insecurity. When people exalt you, you begin to fear that they discover that you are just like them, or that someone else may do a better job than you when you fail to meet their high expectations. The result is feeling threatened by other gifted people. Resorting to control and manipulation to keep things safe for yourself.

2. Burnout

-This is rampant. There is often a certain amount of self-deception behind this. The idea that you can do it all. Allowing unreasonable expectations to be placed on you by others or by yourself.

-On two different occasions in my ministry I have succumbed to burnout. The first landed me in the hospital with heart and stress related problems. The second time I almost lost everything including my family. In the first situation I had allowed others to heap and heap unreasonable requirements on my life and time. In the second, I carried a huge list of expectations over my own head. In both cases, I was driven to the end of myself.

-Take time for yourself and your family. Learn to free your mind of what I called the "guilt of the undone." It will never all get done and it is foolish for you to think you can conquer it all alone. The applause of the people is very motivating but it is setting you up to bring you down. You have one Master and it is not "them" or "yourself." It is Christ and he calls you to a life of rest and peace which will produce wonderful fruit for which He alone gets the glory.

-Eat right and exercise. Learn to have mental activities that allow you to disengage from "war." This "re-creation" will benefit you greatly. I am not suggesting a vacation from God. You never need that. But you do need to avoid viewing God as a taskmaster Who is constantly requiring you to "do." He calls you to Himself to rest and intimacy. Out of that you will get what you need for everything else. What a trap we have fallen into when we begin to associate our Father with our tiredness.

3. Sex

-Sex is a gift of God that brings incredible pleasure without guilt when it is expressed and experienced within its intended boundaries. When you begin to use it in illegitimate ways as an escape from your "high pressure" reality, it becomes gunpowder looking for fire. It is highly destructive.

-Ask the Holy Spirit to give you the grace to satisfy your true longings for intimacy in godly ways. Share your heart with your spouse. Do not share any kind of intimate conversation with an inappropriate person. That leaves out everyone except your spouse, your counselor, or a trusted godly friend of the same sex. We all yearn and crave to be known. To be accepted. To be loved for who we are. These are powerful emotions that can be seduced by the power of sex. The enemy invites us to a false intimacy.

-Stay away from pornography. Flee lust. Be accountable to someone who is nearby. Long distance accountability is a joke. You need someone who rubs shoulders with you on a regular basis. This is someone who can see you around others, look into your eyes, who knows when you are struggling and will talk to you about it.

-Seek help. Don't allow fear and pride from causing you to humble yourself when you are struggling. Remember David was alone on a rooftop when his men were off to war. Don't allow your need for affirmation or intimacy to seduce you into illegitimately fulfilling your heart cravings. Words are powerful, so be very careful what you say to others, especially if you feel the pull of an illegitimate attraction toward them. Life and death are in the power of the tongue. One remark can set a course toward pain for your life.

4. Money

-This is probably the most subtle of the pitfalls. Why? Because we learn how to hide behind "godly" curtains. It is easy to be duped by the power of greed and desire for money. Only the Lord knows the true motives of our hearts.

-It is not wrong for pastors to be really well cared for. As a matter of fact, it is Scriptural. It is wrong, however, when we somehow prostitute ourselves for money. When the motive of what we do becomes to get more money, then we err and can become pierced through with sorrows.

-A servant working hard or overtime to adequately provide for family needs is obeying the Scripture. A servant who resorts to tactics and motives that conflict with the heart of Christ is in trouble. Father is still our provider and we ultimately trust Him. We do not leave His voice to follow another, even if the other offers more money. Again, this one is tricky, because it has to do with the motive of heart, which others cannot see. So guard your own heart.

5. Fear

-The fear of failure. The fear of man. The fear of lack. The fear of rejection. Fear, fear, fear..... It can come disguised in a million ways. Yet, it can quickly shut down your faith and your anointing.

-Fear will thrust you ahead of God because you are afraid of being seen as fearful because you know you should

patiently wait. It can hold you back from God's plan because you fear you might fail to step into what He is calling you to.

-The antidote for fear is a faith that is rooted in the love of God. When you know how much God really loves you, it becomes much easier to simply trust what you sense He is telling you to do. If you need to wait, then you are unafraid to let people know that it is not time to charge ahead. When you feel led to step out, you are unafraid to step into the unknown because you know your loving Father will not fail you.

-In the congregation, there can at times be forces at work to control you to shut you down or speed you up to get "their" own ways. It will be the love of God that will help you correctly respond, patiently endure, and courageously lead your people. This is always the rub for leaders. Some want more, some want less, and some want what God wants.

Conclusion -These are five areas of many that could be listed. I hope that this gives you some food for thought and will help you in avoiding these dangerous areas where the enemy is plotting your demise. Remember... God is for you and not against you! I pray that you are able to avoid these pitfalls. If you are in trouble now, get help! If you are struggling in one of these areas now, get help! Don't be foolish and think you can do it alone. Take this advice from someone who knows that very foolishness and what it can cost you.

Please consider forwarding this post to a friend in the ministry. I pray that these truths will be spread across the body of Christ to encourage God's servants to avoid these pitfalls.

You can also find this article published on [5 Pitfalls For Pastors to Avoid](#), and on the tag pages [pastor fall](#), [pastors in crisis](#), [pitfalls](#), [restoration](#).