

Fractured Faith

“Then everyone deserted him and fled.”

Mark 14:50 (NIV)

It is a wonderful exercise for believers to regularly be in the house of God to worship, join in prayer, hear the Bible read and explained, mingle with the other believers, and sing the praise of our great God. Such times can develop our faith and give us the needed resources to go back out into a hostile world for another week.

What we need to guard against, however, is a fortress mentality that causes us to be strong in church when absent from the daily grind but leaves us weak and ineffective when we leave the church fellowship and go back into the world and face its hostility.

The night in which Jesus was betrayed it seemed that the disciples had developed a fortress mentality. While in the presence of Jesus they believed themselves invincible. They even boasted excessively that they were spiritual enough to follow Jesus to the death if necessary (Mark 14:31).

I am only describing what the disciples' faith was like.

I do not judge them. Their faith was that of children who are brave when daddy is near but can easily be frightened when they are alone and danger rears its ugly head. This was the case with Jesus' disciples.

We too may easily be like the disciples as we find ourselves among other believers and thus feel very strong and safe from the world's challenges. Many times over the years I have witnessed a seemingly strong believer crumble in the presence of adversity. I have even experienced such a time in my own life.

None of us are beyond the risk of stumbling in our journey through life. What we need to do is refrain from judging others who have fallen down in their Christian journey. If the disciples who walked with Jesus 24/7 for possibly three and a half years could abandon Him in Gethsemane, we are not immune from the common pitfalls of life.

Critics may come along and point out our failures as

Christians. However, the focus for a critic's attack against another person is often the very place where the critic is messed up in life. A father may have unruly children but instead of admitting his problem as a parent he will look at another father with difficult children and say that father is a failure.

If you have critics in life who find it important to point out where you have fallen down in the Christian life, remember that the most privileged of people such as the apostles could fail in times of trial.

You may have stumbled as a believer. Perhaps it was a moral issue like King David, cowardice in witnessing for Jesus like the disciples in Gethsemane, or some other situation when your faith was fractured. Always remember that Jesus is full of compassion and forgiveness. Return to Him and find the strength and grace to have your faith mended and yourself restored to active service.