



The Pastor and the Pedestal

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Perceived Perfection. Whether they climbed up there themselves or were given a boost, pastors usually find themselves on a pedestal. Even if a pastor tells his or her congregation that they are a sinner saved by grace like everyone else, it is hard for a congregant to believe that. Pastors are usually only seen by their parishioners on Sundays, elevated on a platform, wearing their Sunday best, hands raised in worship and preaching the Word of God. It is difficult for someone sitting in the pew to relate to that perceived perfection. And it makes it hard for the pastor to find a safe place to go when the pedestal starts to teeter.

The title of pastor and the perception of the congregation or staff do not prevent the reality of struggling, brokenness and temptation in the minister's life. A sermon may address the hurting, but who is addressing the hurting preacher? The church is filled with broken people, and so is the pulpit.

Healthy and Broken. Many pastors are guilty of not practicing what they are preaching. They encourage their congregation to take care of themselves and make sure there is time for a Sabbath, but their own calendar runs them ragged. They preach on nurturing a loving marriage relationship, yet their own spouse is feeling neglected and resentful. They warn of the dangers of sexual immorality, yet many are secretly struggling with purity themselves.

We are all broken people. We just have different details. Healthy pastors are not "unbroken," they just know where to go to deal with that brokenness. Healthy broken pastors have safe people in their lives that they are currently and frequently talking to. I heard one pastor say he has a group of people he can go to and they are allowed to ask the tough questions, but I thought to myself, "Are you going and are they asking?" And sometimes, good friends are not enough to help a pastor deal with deep seeded issues that have not been properly addressed and buried because the pastor is the one who is expected to have it all together. Professional help is available and often times necessary to provide a safe place for growth and healing.

Jumping Before Falling. God wants all of His children to be healthy in their brokenness, including pastors. If the mantle of the ministry is hindering personal growth and healing, take a leap off the pedestal and find a safe place to land before it topples.