

# dealing with mistakes, walking in light

**Bethany Fuller** explains that how we deal with mistakes is more important than the mistake itself

**H**ave you ever made a mistake, and just wished that the ground would swallow you up. It can be devastating. I felt like an imposter anyway, and this just confirms it – I definitely should not be qualified to do this job!

We will all make mistakes at some point in our practice – you may never forget the first one you make. God-willing, they will only be small ones, but he is able to help us deal with the big ones too. When I was two-months qualified,

I looked after a patient having a blood transfusion and didn't check the infusion site for 40 minutes because I was a stressed, newly qualified, and on an understaffed unit looking after multiple complex patients – sound familiar? When I did check, I discovered the canula had tissued and the pump had failed to alarm, so my patient had a large haematoma that took weeks to resolve (but was otherwise OK!). A person who doesn't make a mistake at some point in their lives has either already reached perfection (!) or is totally unaware of self. Basically, we all make mistakes.

But how do we deal with making mistakes in practice as a Christian? Does it look different to how our colleagues deal with it? Should I even make a mistake as a Christian? Shouldn't I be this faultless model of a nurse or midwife who does everything perfectly because I am being an example of Christ to my colleagues?

Thankfully, we don't have to look too far in Scripture to find out that God uses imperfect people to accomplish his perfect purposes. Just think of boastful Joseph, scared and lying Abraham, and impetuous Peter. But all these people have one thing in common – they came to know the Lord, and as a result were changed, beginning to see themselves as they truly were in God's sight. When we see God and know him, he brings us to our knees and makes us humble before his incredible majesty – and our response should be utter faith and dependence on him, knowing that any goodness we have is because of him, and not a product of our self-righteousness.

There are two sorts of mistakes we can make in our work. We can make an error in practice, but our response can lead to a second and more serious error of falling into sin. We can try to cover up an error, and somehow feel like we can atone for it, hoping no one notices. In effect, when we do this, we lie, not only to

ourselves, but to all those around us. And lying is a far greater error in eternal terms than giving 1g of paracetamol when only 500mg was prescribed. It compromises integrity and dulls conscience, and in biblical terms, that's a big deal. Walk in the light, however tempted you are to save face and avoid embarrassment.

If you make a mistake in practice, remember these three things:

1. Acknowledge it in humility – you serve Christ and are called to walk in holiness and light. God has put your seniors there for your good, so ask for their help.
2. Trust God – it is God who validates you, not your colleagues or patients. Trust him for his grace.
3. Pray for help – ask God to help you learn to not make that mistake again and give you confidence to care for your patients well.

As you seek to walk in integrity and faith, God will help you. Remember, keep your ethical edge sharp and don't allow your conscience to become dull. Let's walk in the light as he is in the light, knowing that our worth and validation is in Christ alone! 🌟

**Bethany Fuller** is a Staff Nurse in Surrey, and worked as CMF's Peer Support Coordinator for Newly Qualified Nurses and Midwives during 2023