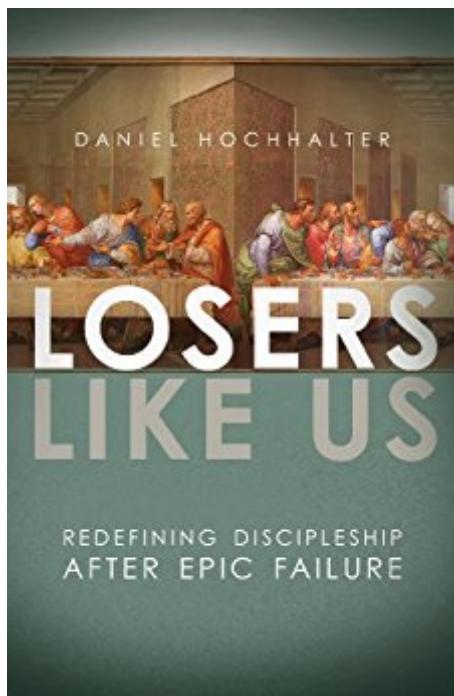


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Losers Like Us: Redefining Discipleship After Epic Failure



Synopsis

In 2008, after seven years of preparation, Daniel Hochhalter permanently failed his PhD, leaving him with no hope of gaining the qualifications needed for his desired career. Then he lost his job. Devastated and in crisis, with no Plan B and no clue how to redeem his future, he looked to the twelve disciples and discovered that--despite their gaping faults and sins--God still loved them and used them to change the world. With fresh warmth and wisdom, ample hope and humor, *Losers Like Us* skillfully intertwines Dan's own story with theirs to show how our worst mistakes and greatest failures bring us to a place of teachableness, egolessness, brokenness, and empathy--the very qualifications required to receive God's love and grace, and to manifest his kingdom on earth. Daniel Hochhalter lives with his wife and two wiener dogs in Portland, Oregon, where his only true credential is that the Lord loves him. Dan has a B.S. (Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA) and an M.Div. (George Fox Evangelical Seminary, Newberg, OR). He does not have a PhD.

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Customer Reviews

If you're looking for systematic theology and correct conclusions presented in perfectly polished prose, this book isn't for you. The author makes no pretense of being about those things. Instead, he strives to see other people and himself with God's eyes in a way that is curious, humble, graceful and full of unanswered questions. In that striving, he reveals himself as insecure, vulnerable and awkward, and makes observations that are widely speculative and often inconclusive. So it goes. Should this matter to you? I don't know. Here's why it matters to me: I am at a time of life where I feel weak and stupid, condemned and ashamed. I have been forcefully rejected and cut off from my faith community, because of some of the ways I have failed, and I don't generally feel like trying to engage with Christian community again. After reading this book, I am more interested in following Jesus and in drawing closer to God and to the church. For me, that is a triumph.

The "problem of pain" is one of the most discussed problems that the World has with the Gospel. "Losers like Us" grapples with this problem and is able to turn it around in a wonderful way. My favorite quote: "Remember, we are all part of a great story that is really about God, not us. He is the number one character (read: winner), and we are all secondary (read: losers)."

I would give this book more than 5 stars if I could. This will resonate with every Christian who has ever felt like a loser--and who hasn't? The author describes how each of the original 12 disciples were "losers" in some way or other. Yet Jesus chose them to be His closest confidants, to build His Kingdom. And He still uses "losers like us" today. God wants us broken and needy so we depend totally on Him. He wants us to be honest with Him and not try to make ourselves look better than we are. Two things that especially struck me: 1) Judas betrayed Jesus once; Peter betrayed Him three times by denying that He even knew Him. Yet Judas ended his own life and will always be known as the betrayer while Peter became a great hero of the faith. The author suggests that the reason is that after the betrayal, Judas felt remorse and killed himself, but Peter--who is described in the book as a "big screw-up"--ran back to the resurrected Jesus for forgiveness. Would Jesus have forgiven Judas if Judas had gone to Him in repentance rather than taking matters into his own hands? 2) The final loser--the biggest loser of all--is Jesus. "His entire life is filled with scandal and suspicion. In the eyes of society, he is born a bastard and dies a criminal, and in between he is seen as everything from a rabble-rouser to a madman." "To be truly heard by the masses, Jesus had to insert himself into the gritty context of human life. He had to become one of us. He had to become a loser." The book is Scriptural--where this author calls Jesus a "loser," Paul talks about Jesus emptying

Himself--and it puts Biblical truth in the language and context of our lives today. Any Christian who has ever felt like a loser should read *Losers Like Us*.

What a wonderful book! Once I realized I was depressed again, I knew I would be in it for the long haul. So I sought out books that could soothe my broken heart. I am so thankful to have come across this one! More than any other book (aside from the Bible, of course) on the disciples of Christ, I learned the most from this one. I was uplifted by the author's willingness to make himself so open and vulnerable to his readers. I was instructed by viewpoints of the 12 disciples I had never before considered. I was comforted by the author's message of hope and the love Christ has for us. One funny thing I should mention - when I told people the title of this book, they all got funny expressions on their faces. Some looked pained by my willingness to read such a book. So glad I did and will read it again. Thanks to the author for writing it!

The Author has succeeded in one thing--writing a book. Furthermore, it is a book for everyone, not just Christians, but all losers. In Chapter 1, the author writes "True, there is no Bible verse saying that if you are a loser, God loves you and prefers to work with you." Actually, there is such a Bible verse: "My Grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness." 2 Corinthians, 12: 9 In his chapter on Judas Iscariot and in other parts of the book, he suggests Judas could be redeemed. Yet it says in the Bible, "wo unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born." Matthew 26: 24 In Chapter 12 the author writes "He (Peter) betrays Jesus three times" Peter denies Jesus, not betrays. I do like the way the author describes Jesus as giving Peter a "do-over" when He asks Peter "do you love me?" John 21 (vv. 15-17) three times. "And three times Jesus replies, 'Feed my sheep.'" (vv. 15-17) In Chapter 13 the author writes: "Scripture is quiet about the boyhood and youth of Jesus . . ." Yet Luke 2:42-48 describes Jesus at the age of twelve "in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions." (v.46) There is a big picture in the particular Bible I used depicting this. Otherwise, Chapter 13 is one of the best chapters in the book. I really enjoyed this. That's why I had a lot to write. From reading this I believe the author should definitely continue his writing career.

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