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## COMING APART AT THE SEAMS

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ELLIOTTSVILLE CHURCH OF CHRIST

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### Introduction:

- A. Southwest Airlines Flight 812 and The Big Dig ceiling collapse illustrate that when things fail, the results can be tragic.
- B. We have all failed at times. But the causes of failure may not be as visible to us.
- C. In a technical magazine recently appeared an article entitled, "Why Bolts Fail?" The writer observed that bolt failure is generally due to one of four causes: **overstress**, **fatigue**, **corrosion**, and **embrittlement**.

### Discussion:

- I. **Bolts and Christians have something in common.** We need to *hold things together*, but sometimes we fail. **Ephesians 4:16**
- A. **Overstress:** Too much stress or tension on a bolt can cause it to stretch, permanently deform, or bend out of its original shape. It then becomes unable to perform and provide the service it was originally designed to do.
  - 1. We live in an age of anxiety. **Matthew 6:25-30**
    - a. Jesus taught his disciples to pray for daily bread. **Mt. 6:3**
    - b. We do have burden to bear. **Galatians 6:5**
  - 2. **Phil 4:6; 1 Pet. 5:7**
  - 3. **How to build stress:**
    - a. Put off everything until the last minute.
    - b. Set unreasonable goals.
    - c. Never let others know how you feel or what you want.
    - d. Never trust anyone. ]
    - e. Never take a vacation break.
    - f. Never seek help.
    - g. Do not pray.
- B. **Fatigue:** It is estimated that approximately 85% of bolts fail due to fatigue. Fatigue is also responsible for a great many of our failures. Webster defines it as; "physical or mental exhaustion; weariness."
  - 1. Spiritual fatigue, like overstress, is also a gradual process. **Lk. 8:13; 2 Tim. 4:10; Rev. 2:4**
  - 2. **Elijah -1 Kings 19:3; 1 Kings 19:9-10,13-14**
  - 3. **2 Thess. 3:13; Gal. 6:9 ; Heb. 10:36**

**C. Corrosion**, according to Webster, comes from the Latin word “corrodere” meaning “to gnaw to pieces.” It means 1) to eat into or wear away gradually, as by rusting or by the action of chemicals 2) to work upon insidiously and cause to deteriorate [a heart corroded by bitterness].” This can occur in metals when they are placed in an environment or exposed to chemicals and other agents that gradually eat away at the material and eventually cause failure.

1. **2 Tim. 2:14-17**
2. **1 Cor. 15:33**
3. **Lk. 8:14**

**D. Embrittlement** – occurs when certain conditions and attitudes exist that makes us easily offended or overthrown. Failure occurs when the bolt becomes brittle, due to the stress of the load, the chemicals within the bolt and the processes it has been subjected to. The bolt becomes fragile and is easily cracked, broken, snapped, and shattered.

1. Webster defines “brittle” as: “easily disrupted, overthrown, or damaged ...easily hurt or offended.
2. **Col. 3:12-13; Ephesians 4:2**

**Conclusion:** Why do we fail? Just as a good engineer would attempt to properly diagnose the cause of bolt failure, we each must examine ourselves. Paul said, “*Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test*” (**2 Cor. 13:5**)