

Discussion Questions

August 14, 2022



We Have Failed ... but GOD

1. What failures (big or small) have you gone through? How did you react/respond? What did you do after? How did those failures shape you for the future?
2. How do you engage with the Lord when your desires or expectations aren't met? Does something need to change?
3. What do you need to surrender to align with God's plans?
4. Do you have areas in your life where you can embrace your weakness? How might God use those to demonstrate His strength?



1 Samuel 30:1-6

David and his men reached Ziklag on the third day. Now the Amalekites had raided the Negev and Ziklag. They had attacked Ziklag and burned it, and had taken captive the women and everyone else in it, both young and old. They killed none of them, but carried them off as they went on their way. When David and his men reached Ziklag, they found it destroyed by fire and their wives and sons and daughters taken captive. So David and his men wept aloud until they had no strength left to weep. David's two wives had been captured—Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail, the widow of Nabal of Carmel. David was greatly distressed because the men were talking of stoning him; each one was bitter in spirit because of his sons and daughters. But David found strength in the Lord his God.

Warren Weirsbe, Commentary on 1 Samuel

We can but imagine the horror and grief of David and his 600 men who had never lost a battle. Their city was burned, their wealth had been confiscated, and their wives and children had been kidnapped. It was the mercy of the Lord that the Amalekites spared the lives of the women and children, for in their raids David and his men had certainly killed their share of enemy women and children (27:11). The verb "carried them away" (30:2) is literally "drove them off" and paints the picture of animals being driven off by the herdsman. The men wore themselves out in weeping and David was "greatly distressed," a verb that means he was pressed into a tight corner, the way a potter would press clay into a mold.

We're really exploring defeat in...

- Life expectations
- Living up to parents/spouse/friends/self/job
- Interruptive situations we find ourselves in that have been thrust on us
- Health circumstances
- Death of a loved one
- Dreams and desires both big and small

How do you respond...

- What do we do when the world we built comes crashing?
- What do we do when a dream we have dies?
- What do we do when our expectations are thwarted by reality?

Results/Responses to Failure

- Bitterness
- Defiance
- Deeper levels of control
- Disappointment
- Depression
- Self-loathing
- Giving up

James 1:2-4

Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

2 Corinthians 12:7-10

Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me—to keep me from exalting myself! Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me. And He has said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.” Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ’s sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.

Paul Tripp

The fact is that the vast majority of our dreams simply die. They crumble before we ever get a chance to experience or enjoy them. They do this because the real world doesn’t behave the way the world of our imagination does.

In our fantasy world, there aren’t any obstacles or competitors in the way of my dream, but in the real world, there are many deep valleys and high peaks between vision and realization. I’m not in control, and people don’t always do my bidding. The real world is a place of unrealized dreams and unfulfilled plans.

Why do dreams die? First, our created world is a broken place and therefore does not operate the way God originally designed it. Second, because people do bad things to one another. Need I write more? I know you have experienced this!

But here’s perhaps the most significant reason why dreams die: because there is a God. Nothing exists outside the scope of his plan. Everything lives under his careful orchestration. Therefore, it is impossible to arrive at any situation before God because he is everywhere, controlling all things according to his wise counsel and for the purpose of his glory.

As much as he has blessed us with the capacity to dream, imagine, and cast vision, our will is not ultimate. The death of a dream doesn’t mean that it was so exceedingly sinful and selfish that God is now punishing you by killing your plan.

It’s not wrong to dream if embedded in your dream is a remembrance of who you are and who God is. I am a creature, and he is Creator. You are human, and he is sovereign. We are finite, and he is infinite. The best way to respond to the death of a dream is to entrust your disappointment, grief, and pain to your Lord, who governs them all for his glory and your ultimate good.

Key points:

- Lean into the Lord in the midst of failings.
- Broken expectations are an opportunity for God to reveal himself.
- Follow Jesus’ example and surrender, embracing your weakness, and being strengthened by the Lord.