

Overcoming Failure

A. Failure is a reality of life that we all experience.

"We all fail in many areas, but especially with our words. ..." James 3:2 (TPT)

"There is no one who *always* does what is right, no, not even one!" Romans 3:10-12 (TPT)

Note: Our failures will either paralyze us or mature us!

"The godly may trip seven times, but they will get up again. But one disaster is enough to overthrow the wicked." Proverbs 24:16 (NLT)

1. Failure can be a great teacher that equips us with wisdom.

"My dear fellow believers, you need to understand that all of our Jewish ancestors *who walked through a wilderness long ago* were under the glory cloud and passed through the waters of the sea on both sides. ... Yet God was not pleased with most of them, and their dead bodies were scattered around the wilderness. Now, all these things serve as types and pictures for us—lessons that teach us not to fail in the same way by callously craving worthless things and practicing idolatry, as some of them did. ... All the tests they endured on their way through the wilderness are a symbolic picture, an example that provides us with a warning so that we can learn through what they experienced." 1 Corinthians 10:1-11 (TPT)

2. Failure can prepare and shape us to help others.

"Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift all of you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.' But he replied, 'Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death.' Jesus answered, 'I tell you, Peter, before the rooster crows today, you will deny three times that you know me.'" Luke 22:31-34 (NIV)

3. Failure can keep us humble and reliant upon God.

"Each time he said, 'My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness.' So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me. That's why I take pleasure in my weaknesses, and in the insults, hardships, persecutions, and troubles that I suffer for Christ. For when I am weak, then I am strong." 2 Corinthians 12:9-10 (NLT)

B. Handling failure correctly is a vital part of maturity.

Four things we must do to handle failure correctly:

1. *Acknowledge our failure.* "Acknowledge your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed." James 5:16 (GNV)

2. *Refuse to hide behind excuses.* "'Who told you that you were naked?' the Lord God asked. 'Have you eaten from the tree whose fruit I commanded you not to eat?' The man replied, 'It was the woman you gave me who gave me the fruit, and I ate it.' Then the Lord God asked the woman, 'What have you done?' 'The serpent deceived me,' she replied. 'That's why I ate it.'" Genesis 3:11-13 (NLT)

3. *Examine what happened so we can learn from the failure.* "Fools are famous for repeating their errors, like dogs are known to return to their vomit." Proverbs 26:11 (TPT)

4. *Put it behind us, and move forward.* "...I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us." Philippians 3:13-14 (NLT)

C. We must learn to measure success and failure by God's standards, NOT the world's.

“For even if you were to gain all the wealth and power of this world with everything it could offer you—at the cost of your own life—what good would that be? And what could be more valuable to you than your own soul?” Matthew 16:26 (TPT)

Note: True success is not measured in outcomes and external achievements. True success is measured by a life lived in surrender to God and in obedience to His voice.

“Others were mocked and experienced the most severe beating with whips; they were in chains and imprisoned. Some of these were brutally killed by stoning, being sawn in two or slaughtered by the sword. These lived in faith as they went about wearing goatskins and sheepskins for clothing. They lost everything they possessed, they endured great afflictions, and they were cruelly mistreated. They wandered the earth living in the desert wilderness, in caves, on barren mountains and in holes in the earth. Truly, the world was not even worthy of them, not realizing who they were. These were the true heroes, commended for their faith, yet they lived in hope without receiving the fullness of what was promised them.” Hebrews 11:36-39 (TPT)

Tommy Green 12.30.18 tommy@centeringlives.com

Connect Group Questions

1. What failure or mistake have you learned the most from in your life?
2. How do we move past our failures?
3. Read 1 Samuel 16:1-13:
 - What kind of person did Samuel think would make a successful leader?
 - How do you think David felt about not being invited initially to stand before Samuel?
 - Why are our hearts more important to God than our outward appearances?
 - Why do most people in our culture value appearances and achievements over godliness and integrity?
4. When it comes to overcoming failures, which of these do you feel is the most important? Which is the hardest?
 - *Acknowledging our failures*
 - *Refusing to hide behind excuses*
 - *Studying or examining what happened so we can learn from it*
 - *Putting it behind us and moving forward*
5. James 4:6 says, “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”
 - What is humility?
 - Why is humility so important to God?
 - How is humility achieved?