

BIG PROBLEMS? BIGGER GOD!

Part 4: The PROBLEM of FAILURE

INTRO: Everyone wants to be a success. I don't know anyone who purposefully set out to be a failure. But here's the harsh reality: Failure is one of the ugly realities of life. Maybe it was divorce, loss of job, overlooked for promotion, parenting, spouse, etc. Many who appear successful live in constant fear of failure. Accept failure as a fact of life, but never as a way of life.

ILL: What do these famous people have in common? Disney, Edison, Lincoln, Jordan, Ruth, etc.

ILL: What do these biblical characters have in common? Eve, Adam, Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Moses, David, Elijah, Peter, Paul, etc. We all fail. We all fail for different reasons. Sometimes our sinfulness has nothing to do with our failure. Sometimes they do (next time!). Sometimes God must allow failure for us before He can bring success to us.

I. REASONS FOR FAILURE

According to Proverbs we fail for a variety of reasons. We usually fail when:

- A. *We don't plan ahead (Pro. 27:12; 16:9).* Old saying is true, "If you fail to plan you're planning to fail" (27:12). The simple minded person is not stupid, just at times impulsive and insensible. When we fail to plan ahead and count the cost we usually experience failure. See Pro. 16:9 . . . We are likely to fail when we fail to plan. Also need a strategy.
- B. *We think we've arrived (or are successful) Pro. 16:18.* Pride is a certain road to failure. We can fool ourselves into believing we are successful. Past success never prevents future failure.
- C. *We are afraid to take necessary risks.* The fear of failure can cause failure. We fear what might happen or what others think and we don't even try. Fear sets us up to be losers. Pro. 29:25 . . . Failure can be our best teacher. Don't wait for perfect.
- D. *We give up too soon (15:19).* Too often during trying times we just stop trying. Failure is past of best resistance. How many games have been won in the last innings, last possession? Too many to count. Never quit. Ex: Judas quit too soon. Failure is a pit stop on the road to success.
- E. *We don't seek godly wisdom and advice (14:12).* We are asking for trouble when we are wise in our own eyes. God's Word is the owner's manual in life. It is filled with wisdom for life, work, manage, family,

finances, health, etc. When we fail to follow His instructions we are bound to fail. Seek Godly advice (Pro. 29:1).

- F. *We have a wrong measurement of success.* Our fallen world defines success differently than God: possessions, popularity, position, comparisons (2 Cor. 10:12), etc. All wrong standards. By the world's definition of success, Jesus Christ was a total failure!

II. RECOVERY FROM FAILURE (Pro. 24:16)

Though we will never stop failure along life's journey, we can learn to recover and get better and get going again (24:16). Some practical steps to recover from failure:

- A. *Take Personal Responsibility for your failure.* Did you fail to plan? Were you too proud to get help? Were you afraid to risk? Did you quit too soon? Did you get counsel from wrong source? Was our definition of success off? What was your contribution to the failure? Own it. Admit it. Don't blame others. To blame is to "be-lame." Losers never take responsibility—they blame the boss, the economy, spouse, etc. Don't make excuses. Pro. 28:13 . . .
- B. *Recognize the Benefits of Failure.* T. Edison said after one of his many failures, "Don't call it a failure. Call it an education!" Failure shows us what doesn't work. It forces us to be more innovative, creative, and collaborative. Failures keep us dependent, humble, hungry, curious. Failure enables us to step back and to re-evaluate life (Pro. 20:30). Failing doesn't make us a failure. It's not our identity or our destiny.
- C. *Learn from your failure and focus on the future (24:16).* Paul says in Phil. 3:13-14 . . . Let go of your failures. Learn from them and move ahead wiser. Failure isn't final unless we choose it to be. Failure needs to be our teacher not undertaker. Learn from every failure. T. Edison...
- D. *Trust God to work it all out of our good and His glory (Rom. 8:28).* God is always at work. Even when we can't see it. Even in and through our failures. He is BIGGER than our biggest failure. God can bring good out of the worst of failures. Our choice.

Read 2 Cor. 4:8-16 . . .

CONC: We all fail at times. Failure is never final unless we let it be!