

LIFE LESSONS – Making it Live

David Welsh | “Failure and the Christian” | Various Scriptures | June 18 & 19, 2011

Failing

Have you ever failed at anything? If you said no, then you have failed to tell the truth! Romans 3: 23 says “...for all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God”, and we all accept that we are imperfect in God’s eyes. However, today let’s focus upon failure in the secular world. Can you share if there has been an area in your life where you felt a failure? Or where your parents felt that you failed? Or perhaps your spouse felt that you are a failure? **Discuss** how such a feeling can stress you out or dominate your thinking and get you down. Remember, “To err is human”. James puts it this way: “We all stumble in many ways” (Jas. 3:2).

Failure is Not Fatal

How can believers handle trials & failures without being totally devastated?

We need to realize that failure is not fatal. Can you name some Biblical examples of people that failed in certain areas? Abraham lied, Jacob deceived, David committed adultery and murder. **Discuss:** God did not give up on them because they got back up, repented and were stronger because they came to rely upon God rather than themselves. Has there been a time when you were downcast and without hope because you were trying to overcome some failure in your own strength instead of turning it over to God? **Discuss** what God said through Paul in II Cor. 4:8-9: “We are hard-pressed on every side, but not crushed, perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.”

Negative or Positive

Do you think of failure as a negative experience? How DO you react to failure? Do you shout with praise because you know that your character is being developed? I doubt it! But many scriptural passages tell us of the benefits of failure. **Discuss** the following passages: Proverbs 28:13...“A man who refuses to admit his mistakes can never be successful”. Proverbs 20:30...“Blows and wounds cleanse away evil, and beatings purge the inmost being.” Romans 5:3-4...“ We continue to shout our praise even when we’re hemmed in with troubles, because we know how troubles can develop passionate patience in us, and how that patience in turn forges the tempered steel of virtue, keeping us alert for whatever God will do next.”

Residing in Grace

Do you think that God is surprised when you fail? Disappointed probably, but not surprised. After all, who made you? Who knows your most secret thoughts and actions? **Discuss** how grace, not perfection on our part, was needed in order for us sinful humans to have fellowship with a holy God While we need to strive to avoid failure in His eyes, we must learn to reside in His grace.

Living in Fear?

Do you live in fear of failure? In God’s eyes? In the eyes of others? In living up to your own expectations? In Matt. 25: 14-30, **discuss** the parable about 3 servants who were instructed to invest money trusted to them. Discuss if you can really be an example of God’s love and live in fear of failure. I Cor. 13:8 says, “ Love never fails”. If we live as a channel of His love, we cannot fail.

Written by Ed Hooper