



HOUR OF POWER

Reverend Dr. Major A Stewart



**WHEN YOU FEEL
LIKE A FAILURE!**



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April 16, 2024

When You Feel Like A Failure

Have you ever felt like a failure as a Christian, parent, husband, wife, friend, or as a person? We all have our setbacks and defeats—times when we feel like failures. Sometimes, failure even overwhelms us. The Bible is a series of stories about failures. Adam and Eve disobeyed God and caused the entire human race to fall. Noah got drunk. Moses killed an Egyptian and had to flee to the desert. David committed adultery with Bathsheba and then murdered her husband. Simon Peter denied the Lord. John Mark deserted Paul and Barnabas on the first missionary journey. These are just a few stories of failures mentioned in the Bible. However, the Bible is also the story of how God loves and forgives failures. In this lesson, we will look at the **results of failure** and **recovering from failure**.



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The Results of Failure



1. Failure reminds us we are human. God is fully aware, because we are human, we fail regularly. How does Psalm 103:14 describe this fact?

Failure reminds us of what God already knows: we are human, we make mistakes, and we fail, sometimes miserably.

2. Failure keeps us humble. Feeling like a failure is sometimes the best thing that can happen to us. If we always feel successful, we will become full of pride. We see this illustrated in the story Jesus tells about the Pharisee and tax collector, both of whom go to pray in the temple (Lk 18:9–14). The Pharisee thinks he is an all-around success. Therefore, he prays and thanks God he is so good and not like other men who are robbers, evildoers, and adulterers, or like the dishonest tax collector standing near him (18:11). Then, what else does the Pharisee tell God in Luke 18:12?

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Success can make us think God should be honored we even show up at church to pray, because we are so special. On the other hand, look at the prayer of a man who feels like a failure. The tax collector is considered a traitor to his own people and a cheat. He has failed his family, his country, and his God. Jesus says the tax collector stands at a distance. This means he stays in the foyer of the church because he does not feel worthy to enter the sanctuary. Because he feels like such a failure, he will not even lift his head, but prays, “ ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner’ ” (18:13). Commenting on this incident, what does Jesus say about the tax collector in Luke 18:14a? Few things can humble us like failure. The Pharisee would have been a much better person if he hadn't felt like such a success. Most of us are better people today because of our failures in the past.



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3. Failure draws us closer to God. Some of the greatest failures in the Bible happened after long periods of success. Noah got drunk after successfully building the biggest ship of his day. David failed after years of tremendous success as a military leader and king. Long periods of success sometimes cause us to become prideful, which pushes God out of our lives. That's why the Bible gives us what principle in Psalm 10:4?

Many people show up at church after years of absence because a failure causes them to sense their need of God's love and forgiveness. **Failure reminds us we are human, keeps us humble, and draws us closer to God. Now, let's look at ...**

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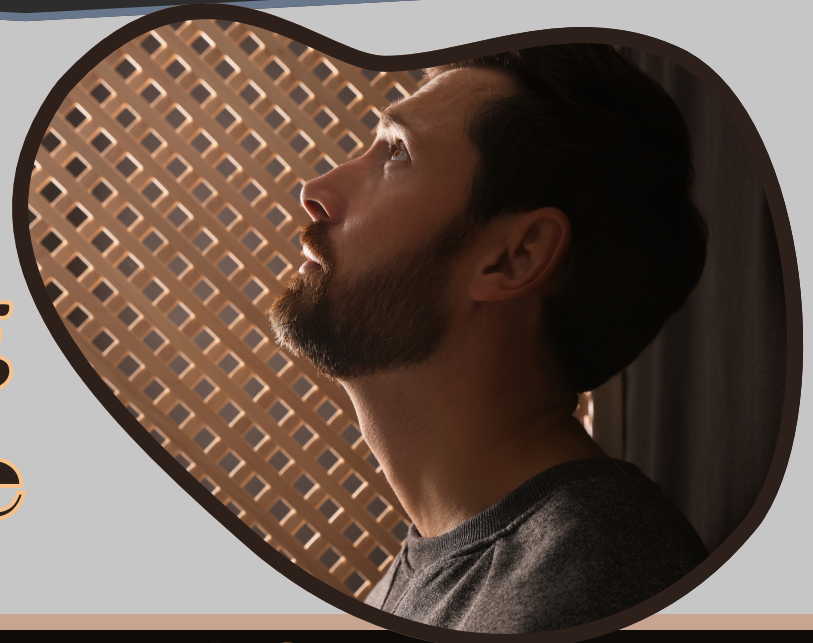


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Recovering from Failure



To recover from failure, we must do four things:

1. Admit the failure. When we fail, we have two choices: confess it or cover it. What does the Bible tell us in Proverbs 28:13?

I don't know where we get the idea we must act like we are perfect. None of us are even close to perfect, and when we act like we are, we only turn people off. The most liked and respected people are those who admit their failures. I get the most positive comments about a sermon in which I tell my church how I mess up as a husband, as a dad, with my temper, etc. People love and are drawn to people who are real, honest, and transparent about their failures. **Recovering from failure** requires we **admit the failure** both to God and to anyone the failure has hurt. Then, we need to ...

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2. Accept God's forgiveness. The Bible is a series of stories of failures and God's willingness to forgive them. When we feel like failures, we need to remember what wonderful promise in Psalm 103:10?

This means God doesn't deal with us on the basis of our failures but on the basis of His grace. The word translated grace (charis, kar'-is) means "favor or kindness shown without regard to worth or merit of the one who receives it." Grace means God will forgive us even though we don't deserve to be forgiven. That's why we have what promise in Hebrews 4:16?

To recover from failure, we must admit the failure, accept God's forgiveness, and ...

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4. Acknowledge failure isn't final. Peter knew all about failure. Jesus warns him in the Upper Room about his upcoming horrible failure. After Peter arrogantly tells Jesus he will never desert Him, what does Jesus say to Peter in Matthew 26:34? In other words, Jesus says, "Peter, you will have three chances to show your faith in me, and you will fail every time." It happened just as Jesus predicted. Three times, as Peter warms himself by a fire, he denies he even knows Jesus (Lk 22:54—62). Yet, a short time later, on the Day of Pentecost, Peter boldly preaches and 3,000 people are saved and baptized (Acts 2:41). What happened to change Peter?

We find out in John 21. After Peter's denial, he and some of the disciples are fishing on the Sea of Galilee. It appears Peter has gone back to his old occupation. After they have fished all night, a voice calls out to them from the shore, asking if they have caught any fish, and they answer "no." Then, the voice tells Peter and the other disciples to throw their net "on the right side of the boat." They do as the voice says and catch a large number of fish (Jn 21:5—6). Realizing the voice belongs to Jesus, they rush to shore, where they find a fire with fish and bread on it.



Faith

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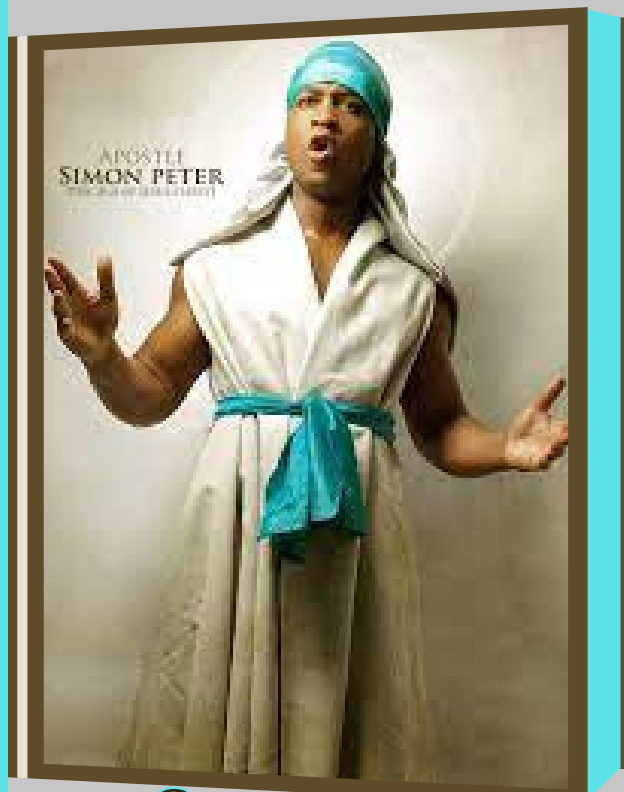
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At this fire, Jesus asks Peter three times if he loves Him. The first two times Peter replies, “Yes, Lord ... you know that I love you” (21:15 & 16). The third time Peter is hurt. However, how does Peter answer the Lord the third time, according to John 21:17b?

In other words, “Lord, you know, in spite of what I did at the first fire, I love you.” All of Peter’s arrogance and pride is now gone. Just before he warmed himself at the first fire, he arrogantly said he would die before deserting Christ.

Through his failure, Peter realizes the dangers of his pride and learns failure isn’t final. There is assurance for all of us at this second fire, because it shows Jesus sees beyond our failures. This reminds us of what truth in the last sentence of 1 Samuel 16:7?



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GOD KNOWS YOU ARE HUMAN—THAT YOU FAIL HIM—BUT HE ALSO KNOWS YOUR HEART. THERE ARE TWO FIRES IN YOUR LIFE: THE FIRE OF FAILURE AND THE FIRE OF FORGIVENESS. YOU MAY BE BETWEEN THE TWO FIRES RIGHT NOW. RECOVERING FROM FAILURE REQUIRES YOU ADMIT THE FAILURE, ACCEPT GOD'S FORGIVENESS, APPLY THE LESSONS OF FAILURE, AND ACKNOWLEDGE FAILURE ISN'T FINAL.

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