

Growing Deeper
The Human Race

Week One - Failure
Luke 22:24-34

Spend FIFTEEN - Day One

1. As humans, we hate the idea of failure. Let's spend this week reflecting on how God uses failure to bless us. Read Luke 22:24-34. Summarize the major plot points of this story.
2. Who ended up being correct in their prediction of the future, Simon (Peter) or Jesus? (If you need help with this question, look up Luke 22:54-62.)
3. Look again at Luke 22:33. Did Simon Peter anticipate failure in his immediate future? What failures have you experienced in your own life? Did you see them coming or were they sudden and unexpected?
4. Now look at Luke 22:32. What do you think Jesus means by saying, "When you have turned back?"
5. Jesus *knew* that Peter was about to face-plant in a big way. How did that knowledge change how much Jesus loved Simon Peter? How did that change Jesus' plans for Simon Peter ("strengthen your brothers")?
6. Often we hold our own failures against ourselves more than God does. Think about any specific or recent personal failures that still haunt you and then close your FIFTEEN in prayer, releasing them to God. Ask Him to replace the burden of your failures with the freedom of trusting in His Holy Spirit.

Spend FIFTEEN - Day Two

7. Let's continue to spend this week reflecting on how God uses failure to bless us. Are there any particular sporting events or athletes that you're excited to watch in the Olympics this week? Who or what are they?
8. Are there any countries that you tend to cheer for, in addition to the U.S.? What makes you prefer those countries?
9. LeBron James struggled with failure when he left Cleveland. You can see a short summary from his perspective here: [youtube.com/watch?v=CQkQFfO6uJ4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CQkQFfO6uJ4). How did failure contribute to James' eventual success?
10. Read Philippians 3:12-14. What is the prize to which Paul is referring?
11. Read again Philippians 3:13. What kinds of things in our lives come under the topic "forget what is behind"?

12. In what ways have those failures contributed to your eventual victory in Christ?
13. Close your FIFTEEN in prayer. Ask God to use your failures to teach you how to pick yourself up and keep going. Ask Him to help you keep struggling for the prize.

Spend FIFTEEN - Day Three

14. Evaluate this statement: A person needs to take risks in order to succeed. Do you agree or disagree? Why?
15. Think of some of the successful people do you know. What role have risk and a willingness to fail played in their success?
16. The article “The Fall and Rise of Steve Jobs” (startingmind.com/2015/success-failure-steve-jobs/) relates how Steve Jobs used his early failure at Apple Computers to reevaluate his goals and methods so that he could come back and lead the company to unprecedented success. Describe a personal failure in your history. How has that failure helped you to reevaluate your choices?
17. Read Joshua 7:2-12. Why did the Israelites fail to conquer the city of Ai when they had just easily destroyed the greater city of Jericho?
18. After the Israelites showed their repentance to the Lord, what happened the next time they tried to take the city? (Read Joshua 8:1-2, 28.)
19. In light of these stories, how can you reframe your understanding of any future failures you may have? How might God use those failures in your life?
20. Close your FIFTEEN by confessing to God those times you’ve been angry about failure instead of looking for opportunities to learn from it.

Spend FIFTEEN - Day Four

21. How does failure affect your faith? Does it strengthen it or weaken it? Why?
22. Phil Vischer, creator of Veggie Tales, experienced catastrophic failure when his company was forced to declare bankruptcy. You can read a short summary of it from his perspective here: “Bankruptcy Humbled Me, Killed My Idol” (christianpost.com/news/veggietales-creator-bankruptcy-humbled-me-killed-my-idol-50119/) What lesson did Vischer learn from his bankruptcy?

23. Did failure affect Vischer's faith positively or negatively?
24. Now read Psalm 51:15-17. What good thing does David say God doesn't value?
25. What supposedly negative things does God value instead?
26. When have you been in the position of having a broken spirit or a broken and contrite heart? How do you think that honored God?
27. Finish your FIFTEEN by giving thanks to God for how He has used your failures and weakness to strengthen your faith.

Spend FIFTEEN - Day Five

28. What is your favorite inspirational movie? What makes it so powerful for you?
29. The blockbuster movie *Rudy* tells the story of a young man who refused to accept failure in his dream of playing football for Notre Dame. What about this story do you think makes it so appealing to people?
30. Tom Rath of *Strengthsfinder* challenges our normal interpretation of this movie. "While Rudy's perseverance is admirable, in the end, he played a few seconds of college football and made a single tackle ... after thousands of hours of practicing." He concludes that Rudy wasted his efforts, "to add talent where little exists...may not be the best use of your time." How might Rudy's life have been different if he hadn't poured his amazing energy into a goal for which he wasn't suited?
31. Failure can actually steer us away from goals for which God has not designed us so that we can find our true calling in Him. Read 1 Chronicles 28:2-10. What goal did David have for himself?
32. How did David react to his failure in achieving this goal? What lesson did he learn?
33. How has God steered you toward His plan for you by using failure as a way to keep you away from a certain path?
34. Close your FIFTEEN in prayer. Ask God to help you clearly see the lessons He wants to teach you through your failure