

Failing Forward Small Group Guide

Warm-up Question: (Choose one, make up your own, or skip this part all together, depending upon the nature of your group.)

1. What was the most difficult class you have ever taken?
2. What is one victory you have experienced in the last month?

Read the following passages: Luke 9:37-56.

In rapid succession, Luke records five accounts highlighting the disciples' failures: the inability to drive out a demon, a misunderstanding of Jesus' mission, an argument concerning who would be the greatest, the attempt to shut down another person's ministry, and a desire to pronounce judgment on a Samaritan village. The Scriptures are filled with accounts of the failures of God's people. We should not miss the obvious conclusion: Our success does not ultimately depend upon our ability to avoid failure. Far more important is how we respond to failure. In fact, growth rarely takes place without failure. For this reason we should embrace a new perspective on failure: Failure is the price tag of success.

Questions for Discussion (Choose several that are relevant for your group):

1. Failure is a broad concept that can apply to everything from a few mistakes on a school exam to a major moral meltdown. Excluding for the moment those failures associated with the latter category, how well do you respond to failures in your life? What sort of failures (again, not including major moral failures) are the most difficult for you to navigate? How risk averse are you?
2. Why do you think so many of us experience a nearly paralyzing fear of failure? What can help us change our perspective on failure?
3. What might it look like to take risks for God? Can you think of any ways in which you have recently taken a risk for God?
4. Many people experience a strong temptation to internalize their failures and make them part of their identity. Do you feel like you have an identity that is deeply grounded on God's word? Where do you feel like your identity is most vulnerable to negative or ungodly influences?
5. The people in the church in Corinth had a number of significant moral failures including visiting prostitutes, participating in meals at pagan temples, getting drunk during celebrations of the Lord's Supper, and filing lawsuits against one another. Are there areas of moral compromise in your own life that need to be brought into the light? How should we respond to moral failures in our lives?

6. We don't always grow from our failures. What steps can we take to learn from our failures rather than waste our failures?
7. What is one way you can begin taking the right kind of risks for God?
8. What is one way you would like your perspective on failure to change?

Pray