

STUDY 10

Growing Through Failure

SELECTIONS FROM MATTHEW 26; JOHN 21:1-19

Thomas Edison, America's most famous inventor, was responsible for about thirteen hundred inventions. Someone reminded him how many times he had failed trying to invent a new storage battery. He had made fifty thousand experiments before he got results. Edison dismissed the failures and said, "I know fifty thousand things that won't work."

The same principle applies to spiritual growth. We have to be able to look at our failures as steppingstones to success. If we give up on ourselves and on God's patient love, we will remain mired in old, unproductive habits. This study about Peter's failure and recovery gives us hope for spiritual progress.

1. What is the worst part of failure for you: disappointing yourself, breaking a promise, experiencing the consequences for yourself or others, or starting over?

READ MATTHEW 26:31-46.

- ✎ 2. What do you learn in verses 31-35 about Peter's motives, his view of himself, and his view of the other disciples?
- ✎ 3. Jesus confided his deep sorrow to Peter, James, and John, asking them to share this darkest hour with him. Imagine you are Peter. How would you have felt when Jesus questioned you (verses 36-41)?
- ✎ 4. What indicates that the disciples did not realize the seriousness of this moment for themselves or for Jesus?

When have you misread a critical situation, not recognizing the need to pray or to be on guard against temptation?

READ MATTHEW 26:57-58,69-75.

5. Peter followed Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest. Why do you think he stayed when he was questioned instead of running away?
- ✎ 6. Describe how each accusation of Peter grew more threatening.
7. How did Peter make each of his denials stronger?

- ✍ 8. At the moment the rooster crowed, Peter realized what he had done. Why was his weeping a proper response?

If you have ever felt the way Peter must have felt, what would you be saying to yourself and to God?

READ JOHN 21:1-19.

9. After his resurrection Jesus appeared twice to the disciples in the Upper Room, showing them his wounds and convincing them he really was alive. Then he met them again by the Sea of Galilee. Why do you think Peter behaved the way he did in verses 7 and 10-11?

10. Why is it so important to be given an opportunity to please or to *do something right* after you have failed?

- ✍ 11. Thinking back on Peter's words to Jesus in the Upper Room (Matthew 26:33-35), what changes do you see in Peter in this private conversation with Jesus (verses 15-19)?

What do you think Jesus' questions and new assignment might have meant to Peter?

12. In starting over again after failure, why is each of the following steps necessary?
- a. Grieving over your failure

b. Knowing you are forgiven

c. Forgiving yourself

d. Rebuilding trust

e. Taking the opportunity to try again

Pray the Bible into Life

- Thank the Lord Jesus that he knows you better than you know yourself and is not shocked by your failures.
- Ask for persistence to watch and pray so that you will be prepared for temptation.
- Thank God for his mercy, his forgiveness, and the opportunity to start again.