



Thank you for downloading the
CQ Rewind - Summary Only Version!

Each week, the **Summary Only** version provides you with approximately four pages of brief excerpts from the program, along with Scripture citations.

If you would like to receive the **CQ Rewind FULL EDITION** at no charge, simply sign up at www.ChristianQuestions.com.

The **FULL EDITION** of approximately 10-12 pages includes comprehensive excerpts from the program, fully quoted Scriptures, graphics, illustrations, and even extra study points that time prevented us from covering during the live program.



How Do You Manage Failure? (Part I)

Luke 22:32: (NASB) ...but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.



Nobody likes failure. Even when we have been told that failure is good for us, that it is a stepping stone and you do not learn from success nearly as much as you learn from failure, we still do not like it! For many of us, failure can be discouraging, debilitating and even depressing. What do we do with this? We learn from it. We look into the lives of those whom we consider successful and study their failures and their reactions to those failures to see how we can use their experiences to help us navigate our own experiences. The Bible is full of great examples of faithful ones who had many failures, and the Bible is also full of their success stories afterwards. What are we waiting for? Let's get started with this whole making-failure-work-for-me thing!

First, let us *suggest* that failure arrives on four specific roads. Understanding these four paths will help us to better learn from failure. They are in order of easiest to rectify first. A brief example of each:

FAILURE DUE TO LACK OF KNOWLEDGE: YOU SIMPLY DO NOT KNOW WHAT YOU NEED TO SUCCEED.

Acts 17:22-23: How could the Athenians properly worship God Almighty if they did not understand God Almighty? Paul saw they were religious, and they did not want to leave any god out. He took that ignorance and turned it into opportunity. *What you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you* - "I will give you the chance to not have that ignorance prevail - I will tell you about that Unknown God."

FAILURE DUE TO IMMATURITY: YOU JUST DO NOT HAVE ENOUGH EXPERIENCE OR UNDERSTANDING TO BE ABLE TO SUCCEED.

Matthew 16:21-23: Peter simply did not know enough spiritually to grasp what Jesus absolutely needed to do. Pride and ego can get in the way of recovering from failure. They can play a role in every one of these paths to failure.

FAILURE DUE TO WEAKNESS: YOU DO KNOW BETTER, YOU HAVE DONE BETTER, BUT YOU SIMPLY FALL ANYWAY.

Galatians 2:11-12: Peter knew better and was mature as a Christian, but he was weak and gave in to serious peer pressure. Failure brings pain, but pain is our friend if we are focused in building our lives into something bigger. This is the biggest kind of failure:

FAILURE DUE TO CHOICE: BEYOND MERE WEAKNESS, THIS FAILURE IS FOUNDED IN SELF-WILL.

Genesis 3:17: Adam made a specific choice to partake of the fruit. Adam chose to disobey; Eve was deceived. Adam was held more accountable. Deception certainly does line us up for failure, but deception only works when it has something to hold onto. We give deception a hand-hold when we do not have important knowledge to fight it, or when we are not yet mature enough to recognize it, or when we are too weak to resist it. Deception is an external attitude in our lives. It piggybacks on one of those roads to failure, enabling us to speed down that road faster.

Unfortunately, there are a lot of deceptions in churches. They can come from places we love and respect, but idolatry and false teachings are rampant. That is why it is so important to study the Bible on a personal basis. Studying the Bible topically is a great place to start. Tradition and ceremony are hard to break.

We would all love to put up a "road closed" sign on those failure roads, but it is not possible nor is it recommended. The consequences to never failing are never growing. We have to experience a lack of knowledge, immaturity, weakness and choices for us to grow. Failure is an important part of our lives. Let's instead focus on building a new road that leads us *through* our failed experience towards a positive "failure's lessons learned" attitude.

We want to be an example to others, by the grace of God enabling us to do something. The grace of God does not work absent from our own efforts. We have to make the effort so the grace of God can bless that effort. Sometimes our efforts lead us to failure.



FAILURE DUE TO LACK OF KNOWLEDGE: YOU SIMPLY DO NOT KNOW WHAT YOU NEED TO SUCCEED.

Failure due to a lack of knowledge is perhaps the easiest type of failure to learn from, because it is more easily recognizable than other paths of failure. It usually has less to do with our ego. **We can fix our lack of knowledge: Acts 19:1-7:** What went wrong? They were not true Christians because of a simple lack of knowledge - they were never taught. Without God's Spirit, His power and influence working in our lives, we cannot be true Christians. Being a footstep follower of Jesus is having the Holy Spirit of God guiding us. We can be appreciative of Christianity - but without being begotten by the Spirit, that deep, self-sacrificial Christianity blessed by God does not exist.

What was the remedy for this failure? An intervening external source of knowledge. Paul found them, listened to them and fellowshiped with them. He then taught them what they needed to know. Failure due to a lack of knowledge is easily remedied if our heart is in the right place and we are willing to absorb what we need to hear. God saw their need and sent the Apostle Paul. Failure can be remedied through intervention.

2 Corinthians 12:7-10: What went wrong? In hindsight, Paul saw the reason for the trial and is relating to us his original failure to grasp the meaning of his experiences. He felt stifled and would not let go of his desire to better serve God. He was not immature or weak. He just did not know what the reason for the experience was. Until he knew it, he would not rest because he wanted to serve with everything he possibly could. What was the remedy for this failure? An internal searching and prayer and then an intervening answer from above. He needed to hear it from outside of himself. It is okay to suffer defeat, but if we do not try then failure is automatic. The idea is to fall down and be able to get up again. Realize that God does not look at us when we fall down and say, "Oh, you fool!" He says, "Oh, My child. Let Me help you up." Did you learn from falling? Are you better because of it? Are you able to look at your life in a little bit of a different way so you can come towards Him with more strength? The Lord judges our intent. We fall flat often, but our intent should be to honor and please Him, to be an example for Him.

Failure's Lessons Learned: Correcting a lack of knowledge that brings us failure requires humility. It can be remedied through the intervention of those around us who truly care for our highest welfare as well as through prayer and action on our part.

How does God's plan for the future treat the world's present failure due to their lack of knowledge? This is a really important question to ask, as we often get so tied up in trying to remedy our own personal issues with failure that we just write off the world's massive issues. The good news is that God's got this! He sees the world's failure and has a plan for their learning! Struggle makes strength! Failure can be a powerful tool in our lives. **Did God's plan go wrong? The world is in a "lack of knowledge environment" and destined for failure: Mark 4:11-15:** That was a strange thing to say. Why did Jesus not want everyone to be converted? Because it was not time for that part of the plan. The entrance of sin caused the rules of God's blessing to be narrowed in this present evil world. His blessing does NOT fully extend to all (yet)! God allowed this to happen. It is for the purpose of eternal learning. God gave (temporary) permission for evil to be here. *Immediately Satan comes and takes away the word* - Is it the listener's fault? God's word and power are not even allowed to take root in the hearts of many. The world "fails" because of this lack of knowledge.

For more on the insightful Parable of the Sower, please listen to our episode, "Is the Power of the Gospel Fading?" from February 21, 2016.

2 Corinthians 4:3-4: Satan is allowed to rule this world, and with that comes a blinded and hopeless state of failure. Applying what you have learned in your life is an important part of making failure work for you.

What is God's future remedy for this failure? The remedy has already been accomplished: 1 Timothy 2:3-6: Jesus only wanted those who were following him to understand. Here we see a repeating that there is a blindness of everyone else. They are not capable of seeing, and Satan does his part to keep them in a blind state.

But if the people are blinded, how can God *desire all men to be saved and come to the knowledge <1922> of the truth?*



Knowledge: Strongs #1922, epignōsis, recognition, full discernment, acknowledgement
Thayer's Lexicon: Precise and correct knowledge

(Notice they are first saved and THEN come to full discernment...) God wants all men to come to full knowledge. They are ignorant now because they are blinded by Satan. God's *desire* is for all men to break free of the stifling ignorance of our sinful world.

When? Soon! Read this future prophecy that sounds almost too good to be true: Isaiah 11:6-9: In the kingdom after mankind has been resurrected, here is how God will address man's ignorance: *For the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea* - Finally, knowledge of the Lord will be rampant! We certainly do not see that today, nor have we ever - even when Jesus was on the earth. We believe the Bible is the inspired word of God. We believe the words written by the prophets were to show us what the world is going to look like. God's will is explicit: *For the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea*. It will literally cover the earth! God's *will* is expressed in prophecy and God's *will* is equal to His *desire*! *He desires all men to be saved*. Here in Isaiah, it shows His will accomplishing that desire.

The world's miserable failure due to their lack of knowledge will be erased. God's plan intervened and the future will NEVER allow failure as a result of ignorance!

GOOD NEWS! Some consider the majority of humankind eternally doomed because of their lack of knowledge. That is NOT what these Scriptures teach. God *understands* failure due to a lack of knowledge. For the majority of the world, they are not YET on the road to harmony with God. But He assures us they will not be judged on their failures due to a lack of knowledge. Lack of knowledge will be erased - it will no longer exist. Lack of knowledge will not be an excuse for final judgment.

Failure due to immaturity is inevitable and we are actually glad about that. As we seek to grow up be it through our adolescent years or to grow up into a mature Christian, we will find that these failures of immaturity can be particularly helpful *if* we know how to process them! The path of the true followers of Christ is a path of struggle, difficulty and failure. But this will be an example in the future when the world walks up what the Bible calls the *highway of holiness*, in the future kingdom.

FAILURE DUE TO IMMATURITY: YOU JUST DO NOT HAVE ENOUGH EXPERIENCE OR UNDERSTANDING TO BE ABLE TO SUCCEED.

This type of failure can often be the most convenient type to grow from as being immature and failing implies that growth is already underway: Matthew 14:25-32: What went wrong? He sunk! Peter started out in faith. Peter had not yet grown into his potential and as a result, his courage and enthusiasm ran ahead of his ability. That is just immaturity. *You of little faith* - Jesus was not reprimanding him. "You have a little faith. Now grow that faith into bigger trust. Why did you doubt?" What was the remedy for this failure? The strong intervening hand of Jesus. Our childlike enthusiasm needs a steady hand for guidance. We can find that steadiness in those whom we respect.

Matthew 20:20-23: What went wrong? The mother was very immature. This is one of at least three times the immature arguments about greatness among the Apostles came up. While greatness would be in their future, their present task was to grow into the spiritual men who could handle carrying the burden of greatness. Greatness was for later. What was the remedy for this failure? The powerful and intervening words of Jesus. Children need to be taught what it looks like to be an adult, and we always need forgiveness for our failures. If we are not taught what it looks like to be an adult, we will not make good adults.

Having knowledge of something means you have a sense of its existence. Understanding it, or full disclosure, tells you why it works and the application of it. Maturity seeks for complete understanding; immaturity settles for knowledge. Experience and failure help us to get that understanding. Ephesians 4:14-15

Failure's Lessons Learned: Failure due to immaturity can provoke growth when we see ourselves as humble children seeking forgiveness, the example and teaching of those who are grown in Christ.

Immaturity can be in all of us at different times of our lives. It needs to be brought to our



attention - usually that happens through failure. We should stay humble, seek forgiveness and learn the lessons of the examples put before us so we can grow into Christ. Immaturity is good if it means there is still room for growth. The general maturity level of the world seems to go lower as time goes on. In our society, we have gone from teenage boys and girls in the past working to contribute to and support their families to present day college students who need puppies and coloring books to cope with an opposing viewpoint. God does have a plan to use all of this for good! How does God view the world's failure? Does He judge them due to their immaturity? Some people blame others for their own failures. They won't admit fault, so they will never learn from those experiences. They will continue to cause pain and heartache to others by finger pointing. That is an immature attitude, which is what permeates our world. Our world is overflowing with blame and self-justification. But does God look at the world and make a final judgment on them because of that immaturity? With the level of the world's maturity so low, it may seem like God messed up. Did God's plan go wrong?

Back to the explanation for the Parable of the Sower - the second group: Mark 4:16-17: The first seed we talked about was taken by Satan - it did not have a chance to work its way into the ground. There was no opportunity due to a lack of knowledge. This second seed takes root but is choked out by the individual themselves due to a desire for comfort in the face of adversity. It was clearly foretold that things would be this way. This is an unfortunate but powerful example of many who claim the name "Christian" today. You get excited about it, you get emotional about it and then something goes wrong or gets difficult and you forget about it. There are many who accepted the name of Christ but no longer believe or act like a true Christian. Does God pronounce permanent judgment upon them? What is God's future remedy for this failure? Again, Jesus' sacrifice as the basis for the remedy has already been put in place. God understands failure. He will not, with certain kinds of failure, hold us eternally accountable.

Lack of knowledge is not an eternal accountability failure in His eyes, but what about immaturity? **What follows is opportunity through testing:** John 5:28-29: No matter who you are, resurrection applies to you: Those who followed after Christ - *a resurrection of life*
Those who did not follow after Christ - *a resurrection of judgment*

This resurrection of judgment is the beginning of the context of a new heaven and a new earth, as described in Revelation 21:1-5. The resurrection is the beginning of the process of growing up, becoming mature. Often Christians look at the time of resurrection as an instantaneous "pass/fail" judgment, but this is just the beginning of the re-standing process. There is a growth process God puts in place. Knowledge and full disclosure take time to develop into understanding.

It will take time for the resurrected humanity to grow into godly maturity: Isaiah 65:20: They will not only be given the time to grow up, but they will be given the evidence to follow the right examples. That is part of maturity. God looks at the immaturity of the world in a similar way He looks at the lack of knowledge. Eternal judgment is not based on these things. With God's plan, immaturity will no longer be a cause of failure. How merciful is our heavenly Father to allow humanity an opportunity to mature with full knowledge! They can decide if they love the Lord and want to live eternally or if they want nothing to do with a kingdom of love, forgiveness and kindness.

Zechariah 8:21-23: This shows maturity, growth, observation and seeing the kingdom of God unfolding. The people will realize that God's favor comes in very specific ways. If they want a part of that favor, they will have to go to the places and people who can help get that kind of favor. It shows how the world will be given the opportunity to grow up! God's plan gives them time, knowledge and understanding. It provides these so that failure will not take them by surprise.

Failure's Lessons Learned: The world's miserable failure due to their lack of maturity will be eliminated. God, through Jesus' sacrifice will never allow immaturity to determine a man's destiny.

*So, how do you manage failure?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!*