

HARD LESSONS IN LIFE: FAILURE IS PART OF SUCCESS

Learn from it, adjust, and keep going.

Compiled by Joe Keim and taught in a group setting

1. Opening Thought

Nobody enjoys failure.

Failing can feel embarrassing, discouraging, painful, or even humiliating.

Sometimes we fail:

- a test,
- a job interview,
- a relationship,
- a goal,
- a responsibility,
- or a personal commitment.

Many people think failure means they are weak, useless, or incapable.

But failure is often one of life's greatest teachers.

- Failure does not mean your life is over.
- It means there is something to learn.
- Strong people do not quit after failure. They learn, adjust, grow, and keep moving forward.

The people who succeed in life are usually people who failed many times but refused to give up.

Illustration

A baby learns to walk by falling many times.

Nobody criticizes the child for falling. We expect it.

Why?

Because falling is part of learning to walk.

Life works the same way.

Sometimes failure is part of learning how to succeed.

2. Scripture

Proverbs 24:16 –

“For a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again...”

- Godly people are not people who never fall.
- They are people who get back up again.

Example

Peter denied Jesus three times.

He failed badly. Yet Jesus restored him and still used him to preach the gospel and lead others.

Philippians 3:13-14 –

“...forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark...”

- We cannot stay trapped in past mistakes.
- God wants us to keep moving forward.

Illustration

A driver who stares only into the rearview mirror will crash.
You must learn from the past without living in the past.

James 1:2-4 –

“My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.”

- Trials and failures can build patience and maturity.
- God often develops strong character through difficult experiences.

Example

Many athletes lose competitions before they ever become champions.
Losses teach discipline, humility, and perseverance.

Romans 8:28 –

“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God...”

- God can use even our failures for growth and good.
- Mistakes do not surprise God.

Bible Illustration

Joseph faced betrayal, slavery, prison, and disappointment.
Yet God used every setback to prepare him for future leadership.

3. Discussion Questions

1. What is one failure or disappointment that taught you something valuable?
 2. Why do many people give up after failing?
 3. What is the difference between failing and being a failure?
 4. How can failure help a person grow stronger or wiser?
 5. Why is it important to keep trying after setbacks?
 6. What can we learn from Bible characters who failed?
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4. Practical Examples

- School: Failing a test but studying differently next time.
- Work: Losing a job but learning better responsibility and work habits.

- Sports: Losing a game but improving through practice.
- Relationships: Saying hurtful words and learning how to communicate better.
- Money: Making poor financial decisions and learning to budget wisely.
- Spiritual life: Falling into sin, confessing it, learning from it, and growing stronger spiritually.
- Daily life: Trying something new and not succeeding the first time.

Real-Life Illustration

Thomas Edison reportedly tested thousands of materials before inventing the light bulb.

When asked about failing, he basically said:

“I have not failed. I’ve just found many ways that do not work.”

Successful people often fail more than others because they keep trying.

5. Challenge for This Week

Think about one mistake, failure, or disappointment you have experienced recently.

Finish this sentence:

“This week I will learn from my failure by _____ instead of _____.”

Examples:

- “I will learn from my mistakes by asking for advice instead of quitting.”
- “I will learn from failure by trying again instead of feeling sorry for myself.”
- “I will learn from criticism by improving instead of becoming angry.”
- “I will learn from my spiritual struggles by spending more time with God instead of giving up.”

Weekly Action Step

When you make a mistake this week:

1. Admit it honestly.
2. Ask yourself what you can learn.
3. Make a plan to improve.
4. Keep moving forward.

Do not allow failure to define you.

6. Closing Thought

Failure is not the end unless you quit.

Every strong person has faced setbacks, mistakes, and disappointment.

The difference is that they kept going.

God is not looking for perfect people.

He is looking for humble people who are willing to learn, grow, and keep trusting Him.

Sometimes failure becomes the very thing God uses to prepare you for future success.