

EPIC FAIL: How to Face Life's Hardest Failures

Sermon by Todd Lester

March 13, 2016

Job 17:11 My days are over. My hopes have disappeared. My heart's desires are broken.

WE FAIL WHEN WE ...

1. DON'T _____

Proverbs 27:12, James 4:15, Proverbs 16:9, Luke 14:28-30

2. THINK WE'VE _____

Proverbs 16:18, Proverbs 15:22, 1 Corinthians 10:12

3. ARE AFRAID TO _____

Proverbs 29:25

4. GIVE UP _____

Proverbs 15:19

5. DON'T _____

Proverbs 14:12, Isaiah 55:8-9

WE SUCCEED WHEN WE...

1. _____ FOR OUR OWN FAILURE

Proverbs 28:13

2. STOP _____ AND START _____

2 Corinthians 7:10, Proverbs 20:30 (GNT)

3. FORGET THE _____ AND FOCUS ON THE _____

Philippians 3:13-14, Matthew 26:75, Matthew 27:3-5

4. TRUST GOD TO _____

Romans 8:28, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Jonah 3:1, Joel 2:25, Isaiah 61:3

Movie Affirmation

Choose one of the movie types below to describe each person in your group and then take turns affirming each one by sharing your choice (and reasons too, if you have time).



Spy Thriller

You are adventurous and unpredictable. We never know what you are going to do next.



Action Adventure

Your no-nonsense approach and high-octane personality always makes life interesting.



Romance Classic

Leading with your heart, you remind us how wonderful love can be.



Rootin' Tootin' Western

You are rip snortin', rugged and down to earth, always keeping us entertained.



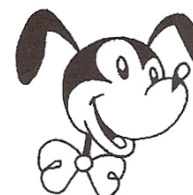
Sci-Fi Extravaganza

You have a wonderful imagination and exciting special effects.



Mysterious Who-dun-it

You are full of wonderful secrets and surprises.



Animation Classic

You are colorful and childlike, keeping us mesmerized with your hilarious capers.



Touching Drama

You are sensitive and expressive. You remind us of the beauty of the human spirit.



Fascinating Documentary

Your intelligence and curiosity enriches us all.

EPIC FAIL: How to Face Life's Hardest Failures

Sermon by Todd Lester

March 13, 2016

Icebreaker/Introduction

The 'Tortoise and the Hare' activity can connect with the idea of ways to face a challenge or looking at the pace or strength or strategies people use to accomplish goals.

Ask if there was anything from this week's message that stood out – either a point that was made which really resonated with them, or perhaps a question or difficulty that came up for them.

Read [Job 17:11](#) – Would you be willing to share about a time when you felt this way?

WE FAIL WHEN WE ...

1. DON'T PLAN AHEAD

Focuses on [Proverbs 27:12](#), [James 4:15](#), [Proverbs 16:9](#), [Luke 14:28-30](#)

Share about an impulsive decision you made which led to difficult consequences.

Do you agree with Todd's statement that the most productive life is a result of the most intentional life? Discuss.

How do we balance using our God-given minds and abilities with making God part of our planning processes? (Todd said that "planning without prayer is presumption.")

2. THINK WE'VE ARRIVED

Focuses on [Proverbs 16:18](#), [Proverbs 15:22](#), [1 Corinthians 10:12](#)

Do you think it's true, what Todd said about, "the average person thinks that they're above average"?

In what circumstances, or around what people, do you most often see pride entering into your life?

What helps you to keep a humble attitude?

3. ARE AFRAID TO TAKE RISKS

Focuses on [Proverbs 29:25](#)

What is a risk you had the opportunity to take in your past, which you wish would have taken? What is a risk you could take now?

On a scale from 1-10 (1 being very risk-averse) how much of a risk-taker are you? Would you say that number has changed over the years?

Read [Proverbs 29:25](#) What does it mean to you to be 'trusting the Lord'?

4. GIVE UP TOO SOON

Focuses on [Proverbs 15:19](#)

Todd mentioned Winston Churchill as an example of someone who never gave up. Think of another example (from the Bible, culture, people you know).

What is something you have had to (or have to presently) persevere through?

5. DON'T LISTEN TO GOD

Focuses on [Proverbs 14:12](#), [Isaiah 55:8-9](#)

Why don't people listen to God?

Todd said that failure can be a major setback or a major stepping stone. Share a time when you learned something from a mistake that make you stronger or wiser or better or...

WE SUCCEED WHEN WE...

1. ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR OUR OWN FAILURE

Focuses on [Proverbs 28:13](#)

Todd asked the question "Where do we get this idea that we have to be perfect?"

What were some of the things Todd listed that we use to blame others? (economy, fate, weather, parents, spouse, government) Why is this not helpful?

2. STOP REGRETTING AND START REPENTING

Focuses on [2 Corinthians 7:10](#), [Proverbs 20:30](#) (GNT)

What is the difference between Godly sorrow and worldly sorrow? (Godly sorrow motivates you to change/do something)

Discuss Todd's statement that sometimes 'we don't change when we see the light but when we feel the heat.'

Todd said that almost every success in life is built on failure (if we learn from it). Do you think it's true that there are some things you can only learn through failure?

3. FORGET THE FORMER AND FOCUS ON THE FUTURE

Focuses on [Philippians 3:13-14](#), [Matthew 26:75](#), [Matthew 27:3-5](#)

'Forget the former' is great advice but is not necessarily very easy for people. How can we do that? Is it as simple as redirecting our attention to think about where we're going instead of where we've been?

Are you holding on to some old regrets or negative memories? What are some ways that you could deal with them so that they stop affecting your present (and future)? [sometimes recognizing them, and where they came from is an important first step]

4. TRUST GOD TO WORK IT ALL OUT

Focuses on [Romans 8:28](#), [2 Corinthians 5:17](#), [Jonah 3:1](#), [Joel 2:25](#), [Isaiah 61:3](#)

Todd reminded us that those we consider the 'heroes' of the Bible had lots of weakness, problems and failures, but they were still used by God. Can you believe that God could take your greatest weakness and make it your greatest strength?

Todd used the idea of a tapestry (mess of knots and tangles on the back, beautiful picture on the front) to illustrate our lives. What are some of the beautiful things God sees in your life?

EPIC FAIL: How to Face Life's Hardest Failures

Sermon by Todd Lester

March 13, 2016

Everyone experiences failure. We all have setbacks, failures, defeats and losses. Nobody is perfect; everyone makes mistakes. But sometimes a defeat can overwhelm you. Have you ever felt that the desires of your life have been broken or lost? Life can be tough and can leave you feel beaten down and kicked around. However, you're never a failure until you give up. This week's message was about causes of failure and what God's Word says about how to start over.

Job 17:11 My days are over. My hopes have disappeared. My heart's desires are broken.

WE FAIL WHEN WE ...

1. DON'T PLAN AHEAD

Proverbs 27:12 A prudent person foresees danger and takes precautions. The simpleton goes blindly on and suffers the consequences.

James 4:15 What you ought to say is, "If the Lord wants us to, we will live and do this or that."

Proverbs 16:9 We can make our plans, but the Lord determines our steps.

Luke 14:28-30 But don't begin until you count the cost. For who would begin construction of a building without first calculating the cost to see if there is enough money to finish it? Otherwise, you might complete only the foundation before running out of money, and then everyone would laugh at you. They would say, "There's the person who started that building and couldn't afford to finish it!"

2. THINK WE'VE ARRIVED

Proverbs 16:18 Pride goes before destruction, and haughtiness before a fall.

Proverbs 15:22 Plans go wrong for lack of advice; many advisers bring success.

1 Corinthians 10:12 If you think you are standing strong, be careful not to fall.

3. ARE AFRAID TO TAKE RISKS

Proverbs 29:25 Fearing people is a dangerous trap, but trusting the Lord means safety.

4. GIVE UP TOO SOON

Proverbs 15:19 A lazy person's way is blocked with briars, but the path of the upright is an open highway.

5. DON'T LISTEN TO GOD

Proverbs 14:12 There is a path before each person that seems right, but it ends in death.

Isaiah 55:8-9 "My thoughts are nothing like your thoughts," says the Lord. "And my ways are far beyond anything you could imagine. For just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so my ways are higher than your ways and my thoughts higher than your thoughts."

WE SUCCEED WHEN WE...

1. ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR OUR OWN FAILURE

Proverbs 28:13 People who conceal their sins will not prosper, but if they confess and turn from them, they will receive mercy.

2. STOP REGRETTING AND START REPENTING

2 Corinthians 7:10 For the kind of sorrow God wants us to experience leads us away from sin and results in salvation. There's no regret for that kind of sorrow. But worldly sorrow, which lacks repentance, results in spiritual death.

Proverbs 20:30 (GNT) Sometimes it takes a painful experience to make us change our ways.

3. FORGET THE FORMER AND FOCUS ON THE FUTURE

Philippians 3:13-14 Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us.

Matthew 26:75 Suddenly, Jesus' words flashed through Peter's mind: "Before the rooster crows, you will deny three times that you even know me." And he went away, weeping bitterly.

Matthew 27:3-5 When Judas, who had betrayed him, realized that Jesus had been condemned to die, he was filled with remorse. So he took the thirty pieces of silver back to the leading priests and the elders. "I have sinned," he declared, "for I have betrayed an innocent man." "What do we care?" they retorted. "That's your problem." Then Judas threw the silver coins down in the Temple and went out and hanged himself.

4. TRUST GOD TO WORK IT ALL OUT

Romans 8:28 And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.

2 Corinthians 5:17 This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!

Jonah 3:1 Then the Lord spoke to Jonah a **second** time.

Joel 2:25 The Lord says, "I will give you back what you lost to the swarming locusts, the hopping locusts, the stripping locusts, and the cutting locusts."

Isaiah 61:3 To all who mourn in Israel, he will give a crown of beauty for ashes, a joyous blessing instead of mourning, festive praise instead of despair. In their righteousness, they will be like great oaks that the Lord has planted for his own glory.