

November 25, 2012
From Failure to Action

Is failure ever the final word?

Between August 1959 and November 1961, NASA conducted twenty unmanned rocket tests and two manned tests, leading up to John Glenn's historic orbit of the earth on February 20, 1962. Ten tests were considered unqualified successes. Ten were failures, and two had mixed results. Three tests were cancelled.

MONDAY STUDY

1. Denying Christ

Read John 18:15-18,25b-27 and then try to answer the following questions.

- Why do you think Peter followed Jesus and the other disciple (probably John)? What does it say about his bravery compared to the other disciples, all of whom fled, according to Mark 14:50?
- After the first and second denials, do you think Peter felt remorse? Do you think he was determined not to let it happen a third time? If so, what happened?
- Why do you think John added the detail in verse 26, that the slave who questioned Peter was a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off?
- Do you think Peter was in any real danger? Why or why not?
- What would you have done in Peter's situation?
- What do Peter's actions tell us about his natural boldness?
- Who gave Peter his natural talents and strengths?
- How did sin impact Peter's natural boldness?
- What is the difference between sorrow and sorrow that leads to repentance? (see 2 Cor. 7:10).
- Can you give an example, not necessarily from your own life, of someone who feels defined by their past?
- As we talked before, Peter was reminded of his past every morning when the roosters crowed. But what is the difference between being aware of your mistakes and being identified by them?
- Did Peter allow his past to hold him back or define him? How do you know?

TUESDAY STUDY

2. Restored by Christ

Read John 21:15-19 and then try to answer the following questions.

- In John 21:3, Peter decided he was going to go fishing. Does this suggest he no longer felt qualified to be a disciple? Or was this just how he processed his grief over his failure?
- Why are people often tempted to retreat to something familiar after failure?
- What did Jesus call Peter in verse 15? (his given name, Simon son of John)
- Do you remember, according to Matthew 16, what "Peter" meant? (It means "rock." In Matthew 16:18 Jesus called Peter the rock on which He would build His church)
- Why do you think Jesus did not call him Peter? Do you think it stung when Jesus did not call him by this strong nickname?
- Why do you think Peter was grieved in verse 17? (possible answers: Peter thought Jesus did not believe him; it reminded him of his 3rd denial of Jesus)
- What did Jesus tell Peter do 3 times?
- When your children fail, how do you restore them?
- How has God restored you in the past?

- Jesus' last words to Peter in verse 19—"Follow Me"—were identical to His first words to Peter in Matthew 4:19. How does this encourage you?
- What do you think Jesus meant by the statement more than these?
- If Jesus had been speaking to you, what would it have meant?
- If Jesus was referring to the other disciples, why would that be important for Peter's future as a leader?
- If Jesus was referring to fishing, why would that be important for Peter's future as a leader?
- How did Peter's death fulfill Jesus' prophecy?
- How did Peter's death provide an opportunity for him to prove his loyalty to Jesus?
- Would you be willing to die for Jesus? At one point, Peter was not, but eventually he did.
- Why is martyrdom such an honor for a Christian?

WEDNESDAY STUDY

3. Standing for Christ

Read Acts 4:13,18-20 and then try to answer the following questions.

- To what did the religious leaders attribute Peter and John's boldness?
- What did the Sanhedrin command Peter and John not to do? Why do you think they had such a problem with the name of Jesus?
- How does the response of Peter and John communicate boldness?
- Why could Peter and John not stop talking about Jesus?
- When have you had opportunities to be bold for Jesus? What happened?
- How can you lead your children to be bold for Jesus at school, with friends, and with family?
- Through Peter's failure, God began a process that gave Peter supernatural boldness. Could God have accomplished that if Peter had not failed?
- Could Peter have developed supernatural boldness without the work of the Holy Spirit? (No. The Holy Spirit is THE agent for spiritual transformation. Peter may have regained his natural boldness, but without the Holy Spirit, it would have merely been bravado.)
- Is it fair to say that the Holy Spirit doesn't **change** who you are; He **redeems** who you are? What does that mean in Peter's context?
- What are some of your natural personality traits that could be utilized for the advancement of the gospel?
- What would need to happen in order for the Lord to redeem that part of your personality?
- Do you think God wanted Peter to fail? Why or why not?
- Has God ever transformed your life through failure?

THURSDAY – SATURDAY

Read through the following articles in preparation for Pastor's Jim's Preaching and Teaching.

1. The Life of Simon Peter;
2. Simon Peter: The Man and His Ministry;
3. Peter's Shepherd Assignment;
4. The Sanhedrin: Their History and Function;

SUNDAY – November 25, 2012 Be Ready to Really Grow in God's Word.