



FEARS, TEARS & JEERS:

Staying positive
in a negative world, Lesson 3

GOOD MORNING!

- Thanks for choosing to join us today!
- God will reward your faithfulness...just listen for His still, small voice!
- Let's open in prayer.

Thus far in this series...

- First, we covered SALVATION. If you desire to stay positive in a negative world, it begins with KNOWING YOU'RE SAVED, ONCE AND FOR ALL!
- Remember: for the Christian, this life is the worst it gets...for the unbeliever, this life is the best it gets!

- Last week, we covered mankind's biggest fear: DEATH. Death is not termination or extinction, but *change!*
- As Christians, we may fear the process of dying but we have no legitimate reason to fear death itself. That's the core blessing of Christianity!

Today's Topic:

Fear of failure.

- Failure means:
- * lack of success
 - * lack or sudden end of performance.





- During my childhood, I spent quite a few years in New Jersey, not far from Menlo Park. I visited the Thomas Edison museum several times. He was and is a local hero. Do you realize that he failed 1,000 times before he invented the light bulb? He also invented the phonograph. Imagine how different our lives might be if he had quit!

- I heard a segment on WIHS-FM 104.9 Christian radio by R.C. Sproul. He was describing how difficult it is to start and operate a small business in America today. Only one of every 25 small businesses last 10+ years. That's just 4%!

- Thus far, Keep In Touch has lasted 21+ years...and we have faced failure head-on many times. I'm sure that others in this room who have started small businesses have faced failure head-on, too!



- How many people woke up today and said, ***“Lord, I really, really want to fail big-time today. Please help me to be a royal failure.”***

Failure can take many forms.

- Failure in academic study.
- Failure on a job or in a career.
- Failure in marriage and family life.
- Failure in ministry and social service.
- Failure in diplomacy, politics or war.
- Failure in recreational pursuits.
- The list of potential failures is endless.

Here's a recipe for F.A.I.L.U.R.E.

- F = Financial foolishness
- A = Attitude problems
- I = Irresponsibility
- L = Lack of vision
- U = Unrestrained appetites
- R = Ruined reputation
- E = Escapism

Financial Foolishness

F

Are you living within your means?

- *"The rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender." --Proverbs 22:7*
- Avoid debt, and if you do use debt, use it wisely. Just because you get a credit card offer doesn't mean you have to take it... or use it!

Are you paying your bills?

- *“A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold.” --Proverbs 22:1*
- Be a person of integrity. Don't steal! Be resolute about paying your bills. Building a solid credit history will help you for years to come.

Are you faithful with what you have?

- *“He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much.” --Luke 16:10*
- How can you expect God to give you “more” money if you can't handle what you have?

Are you hindering spiritual wealth?

- *“If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?” --Luke 16:11-12*

Attitude Problems

A

Is there a chip on your shoulder?

- *“God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.” --James 4:6*
- Are you a know-it-all? Do you think you could do a “better” job than your supervisor or the owner of the business? Are you always asking “what’s in it for me?” Do you think you deserve more...now?

Do you resent going to work?

- *“For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.”*
--2 Thessalonians 2:10-12

Are you working “just to get by?”

- *“And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance; for ye serve the Lord Christ.” --Colossians 3:23-24*
- Poor or mediocre job performance will hinder you for life!

Irresponsibility



Do you realize you are accountable?

- *“Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. For we must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.” --2 Corinthians 5:9-10*

NAÏVE:
“innocently ignorant”

WISE:
Knowing the facts, understanding how they relate to you, and applying what you know and understand to be true.

FOOLISH:
“deliberately dumb”

- God gave you freewill.
- You make thousands of decisions a year: some little, some big. Each one bears fruit.
- You are responsible—and accountable—for every choice you make.
- God cannot bless a person who does not take responsibility for his or her choices.

Lack of vision

L

Do you have a God-given vision?

- *“Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.” --Prov 29:18*
- The vision to stay on-track?
- The vision to know God’s Call?
- The vision to pursue Higher goals?

Unrestrained appetites



Are you prone to excess?

- *“This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh... the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.” –Galatians 5:16, 22-25*

Pick your poison!

- People are prone to addiction!
- Power, position, prestige
- Affection and recognition
- Sexual gratification and exploration
- Food
- Pleasure, recreation and fun
- Money

Are you moderate and content?

- *“But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment, let us be therewith content.”*
--1 Timothy 6:6-8

Ruining your reputation

R

Are you building a good reputation?

- *“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.” --Gaatians 6:7-9*

- As the years of your life pass by, one of the most valuable assets you will possess is your reputation. It will either work for you or against you. Once you ruin it, it's very hard to rebuild it.
- Your integrity will make a difference in your life... and in your family. The ripple effect will continue beyond your lifetime.

Escapism

E

Are you easily discouraged?

- *“These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.” --John 16:33*
- The Christian life—including work and career—is a marathon, not a sprint.

- We're all imperfect people...
- Living in an imperfect world...
- There is much evil, stress, hurt, pain, disaster, difficulty...
- It's "human" to want to escape! Our escape is when we're in heaven for eternity. *If you want to get high, get hooked on Jesus!*

If and when you “fail...”

What I have learned about my failures...

Failure
+ humility
+ time
+ God's Hand
= Success.

- It's *supernatural!* "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." --Romans 8:28

- Remember Job and Joseph!!!!!!
- They both experienced several dramatic "failures," but were vindicated in the end.
- Prudence Crandall, a courageous Christian woman and Connecticut's Official Heroine, went through gut-wrenching "failure," but she was eventually vindicated.

- Not *everyone* is insulated from failure or promised eventual success...there is a conditional promise to those who love God and are called according to His purpose.
- Therefore, to hate God, to be oblivious to and out of His call, to be rebellious and dumb is a recipe for failure.

Even if you've messed up...

- If you fess up and repent, God is incredibly merciful and can turn your failure into success. He's a God of second chances.
- There still may be consequences to your folly, but He will weave good into the fabric of your life. He has an awesome way of using our pain for His gain!

We live in a risk-averse culture.

- Especially in northern Connecticut and western Massachusetts...insurance country!
- If there isn't a firm guarantee, or if we cannot forecast specific results on an Excel spreadsheet, then we tend to avoid risk.
- In reality, you and I will never remove the mystery out of human existence.

Our culture also prefers *comfort and convenience* over commitment.

- We see it in our families, churches, workplaces.
- We want everything "now," and when we don't get what we want, we have a tantrum and move on.

By today's standards...

- Would Christopher Columbus have dared to embark upon his journey?
- Would the Puritans—and immigrants since-- have come to the New World?
- Would the great experiment in freedom called "The United States" have been created?

- America was born out of risk-taking and courage in the face of failure.
- As America drifts from its Judeo-Christian heritage, it becomes less motivated by FAITH and more by SIGHT...and more paralyzed by FEAR OF FAILURE.

What overcomes fear of failure?

- Walking in **wisdom**, not folly or naivete.
- Walking in **obedience** to God's Word, the Holy Spirit, and God's Call.
- Walking in **integrity** and truth.
- Walking in complete **Trust in God**.


