

The Gospel of Mark
Life at the Bottom of the Mountain
Mark 9:14-29

Failure is never fun and defeat is never delightful. It can be painful and embarrassing. More importantly, our response to failure can be life-changing, and ultimately alter our destiny. Failure can make us bitter or better. In 2000, John Maxwell wrote an excellent book called *Failing Forward*, that outlined principles that serve to move us beyond our failures of today so that we might enjoy our successes of tomorrow.

1. We must rely on Jesus.
2. We must exercise faith.
3. We must engage God in prayer.

That day at the cross, many people thought that Jesus' life and ministry was a failure. Little did they know that within three days, the resurrection of Jesus would prove what He had been preaching all along—that with God all things are possible. Life's failures should serve to drive us to Jesus, increase our faith, and humble us in prayer.

For further reflection:

What has been your most profitable failure—the one from which you learned the most valuable lesson? How do you respond to other people's failures? How do you think the transfiguration prepared Peter, James, and John for life at the bottom of the mountain? How do our failures impact our ability to do ministry? What might we say or do to mitigate the damage done to His name? Do you think our generation can be described as a faithless generation? If so, what can we do about it? How does turning to Jesus with questions and doubts demonstrate at least a small amount of faith rather than no faith at all? What would no faith look like? How does self-sufficiency express pride, while prayer and humility express, faith, trust and dependency?