

**Monday**

Read Matthew 26:31-35 and 1 Corinthians 10:12

Peter is certain he is stronger than everyone else – his love for Jesus, his commitment, his fortitude – but it turns out he is relying on what he is doing for Jesus... it's all about him.

A lot of businesses have failed from overestimating their strengths. You don't have to think too far back to remember when there were Blockbuster video rental stores all over the place. When was the last time you saw one? They overestimated their strength and lagged behind the competition. When Netflix began mailing DVDs, Blockbuster eventually did but was slow out of the gate. When Netflix started streaming content, Blockbuster was already basically done.

More immediately, we see in our lives and the lives of those around us how overestimating strength leads to failure. Students have flunked out thinking it could never happen to them. Spouses have fallen into affairs. Lives float adrift on top of the scraps of their overestimated strength. And the same refrain echoes, "That could never happen to me!" Beware of that statement.

Where in your life are you living as if you were too strong to fail?

1 Corinthians 10:12 (The Message): Don't be so naive and self-confident. You're not exempt. You could fall flat on your face as easily as anyone else. Forget about self-confidence; it's useless. Cultivate God-confidence.

How will you cultivate God-confidence this week?

**Tuesday**

Read Matthew 26:69-75

Our personal failures are often caused by our fear of the disapproval of others. Every time you make a decision based on fear of disapproval you sow the seeds for an eventual failure.

The night that Jesus was arrested and Peter denied Jesus to others three times, Peter is a people-pleaser just trying to go with the flow and it leads to deep personal failure. Are you falling into this trap of being a people-pleaser? Ask yourself these questions:

Are you following Jesus at a distance?  
Are you sitting around waiting to see what happens?  
Whose opinion matters more to you than God's?  
Why are the opinions of others so important to you?

**Wednesday**

Read 1 Peter 1:3-5

One of the three things we talked about on Sunday about how to respond when we fail is to cast yourself on God's mercy.

Peter has experienced the new birth into the living hope of the resurrection of Jesus Christ by giving himself up to God's mercy. There's no other explanation for how he goes from denier of Jesus to the rock upon which the community of Jesus is built. He gives up that strength he was so sure of the last night of Jesus' life. He gives up his pride. He gives up his failures. He casts himself onto God's mercy and allows God to use him as that clay jar holding the treasures of Jesus. When you feel like you've failed again, that doesn't mean you haven't given yourself to God's mercy, but it means you have an opportunity to cast yourself upon God's mercy in Jesus again – perhaps more deeply, more profoundly, and with a richer desire for mercy.

What would it look like to cast yourself on God's mercy today?

## Thursday

Read John 21:15-17

Jesus only uses people who have failed to build his church.

The one who denied Jesus three times gets the opportunity to affirm his devotion to Jesus three times and is the one who goes onto strengthen his brothers (as Jesus said in Luke 22).

Jesus does not abandon the disciples even when they abandon him. He sticks by Peter even when Peter says he's never heard of Jesus. 2 Timothy 2:13 tells us why: "If we are unfaithful, he remains faithful, for he cannot deny who he is." Jesus is not packing up and leaving your life.

We can be confident in living the life that God has planned for us because scripture demonstrates time and time again that God uses fallen, broken people for His purposes. The notion that you need to be perfect to do certain ministries in church (or any at all!) is a hellish lie.

## Friday

Each week in 2022, we are praying for the most dangerous places to be a follower of Jesus. Please spend today in prayer for Egypt and the Christians in Egypt. You can get more info, and this info comes from, here: <https://www.opendoorsusa.org/christian-persecution/world-watch-list/>

What is life like for Christians in Egypt?

Persecution against Christians in Egypt happens mostly at the community level and most frequently in Upper Egypt. Incidents may vary from Christian women being harassed on the street, to Christian communities being driven out of their homes by extremist

mobs. Although Egypt's government speaks positively about the country's Christian community, the lack of serious law enforcement and the unwillingness of local authorities to protect Christians leave believers vulnerable to attack.

Areas for prayer:

- Pray for the safety of all Christians as they go about their daily lives.
- Pray for an end to false accusations and senseless attacks against Christians, and that there will be an urgency in local police forces to seek justice for all wrongdoing.
- Pray for boldness and discernment for Christians in Egypt, as they seek ways to shine the light of Christ brightly in their communities.