

Succeeding at Failure

All of us have faced failure of one kind or another in our lives.

Perhaps it was trying out for the football team and not making the cut. Or the cheerleading squad and being turned down.

Maybe we were in an academic competition for the mathematics award and missed out. It could be that we sought a scholarship that would have helped immensely with expenses in college, and didn't get it.

Whatever your failings may have been, take heart from this important story from the Bible.

One of the most unusual set of circumstances in the New Testament surrounds Mark, the cousin of Barnabas. Paul and Barnabas took young Mark with them on a missionary trip, but he returned home before the end of the trip for reasons not revealed in Scripture.

Whatever Mark's reasons, Paul apparently thought they were unjustified since he refused to take Mark along on a subsequent trip, according to Acts 15:38.

Did Mark fail at being a missionary? Judging from Paul's response, it would appear he did. While the New King James Version says Mark "departed" from Paul and Barnabas, the word probably is closer to "deserted"—a more negative connotation. It's probably reasonable to conclude that Mark did fail at being a missionary.

But did that make him a permanent failure? Apparently not, for the same apostle Paul, who was so disappointed in Mark, counted him a valuable coworker in ministry later in his life. This is a perfect example of how to succeed at failing: fall, get up and continue on.

So the next time you fail, make sure it is a temporary experience, not a permanent label.

Don't get *failing* and *failure* confused. Failing is nothing more than the back door to success.

Here is what Paul had to say: *Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry* (2 Timothy 4:11 NKJV).

– Beecher Hunter