

Important part of leadership is helping people to recover from failure.

I. THE REALITY OF FAILURE

A. People we work with will have failures of various kinds

1. *Spiritual struggles Efforts that don't work Conflicts Marriage issues Personal failures*
a. *2 Kings 6:5 As one of them was cutting down a tree, the iron axhead fell into the water. "Oh, my lord," he cried out, "it was borrowed!"*
2. The key is how do we treat people who have struggles and failures?
a. *Matthew 12:20 A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory.*

1. This speaks of Jesus' gentleness with struggling people

B. Some helpful perspectives in dealing with struggling people

1. You can't take it personal: *I am a failure b/c my people have failures...*
2. You can't reject people who have struggles I care for you...
 - a. If you do – this will produce unhealthy things
 1. Some people won't try: Afraid of rejection/humiliation
 2. Some people will be dishonest: Choose to pretend rather than be open and seek help
 3. Some will run away: From ministry – from church – from God
3. Elisha apparently had given the message that he could be approached – even about negative things

II. PARTICIPATING IN RECOVERY

A. Failure is an excellent opportunity for teaching/learning

1. In some ways a man will not learn true lessons without struggle/failure
 - a. They will have huge egos
 - b. They will be unprepared for reversals/struggle

B. Learning the lesson: Elisha didn't simply say: You shouldn't have done that!

1. He asks one of the most important questions in failure
 - a. *V6 where did it fall?* He applied the miracle at the point of the loss/failure
2. The key question in failure is not what did you do...it is how did you get there? How did it happen?
 - a. If a man can't identify how he wound up there – he will fail again in the same way!
 1. What did you fail to do that caused this: Lack of prayer/word/honesty/relationships
 - a. Check the axe head: Attention
 - b. Maintain the shaft: Spiritual maintenance
 - What did you do that began this process/made it easier to do other foolish things?
3. This is not a matter of technique – it is dealing with heart issues
 - a. Pride/fear/rebellion/bitterness/selfishness/laziness

C. Participating in your own recovery

1. Notice Elisha didn't do it all for him
 - a. This is what some people want: *Say a prayer/counsel me and fix everything*
2. Elisha made him participate in his own recovery
 - a. *V6 he showed him the place...* b. *2 Kings 6:7 Therefore he said, "Pick it up for yourself." So he reached out his hand and took it.*
3. How much you able to help someone is dependent on the person
 - a. You can't make people recover! b. You have to work at their pace – or it simply won't work

III. MAKING IRON SWIM

A. We must have confidence for recovery

1. We must believe that people can recover/be healed/move on
2. We have to contend for this in prayer: *A supernatural dimension*
 - a. I've seen many miracles: But recovery from failure is one that is desperately needed
3. We have to preach and teach this: A theology of recovery
 - a. Give hope to those who are struggling
 1. *Rom 15:13 Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.*
 - a. Declare the character of God: The God of Hope!

B. It is a powerful life/ministry lesson to see the miracle of recovery

1. *2 Kings 6:6 And he shewed him the place. And he cut down a stick, and cast it in thither; and the iron did swim.*
 - a. A supernatural dimension that allows someone to recover and move on in usefulness for God