

The purpose of the first paragraph is to reveal stats and quotes from mainstream sources about the growing struggles teens may have regarding each topic. The purpose of the second paragraph is to reveal God's perspective by seeing what the Bible says regarding each topic and how we can receive help and guidance in our life's purpose through a relationship with Jesus.

FAILURE

Failure is defined by Google as a lack of success, or the action or state of not functioning. Many teens experience atychiphobia (the fear of failure) every day¹⁴⁷. Failure may bring natural feelings of sadness, anger, hopelessness or worthlessness, but it's a necessary experience for creativity, learning, growth, strength and wisdom. In a world obsessed with teaching young people the correct way to do things, we're at risk focusing too much on 'not getting things wrong' rather than on really understanding or exploring ideas¹⁴⁸. So, how do we accept and deal with failure?

The Bible says that, in front of God, everyone's a failure because everyone sins (Rom. 3:23, James 3:2). We can call out (Phil. 4:6) and confess our failure to receive forgiveness (1 John 1:9) and a new life (2 Cor. 5:17) based not on our works, but God's love (Eph. 2:8-10). Jesus warned us of trouble in this world, but He has overcome it (John 16:33). We can rejoice in failure (James 1:2-4) because God can use it for our good (Rom. 8:28). He can be our strength (Phil. 4:13) to get back up (Prov. 24:16) and help us let go of the past and move forward in Him (Phil. 3:13-14).

BIBLE VERSES TO CONSIDER

Romans 3:23 "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

James 3:2 "We all stumble in many ways."

Philippians 4:6 "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God."

2 Corinthians 12:9-10 "But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong."

Romans 5:3-5 "Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us."

Psalms 73:26 "My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever."

Proverbs 28:13 "Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy."

2 Corinthians 4:8-10 "We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body."

Proverbs 3:5-6 "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight."

Romans 5:8 "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

Philippians 1:6 "being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."

1 John 1:9 "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."

2 Corinthians 5:17 "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!"

Ephesians 2:8-10 "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."

John 16:33 (Jesus) "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

James 1:2-4 "Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything."

Romans 8:28 "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."

Philippians 4:12-14 "I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength."

Proverbs 24:16 "for though the righteous fall seven times, they rise again, but the wicked stumble when calamity strikes."

Philippians 3:13-14 "Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus."

2 Timothy 1:7 "For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline."

Psalms 145:14 "The Lord upholds all who fall and lifts up all who are bowed down."

Psalm 40:2 "He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand."

Isaiah 41:13 "For I am the Lord your God who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, do not fear; I will help you."

1 Peter 5:7 "Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you."

Revelation 14:12 "This calls for patient endurance on the part of the people of God who keep his commands and remain faithful to Jesus."

Hebrews 12:1 "Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us."

Ephesians 4:22-24 "You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness."

Hebrews 4:16 "Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need."

Philippians 2:13 "for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose."

Psalms 119:71 "It was good for me to be afflicted so that I might learn your decrees."

Psalms 37:23-24 "The Lord makes firm the steps of the one who delights in him; though he may stumble, he will not fall, for the Lord upholds him with his hand."

James 4:10 "Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up."

Romans 7:18-25 "For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it. So, I find this law at work: Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!"

STATS & QUOTES TO CONSIDER

There's a word that means "fear of failure": atychiphobia. Understandably, few teens are familiar with that word, but many of them experience it every day.

Children who don't get the chance to deal with obstacles themselves grow up into teenagers who suffer from what's known as "failure deprivation."

Faculty at Stanford and Harvard coined the term "failure deprived" a decade ago, to describe college-aged students who seemed to have difficulty coping with everyday struggles.

But the important word here is long-term: It may be necessary to fall down and get up, again and again, in order to eventually achieve those goals.

The saying goes "What doesn't kill you makes you stronger." This is not traditional parenting advice, nor is it perfect parenting advice, but it wouldn't hurt this generation of teenagers if it got a bit more of an airing.

One of the biggest issues facing today's teenagers is what their parents believe about effective parenting. Most parents are trying so hard to raise their kids the absolute best way they can, but are being led astray by some ill-informed, but good sounding, parenting principles. Let me make one thing very clear, doing all you can to protect your teenager from discomfort or disappointment is NOT effective parenting. The role of a parent is to prepare their teenager for adulthood. Protecting them from setbacks or sadness does not equip them to handle life as an adult, rather it sets them up for real struggles later in life.

Teenagers become good at shifting the blame. They put their new found thinking skills to good use and make their issues or faults everybody else's problem.

There are many benefits that are derived from failure and disappointment. I am sure each of us can look back on some of our less successful moments and identify how they have helped us become a stronger, wiser, or a more whole person.

When we make mistakes or things don't go our way it is only natural to feel any number of negative or unpleasant emotions; sadness, anger, hopelessness, frustration etc. These feelings are part of life, and we all have to learn to live with them. We all have to foster the ability to continue to function in life while feeling down.

In a world that is obsessed with teaching young people the correct way to do things, we risk creating a generation who are focused on not getting things wrong rather than on really understanding or exploring ideas.

Letting young people have the freedom to fail and to make mistakes empowers them to explore their creativity, to learn real lessons, and develop a deeper understanding of the world and who they are.

Young people who develop an outlook on life that factors in disappointment and acknowledges there will be challenging times, are far more likely to achieve their goals and find a degree of

contentment than those who do not learn to expect disappointment as part of life.

When we shield teenagers from disappointment or failure, they form an expectation they never have to feel anything unpleasant in life. This results in a sense of entitlement, whereby they believe they deserve success or happiness simply because they are who they are. If teens never have to face the consequences of their own weaknesses or mistakes, they will form unhealthy expectations about life and relationships. When teenagers accept responsibility for their failures, they learn to solve problems by acknowledging and dealing with them rather than by blaming others or using coercive power to get their own way.

For some young people... The fear of failure: making the wrong choice or failing, sometimes seen as the same thing, feels overwhelming.

Many of the choice's worth making involve the risk of failure and the anxiety that comes with that.

Failure isn't the end in fact it's just the beginning.

While failure may provide an incentive for trying harder for some, it often teaches discouragement and resignation for many others. School failure itself can inflict the sting of punishment. "It's meant to show me how badly I am doing," was how one sixth grader explained it. The experience of failure can be a formative one when it convinces children that how poorly they performed is the best they can do, is evidence of their innate lack of capacity, and justifies giving up on themselves. This is particularly true for adolescents who daily struggle with multiple questions concerning personal inadequacy and tend to take any kind of failure to heart.

You can't grow through adolescence without experiencing failure. Frustrating at best, disheartening at worst, failure can cause a serious sense of worthlessness when a painful incident is turned into a personal descriptor: "I'm such a failure!" Now you have a wipe-out of self-esteem.

While some teens are able to use failure to become better, others become immobilized by their intense fears.

Sometimes teens draw incorrect conclusions about themselves based on failure.

Failure can often stop us from doing what we love.