“BOUNCE BACK”
SERIES

“NOT SURPRISED”

WEEK 1

WORD

“But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.”

Luke 22:32
(Read also Luke 22:31-34

SPARKS

- Who is someone you know who makes you feel comfortable being yourself? What is it about them?
- What is something you do now differently because of something you experienced in the past?
- Who is someone who has helped you through a difficult or frustrating situation? What did they do?

Everyone experiences failure. Sometimes we fail because of our choices, sometimes because of circumstances, and sometimes because we simply fall short. But failure does not have to be the end of our story.
Peter denied Jesus three times, yet Jesus already knew it would happen. More importantly, Jesus knew Peter's failure would not be the end. God can use our failures to teach us, shape us, and help us grow.
This week, we will learn how to respond when we fail and when others fail, knowing that we can always bounce back through God's grace.

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1. JESUS IS NOT SURPRISED BY YOUR FAILURE.

Luke 22:32
32 But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. ***And when you have turned back,*** *strengthen your brothers."*

Jesus knew Peter was going to fail before Peter ever failed. Yet Jesus did not abandon him or cancel His purpose for him. Instead, Jesus prayed for Peter and already spoke about what Peter would do after he turned back.
Our failures may surprise us, but they never surprise Jesus. He knows our weaknesses and understands our limitations. Because of this, we don't have to hide from Him when we fail. We can come to Him, receive His grace, and allow Him to restore us.
If Jesus already knows our weaknesses and still chooses to love and use us, what should that change about the way we respond to our failures?

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2. WE SHOULD NOT BE SURPRISED WHEN WE FAIL.

Luke 22:33-34
33 But he replied, ***"Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death."***
34 Jesus answered, ***"I tell you, Peter, before the rooster crows today, you will deny three times that you know me.""***

Peter was confident that he would never deny Jesus. But Jesus knew Peter better than Peter knew himself. Sometimes we can be overly confident in our own plans, strength, or intentions.
We shouldn't expect to fail, but we should recognize that we are human and that our plans are not always God's plans. We can live with humility and say, "If God wills." When our plans change, we can trust God to lead, redirect, and teach us.
How might our lives change if we held our plans with confidence but also with an open hand before God?

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3. WE SHOULD NOT BE SURPRISED WHEN OTHERS FAIL.

Luke 22:31-32
‘31 ‘Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to ***sift all of you as wheat.*** *32 But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back,* ***strengthen your brothers.****”*

Jesus knew Peter would fail, but His response was to pray for him. He also told Peter that once he turned back, he was to strengthen his brothers. Romans 15:1 reminds us that we who are strong should “bear with the failings of the weak.” Instead of criticizing people when they fall, we can pray for them, encourage them, and help them get back up. How should we respond when someone fails?

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LIVE IT!

- Be honest with God about your mistakes and weaknesses, and refuse to live in shame or condemnation.
- Trust God when He redirects you, even when His direction is different from what you expected.
- Pray for others instead of being quick to criticize them.

PRAYER

- Thank God that He knows our weaknesses and failures and does not abandon us.
- Ask God to help us trust Him when things don't go according to our plans.
- Ask God to give us His heart toward people who are struggling or have failed.

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