

'FAILURE': A PASTORAL STUDY

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O. Schoeman.

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DEDICATION:

This study is dedicated to all the counsellors who work with 'failures'.

“..... that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble,
with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.”
(2 Corinthians 1:4 NKJV)

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CHAPTER ONE. PROBLEM STATEMENT

1. Introduction.

1.1 Background.

Counselling is perceived as the dynamics of reciprocal human relations as it is expressed in communicative procedures (Louw, 1998:9). It has the goal of providing encouragement and guidance for those who are facing losses, decisions, or disappointments, and seeks to stimulate personality growth and development to help people to cope more effectively with these issues (Collins, 1988:16). It embraces techniques that are applied to help people to make choices and adjustments in various aspects of a person's life (Plug, Louw, Gous & Meyer, 1997:405). However, the word 'counselling' is a many-faceted complex idea. Collins (1988:16 & 17) differentiates between pastoral care, pastoral counselling and pastoral psychotherapy. MacArthur (1994:ix) refers to a system of biblical truth that brings together people, their problems and the living God. Pastoral counselling is referred to *inter alia*, as: 'an alternative path in mental health' (Means, 1997:317), 'spiritual healing' (Hopkins, 1999:145), 'managed care' (Belcher & Hall, 1999:391), 'deconstruction' (White, 2002:270), 'spiritual direction' (Galindo, 1997:395), and 'soul care - *cura animarum*' (Louw, 1998:2). The list is endless.

Amongst practitioners and academics, whether secular or theological, there is consensus that no matter what techniques, models or methods are used, or by what name they are called, the overall ideal is that the counsellee should be assisted to return to a normal, balanced lifestyle. As stated by Adams (1979:ix), "*all counsellors have one goal in common: change. Moreover, as diverse as the various counselling systems may be - and they are quite distinct*

fundamentally - they all see a need for change, use verbal means to bring about change, which is purported to be for the benefit of the counsellee.”

Adams (1979:ix), and Louw (1998:2), use the expression that ‘verbal means’ are used to bring about change. Since Adams made this initial statement in 1979, other techniques have evolved and ‘non-verbal’ means have been developed. While various methods of assessing client or counsellee strengths were in existence prior to 1979, for example Raymond Cattels’ *Structure-Based Systems Theory* of 1957 and 1965 (*cf* Schoeman, 2004:15), it is only within recent times that these ‘non-verbal’ forms of therapy have become widely accepted and used within the counselling community. The range of ‘non-verbal’ counselling methods is innovative and impressive. There are, amongst others, ‘Music, Music Therapy and Trauma’ (Sutton, 2002), ‘Game Analysis, Actualising Therapy, Primal Therapy and Psycho Drama’ (Baker, 1999:23-24) and ‘Teddy Bear Therapy’ (Baloyi & Vorster, 2002). The aim of ‘non-verbal’ therapy is to assist counsellees to express their problems in such a manner that the necessity of verbal communication is reduced to acceptable levels for the counsellee, and thereby facilitating the counselling process. It would appear then, that counselling has evolved from simple person to person communication in the counsellor’s study, to more divergent means of bringing about meaningful change.

When the various methods and models that are used in counselling are considered, it also becomes apparent that counsellee problems are attended to from many different angles. As the science and practice of counselling develops, more and more innovative and unique methods for counselling, and research are expounded and developed in an endeavour to ‘cover all bases’, including the objective of this study, namely, to investigate how ‘failure’, or perceived ‘failure’ can affect the counsellee. The objective has, however, irrespective of method or model, remained consistent, namely change.

It is of great importance to recognize that while the aim of counselling is to turn 'failure' into success, and both counsellee and counsellor fear 'failure'. This 'failure' can be either the counsellee's 'failure' to change, or counsellor's 'failure' to bring about meaningful change (MacLennan, 1996:391). However, much can be learnt from 'failure' as indicated by the arts, sports and sciences where 'failure' is commonplace, routinised, and often linked to well-crafted recovery systems (Cannon, 1997:491). White (2002:270-280) contends that in the medical illness-cure tradition, clients are diagnosed with a mental disorder and a problem-saturated identity is developed and reinforced, and it becomes difficult for clients to escape from themselves. White (2002:270-280) proposes a model where externalisation enables the counsellee to view the problem as a separate entity and thus external to the person, and reinforces the client's ability to fight his or her problems.

In this vein, Lutzer (2001:10) states that we can learn from the life of David to *benefit* from his mistakes, and points out that despite his glaring 'failures', he was a man after God's own heart. In an earlier publication, Lutzer used the very apt title, 'Failure: The Backdoor to Success' (Lutzer, 1987).

This would appear to be a contrary, and possibly underdeveloped, concept, using 'failure' to evoke success, yet this intriguing enigma could quite possibly hold a key to successful counselling. Most counselling techniques and models assist the counsellee to overcome a problem or to work around it, or, alternatively, to accommodate the problem in such a manner that the counsellee has learned to live with the problem. It would appear therefore that revisiting the problem, and turning a 'failure' around to assist in the healing process, might open new avenues to developing counselling insights and methods that have not been fully developed.

2. State of Research.

An extensive bibliographical search was conducted using the Internet in the following databases:

ATLA - Religious data base.
PSYCHINFO.
NEXUSVIEW.
ACADEMIC SEARCH PREMIER.

This search revealed that much research had been done into:

- Assessing client strengths (*cf* De Jong & Miller 1995, Lawson, 1994; & Cowger, 1994)
- Strengths based therapy (*cf* Early, 2001; Malekoff, 2001 & Blundo, 2001)
- 'Failure' - in terms of therapeutic failure (*cf* Hovemeyer, 1998; Canon, 1997)

It would appear that very little research has been conducted into the subject, and little has been written regarding utilizing counsellee 'failure' as a *strength* in *pastoral counselling*. Motivational authors have explored this field by using people who have failed in some way and later made a success of their lives, as examples to motivate 'failures' to carry on and try again (Ruth, 2004:1, Arcement, 2004:1).

3. The concept of 'failure'.

What is 'failure'? It would appear as if there is no empirically set mark to indicate 'success' or 'failure'. Timpe (1999b: 684) posits that the level of a person's aspirations operates as a criterion by which the person evaluates whether performance is a success or a 'failure'. The level of aspiration for future events reflects one's achievement history with the level modified upward after a series of successes and downwards after 'failures'. He adds that a person's aspiration levels serve as a level of performance considered acceptable within one's self image. It is inferred that success, or 'failure', is a personal viewpoint, rather than an empirically deduced statement.

In the debate regarding perceived and real 'failure', it follows then, that 'failure', as is the case with beauty, lies within the eyes of the beholder.

3.1. 'Failure' from a Scriptural viewpoint.

'Failure' in Scripture can be viewed from two perspectives, i.e., from God's perspective, and from a human perspective.

3.1.2. 'Failure' as seen from God's viewpoint.

To illustrate the meaning of 'fail' in the Bible, the following comparisons are presented:

3.1.2.1. Walker (1996: 'Fail' ISBE), gives the following comparison of Hebrew words for 'fail' in the Old Testament:

- כָּלָה *kalah* is the most frequent, meaning "to be consumed," "ended" (Job 11:20; 17:5; Psalm 69:3; 71:9, Proverbs 22:8; Isaiah 15:6, Jeremiah 14:6 and Lamentations 2:11; 3:22; 4:17),
- כָּצַו *karath*, "to be cut off" (2 Samuel 3:29, of "failure in succession", so in 1 Kings 2:4,),
- אָדָר *adhar*, "to marshal," "to be missed" or "lacking" (Isaiah 34:16, 40:26, 59:15, and Zephaniah 3:5),
- רָפַח *raphah*, "to become faint" or "to make feeble" (Deuteronomy 31:6.8; Joshua 1:5 and 1 Chronicles 28:20),
- אָבַד *abhadh*, "to perish," "be lost" (Psalm 142:4, and Ezekiel 12:22).

Walker adds that many other Hebrew words are translated 'fail', but that they are for the most part, in single instances. (WALKER, 1996, 'fail', ISBE)

3.1.2.2. Vine (1981:68 "fail") states the word 'fail' has the following meanings:

- ἐκλίπη *ekleipō*: meaning 'to leave out', as in the cessation of human life.
- ἐπιλείψω *epileipō*: meaning 'not to be suffice for a purpose', as said of insufficient time.
- πίπτω *piptō*: meaning 'to fall', as is used of the Law of God in the sense of losing it's authority, or ceasing to have force.

3.1.2.3. Louw & Nida. (1994: Electronic Database), give explanations for the concept of 'failure' in the following domains: 13.21, 13.22, 13.41, 36.25, 57.46, 57.67, 68.49, 75.6 and 75.7 as used in the New Testament.

From the above comparison it would appear that 'failure', from God's viewpoint, would seem to indicate the 'failure' of fallen man to accept God's redemptive grace with the resulting condemnation to eternal perdition. It is stated in Scripture, 1 Timothy 2:4, that it is the will of God that all men shall be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. It is evident that not all people come to Christ for salvation, and therefore fall short of the glory of God. In this primary sense then, it is apparent that everyone has failed.

3.1.3. 'Failure' as seen from a human perspective.

It is difficult to explain 'failure', as perceived by modern society, from a Biblical viewpoint. 'Failure' is perceived to be 'a lack of success' or 'an unsuccessful person' (Lewis, 2003), and often the concept of 'failure' implies that the thing or person, that has failed is of no other use and may be discarded.

Scripture teaches us that there is no such thing as 'failure' as commonly perceived by society, as Romans 8:28 teaches us that *all things* work together for the good of those who love God. If literally all things, including diversity and misfortune, work together for the good, then there is no room for the concept of 'failure'. This is evidenced in Scripture, in numerous instances. In Genesis 50, for example, we read of the account of Joseph, who confronted his brothers with the issue of his being sold in to Egyptian slavery, and stated that while they intended to do him harm, his misfortunes were part of God's plan to save many lives. Paul writes in the epistle to the Romans that we rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope (Romans 5:3-5).

Scripture abounds with examples of people who were possibly 'failures' in the eyes of fellow men, but who were still useful to God in the commissioning of His

divine will, and while they may be perceived to be 'failures', they were actually successful in the eyes of God, albeit only to a certain extent. In this regard we have the examples of Peter who denied Jesus Christ, and later became a pillar of the church, and that of king David who committed both adultery and murder (cf 2 Samuel 11), yet he was also known as a man after God's own heart.

This implies then, that from a Scriptural viewpoint, that 'failure' may not be so devastating as may be initially thought to be, and deserves further investigation.

3.2. 'Failure' from Society's viewpoint.

'Failure' would appear to be a relative concept, depending on various external social circumstances, including the norms and values prevalent in society at a given time, as indicated in the introduction to this section.

'Failure' is a concept that we learn from others, and newborn infants come into this world having no concept of 'failure' and success (Cannon, 1997:491-506; Wall, 1994:555). It would appear then that it is part of the learning process, to try and try again until success is achieved. To fail is to admit defeat, and is often accompanied by a sense of shame, guilt and a sense of worthlessness. So, according to Cannon (1997:491-506), in a real sense, children are devoid of a sense of 'failure' until society teaches them the concept of 'failure'. For a child, not to succeed at first, does not imply 'failure', but only that he or she did not achieve what he or she intended to, and he or she will quite happily try again.

If, as it is indicated by Cannon (1997:491-506) and Wall (1994:555), that the concept of 'failure' is a concept learned from society, the illation can be formed that it should be possible to reverse this experience, and it should be possible

to turn a negative experience, or 'failure' into a advantageous experience. This would appear to merit a more scientific examination.

4. PROBLEM STATEMENT.

In the light of the foregoing, the following question presents itself:

HOW CAN THE COUNSELEE'S 'FAILURE' BE UTILISED IN PASTORAL COUNSELLING?

The specific issues that will be investigated in regard to the above-mentioned question are:

- What are the Scriptural perspectives on 'failure'?
- What are the perspectives on 'failure' within other disciplines?
- What would an empirical study on 'failure' reveal?
- What Biblically based model can be proposed regarding 'failure' by counsellee's in pastoral counselling?

5. Research Objectives.

The purpose of this study is to research the concept of 'failure' as seen within the secular and religious therapeutic and counselling professions with the aim of arriving at a valid Biblical understanding of 'failure' in peoples live's, and to propose a model for the counselling of individuals who had experienced 'failure'.

In order to reach this goal, the researcher will endeavour to reach the following objectives:

- To determine what the Scriptural perspectives on 'failure' are.
- To determine what other disciplines say of 'failure'.
- To conduct an empirical study on 'failure' related strengths in individuals.
- To propose a model for pastoral counsellors in which 'failure' can be used to counsel individuals.

6. Central Theoretical Statement.

The central theoretical argument of this study is that the concept of 'failure', according to popular thought is a misnomer, and that from scriptural perspectives a counselling model could be developed to guide counselees in pastoral counselling.

7. Method.

7.1 This pastoral-theological study will be conducted within the reformed tradition, accepting that the Word of God is inerrant, authoritative and sufficient for the correction and instruction of man (Collins, 1988:17-19, Crabb, 1987:10, Adams, 1973:15).

7.2 The research model that will be used in this research corresponds to the model developed by Zerfass for practical theology, which is constituted in a basis-theory, a meta-theory, and a practice-theory (*cf* Heitink, 1999:113, Louw, 1998:75).

7.2.1 With reference to the basis-theory, a research will be conducted into literature, articles, Internet searches and a grammatical-historical exegesis of various relevant Scripture from both the Old and the New

Testaments, and a study of seven characters in Scripture, those being, Adam and Eve, Elijah, Gideon, David, Peter, Judas and Dorcas.

7.3.2 With reference to the meta-theory a research will be conducted into literature, articles, and Internet searches in psychology, sociology, social work and corresponding fields of counselling. A qualitative-empirical study will be conducted with seven case studies that have experienced 'failure' and have turned 'failure' into success.

7.3.3 With reference to the practice-theory, data gleaned from the basis-theory will be compared with data gleaned from the meta-theory and the empirical study, in a hermeneutical interaction to formulate a model for practise theory.

7.4 Unless indicated otherwise, all Bible references will be made from the New King James Version, Copyright 1982, Thomas Nelson, Inc. electronic database.

7.5 Unless indicated otherwise, the reference to gender, 'he' also refers to 'she', and *vice versa*.

7.6 Unless indicated otherwise, the terms 'therapist' and 'counsellor' and that of 'counselee' and 'client' are used interchangeably.

8. Chapter Division.

- CHAPTER 1 - Introduction.
- CHAPTER 2 - Basis-theoretical perspectives on 'failure'.
Expository approaches.
- CHAPTER 3 - Basis-theoretical perspectives on 'failure'. 'Popular'
Theological approaches.
- CHAPTER 4 - Meta-theoretical perspectives on 'failure'.
- CHAPTER 5 - Practice-theoretical perspectives on 'failure'.
- CHAPTER 6 - Conclusions and recommendations.

9. Representation of the correlation between points 7.2.1, 7.2.2 and 7.2.3 (see following page)

PROBLEM STATEMENT	RESEARCH OBJECTIVES	METHODOLOGY
What are the Scriptural perspectives on 'failure'?	To determine what Scriptural perspectives on 'failure' are.	A research will be conducted into literature, articles, internet searches and a grammatical-historical exegesis of relevant Scripture from both the Old and New Testaments.
What are the perspectives on 'failure' within secular sciences?	To determine what the secular sciences mean by 'failure'.	A research will be conducted into literature, articles and internet searches in corresponding fields of study regarding 'failure'.
What would an empirical study regarding 'failure' reveal?	To conduct an empirical study with consenting individuals.	A qualitative-empirical study will be conducted with ten case studies.
What Biblical guidelines can be put forward for the implementation of 'failure' in pastoral counselling?	To propose a Biblical model in which 'failure' can be used to counsel individuals.	Data gleaned from the meta-, basis- and practice-theories will be synthesized to form a 'failure' model for counselling.

CHAPTER 2: BASIS-THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES OF 'FAILURE': EXPOSITORY APPROACHES.

Clarification. The basis-theoretical perspectives of 'failure' can be divided into two groups: the first being the expository perspectives, where an expository study is made regarding the Biblical nature of 'failure', and a following chapter, chapter 3, which studies 'failure' as seen in terms of 'popular theological literature' and pastoral-psychological literature. Due to the difference in emphasis of the two natures of this particular part of the study, and to create a balance in the division of chapters, it was deemed necessary to separate the expository approaches and the popular theological approaches regarding 'failure'.

2.1. INTRODUCTION.

As mentioned in chapter 1, the model proposed by Zerfass, consisting of a basis, meta, and praxis-theory (sometimes also referred to as a practice-theory) will be utilised in this study (*cf* Heyns & Pieterse, 1990:35,36).

2.1.1. What is a basis-theory?

Heyns & Pieterse (1990:19, 56) are of the opinion that it is the task of practical theology to identify and critically evaluate current practical theological theories and where necessary, to develop new theories for praxis, and conclude that the basis theory directs the communication of the gospel in the church and society, and is influenced by both theological insights and those of communication science. Theory is the 'discussion, consideration and planning pertaining to praxis. The theorist says on paper what others will eventually implement in wood and stone, in steel and concrete, in words and human material' (Heyns & Pieterse, 1990:25). It follows then that the basis-theory component of the

pastoral model is involved in the interpretation of Biblical norms, values and criteria regarding man's conduct, in respect to a specific field of study, within the scope of pastoral counselling (*cf* also Venter 1996:3). De Klerk (1987:15) avows that no researcher can work without certain presuppositions regarding Scripture, and the researcher is impelled to declare his or her position and stance regarding the Scripture and exegesis, in order that this may be taken into account. In this light then, it is accepted that the Bible, though written by man, is inspired by the Holy Spirit (2 Tim. 3:16) and the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit is required for the understanding and application of Scripture in the lives of both Christians and non-Christians alike.

2.2. Aim.

With the abovementioned principles of a basis-theory in mind, it is the objective of this chapter to investigate what the Bible and religious literature has to say regarding human 'failure', and along with the meta-theory, develop a praxis theory for pastoral counselling. From the preliminary investigation into the subject matter it would appear as if the phenomenon known as 'failure' received far more attention from religious literature than was the case for secular literature. With this in mind, it was decided to narrow down the basis-theoretical investigation to a Hermeneutical-exegetical study of 'failure' in Scripture. 'Failure', as perceived in more 'popular' religious literature is, in part, the intended subject for investigation in chapter 3.

2.3. Anthropology

As it is the stated aim of this study to investigate human 'failure', it is of paramount importance then, to first find an answer to the age old question, also asked by David in Psalm 8, "What is man?" before attending to the question

of 'failure'.

2.3.1. Dichotomy or trichotomy?

Both Christians and non-Christians sense that they have an immaterial part - a 'soul' that will live on when their bodies die. However, amongst Christians there has been a long-standing debate on whether man is composed of a physical and spiritual entity, or whether the spiritual entity can again be divided into a further two entities, *spirit* and *soul*. This debate evolves around the so-called 'dichotomous' and 'trichotomous' elements of man. A short description of the two theories is presented for elucidation.

2.3.1.1 Dichotomy.

The dichotomous debate has a bearing on this study, since, if it can be argued that if man is of the same construct as animals, that is being dichotomous, then behavioural psychology has a very important bearing on 'failure' and the Christian response to 'failure', which has grave implications for pastoral counselling. Behavioural Psychology 'is concerned with the conditions involved in development, maintenance, and control of the behaviour of *individuals and other organisms*' (Bufford, 1999:127, 'Behavioural Psychology' (emphasis own)). This view regards man as primarily being members of the animal kingdom and as derivatives of some of it's higher forms (Erickson, 2001:164-165), and that behaviour is a reflexive or operant, primarily controlled by preceding events (Bufford, 1999:127). Man is supposed to have come in to being through the same sort of process as have all other animals, and will have a similar end. There is no qualitative difference between humans and other animals, the only difference is that of degree. This view of humankind is perhaps most fully developed in behaviouristic psychology where human motivation is understood primarily in terms of biological drives. It is assumed

that human behaviour can be changed through positive or negative reinforcement (Erickson, 2001:164 -165; Bufford, 1999:128-131). Behavioural psychology is highly controversial for Christians, and the most controversy evolves around the assumptions of materialistic reductionism, and secondly the overt focus on motor behaviour to the exclusion of mental, emotional, and relational aspects of behaviour (Bufford, 1999:129). The implication is that man is reduced to the level of animals, and it flies in the face of the Scriptural account of the creation of man (cf. Chapter 2.4). In concurrence with this line of thought, Evans (1999:861. 'Personhood'), states that there are thinkers who would reduce, or eliminate the special status humans seem to enjoy by reducing them to the *status of other animals* (emphasis by researcher). Grudem (1994:480) makes the very important observation that man is different from animals in that we can relate to God in worship and prayer, and that the soul of man can live forever, which is not possible for animals. According to Sarles (1994(a):376-378), Grenz (1994:156-158) and Grudem (1994:472-486), *dichotomy* teaches that man is composed of two distinct elements, *body* and *soul*, where the body represents everything material, while the soul represents everything spiritual. This means that the soul and spirit of man is counted as one, as seen for example in Genesis 35:18, 1 Kings 17:22 and Matthew 10:28. Grudem (1994:473) emphasizes that Scripture teaches the overall unity of man as created by God, and is of the opinion that where Scripture refers to 'soul' and 'spirit', it is referring to the spiritual component of man.

2.3.1.2. Trichotomy.

Trichotomy teaches that man is composed of three distinct elements, *body*, *soul*, and *spirit* and is popular in conservative Protestant circles (cf Joubert, 2004, Erickson, 2001:180). The soul includes the principle of animation and the faculties of human nature, such as mind, heart and will. The spirit is the spiritual capacity to relate to God (Sarles 1994:376-378), and that this spiritual

capacity comes alive when a person becomes a Christian. Evidence for this position is found in Hebrews 4:12. For the Christian to be spiritually alive is to be in union with God (Anderson, 2000:30). It is perhaps this specific ability of man that forms the crux of the trichotomous view. According to Grenz (1994:156), trichotomy can claim the church father Irenaeus as a forebearer, indicating the long history trichotomy has had in the church.

The Theocentric nature of man, as indicated by trichotomy, is of vital importance to pastoral theology for, while modern secular psychology readily admits to the metaphysical nature of man, it is hesitant to relate to the Theocentricity of man. In this regard, Grenz (1994:158-159) states that modern theologians tend to reject any concept of multiple substantial entities, claiming that the belief in a soul that can exist separate from the body is “metaphysical speculation”, and due to the fact, so the modern theologians claim, that the concept of multiple substantial entities is a highly problematic concept, they reject it. Timpe (1999c: 852. ‘Personality’), makes the observation that personality incorporates the individual’s unique social, emotional, and motivational attributes. He adds that personality transcends one’s biological framework to emphasize the *spiritual or mental* uniqueness of the human race, and that in this sense; *personality ties with religiosity* and values (emphasizes researcher). The fact that cognisance is given to the spiritual and religious nature of man is very important for pastoral counselling, as pastoral counselling relies on the work of the Holy Spirit to renew and invigorate the individual (*cf* Galatians 5:16,17, 19-23, Philippians 2:13). MacArthur (1994:xiv), in his comments on Carl Jung and William James, states, *They utterly rejected supernaturalism, repudiated the authority of Scripture, and discarded the central tenets of historical Christian belief.*

From the above observations, it becomes obvious that pastoral theology must reaffirm its stance, emphasizing that man is not just ‘another animal’, but a

creation of God, in the likeness of his Creator. This is in accord with the sentiment expressed by Johnson (2000:5) when he states that secular models cannot fully describe supernatural effects on human nature, and that the impact of the demonic, or of the Holy Spirit on human beings can only be recognized with a perspective that allows for their possibility. It follows that the trichotomous viewpoint on the nature of man is better suited to allow for the impact of the demonic forces and that of the Holy Spirit, than would be in the case of a dichotomous perspective.

We must conclude that man, as a creation of God, has the ability to respond to the calling of God, in such a way that it is not possible for animals to do. It is this ability to react to his conscience and the call of God, that enables man to change and rise above his circumstances, and it is this specific attribute of man that is of relevance to this study. For the purposes of this study, (*cf* De Klerk 1987:15 on stances regarding Scripture) the stance will be assumed that man is *trichotomous*, and that it is the spiritual element and composition of man that enables him to rise above his 'failure', and turn it in to something worthwhile and positive.

2.4. The Creation, Fall and Redemption of man.

Anderson (2001:23) asks the question - "Who are you?" Many answers can be given, very often relating to a person's identity within the community, but that does not reveal who the real person is, or the full extent of personhood. He adds that to understand the gospel and who we are in Christ, and indeed, who we are as a person, one needs to look at the creation account and the subsequent fall of mankind. This is a very important reflection as it would appear to permeate the entire scope of how Scripture and theology should be understood and researched. Theology, and pastoral theology as one of its offshoots, cannot deny the fall of man, neither can it escape the effects of sin

on man (Grudem, 1994:490). Berkhof (1986:427) posits that there is a golden thread running through theology that indicates that it is God's intention to adopt people as His children, but, he adds, there are no pure individuals, (Romans 3:23, 'for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God' NKJV) and that man is alienated from God, necessitating a salvation covenant between God and man. This is intimated to us in Scripture, in the very unique way the canon of the Bible is composed. In the first book of the Bible, Genesis, the creation of man is described, and immediately thereafter, the fall of man. The last book of the Bible, Revelation, closes with the invitation to become partakers of the grace of God, and in the middle of the Bible we find the four Gospels that recount the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the mediator between a sinless God and sinful man (1 Timothy 2:5). It is essential therefore, that the creation, fall and redemption of man be studied more closely, in order to attempt to ascertain who or what man is, and this is what McGee (1998:13) expressed by positing that to fully understand the provisions that God has made for our self-worth, we must look back to man's beginnings.

2.4.1 Creation of man and the likeness and image of God.

The creation account of man is found in Genesis, chapters one and two. There are two distinct issues that must be discussed; namely the creation of man and that of man being created in the image and likeness of God. The two distinctive aspects of man being created on the one hand, and that man was created in the likeness and image of God on the other, is a distinction often found amongst authors (*cf* Erickson, 2001:163-178, Olivier, 1997:103, Helberg, 1996, 28-29, Grenz, 1994:144, 168, Grudem, 1994:440,442, Hodge, 1992:262).

2.4.1.1 The creation of man. The creation of man can be seen as the deliberate act of God where man was formed out of the earth and made in to a living being or 'soul', as has been described in Genesis 1:26 and 2:7.

More than one word is employed in the Old Testament to express the creation of man:

(1) אָרַבַּ *bara'*, "create," a word of uncertain derivation, occurring five times in Genesis 1, to indicate the origin of the universe (verse 1), the origin of life in the waters (verse 24), the origin of man (verse 27), and always in connection with God's creative work.

(2) יָצַק *yatsar*, "fashion," "form," "knead" (Gen 2:7), "of the dust of the ground."

(3) בָּנָה *banah*, "build," in special reference to the creation of woman, "built out of the rib" (Gen 2:22). (VEBDW, 1985: 'create')

Through God's action man became a נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה: *nephesh chayyah*, 'a living soul'. This refers to the breath of life, which man shares with the animal world (Gen 1:20-21,24), and has this distinction, that God Himself breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life, which literally means, the 'breath of lives', *nishmath chayyim* (Marais, 1996). The conclusion is that while man is a part of creation, he is also separate from the rest of creation, in that he alone enjoys the distinction of having the breath of life that was given to him by God. There may be a great resemblance between man and animal, as both were created from the dust of the earth, but there is also an essential difference. The Bible does not show a situation in which man and animal stood on the same level, or even enjoyed fellowship with one another. Man was the image of God right from the beginning; he differs from animals and he rules over them (Leigh 2003, 'The Imago Dei'). Other than animals, man is also an individual personal being, and not a gregarious animal (Helberg, 1996:30).

The fact that man has a spiritual constitution that differs from that in animal life has significant bearing to this study. Heyns (2002:103) refers to Charles Taylor who stated that humans and animals can have actions ascribed to them, which sets them apart from machines, but only humans have the power to interpret their inner and outer contexts which gives them the power to posit their own goals and act autonomously. In this regard, Leigh (2003) concurs, when he is of the opinion that man is utterly distinct from animals, and comes to the conclusion that man has a far greater similarity to God than he has to animals. Man is not merely one more creature in the long line of other creatures, but in him the creation of all other creatures is drawn together in a single point. They find their meaning in the existence of man, they are no longer merely good, but together with man, they are very good (Helberg, 1996:28-29).

When the aspect of 'failure' is addressed later on in this chapter, (see 2.5) it will be seen that recognition of 'failure' is something confined and unique to humans. It implies the ability to reason and deliberate issues of behaviour, which is not applicable to animals. In this sense then, the *conscience of man* would be a valuable tool in pastoral counselling as it relates to Scripture, behaviour, recognition of 'error', and the amendment of 'erroneous behaviour'.

Erickson (2001:168-169) asserts that the creation of man has several points of meaning that are of significance:

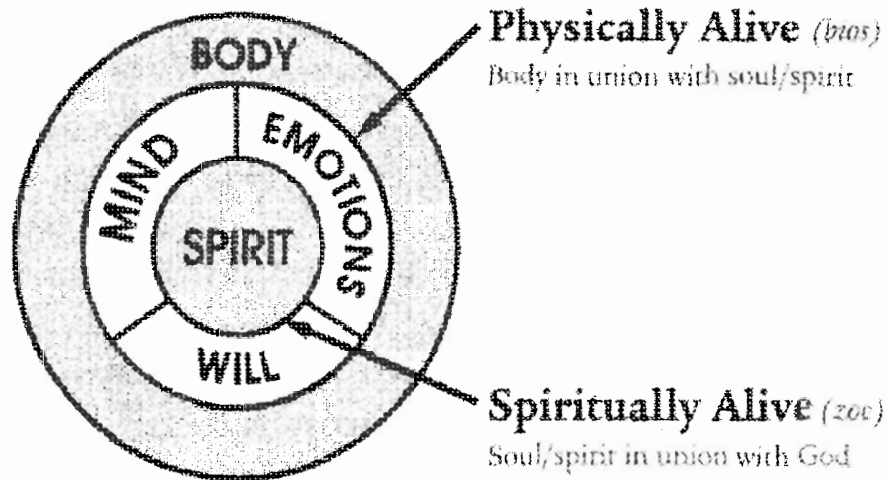
- Humans were created, that means that they have no independent existence. Our value is derived from, and conferred upon us by God.
- Humankind is part of the creation. 'Ecology', which is derived from the Greek οἶκος 'oikos', meaning 'house', means that what we humans do

to one part of it, affects the other parts as well, as is evident by the current world wide pollution problem.

- Humanity has a unique part in creation. While the animals were made 'according to their kind', humans were made in the likeness and image of God. Humans are not fulfilled when their animal needs have been satisfied.
- There is a common bond amongst human beings. On the one hand we are all related to one another, but on the other hand it also means that we share a common denominator in that in our natural state we are in rebellion against God.
- There are definite limitations upon humanity. We are not God.
- Limitation is not inherently bad. Finiteness may well lead to sin if we fail to accept our limitation and live accordingly.
- Humans are something wonderful. Although creatures, we are the highest among them, the only ones made in the image of God.

Anderson (2000:28-32) contends that man was created with three fundamental aspects as indicated in this graphical representation:

ORIGINAL CREATION Genesis 1,2



- Significance. In the original creation, humankind was given a divine purpose for being there. He was given dominion over all the other creatures. Adam did not have to search for significance or meaning. That attribute was the result of creation.
- Safety and Security. Not only did Adam have a sense of significance, but he also enjoyed a sense of safety and security. All his needs were provided for, he lacked for nothing. He could eat of the tree of life and live forever. He was safe and secure in the presence of God.
- Belonging. Adam apparently enjoyed intimate, one-on-one communion with God, but something was missing, and Eve was created as a helpmeet. Adam and Eve not only had a sense of belonging with God but also with each other. When God created Eve, He established human community: a meaningful, open, sharing relationship with one

another. Even though naked, they were not ashamed. They had nothing to hide.

From the above, it would appear that when God created man, there were several distinctions made that separated him from the plants and animals, and made him unique. He not only has spiritual, or non-physical attributes, but these attributes enable him to reason, understand his emotions, and is able to motivate him, either to do evil, or to do good. From the Scripture account, man was created sinless, but with the potential to sin, (*cf* Genesis 1:31) and not a 'failure' but with the potential to 'fail'. It is apparent that this ability and potential to sin, and therefore also to 'fail', separates man from the animal world and places man in a higher order than the animal world, as animals cannot sin, and Romans 8:22 indicates that the animal world is included in the bondage that sin placed upon creation.

2.4.1.2. Image and Likeness.

This distinction between man and animal becomes clearer in the declaration that man was made in the 'image' (*tselem, eikon*), and after the 'likeness' (*demuth, homoiosis*) of God (Strong, 1994: 'image' and 'likeness'), (*cf* Genesis 1:26, 27) while in Scripture this observation is not made regarding the animal world. The first created man lived in unclouded, intimate fellowship with God. He was secure and free, and in all of God's creation, no creature compared to him. Adam was a magnificent creation, complete and perfect in the image of God and his purpose was to reflect the glory of God. Man was to be the showcase for God's glorious character (McGee, 1998:16).

2.4.1.3. Man in the Image of God.

Grudem (1994:442-443), posits that out of all the creatures that God has made, only one creature, man, is said to be made in the image of God. He defines 'in the image of God' as *"The fact that man is in the image of God means that man is like God and represents God"*. He adds that the Hebrew words for 'image' (תְּצַבְּ לַיהוָה *tselem*), and "likeness" (דְּמוּתוֹ לַיהוָה *demût*) refer to something that is similar, but not identical to the thing that it represents. This is borne out by Scripture. Genesis 5:3 states: "And Adam lived one hundred and thirty years, and begot a son in his own likeness (דְּמוּתוֹ לַיהוָה *demût*), after his image (תְּצַבְּ לַיהוָה *tselem*), and named him Seth" (NKJV). This does not mean that Seth was identical to his father Adam in all respects, i.e. brown eyes, wavy hair, athletic prowess and quick temper, etc., but Seth was like his father as a son is like his father.

Grudem (1994: 445-448) makes the observation that there are five ways in which we are like God:

- **Moral Aspects:** We are accountable to God, and we have an inner sense of right and wrong that sets us apart from animals.
- **Spiritual Aspects:** We do not only have physical bodies but we are also spirits and can therefore act in ways that are significant in the spiritual realm of existence.
- **Mental Aspects:** We have the ability to reason and think logically.
- **Relational Aspects:** We have the ability to relate to God and to each other, and stand in a relationship to the rest of creation.
- **Physical Aspects:** There are several Godlike abilities that man has, for example, the ability to hear, see, feel, and have sympathy for someone.

We have the ability to grow and become more like God throughout our lives, and as we consciously seek to grow in to a greater likeness to God in all these areas, we demonstrate an ability that sets us apart from the rest of creation. (Gruden 1994:449)

Leith (1993:99-100), observes that man has the capacity to transcend instinct and impulse, to objectify himself and to reason about his own behaviour. He adds:

The power to objectify the self and to transcend the self gives the human creature a power over his or her past and a capacity to exercise some freedom in shaping the future. By the power of self-objectification, a human creature knows that he or she did or said or failed to do or say certain things yesterday. The power of transcendence gives one the capacity to stand in judgement of one's past, to praise oneself or to blame oneself. It is this capacity, which enables us to take the past and to use it in the achievement of a future, that at least in some measure is freely chosen."

Needham (2000:31) cites Augustine who stated that the glory of Adam is that he was created in the image of God, but that this image rested not in his body, but in his soul, and that Adam was created with a 'rational soul' and the faculties of understanding, memory and free will.

It is of prime importance for pastoral counselling to note that man was created with this ability to recognise 'failure' and to be able to create something positive out of it. However, there is a proviso coupled to this ability, namely that meaningful change can only be brought about by the work of the Holy Spirit,

who is our comforter, advocate and guide (John 14:16, 26, 15:26, 16:7). This refers again to the creation of man: where man was created dependant of God, in Whom he not only finds his reason for being, but is also man's ability of becoming what God intended man to be (Philippians 4:13, 2 Corinthians 12:9).

2.4.1.4. The Creation of Man and 'Failure'.

It is apparent from the Scriptural account of the creation of man, that he was not created a 'failure', as Genesis 1:31 states, "Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was **very** good." (NKJV)

This statement is obviously inclusive of the original state of man. It is also apparent therefore, that prior to the fall, there were no harmful effects of sin on man. The implication is that prior to the fall man lived in a state of moral purity, without fear, guilt or shame, or the experience of 'failure' (*cf* Hodge, 1997:263), in today's term: successful in everything he did (for instance by naming the animals)..

Adams (1979:101) comments that Adam was created as an example of *normal human life* (italics own). His nature, with its focuses and capabilities, was truly human. But it was not normal for him to sin: that was abnormal behaviour.

It follows then that if Adam was created sinless, without guilt or shame or blemish, he could not have been created a 'failure', and could not fail in any sense. If there was a 'failure', it must have been brought about *after the fall*. Grudem (1994:490) would seem to agree with this when he posits that 'sin is any 'failure' to conform to the moral law of God in act, attitude, or nature.'

2.4.2. The Fall.

2.4.2.1. The 'Fall' described.

The term, 'fall of man' refers to the disobedience and sin of Adam and Eve that caused them to lose the state of innocence and sinless perfection in which they had been created. This event plunged them and all of mankind into a state of sin and corruption, bringing about God's wrath.

In Genesis 2:16&17 we learn of the prohibition placed upon Adam and Eve not to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and in Genesis 3:1-6 we learn of Adam and Eve's defiance to the Divine prohibition. Defiance or rebellion against God is known as sin. Gruden (1994:490) defines sin as: "Any failure to conform to the moral law of God, in act, attitude, or nature." Leith (1993:105) states that sin in its basic form is living life in terms of the creation with no reference to God. He adds that sin has always been understood as the *privation of good* or nothingness (Leith, 1993:110). Grenz (1994:186) shows that biblical writers describe our human problem as 'failure', not 'pride'. In its essential nature "sin" describes our inability, or even our set refusal, to fulfil God's design for us, and simply put, we miss the mark and fall short of God's glory. However the fall and sin may be described, perhaps the best description would be that of Romans 3:23 that says we 'fall short of God's glory.'

In this sense, 'failure', in terms of Scripture, and in terms of the global picture, would not appear to be the result of something that we attempted to do, but which was not successful. 'Failure' should rather be defined as not being what God intended for man. Rebellion against God's will and attempting to be like God is the main contributing factor that leads to 'failure.' The implication for pastoral counselling is that it must be recognized that all people have the ability

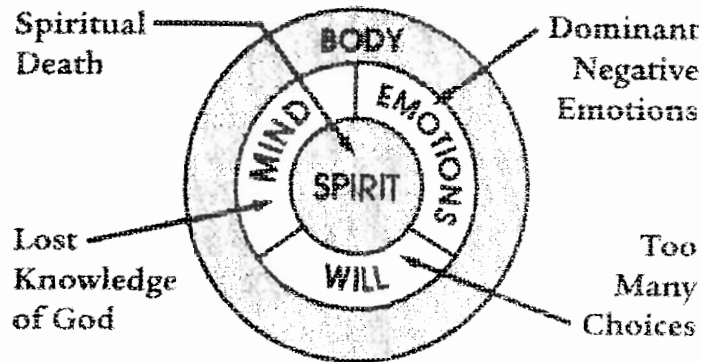
or potential to 'fail'. It is an inherent part of the constitution of man, compounded by the fact that natural man lives in opposition to God, and does not willingly submit to the authority of God, as indicated in Romans, chapter seven, where Paul alludes to this rebellious nature of man. It must also be recognized that man does not always willingly 'fail', but does so in rebellion against God. As all mankind is part of the fallen creation, everyone is subjected to the ever-present possibility of 'failing'.

2.4.2.2. The Result of the Fall.

Adam and Eve were, according to the Genesis record, created to live in perfect harmony, but they were disobedient and ate of the forbidden fruit. Sin had disastrous consequences for Adam and Eve and their posterity. Their eyes were opened; they knew good from evil; they were ashamed of their nakedness and they were cast out of the garden while childbearing, toil and tilling the earth was complicated by sin (Leith, 1993:105). Sarles (1994b:36) is of the opinion that man is depraved, not because he has a will, but because he has a will that prefers evil. Johnson (2000:13) indicates that sin, 'an evil dynamic structure', influences fallen man by being a source of evil deeds, desires and thoughts, it is the push/pull to sin, and more fundamentally, this dynamic has corrupted the rest of the self so that the whole self has become tainted. In this regard, Johnson (2000:12) states that the day they sinned, humanity became relatively independent and did something new, and that this independence of heart is the essence of sin. Instead of being in fellowship with God, man became haters of God (Romans 1:30), worshippers of the creation (Romans 1:25), lovers of self (2 Timothy 3:2), dead in sins (Ephesians 2:1), and unable to do eternal good (Romans 3:12), and that is the ultimate 'failure'.

Anderson (2000:32-38) indicates that the fall had the following effects on man:

EFFECTS OF THE FALL Genesis 3:8—4:9



- **Spiritual Death.** Adam and Eve died, spiritually, as a result of the fall. Their union with God was severed and they were separated from God. Even though they did not die physically, not immediately, physical death would be a later consequence of the fall. They died spiritually; they were separated from God's presence. They were physically sent away from the Garden of Eden and cherubim barred them from entering again.
- **Lost knowledge of God.** Adam and Eve lost their true perception of reality and their knowing was no longer rational. Adam and Eve tried to hide from God, indicating a faulty understanding of God. How could man hide from an omnipresent God?
- **Dominant negative emotions.** Adam and Eve were not only darkened in their understanding, but they also became fearful and anxious. The first emotion expressed by fallen humankind was *fear*. Another

emotional by-product of sin was *shame* and *guilt*, implying a sense of 'failure'. When they sinned, Adam and Eve were ashamed to be naked and they had to cover up. Many people mask the inner self for fear that others may find out what is really going on inside. When dominated by guilt and shame, self-disclosure is not likely to happen. Humankind also became depressed and angry after the fall, as evidenced by Cain's reaction when God was displeased with his offering (Genesis 4:5-7).

- **Too many choices.** Sin also affected Adam and Eve's will to choose. In the Garden of Eden they could only make one bad choice, and that was to eat of the forbidden fruit. They could make a myriad of good choices, but only one bad choice. Apart from the Holy Spirit in man's life, the greatest power man possesses, is the power to choose.
- **Attributes become needs.** Another long-term effect of sin is that humankind's inherent attributes before the fall, became glaring *needs* after the fall. Acceptance was replaced by rejection, resulting in a need to belong. Innocence was replaced by guilt and shame; therefore the need for a legitimate sense of worth has to be restored. Dominion was replaced by weakness and helplessness; therefore humankind has a need for strength and self-control.
- **Bodily effects.** Though not mentioned by Anderson, it is apparent from observation that the human body did not escape the effects of the fall; sickness, disease, aging, pain, deformity and brokenness, all the direct results of the fall.

Boice (1986:199) states that as soon as we begin to talk about sin we run into a problem. People dislike the subject of sin and desire to see themselves in a better light than that in which the Bible presents us. Peters (2000:85) reflects on this and identifies a dangerous characteristic of sin in that man has a tendency to blame others for his own shortcomings, and calls this tendency

'scapegoating'. This facet of human nature is seen in Genesis 3:12&13. In this regard, Turner (2000:32-33) comments that when God confronted Adam with his sin by asking where he was, Adam replied that it was the woman that God had given him, that caused him to eat of the forbidden fruit. Adam first betrays his wife, and then blames God. Where Genesis 2:24 had spoken of man clinging to his wife and becoming one flesh, we now see them disintegrating into two naked, quarrelling people. Where God had initially made Eve to be a helpmeet for Adam, because it was not good that he was alone, we now see that Adam and Eve both chose to turn their backs on God's decree and shift blame away from themselves.

Boice (1986:199) posits that when we are sick, and know that we are sick, we seek out a doctor and follow his prescription for a cure, but if we did not know that we are sick, we might well perish from our sickness. He adds that it is the same, spiritually. If we deny our spiritual sickness, we would be unwilling to accept God's cure, we think we do not need it. The implication of his viewpoint is that unless man is willing to admit to his sickness, he cannot be healed. The Heidelberg Catechism states in Question 2, *'How many things are necessary for thee to know, that thou, enjoying this comfort, mayest live and die happily? And gives the answer : Three; the first, how great my sins and miseries are; the second, how I may be delivered from all my sins and miseries; the third, how I shall express my gratitude to God for such deliverance* (Creeds of the Church, 2003 PC Study Bible) The age old adage would hold true: you may be able to lead a horse to the trough, but you cannot force it to drink. It is of interest to note that this principle is embraced by support groups like Alcoholics Anonymous. Collins (1988:497) states that *The members of Alcoholics Anonymous believe that a drinker needs to hit rock bottom in some way. Only then is the person willing to admit that he or she is powerless to control alcohol and unable to manage life without help.* Prior to hitting 'rockbottom', alcoholics and many other addicts, deny that they have a problem, and while in

the denial phase, any treatment is not likely to be effective. Brokenness is the key to effective ministry and the final ingredient for discipleship counselling, it is here that message and method come together (Anderson, 2000:17-18)

In a study of Romans chapter 7, we learn that Paul wrestles with a similar problem. Paul states that he suffers from a conflict in his soul in that he desires to do good, but falls prey to a tendency to do that which is wrong. In Romans 7:24 Paul cries out that he is a wretched man, and pleads for someone to relieve him of this burden of spiritual death. Grenz (1994:407) comments on 'repentance' and states that, "Repentance, then, involves a total, radical alteration within the core of our personal being. It means admitting our spiritual poverty." Perhaps the term "spiritual poverty" best describes man's result of the fall and man's poverty is exacerbated by the fact that he is unwilling to admit to his shortcomings and unwilling to accept help.

2.4.2.3 The Fall and 'Failure'.

From the above (2.4.2.2.) it would appear that man's spiritual poverty would indicate his 'failure' as a creation of God. In the words of Romans 3:23, man has fallen short of the glory of God. Boice (1986:199-204) indicates that where man was originally created in the likeness of God, the fall resulted in the death of *spirit*, *soul* and *body*. Man fell from being the apex of God's creation to a position where he is alienated from God, and became rebellious in nature, not seeking God (Romans 3:). *In this respect, man is a 'failure', not in what he does, but in what he is.* Leigh (2003, *The Imago Dei*) holds that the moral nature of man was changed by the fall but that man was still, to a certain extent, *imago Dei* (in the image of God).

2.4.3. Redemption.

2.4.3.1. Redemption described.

The word 'redemption' is derived from the word 'redeem' which means to 'buy back', or to 'ransom' someone (Lewis, 2000 'redeem', Louw & Nida, 1988: 37.131). In theology it refers to the atoning work of Christ (Grudem, 1994:568-607; Leith, 1993:1), or 'reconciliation' (Zinkand, sa:84), in which man may be gathered by the Holy Spirit to worship our Creator and Redeemer and be transformed in this very process into a member of the body of Christ (Jeanrond, 2002:28). Boice (1986:324) indicates that the word 'redemption' means that work by which Jesus freed us from sin and refers to three Old Testament words that are indicative of the atoning or redemptive work of Christ. The first word, בָּרַל *gaal* (cf Strong, 1994:OT 1350) meant 'to set free', as in Exodus 6:6, the second word is פָּדָה *padah* (cf Strong, 1994:OT 6299) which means 'to set free by buying a price' as seen in Exodus 13:13, and the third word is כֹּפֶר *kopher* (cf Strong, 1994:OT 3722) which means a "ransom price" as seen in Exodus 30:10. In the New Testament, Jesus is quoted in Matthew 20:28 as saying that the Son of man came to give his life as a ransom for many, indicative of the redemptive office of Christ.

The redeeming work of Christ, in its several aspects, is denoted in Scripture by various terms, namely, reconciliation, propitiation, expiation, atonement, redemption, satisfaction, substitution, and salvation. (MSE, 2003 Atonement)

The word 'atonement' which is often used in theology as a synonym for redemption, first appeared in the 16th century as two words, 'at onement' signifying a making of amends and rendering of satisfaction for wrong done that brings to an end alienation and restores good relations (CEPT, 1995:174), which reflects the main theme of the entire New Testament, and Christianity is

cross-centred and atonement-centred throughout its being. The centrality of the atonement of Christ has influenced our language, giving us the word 'crucial' which means literally 'pertaining to a cross' (NDT, 1998:54). But the word is also used to denote that by which this reconciliation is brought about, the death of Christ itself; and when so used it means *satisfaction*, and in this sense to make an atonement for one is to make satisfaction for one's offences, and, as regards the person, to reconcile, to propitiate God in his behalf (EBD, 2003. "atonement"). The need for atonement or redemption, arises from the universal sinfulness of mankind and our inability to resolve the problem caused by our sin. That all are sinners, is clear from Scripture (Romans 3:23), that we cannot meet the standards of God is also understood, and Scripture further states that the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23). This leaves humankind in a very desperate situation as evidenced by Paul's cry 'O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?' (Romans 7:24. NKJV). It is against this background of human hopelessness that God, in His boundless grace and mercy, and in His infinite love sent his Son as the atonement for our sin. ('But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.' Romans 5:8,9. NKJV). It is in this primary state of 'failure' of mankind that God intervenes and transforms 'failure' into success.

2.4.3.2. Redemption and the effect on man.

Boice (1986:327) makes the observation that redemption implies that man must be brought back to enjoy that state he had encountered previously in his original state before God. It is the beginning of a new life (Hodge, 1997:434) or a literal renewal or recreation of life (Wolters, 1988:57) Johnson (2000:16) claims that redemption is not ultimately a new thing; it is the divine restoration of the old, the healing of God's creation. Leigh (2003:Imago Dei) asserts that

the moral nature of man was changed by the fall, and that a reversal of this change takes place instantly when an individual trusts in Christ as saviour and is justified by God. In practice, he gradually becomes more like Christ (Ephesians 4:13), and this process is often described as 'sanctification.' To sanctify means generally, to make holy, that is, to separate from the world and consecrate to God. (Rall, 2003. Sanctification.) It is the process of God's grace by which the believer is separated from sin and becomes dedicated to God's righteousness and this is accomplished by the Word of God (John 17:7) and the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:3-4). sanctification results in holiness, or purification from the guilt and power of sin (NIBD, 1986. Sanctification). Sanctification is on the one hand God's work as we are sanctified by God the Father (Jude), the Son (Hebrews 2:11), and Holy Spirit (2 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Peter 1:2). Perfect holiness is God's command for mankind (1 Thessalonians 4:7). On the other hand, sanctification is also the work of the believer. Numerous commands in the Bible imply that believers also have a responsibility in the process of sanctification. We are commanded to 'be holy' (Leviticus 11:44; 1 Peter 1:15-16); to 'be perfect' (Matthew 5:48). These commands imply effort on our part. We must believe in Jesus Christ, since we are sanctified by faith in Him (Acts 26:18). Through the Holy Spirit we must also put to death the evil deeds of the body (Romans 8:13). Paul itemized the many "works of the flesh" from which we must separate ourselves (Galatians 5:19-21). Finally, we must walk in the Spirit in order to display the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-24). Sanctification is a process that continues during our lives as believers (Hebrews 10:14), and only after death are the saints referred to as 'perfect' (Hebrews 12:23). Adams (1979:233) elucidates the work of God and the work of man in the newness of life, in the following chart.

Doctrine	Act	Process	God does it alone	God enables man to do it
Regeneration	•		•	
Conversion: repentance and faith	•			•
Justification	•		•	
Sanctification		•		•
Glorification	•		•	

The Newness of Life: The Doctrine of Sanctification.

From this chart it can be seen that God is the author of the process in which the sinner is regenerated. However, with regards to conversion, which is inclusive of repentance and faith, man is required to be a willing participant. The same may be said of sanctification. There is a marked, and very important difference between regeneration, justification and glorification, and sanctification that must be noted. Regeneration, justification and glorification are instantaneous works of God, and sanctification is a process. Without regeneration and sanctification, there can be no sanctification and glorification.

With the process of sanctification, the rate in which the process of sanctification takes place is dependent on the co-operation of the believer. In the Amplified Bible Isaiah 30:18 is referred to in the following manner, which is descriptive of the nature of God in regards to the believers co-operation in the process of sanctification,

And therefore the Lord [*earnestly*] waits [*expecting, looking, and longing*] to be gracious to you; and therefore He lifts Himself up, that He may have mercy on you and show loving-kindness to you. For the Lord is a God of justice. Blessed (happy, fortunate, to be envied) are all those who [*earnestly*] wait for Him, who expect and look and long for Him [for His victory, His favor, His love, His peace, His joy, and His matchless, unbroken companionship]! (AMP. 1987)

2.4.3.3. Redemption and 'failure'.

Christianity is not something separate from the daily life, and redemption cannot be seen as something that involves the spirit of man alone (Van Niekerk, 1993:58). Johnson (2000:17) contends that contrary to some Christian teaching, the redeemed person is not merely a passive faucet through which God works. Leith (1993:198) stated the same fact and writes that the Christian life is lived *within* this world. It is lived out in housework, in rearing children, in participation in political processes and of the civil community, in work and in the arts. It is never a 'religious' withdrawal from this world. According to John 17:5 Jesus Christ prays to the Father that the children of God (the redeemed) should not be taken out of this world, but that they should be kept from the evil one.

Redeemed man has the ability to utilise the God-given gift of redemption and a new life, to turn 'failure' around and create some measure of success in everyday life. Johnson (2000:16 -ff) states that the redeemed self is empowered to construct new and some differently conceived goods, values norms and motives. They are received from God through the Scriptures and gradually the redeemed person comes to construct this new framework.

Instrumental in this change is the work of God through the scriptures, the Holy Spirit and God's people. The world of the redeemed self will be different to the world of the fallen-self as certain persons, activities, and objects will become more or less important in reference to the ultimate shift from an anthropocentric, to a more theocentric orientation. Jeanrond (2002:29) contends that we need a large amount of self-critique, that demands a willingness to face the truth of all our relationships with God, other people and nature, and to transcend our own needs and discover true relationships. Leith (1993:102) states that the ability man has to objectify himself and to transcend the self gives the human creature a power over his or her past and a capacity to exercise some freedom in shaping the future. It is this capacity which enables us to take the past and to use it in the achievement of a future. Berkhof (1986:189) posits that man, in contrast to the animal, is an unfinished being, he is created as potentiality; his identity does not lie in him, but before him. Therefore, man lives in the sphere of history with the potential to change 'failure' into success.

2.5 The concept of 'failure' in the Bible.

Lutzer (1987a:11) laments that there are many books on the topic on how to be a 'success', but that those books are written for people who simply lack initiative, or who haven't established worthy goals for themselves. There are scores of Christians whose lives are so characterised by perpetual 'failure', and that simply applying some novel "secret" of success, smacks of mockery. Indeed, there is far more said on success than there is on 'failure', and more often than not, when 'failure' is mentioned, it is assumed that the reader knows what is meant without going into the specifics of what 'failure' actually is (*cf* chapter 1.3). In order to determine what Scripture says about 'failure', we have to examine the Hebrew and Greek words for 'failure', and determine what

is actually meant by the words, and in the light of semantics, try to determine what Scripture means by 'failure'.

2.5.1 Hebrew and Greek Words on 'failure'.

2.5.1.1. Hebrew words.

Walker (1996: 'Fail' ISBE), gives the following comparison of Hebrew words for 'fail' in the Old Testament:

- הַנִּלְכָּה *kalah* is the most frequent, meaning "to be consumed," "ended" (Job 11:20; 17:5; Psalm 69:3; 71:9, Proverbs 22:8; Isaiah 15:6, Jeremiah 14:6 and Lamentations 2:11; 3:22; 4:17),
- הִרְכַּבְתִּי לְהָרָה *karath*, "to be cut off" (2 Samuel 3:29, of 'failure' in succession", so in 1 Kings 2:4.),
- הִרְדַּעַנְתִּי *adhar*, "to marshal," "to be missed" or "lacking" (Isaiah 34:16, 40:26, 59:15, and Zephaniah 3:5),
- הִפְרַחְתִּי לְהָרָה *raphah*, "to become faint" or "to make feeble" (Deuteronomy 31:6,8; Joshua 1:5 and 1 Chronicles 28:20),
- דָּבַא לְהָרָה *abhadh*, "to perish," "be lost" (Psalm 142:4, and Ezekiel 12:22).

Walker adds that many other Hebrew words are translated 'fail', but that they are for the most part, in single instances.

VanGemeren (1997:874-875, 1004-1005), gives the following distinctions for the word 'fail':

- 1698. רָמַנְנָה *(gmr)*, q. be at an end, cease, fail.

'To be at an end' as found in Psalm 77:9 in which the poet assumes that God's grace and mercy might end, or to cease as in Psalm 12:2 where the psalmist laments the disappearance of the righteous.

It has the derived meaning 'requite' in antithetical parallelism in Psalm 7:10 where the poet bids God to 'bring to an end' the evil of the wicked and to establish the word of the righteous.

- 5022. ססמ (*ssm*) , **q**. dissolve, melt, lose courage/heart, despair; **ni**. melt, dissolve, become liquid, grow faint, feeble, weak, or fearful, be wasted; **hi**. cause to melt, intimidate; sam (*mās*) , adj. Melting, failing, collapsing, despairing, discouraged, despondant, rejected, downhearted, disheartened.

The most extensive use of ססמ occurs in the idiom of a melting heart, usually to denote loss of courage in the face of impending disaster.

2.5.1.2 Greek words

Vine (1981:68 "fail") states the word 'fail' has the following meanings:

- ἐκλείπω (*ekleipō*): meaning 'to leave out', as in the cessation of human life.
- ἐπιλείπω (*epileipō*): meaning 'not to be suffice for a purpose', as said of insufficient time.
- πίπτω (*piptō*): meaning 'to fall', as is used of the Law of God in the sense of losing it's authority, or ceasing to have force.

Louw & Nida. (1994: Electronic Database), give the following domains for the word 'failure':

- **13.21** ὑστερέω : to fail in some measure to attain some state or condition - 'to fail to attain, to not attain, to be behind in.'
- **13.22** ἥττημα, τὸ ν: a lack of attaining a desirable state or condition - 'to fail, to lack, failure. ἤδη μὲν οὖν ὅλω ἥττημα ὑμῖν ἔστιν ὅτι κρίματα ἔχετε μεθ' ἑαυτῶν ' the fact that you have legal disputes among yourselves is indeed evidence of your complete failure' 1 Corinthians 6.7; τοῦ ἥττημα αὐτῶν πλοῦτό ἐθνῶν ' their failure brought rich blessings to the Gentiles' Romans 11.12.
- **13.41** ἐπιλείπω : to begin to cease - 'to begin to come to the end, to fail, to run out.' ἐπιλείψει με γὰρ διηγούμενον ὁ χρόνος περὶ Γεδεών 'time is running out for me to speak of Gideon', Hebrews 11.32.
- **36.25** προάγω : to go beyond established bounds of teaching or instruction, with the implication of failure to obey properly - 'to go beyond bounds, to fail to obey.' πᾶς ὁ προάγων καὶ μὴ μένων ἐν τῇ διδασκίᾳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ 'anyone who does not remain in the teaching of Christ but goes beyond it' 2 John 9.
- **57.46** ἐκλείπω a : to change to a state in which something is lacking or insufficient - 'to give out, to fail.' ἑαυτοῖς ποιήσατε φίλους ἐκ τοῦ μαμωνᾶ τῆ ἀδικίας. ἵνα ὅταν ἐκλίπω δέξωνται ὑμᾶς εἰς τὸ αἰώνιον σκηνῶν 'make friends for yourselves with unrighteous worldly wealth, so that when it gives out you will be welcomed in the eternal home' Luke 16.9.
- **57.67** ἀπόλλυμι : to fail to obtain a valued object - 'to not obtain, to fail to get .' οὐ μὴ ἀπολέσω τὸν μισθόν αὐτοῦ 'he certainly won't fail to get his reward' Matthew 10.42.
- **68.49** πίπτω : (a figurative extension of meaning of πίπτω 'to

fall,' 15.118) to cease, with the possible implication of failure - 'to stop, to cease, to fail.' ἡ ἀγάπη οὐδέποτε πίπτει 'love never ceases' 1 Corinthians 13.8.

- **75.6** αὐτάρκεια : a state of adequacy or sufficiency - 'what is adequate, what is sufficient, what is needed, adequacy.' πάντοτε πᾶσαν αὐτάρκειαν ἔχοντέ 'always having complete sufficiency' 2 Corinthians 9.8.
- **75.7** πίπτω' : ἐκπίπτω ε' : (figurative extensions of meaning of πίπτω α 'to fall,' 15.118, and ἐκπίπτω α 'to fall out or from.' 15.120) to become inadequate for some function - 'to become inadequate.

From the above descriptions it becomes clear that there is no specific word in the classic languages of the Bible to denote 'failure' as it is seen in terms of the modern expression 'I am a failure.'" The word 'failure' mostly means the cessation of a thing or an action.

2.5.2 The Concept of 'Failure' in Scripture.

Scripture would appear to have a different view as to what is normally meant by 'failure' as explained in a dictionary. 'Failure' is commonly described as a lack of success, whereas the Bible refers to the concept of 'failure' as in man falling short of the glory of God, or missing the Divine plan for mankind. Man would define 'failure' as not achieving something he sets out to do, or as being inadequate or not being good enough (Oliver, 1995:11), while Scripture would rather point out that it is not what man *does*, but that which he *is* that is deemed to be a 'failure'.

There is, however, a very distinct dissimilarity between the secular concept of 'failure' and the Scriptural concept of 'failure'. While the secular concept of 'failure' does not seem to include the possibility restoration, cure or return to health, the Scriptural concept of 'failure' would embody the distinct possibility of restoration, as indicated in Proverbs 24:16 that states that the righteous man might fall seven times, but each time will rise again. In his parable on the athlete striving to win the race in Philippians 3:12-14, Paul alludes to the fact that there may be hindrances to achieving his goal, but that he would not allow these hindrances to prevent him from succeeding. The sanative aspect of Biblical 'failure' is also indicated by the atonement of Christ. Pelser (1996:30-31) concludes that the descriptive term 'in Christ', as seen in Romans 3:24, 6:11, 6:23, 8:1&2 and 8:39, refers to the act in which God redeems sinful man, and that man can now live for God, having died to sin. Where sin reigns, man is dead, as the reward for sin is death. However, when God reigns through Christ, man receives eternal life. In 2 Corinthians 5:17, Paul sums up the concept of being 'in Christ', when he states that, if a person is in Christ, he is a new creation, where the old things have passed away and everything has been renewed. As Pelser (1996:20) shows, the believer in Christ is not a slave to sin anymore, but he or she cannot escape the influence sin has on his or her life. However, the most important aspect of being 'in Christ' is the fact that the believer has entered into a relationship with God, and it is within this relationship that the prospect and hope exists that all of the believer's problems can be resolved.

2.5.3. Sin as 'Failure'.

In the light of the foregoing contemplation of man and 'failure', no study of 'failure' can be complete without reference to sin, the ultimate 'failure' that not only impacted humankind, but also, the whole of creation as the words of Romans 8:22-23 indicate.

Sin can be defined in various ways:

Helberg (1996:34) describes sin as: a wrong attitude, a wrong will, disobedience to God, unbelief, and ingratitude.

Grenz (1994:182-183) in his discussion on sin, provides us with the following description of sin. In the Old Testament several Hebrew words touch on the various dimensions of sin. These include עִוָּה *'avah* ('bent' or 'crooked'), עָוֹן *'aval* (the lack of integrity and translated as 'iniquity'), and שָׁבַח *ma'al* ('breach of trust'). The most widely used term to describe 'sin' in the Old Testament is חָטָא *chatha* which, basically, means to miss the right point or to deviate from the norm. In the New Testament various terms are used to describe the phenomenon of sin. These include παραβαίνω *parabaino* ('the transgression of a boundary'), παρακούω *parakoe* ('disobedience to a voice'), παραπτωμά *paraptoma* ('falling where one should have stood upright'), ἀγνόημα *agnoema* ('ignorance of what should have been known'), ἡττημά *hettema* ('the diminishing of what should have been rendered'), and ἀνομία *anomia* ('the non-observance of the law'). The Greek word ὕβρις *hubris* parallels the Hebrew פָּשָׁע *pasha'*. Grenz (1994:182-183) cites William Barclay who described *hubris* as mingled pride and cruelty, and *hubris* is the pride which makes man defy God, and the arrogant contempt which makes him trample on the hearts of fellow men.

Erickson (2001:188-189) provides the following perspectives: Sin is an inward inclination, an inherent inner disposition inclining us to wrong acts. Sin is rebelliousness and disobedience. Sin entails spiritual disability, the incomplete fulfilment of God's standards, and the displacement of God.

Grudem (1994:490-491), as previously mentioned, describes sin as any failure to conform to the moral law of God in act, attitude, or nature.

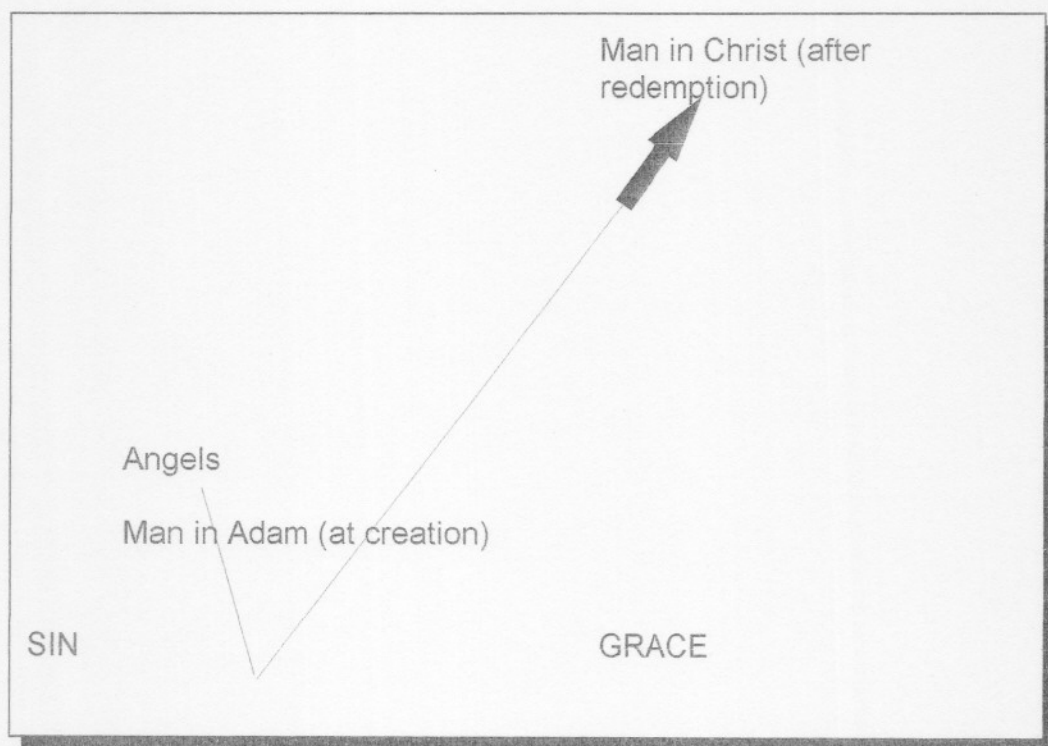
There is a colloquial description of sin that is often discussed in catechism, of which the origin and authority are unknown, but has been passed on from teacher to pupil. This sketch of sin states that sin, 'is to be, what you are not allowed to be, not to be what you are supposed to be, to do what you are not allowed to do, and not to do what you are supposed to do.' While this generalisation may, or may not be theologically sound, it does reflect on 'being' and 'doing' and has an impact on the fact that man is a living, dynamic entity, and is prone to evil.

The manner in which sin came into the lives' of Adam and Eve has been the subject of much discussion (*cf* chapter 2.4). There are numerous, and as yet, unanswered questions regarding sin and the fall of man, such as: Where did sin come from? It must be affirmed that God himself did not sin, and God is not to be blamed for sin. It was the angels that sinned initially and they were followed by man, and in both cases they did so voluntarily. Yet, on the other hand, it must be guarded against the opposite error, that sin eternally co-existed with God, and that this evil was similar to, or equal to God in power. Also, we must never think that sin surprised God, or caught him unawares (Grudem, 1994:492). While acknowledging the idyllic state that existed in the Garden of Eden, many theologians throughout Christian history have suggested that the first humans, prior to the fall, were not characterised by positive, chosen obedience to God and the fullness of eternal life, as is evidenced by man's choice to sin (*cf* Grudem, 1994:492; Spykman, 1992:312-313). This means that they did not yet fully participate in the human destiny as designed by God. This observation carries immense significance. It means that Jesus Christ, in his positive obedience to the will of the Father, takes pre-eminence over Adam in his innocence. Thomas (2003: ISBN 'Adam') posits that according to Romans 5:12-19 Paul institutes a series of comparisons and contrasts between Adam and Christ; the two persons, the two works and the two consequences. The fullness of the apostle's meaning must be carefully

observed. Not only does he teach that what we have derived from the first Adam is met by what is derived from Christ, *but the transcendence of the work of the latter is regarded as almost infinite in extent*. We are bound to Adam by birth, and it is open to us to become bound to Christ by faith. If we refuse to exchange our position in Adam for that which is offered to us in Christ, we become answerable to God. Jesus Christ lifts mankind to a higher plane than that enjoyed by the first human pair in the Garden of Eden (Grenz, 1994:191)

Adams (1979:181) posits that in Christ, humanity has been raised far above the principalities and powers on earth and has been elevated to sit at the right hand of God, and refers to this elevation of man as 'super-redemption' and illustrates it in the following diagram, where the arrow is

not in a symmetrical V shape, but rather in a \checkmark indicating that the process is out of balance, in favour of God's more abounding grace.



Erickson (2001: 190) takes us to the other end of the spectrum when he makes reference to liberation theology which claims that the source of sin is economic struggle! The solution, according to liberation theology, is to eliminate oppression and inequities in possessions and power, and rather than evangelizing, our chief pursuit should be economic and political action aimed at altering the structure of society. How this solution addresses the sinful nature of mankind and the holiness of God, is something that is yet to be explained. However, Erickson (2001:191) points out, that from the evangelical perspective, the problem lies in the fact that humans are *sinful by nature* and live in a world in which powerful forces seek to induce him to sin, and it is important to note that the responsibility for sin cannot be laid at the door of God, but should be placed squarely at the door of the individual.

Sin may involve consequences in which we have no control over. We do not sin all by ourselves. We grow up in a world and we participate in a societal structure which is not congenial to what we are meant for, namely love and Godliness. Our society is based on the motive of personal and collective self-interest, which, depending on the circumstances, comes in the form of greed, ambition, party interests, competition, and nationalism amongst others, which determine the relationships and mode of conduct, and is only held in check by the realisation that one's own interests impact on that of one's neighbour. Sin is a cumulative process or a contagious disease, and one cannot escape this pull and do not want it either (*cf* Berkhof, 1986:213).

When the essence and nature of sin is understood, and the fact that sin is inherent, and not only permeates the inner life of man, but also affects his relationships between him and God, ecology and his neighbour, we can begin to understand what is meant by man living in a broken world. Everything he is, is tainted by sin, everything that he does, and everything that he aspires to be, is tainted by sin. We cannot even consider the holiness of God, with sin

contaminated minds. We cannot contemplate perfection, love, eternity, prosperity or any other thing, without thinking, "What is there in it for me?" The fable regarding the Greek legend of Midas, the greedy king of Phrygia who Dionysus gave the power to turn everything he touched into gold, comes to mind (Wordweb, 2003. Midas). Everything he touched turned to gold, even the food he wanted to put in his mouth, and the water he wanted to drink, quite possibly, also his daughter he wanted to touch. Instead of bringing him immense riches, his touch brought him untold misery. Sin is man's 'Midas touch', instead of 'becoming like God' he becomes miserable.

2.5.3. Blessing and curse as Biblical synonyms for success and 'failure'.

Using an electronic database (e-Sword, 2002), a word search was done on the New King James Version to try to establish to what extent the words 'failure' and 'success' appear in the Bible. This translation was used instead of the older King James Version, due to the fact that more modern English is used. The results were very interesting and are given here:

Success: Five verses;

- **Genesis 24:12** Then he said, "O LORD God of my master Abraham, please give me success this day, and show kindness to my master Abraham.
- **Joshua 1:8** "This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.
- **Job 6:13** Is my help not within me? And is success driven from me?
- **Job 30:22** You lift me up to the wind and cause me to ride on it; You spoil my success.

- **Ecclesiastes 10:10** If the ax is dull, And one does not sharpen the edge, Then he must use more strength; But wisdom brings success.

When the King James Version was subjected to a word search, the word 'success' produced only one result: that being Joshua 1:8, already annotated above, and is also translated as 'having good success'.

'**Failure**' A word search for the word 'failure' in the New King James Version gave only three verses, those being:

- **Job 21:10** Their bull breeds without *failure*;
- **Romans 11:12.** Now if their fall is riches for the world, and their *failure* riches for the Gentiles, how much more their fullness!
- **1 Corinthians 6:7.** Now therefore, it is already an utter *failure* for you that you go to law against one another. Why do you not rather accept wrong?

The word search in the King James Version did not reveal a single verse where the word 'failure' is used.

Using the King James Version, the word search was extended to include the following words, and the number of hits are indicated between brackets:

Fail - (64)

Failleth - (19)

Failed - (11)

Failing - (2)

For an explanation of the Hebrew and Greek meanings of the words 'success'

and 'failure' I would like to refer to Addendum 'A' and Addendum 'B'.

It would appear then, from the word search, that the term 'failure,' as seen in Scripture, does not have the same meaning as perceived by modern man. The Bible often refers to our secular concept that we perceive as 'success' and 'failure' as being blessed and cursed, which are words that, to us, do not convey the thought that we wish to express. We do not commonly speak of someone who failed a test at school as 'someone who is cursed', or, in the event of passing with good marks, as the student being 'blessed.' The concept of success and 'failure', as alternative expressions of blessing and curse, is discussed later (*cf* Chapter 2.5.4.). With the passing of time, the meaning of words and expressions have changed along with an ever changing culture. However, it is important to note that the Biblical concepts of 'failure' and 'success' are often contradictory to modern thought. The Biblical connotation of 'blessing' can not always be seen as being a success, or lack of blessing to be seen as a 'failure'. Scripture teaches us that very often hardship can be counted for a blessing. This can be seen in the Biblical account of Naomi (book of Ruth) who left her homeland and suffered the loss, not only of her husband, but also that of her two sons and thus left her in dire straits and without any support. When her one daughter-in-law accompanies her back to Canaan and eventually marries Boaz, she is not only assured of temporal support, but a son was borne to Ruth, the daughter-in-law, and this grandson was named Obed, the grandfather of King David (*cf* Ruth 4:17, 21 & 22). In the New Testament we have the example of Paul who states in Philippians 3:7 that everything that was gainful for him, he reckoned as rubbish that he might gain Christ. Paul was prepared to lose everything, his status and worldly possessions even his life (Acts 21:13), which flies in the face of modern secular thought. The very idea of losing all you have is considered to be the worst of luck, the greatest tragedy to befall man, and yet, in Christ, man is richer than he was before (*cf*. 2 Corinthians 6:10).

'Failure' can be viewed in two perspectives, as the following chart indicates:

A PARADIGM OF 'FAILURE'		
In the eyes of God		
Success: To obey God. Success is seen as hitting the mark.	'failure' To disobey God. 'failure' is seen as missing the mark.	Restoration. Always possible. Divine intervention in the life of man.
In the eyes of the world		
Success: To achieve the stated goal. Success is seen as achieving that which you set out to do	'failure'. Not achieving the required results 'failure' is seen as incompetence	Restoration. Not always possible. Human intervention is required, usually without God.

2.5.4. The constructs, *Shame, Guilt and 'Failure'* as seen in Scripture

As indicated in chapter 2.4.3, the first century Mediterraneans did not view success and 'failure' in the same light as we do today. Their equivalent values were rather seen in terms of *shame* and *guilt* which will be discussed here in more detail.

Shame is defined by Timpe (1999b:1114) as an unpleasant emotional reaction by an individual to an actual or presumed negative judgement of himself by

others resulting in self-deprecation *vis-a-vis* the group.’ Pattison (2000:192) makes the observation that while people experience remorse in response to some kind of fault, they feel shame because they lack something, and this feeling of shame and loss is so profound that man covers himself, or conceals himself from God. This covering acts as a memorial of original loss and disunion, and can only be disposed of in an act of final shaming or exposure when human sin is laid bare through confession before God, and opens the way for the restoration of fellowship with God. Yen (1999) makes an interesting differentiation between guilt and shame, when he observes that with guilt there is a desire for atonement, to make amends or to heal a hurt. With shame there are feelings of alienation, ‘failure’ and self-doubt and is the most poignant experience of the self by the self. Yen (1999) points out that guilt says I’ve made a mistake, whereas shame says I am a mistake. Pilch and Malina (1993:95,96) hold that shame, and its counterpart, honour, are core values in the Biblical context. Honour is a claim to worth that is publically acknowledged, and shame is the opposite of honour, a claim to worth that is publically denied and repudiated, both these values are primarily group values. Individual males must achieve honour in public contests. It must be claimed, gained, and defended before one’s peers. Honour is associated with a value cluster that includes: strength, courage, daring, valour, generosity, and wisdom. Weakness, cowardice, and lack of generosity indicate lack of honour, and therefore are despised. This value cluster and the honour underpinning it are most intensely lived in a small group, where everybody knows everybody else, where all are “equal” in honour, where the individual exists only through the group, and where kinship rules prevail. For a male, ‘to lose honour’ is ‘to be shamed.’ Being shamed involves a loss of repute and worth in the eyes of others, especially of one’s peers. It results from a public exposure of a person’s weakness, cowardice, pretension or foolishness. Mathews and Benjamin (1996:11) posit that honour and shame are labels which defined the status of a household in the village, not as much as to what a household was actually

doing, but as how villagers reacted to it. Honourable households were in place and functioning well. Shame sentenced a household to death by placing its land and children in jeopardy. Shamed households ate too much, drank too much, were lazy, quarrelsome, selfish, and thought nothing about lying to the village assembly. They were thoughtless in their sexual relationships, and disrespectful of the new born and the dead. Their herds were mangy, and their farms run down. Shamed households did not fulfill their responsibilities to their own members or their neighbours. Shamed households were on probation. They were out-of-place and not functioning properly. Consequently, both their contributions to the village and their eligibility for its support were suspended. The label downgraded the status of a household, until it demonstrated that it was once again contributing to the village. Mediterranean societies were held to be 'agonistic', or competitive, and as honour is the primary value and also a social commodity, honour is the object of continuous competition (Hanson, 1996 :84). It follows then that in a competitive society where honour was held in high esteem, and to lose your honour, to be shamed or to lose your status within the community, was the worst thing that could happen to a family. Shame is defined by the McClintock and Strong Encyclopedia (2003. Shame) as the, *apprehension that reputation and character are in danger, or by the perception that they (character and reputation) are lost*, whereas the International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia (2003. Shame) comments that shame is *almost uniformly bound up with a sense of sin and guilt*. In this light, it becomes apparent that, seen in the context of the exceptionally high value placed upon honour in the first century Mediterranean social structure, should a member of the community in some way bring about shame to the community, he has 'failed' as a person and has subsequently caused the community to 'fail' as well. This 'failure' in societal structures inculcates guilt. Rall (2003. Guilt) observes that the Christian idea of guilt involves three elements:

- **Responsibility**, from the Greek *aitia*, "cause," which concerns man's real freedom,
- **Blameworthiness**, from the Latin *reatus culpae*, which concerns man's knowledge and purpose, and,
- **Obligation**, to make good through punishment or compensation, from the Latin *reatus poenae*, which can be compared to the Greek ὀφείλημα *opheilema*, "debt,"

From this can be deduced that when thinking of guilt, we think about the personal blameworthiness of the person and the recognition that the person involved has 'failed' in some form or another.

From the above it would appear that the Biblical concept of 'failure' differs from the modern expression, and that the Biblical concept of shame and guilt approximates the modern view of 'failure'. However, the modern concept of 'failure' is an individualised one, whereas shame in the Biblical context involved the whole patriarchal family, thus broadening the scope of an individual's 'failure'.

2.6 Selected case studies of human 'failure' in Scripture.

In order to show how 'failure' is treated in a Biblical context, six characters from the Bible will be dealt with under three divisions, namely, Background, Analysis of 'Failure' and Reversal of 'Failure' where the reversal of 'failure' into success is discussed. The characters chosen are David, Gideon, Elijah, Judas, Peter and Tabitha. The reason for this particular selection of Biblical characters is that they all had different experiences of 'failure' and the lessons learnt from each is addressed under the heading 'Reversal of Failure'. Prior to this, however, attention must be paid to the account of Adam and Eve, as the

'original failures' and the first, initial objects of God's reversal of 'failure', in which the tone is set for the rest of the case studies.

2.6.1 Adam and Eve.

2.6.1.1. Background.

Any endeavour to study and investigate the origin of man in Adam and Eve, of necessity, runs into difficulties from the outset, as relatively very little is mentioned in the Bible regarding these first two earthly inhabitants.

Surprisingly, Scripture refers to the name 'Adam' only twenty-seven times in the King James Version, of which eleven instances refer to the account of the life of Adam, (Genesis 2:19 - 4:25). Genesis 5 contains five references to Adam, and then in a genealogy of the descendants of Adam. There are seven references to Adam in the New Testament (Luke 3:38; Romans 5:14; 1 Corinthians 15:22, 45; 1 Timothy 2:13, 14, and Jude 1:14) , and one reference in the Old Testament to a town by the name of Adam, which was situated near Zaretan, somewhere to the east of Jericho (Jos 3:16). Of Eve there is even less reference made, her name appearing only four times in the Scriptures (Genesis 3:20, Genesis 4:1; 2 Corinthians 11:3, and 1 Timothy 2:13) , twice in conjunction with the Garden of Eden account, and twice in the New Testament. She is referred to as 'the woman' eight times in Genesis (Genesis 3:1, 3:2, 3:4, 3:6, 3:12, 3:13, 3:15, 16). So while there are not many direct references to Adam and Eve, it becomes obvious that inquiries will have to be made from other, extra-Biblical sources. Much can be, assumed, correctly, such as the fact that Adam had no childhood. he must have been lonely in another sense from the way we experience loneliness. He had no parents, no-one to teach him what to do, no family and no friends. He was the first zoologist - he had to name all the animals, and the first landscape architect, as he was tasked to

take care of the Garden of Eden (LAB, 1989:11, Adam). Eve was the final piece in the puzzle of God's creation, the one crafted out of the body of Adam, to offer companionship, and being together they were far greater than being alone (LAB, 1998:13, Eve)

The account of Adam and Eve is communicated to us through Genesis 2 & 3. The place of man is carefully detailed and safeguarded in the Genesis narrative. Adam and Eve were created as the crowning glory of God's creation and were appointed to rule over creation (Genesis 1:26). They were created sinless, but with the ability to sin, and without the faculty to determine between good and evil. This ability to distinguish between good and evil only came about after they had eaten from the forbidden fruit (*cf* Genesis 3:4-7). In their original state, this would have been no imperfection or hindrance to their existence, as they walked in the glory of God and had no want at all. In their sinless perfection, created after the image and likeness of God, appointed to have dominion over creation, lacking for nothing, they were fulfilling God's purpose for them, and therefore, could be reckoned as being successful in the fullest sense of the word. Turner (2000:28) points out that part of the commission given to Adam and Eve in Genesis 1:28 was to subdue the earth, and being placed in the Garden of Eden to till and keep it (Genesis 2:15) is indicative of man making the earth conform to his will, and serve his desires. The first inkling of something being amiss is found in Genesis 2:18, where God said that it was not good that man was alone. Immediately the question arises: would this indicate a deficiency in God's creation? This would not appear to be the case as God, in surveying all that had been created, inclusive of man, stated that it was very good (Genesis 1:31). It would appear that this comment on the deficiency in Adam related to his lack of suitable companionship, rather than a defective creation. This is intimated in the comment later made by Adam, in referring to Eve, that he now had a fitting companion (Genesis 2:23).

Genesis 3 tells of the temptation of Adam and Eve, and their submission to the temptation by Satan, and their fall from grace. The whole episode is characterised by the many unanswerable questions that arise. Was the prohibition given to Adam alone, and tasked to convey the prohibition to Eve, resulting in her 'failure' to believe him? From where did the serpent gain his knowledge about the prohibition? Why did the serpent approach Eve first, or did he initially approach Adam and being rebuffed, approach Eve? Why was the serpent never brought to book regarding his actions? Was the temptation to be disobedient and thus to sin, inherent in Adam and Eve, or was the ability to sin something new, of which Adam and Eve had no prior knowledge? Eve was approached by Satan and questioned the authority of God, and by creating a desire to distinguish between good and evil, incited Eve, and, according to Genesis 3:6, Adam, who was apparently standing beside her, and they both ate of the forbidden fruit. This much is given, and while they might be relevant questions, they do not form the crux of the matter. The focal point of the whole episode is reduced to the irrefutable fact that cannot be negated, diminished or explained away. Adam and Eve sinned by rebelling against God's expressed commandment. It is factual, condemning, and final. In this there is a pointer to many of the problems encountered in pastoral counselling. Many counselees are unwilling to concede that what has been done, is done, and no amount of dwelling on the past can make any difference to the situation. Often the clouding of the pertinent issues or the muddying of the waters is used as a defensive mechanism in order to escape culpability for transgressions. Perhaps the answer lies in the Biblical account, to recognise and accept what has happened, and continue from there. It is an interesting thought that comes to mind, is that God did not scrap His handiwork and throw it in a wastebasket, and start anew as we might have done, but that He committed Himself to working with Adam and Eve in their fallen state, and was willing to renew and reconcile the existing couple. The result of the fall is accounted for in paragraph **2.4.2.1 - 3**, above.

2.6.1.2. Analysis of 'Failure'.

The moment Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit, their eyes were opened, they discovered that they were naked, they made coverings from fig leaves, and tried to hide from God. It is not apparent from the Biblical record if Adam and Eve were aware of the process of falling, or if they were just immediately cognisant of having fallen. It is, however, significant to note that they were aware of not being the same as they were previously. Perhaps, most significant of the first awareness of the change in their condition, is the awareness of their nakedness. Physically naked, to be sure, but also spiritually naked. When Adam and Eve conversed with God prior to the fall, they would have been aware of God's omniscience and with the fall and after the fall they must have been aware of their spiritual and moral nakedness as is seen from their shyness and feeling of shame. Ecclesiastes 5:15 states "As he came from his mother's womb, naked shall he return, To go as he came; And he shall take nothing from his labour Which he may carry away in his hand" (NKJV), from which we can deduce that being naked implies more than just nudity, but also shows the barrenness of man.

The 'failure' of Adam and Eve involved many aspects. Death, in all its entities, physical and spiritual, separation from God, and the tainting of the whole human race, as well as burdening the rest of creation, are but some of the results of the fall. Erickson (2001:194-201) affirms that the result of Adam and Eve's transgression impacted on their lives, and through them, all mankind as well, in the following manner:

1. The relationship with God was affected by divine disfavour, guilt and punishment.
2. Secondly, it resulted in the enslavement of man, his flight from reality,

- denial, insensitivity, self-deceit, self-centeredness and restlessness.
3. Thirdly, it affected man's relationships with other humans in that competition, inability to empathize, rejection of authority and inability to love became essential elements in the make-up of man.

To this can also be added the fact that man's relationship to nature was also impacted upon by Adams' transgression.

While the Scriptural account only gives an indication of the humanely effects on Adam and Eve, it is with their son Cain that the effects of sin become apparent. He is jealous of, and slays his brother, is angry with God, and refuses to acknowledge his condition (Genesis 4:4 -14). Hess (1997:509) observes that unable to bear the weight of their shame, they divert attention away from themselves by pointing to another, Adam pointing to Eve, who points to the serpent, and such is the nature of shame in our relationships. Our inability to own up and acknowledge our shame leads us to attack or accuse others, fending off our self-hatred, deflecting that which threatens to diminish us, poisoning our relationships.

One of the severest implications of Adam and Eve's 'failure', is the magnitude of the result of the fall. All people are involved in Adam's sin, and thus receive both the corrupted nature that was his after the fall, and the guilt and condemnation that attach to sin (Erickson, 2001:210). It suffices to say that the 'failure' of Adam and Eve necessitated the *sine qua non* of a Redeemer (*cf* chapter 2.4.3. "Redemption" where this subject is dealt with in greater detail). It is of interest to note that the name of firstborn, born to Adam and Eve, Cain, who was born after the fall and the covenant of Genesis 3:15, carries special significance. Boice (1986:661) argues that the essential meaning of his Hebrew name is "Possession" or, colloquially, "Here he is!" assuming that he

would be the promised deliverer. Eve said, 'I have gotten a man from, or with the help of, God, and recognized this gift of God, as a first step toward fulfilling the promise of the Redeemer, 'the seed of the woman' (Genesis 3:15). Cain, her supposed acquisition, proved a deadly loss (*cf* FBD. 2003. Cain).

2.6.1.3. 'Failure' Utilised.

It is apparent from Genesis 3:15 that God intended to remedy the situation that resulted from the fall, and that this remedy involved God's slaughtering of animals for a proper covering of Adam and Eve's nakedness, which is the first indication of sacrifice, that led, ultimately, to the atoning ministry of Christ (*cf.* **2.5.3**). There are two prominent aspects regarding God's remedy for 'failure': the first being that salvation, though offered freely to all man (Isaiah 55:1-3, Ezekiel 33:11, John 3:16, 1 Timothy 2:3-4), is not accepted by one and all. So in a sense, God's remedy for 'failure' is not effective for all men. It was sufficient, but not effective for all mankind. Grudem (1994:657) holds that there is a distinction between *common grace* and *saving grace*, where *common grace* is bestowed on all people, and *saving grace* brings about salvation in those elected as predestined for salvation (*cf* Erickson, 2001:306-313; Leith, 1993: 225-228). The second aspect of God's remedy for 'failure' that is noteworthy, is contained in the title to J. Adams' book, "A Theology of Christian Counselling. More Than Redemption" in which he asserts that through redemption man is made *more* than what he was before (Adams 1979). In this vein Grenz (1994:327), asks the question: was the work that Jesus Christ accomplished primarily restorative or elevative?

Grenz (1994:326) makes the observation that theologians generally divide Christology into the related topics of Christ's person, and Christ's work and when so divided poses the question, which ought to proceed the other?

Spykman (1992:301-303) affirms that sin is an alien force, an enemy that must be overcome, yet it is difficult to explain, as Scripture only speaks of the *beginning* of sin, and not of the *origin* of sin. Grenz (1994:326) posits that many theologians look to the fall of Adam to describe the work accomplished by Christ. If Adam had not sinned, would Christ still have come? The question arises, was it necessary for God that any people should be saved at all? If we keep in mind that the angels sinned, and were cast into hell (2 Peter 2:4), without any form of redemption offered, God could have chosen to save no-one and in perfect justice left us in our sins awaiting judgement, just as God did with the angels (Grenz 1994:326). The ultimate cause that led to Christ's coming to earth and dying for our sins must be found in the character of God himself, the love and the justice of God. The Belgic Confession, Article 17, regarding the Recovery of Fallen Man states:

We believe that our good God, by his marvellous wisdom and goodness, seeing that man had plunged himself in this manner into both physical and spiritual death and made himself completely miserable, set out to find him, though man, trembling all over, was fleeing from him. And he comforted him, promising to give him his Son, "born of a woman," to crush the head of the serpent, and to make him blessed.
(Creeds of the Church, 2003).

That God loved sin-ridden man is evident from Scripture, as John 3:16 indicates, but the justice of God required that God find a way that the penalty due to us for our sins be paid, as God could not accept us into fellowship with himself unless the penalty was paid. Romans 3:25 shows that Christ was sent to be a 'propitiation', a sacrifice that bears God's wrath so that becomes favourably disposed towards us (Grudem, 1994:568-569).

The matter of the universal atonement of Christ necessitates the question, are the implications of the fall universal, or were they restricted to Adam and Eve only? That the effects of the fall is universal, is shown to us in both Scripture (Romans 3:23 and 5:12) and in daily life, as numerous newspaper accounts regarding criminal and immoral activities continuously show us. The universality of Christ's atonement is a very important factor to keep in mind in pastoral counselling (cf John 3:16, Isaiah 55:1) . It brings succour for counselees in their time of desperation, when they realise that while they may have fallen into various, grave misdeeds (1 Corinthians 10:13), there is forgiveness and restoration (1 John 1:7), and indeed an opportunity to start anew (2 Corinthians 5:17), which would not have been possible without the atoning work of Christ, as we would all still be dead in our sins and trespass.

The work of the Holy Spirit in the atoning work of Christ, as applied to man, requires some attention. Prior to his death, Christ made the comment that it was beneficial for us that he should go away, for if he did not go away, the 'Helper' would not come (John 16:7 NKJV) The word 'helper' is derived from the Greek, παρακλητος (*paraklytos*) 'An *intercessor, consoler*: - advocate, comforter.' (, Strong, 1994 G3875 Louw & Nida, 1988: Semantic Domains.12.19). The name '*parakleitos*' is a composition of two Greek words *para*, meaning 'alongside' and *kaleo* meaning 'to call' and literally means 'someone alongside you who call or exhorts', or 'he who has been or may be called to help' (Zodhiates : 1991:1745-6 Paraklesis - 3874, and Parakletos - 3875). It is stated variously that the mission of the Spirit is to complete the program of the triune God in the world, not only as the source of life but also as the power of the eschatological renewal of life, and is the agent who brings in the new creation. He effects the union of believers with Christ, and the community of other Christians, the reconciled people of God (cf Grenz, 1995:379, Grudem, 1994:364). As the Spirit is indwelling (Romans 8:9, 1 Corinthians 3:16), he is ever-present to continue his work in the life of the

believer, and is therefore a constant companion through the trials and tribulations of life. Lotter (1993:74) posits that the redemptive work of Jesus Christ on the cross, is applied or executed in the lives of believers through the ministry of the Holy Spirit and is applicable, both internally and externally. Internally, the believer is transformed to mirror Christ which is exemplified in Galatians 5:22, 23 that points out that the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

Pastoral Perspectives. That Adam and Eve 'failed' is evident, as is the fact that God provided an opportunity in Jesus Christ to reverse 'failure'. No person can fall further than Adam and Eve had fallen, no matter what his or her transgression was. No man can fall further than being lost and condemned. The fact that Jesus Christ died on the cross as propitiation for the fallen sinner is irreversible. Therefore, there is a glorious hope for the worlds worst 'failure'; he can be renewed in Christ, and be given the opportunity, through the grace of God alone, to start anew. The discussion which follows, will indicate how the Bible tells us about this hope by showing that people who 'failed' could reverse the process when following God's imperative.

2.6.3. Gideon.

2.6.3.1. Background.

During the time of the Judges, there was no predetermined or planned leadership such as under a monarchy where the son of the king would rule after the death of the king. God raised up individuals to meet special circumstances (Mafico, 1998:559; ZPEB, 1977:718), and one such individual was a young man by the name of Gideon. Gideon lived in a time when Israel was frequently attacked by marauding hordes of nomadic Midianites, disrupting

the agrarian economy and forcing the inhabitants to take desperate measures, as indicated by Gideons' threshing of grain from within the shelter of a winepress (Judges 6:11). Block (1999:251) posits that the Midianites were the instruments that God used as agents of His divine punishment, meted out for the apostasy of His people. This would appear to be the fulfilment of the covenant curses outlined in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28. The mound of grain being threshed would not have been much, presumably sufficient for the week's ration, indicative of the harshness of the judgement that was imposed.

According to Van Der Merwe (1945:34) Gideon was a young man, having lost his two elder brothers to the marauders at mount Tabor, and adds that the embarrassment and shame of hiding from the enemy would have aroused feelings of acerbity and bitterness which would have been exacerbated by his inability to do anything about the situation. Furthermore, it would appear as if Gideon's father was a Baal priest and that he had custody of the altar that was erected to worship Baal (Judges 6:27). From this it is clear that Baalism had superceded Yahwism (Mafico, 1998: 559), which would explain the plight of the Israelites. That their plight was of their own devices is made evident from Judges 6:1, where the Bible simply states that the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord, and the primary instruments of God's discipline, were the Midianites, Amalakites and the Easterners (Block, 1999:251). Gideon's task would be to restore Israel to the service of the Lord alone. It should be noted that the dynamic leadership of Gideon that followed was not a result of public demand, personal desires for leadership, or a high opinion of his own abilities, but only as a result of his knowledge that God had called him and was leading him. Gideon was called by God primarily because of his valour and not so much because he a righteous person (Mafico, 1998:559), and even then he does not appear to be a very courageous individual, for when the messenger of the Lord addresses him, he is hiding from the marauders in a winepress, threshing wheat (Judges 6:11). There is a parallel between Moses and

Gideon, in that both expressed their sense of incompetence and inadequacy (Block, 1999:261, Webb, 1987:148). This parallel is expounded by Bosman (2003:261) and gives the following comparison between Moses and Gideon:

Moses		Gideon	
Hides in Midian	Ex. 3:1	Hides from the Midianites	Judg. 6:11
Empowered "I send you"	Ex. 3:12	Empowered "I send you"	Judg. 6:14
Feels inadequate	Ex. 3:11	Feels inadequate	Judg. 6:15
Receives a sign	Ex. 3:12	Receives a sign	Judg. 6:17
Called with fire	Ex 3:6	Called with fire	Judg. 6:21
Called by God Himself	Ex 3	Called by God Himself	Judg. 6

There were three objections raised before Gideon was convinced that God had a task for him: His feelings of responsibility towards his family's welfare, the doubts about the call itself, and thirdly, his feelings of inadequacy for the job at hand (L.A.B., 1989:429)

2.6.3.2. Analysis of 'Failure'

While Gideon may have been just another normal labourer to outsiders, he could, most likely, have been experiencing feelings of inadequacy, resentment and frustration due to the fact that there was nothing that he could do to remedy the situation. Hamlin (1990:93) holds that Gideon's trouble was of a psychological nature, in that he was overwhelmed by the disaster which had come on his people and was doubtful of God's power to deliver them, and in addition to this, Gideon suffered from an inferiority complex. When the

prevailing situation is kept in mind, and the fact that there was no-one else in Israel who was prepared to stand up to the Midianites, that his own family had suffered a number of setbacks, it is quite plausible that Gideon would have thought himself an unlikely candidate for the Lord's work. His reply to the Angel of the Lord gives us some insight to his inner most struggle. Gideon said to Him, *"O my lord, if the LORD is with us, why then has all this happened to us? And where are all His miracles which our fathers told us about, saying, 'Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt?' But now the LORD has forsaken us and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites."* (Judges 6:13 NKJV). The answer that Gideon gave the messenger of the Lord would appear to give the impression that Gideon thought that the Angel of the Lord was mocking him. In consideration of the above, it might readily be assumed that Gideon would have thought himself to be ineffectual, and a 'failure'. That he thought himself to be of no consequence and which could be interpreted as having a low self-image is evidenced by his own words, as recorded in Judges 6:15, "O my Lord, how can I save Israel? Indeed my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house." The despondency in his words would seem to bear witness to this line of thought.

2.6.3.3 'Failure' Utilised.

Gideon, though doubtful, displayed a commitment to the Lord despite his own weaknesses and shortcomings (L.A.B, 1989:429). He did not become leader at the demand of the people, as he evidently had scarcely thought of himself as his country's deliverer and he lived in fear of his fellow citizens (Judges 6:27). The call not only came to him as a surprise, but found him distrustful both of himself (Judges 6:15) and of his people (Judges 6:13). It found him too without inclination for the task, and only his conviction that the command was of God persuaded him to assume leadership (Schenk, 1996). The words of the Angel of the Lord in reply to Gideon's comment, is very instructive. "Then the LORD

turned to him and said, "Go in this might of yours, and you shall save Israel from the hand of the Midianites. Have I not sent you?" (Judges 6:14 NKJV). It would appear to be a contradictory statement, as Gideon did not feel 'mighty'. However, the key lies in the words, "Have I not sent you?" The implication being that he is being sent by God, and not by a mere mortal, and therefore has the authority and power to do as God commands. It is to his credit that Gideon was willing to allow himself to be used of God. Block (1999:260) holds that the might of Gideon actually refers to the power God will invest in Gideon as He commissions him. That Gideon was not immediately convinced of the endowment of Godly power, is apparent in his conduct when he toppled the pagan altar. This was done in the night, as he feared the consequences from the citizens of Ophrah, had he done so in broad daylight (Block, 1999:267). This conviction of Gideon that he was called and sent by God inspired him to obediently reduce his army to a mere 300 men, which would have been totally insufficient to battle against the hordes of the Midianites. The account of the battle and the subsequent victory is proof that the victory was of the Lord, and not by the strength of his hand (*cf* Judges 7:7; Gigot, 2003. Gideon). This commitment and trust in the ability of the Lord to overcome despite overwhelming odds is one of the themes of the Bible, and can also be found in the life of Abraham, who left his home-town Haran, to travel to an unknown country (*cf* Genesis 12:1-5). This theme is also seen *inter alia* in the lives of Joseph (*cf* Genesis 37-50), Moses (*cf* Exodus 3) and Samson (Judges 16). In the New Testament, it can also be read in the history of Paul, who, by his own account (2 Corinthians 12:9-10) stated that, in Christ, even though he is weak, he is strong, and able to endure and to overcome adversities. When Gideon's triumphs are brought to mind, it is seen that it is indeed so that the victory was achieved through the Lord. The value of the lesson learnt from Gideon and his reversal of 'failure' to pastoral counselling lies in the recognition that a conviction in the ability of the Lord to overcome life's diversities and challenges should not be disregarded, or minimized. The value of faith and conviction in

the ability of the Lord to carry through is evidenced by the last reference to Gideon found in the Bible, where he is counted as one of the heroes of the faith (Hebrews 11:32).

Pastoral Perspectives. Perhaps the most important lesson that can be learnt from the Gideon narrative is that the power and ability of God should not be forgotten wherever assistance is sought amongst the daily trials and tribulations of our lives. Philippians 4:13 states reassuringly that all things are possible, through Jesus Christ that strengthens us. However, it must also be admitted that, very often, it is only when man is brought to his wit's end, that he is able to release his tenacious grip on his own pitifully meagre abilities, and look to the Lord for his salvation. Gideon's experience reminds us that God uses ordinary people to accomplish His purposes, and that God leads one step at a time (Richards, 1999:105). There is tremendous comfort in the knowledge that **outside** of the counsellee, the power is in God's hands hence putting the focus not on the person, but with God who is almighty.

2.6.4. Elijah.

2.6.4.1. Background.

"And Elijah the Tishbite, of the inhabitants of Gilead" (1 Kings 17:1 NKJV), is the only reference we have as to the origin and identity of someone who has been called one of the greatest figures in the Bible (Viljoen, 1957:153), *the* great prophet, and one of the most distinctive and diversely talented individuals in the Bible (House, 1995:209, 212). This wonder-working prophet is introduced to us like another Melchizedek (Genesis 10:4,18), without any mention of his father or mother, or of the beginning of his days. It is as if he had dropped out of that cloudy chariot which, after his work was done on earth, conveyed him back to heaven (cf McClintock and Strong, 2003. Elijah). Rice

(1990:140) views Elijah as a meteor out of the blue that bursts upon Ahab's world, defying the royal establishment and challenging the powerful mystique of the Canaanite religion. Elijah is often regarded as a wilderness dweller, probably because of his trans-Jordanian connections and his clothing, a garment of haircloth and a leather belt, yet, he was repeatedly allowed to address the king in person. His ability to run before a chariot indicates that he must have been a man of great endurance (De Vries, 1975:284). Olley (1998:25,47) postulates that Elijah bursts on to the scene abruptly and unannounced, driven by a passion that is consistent with the whole of the former prophets. Alone and always in charge, which is indicative of his character and mission, he was sent to confront and not to comfort, and his message was often rejected just because he was mistaken to be the author of the message (L.A.B. 1989:637). Elijah's first known act, as a prophet of God was to prophesy that a three year long drought was about to strike the country, after which he fled to the brook Cherith where he was sustained by crows that brought him meat and bread (1 Kings 17:1-8). Following this, he went to Zarepath where he met a widow for whom two miracles were wrought, the first being the continuance of oil and flour, and the second, the revival of her son (1 Kings 17:13-24). The next recorded incident in his life was the confrontation and execution of the 450 prophets of Baal and his subsequent praying for rain (1 Kings 18). When Jezebel heard what had happened to the prophets, she sent a message to Elijah informing him of her intent to avenge the death of the prophets of Baal by killing him. Jezebel's fury at the murder of the 450 priests of Baal by Elijah is not only an expression of religious wrath, but of political wrath as well. Elijah's challenge on Carmel gave the lie to all that she had hoped to achieve, that is to rid primitive Israel of its obsessive Yahweh devotion, into a cosmopolitan one, akin to the surrounding nations. The problem was exacerbated by her husband Ahab who had willingly co-operated with Elijah (Hyman, 1990:289-290). An amazing turnabout takes place, where Elijah, on receiving this death threat, flees and '*ran for his life*', (1 Kings 19:3

NKJV) this despite having received death threats from her husband Ahab, and having shrugged them off. Taylor (2001:6), posits that, according to the text, the Holy Spirit of God did not drive him into the wilderness, his fear did. This dramatic about face of a mighty prophet after a tremendous success, defies explanation and could well be viewed as his 'failure'

2.6.4.2. Analysis of 'Failure'.

As mentioned above, Elijah's running away from Jezebel defies explanation. It appears that, like Samson, he was immediately bereft of all his power (Viljoen, 1957:168). In one stroke Jezebel rids the country of Elijah's troubling presence and brings discredit on the prophet of God. On his own in the wilderness of Beersheba, he lay down under a broom tree and prayed that he might die. His actions have been described as 'the peak of brokenness, dejection and discouragement' (Viljoen, 1957:169), and 'self-pity from which depression, despair and other sins are made' (Adams, 1973:372). Nelson (1987:126) describes Elijah as a broken, disappointed man. In today's language, Elijah would be called a 'drop-out', a 'failure'. Allen (1979:193) states that it is hard to imagine a more dramatic Old Testament character than Elijah, yet there is a perplexity regarding his character. On the one hand his very name evokes strong images, yet he has his darker side too, Elijah: moody, depressed, paranoid even afraid. He adds that his character is a conundrum, the 'Peter' of the Old Testament. Where Peter's courage failed him in the presence of a maid, so Elijah's strength wilted before the threats of Jezebel. Elijah wanted to die because he felt himself to be no better than his fathers (1 Kings 19:4) and the context suggests that he had his prophetic predecessors in mind and this would express a deep sense of 'failure' (Rice, 1990:157). The narrative shows deep psychological insight in describing the generalized depression that sometimes results from success, and the burned out prophet can only see the darkest side of the situation as he voices his ego-centred complaint to God (Nelson, 1987:126). The problem with Elijah would appear to be that he took

his eyes off the Lord and shifted his focus to a person. A very striking reference is made to Elijah in the New Testament that helps to bring about a little more perspective to this great prophet. James 5:17 states "Elijah was a man with a nature like ours" (NKJV), and it must be recognised therefore, that Elijah, as God's prophet, was just as susceptible to 'failure' as anybody else is.

2.6.4.3. 'Failure' Utilised.

The restoration of Elijah holds some very salient aspects. The first being his being resuscitation by an angel who brought him an ashcake and a jug of water, and sent him on his way to his encounter with God at Horeb (1 Kings 19). The second aspect of his restoration is his encounter with God. Hyman (1990:290) contends that there was a special relationship between God and Elijah. Elijah was excessively zealous for God, and it is because of this fervour that he is endowed with unusual power, a power which God himself submits. The more tender aspects of the relationship come to the fore on the mountain. As Olley (1998:47) points out, God's quiet work is juxtaposed with Elijah's confrontational style. Hawkins (2001:13) points out that Elijah had taken refuge in a cave on the Mount Horeb, the same mountain, elsewhere known as Sinai, upon whose height Moses received the tablets of the Law. Told to confront the Almighty on sacred territory, the prophet is placed in a dilemma, as he would have been aware of the warning contained in Exodus 33:20 'You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live.'" On the mountain Elijah took refuge in a cave, and God asked him what he was doing there? Nelson (1987:123) contends that the real story behind Elijah's experience on Mount Horeb is really about Elijah's attempt to relinquish his prophetic office and God's insistence that he should continue. Elijah's reply was not criticised, and he was instructed to go and stand outside the cave and stand before the Lord. What happens next is reminiscent of Adam and Eve and Moses' encounter with God under similar circumstances. - Following their fall from grace, Adam and Eve met God while He was walking in the garden in the cool of day, and no

reproach was made (Genesis 3:8). Moses asked to see the face of the Lord, and received a kind reply (Exodus 33:18-23). It appears as if the compassion of the Lord is manifested to Elijah, as he meets God, not in a great strong wind that broke rocks in pieces, or in the following earthquake and fire, but in a 'still small voice' (1 Kings 19:12). Elijah was compassionately restored to office and sent back the way he came, to anoint Hazael as king of Syria, and to anoint Elisha as prophet in his place. Elijah had a final encounter with his arch-enemies Ahab and Jezebel and prophesied the manner of their death. Elijah's ministry continued for some time, and he was not destined to see death, but "a chariot of fire appeared with horses of fire, and separated the two of them; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven" (2 Kings 2:11 NKJV).

Pastoral Perspectives. From the account of Elijah's 'failure' and the subsequent reversal of 'failure', three very important lessons are to be learnt. One, it is a mistake to take your eyes off the Lord and only see the circumstances around you or the people threatening you. The concomitant result is the 'failure' of your faith. This point has an enormous influence on the ability of the counsellee to see a problem through. Very often blind faith is the last tie that binds the believer to God. The second lesson that is learnt is that the compassion of God exceeds the faults of man. Elijah was witness to the resuscitation of a tired body and spirit through bread and water, and the tender mercy on the mountain. The third lesson that is learnt from Elijah's experience is that 'failure' is ultimately turned around into success by God, and results in the glorifying of God. As Isaiah 61:3 states that the Spirit of the sovereign Lord has sent someone "To console those who mourn in Zion, To give them beauty for ashes, The oil of joy for mourning, The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; That they may be called trees of righteousness, The planting of the LORD, *that He may be glorified.*"

2.6.5. David.

2.6.5.1. Background.

When we think of David, we think of the shepherd, poet, giant-killer, king and ancestor of Jesus Christ, in short, one of the greatest men in the Old Testament (LAB, 1989:511 'David'). From the Biblical accounts, it would appear that his was not a popular sibling (1 Samuel 17:28) and that he was scorned for his poetic ability (Viljoen, 1957:34). From the depth of the Psalms that David composed it soon becomes evident that the time spent on pastoral duties made the relationship with God grow and that it would appear to have no comparison in Scripture. He is remembered and respected for his heart for God, and, more than anything else, had an unchangeable belief in the faithful and forgiving nature of God (LAB, 1989:511 David). Weir (2003. David) makes a most interesting observation that in respect of David's character the most opposite estimates have been formed. This is indeed so, as on one hand he is extolled as a saint, and yet few men have committed worse crimes. Bergen (1996:361) observes that 2 Samuel 11 forms a watershed in the Biblical writers presentation of David's life. Initially, David was portrayed as the servant of the Lord, scrupulously obedient in every point of the law. A turnabout takes place and in a moment David becomes a rebel against the Lord's covenant, with devastating consequences. It becomes clear from Scripture that when he sinned, and realised that he had sinned, David's remorse and repentance was sincere (2 Samuel 24:17). On the other hand, David committed adultery with Bathsheba and arranged the murder of her husband to cover up his sin, as Scott (1975:36) comments 'sin upon sin', and it took a bold Nathan, the prophet of the Lord, who confronted David with his sin, before David realised what he had done (2 Samuel 12:17). God sent a prophet who used a parable to convince David of his transgression, and in this sense was an ambassador for God. As it was a dangerous mission that he embarked upon, and much

depended on the manner in which Nathan would convey his message to his king. Nathan makes use of a parable in order to bring a simple yet telling message that would convince David of his sin (*cf* Vermeulen, 1999:35), and it is through the use of a parable that David is trapped into indignant judgement (Campbell & O'Brien, 1998:599).

2.6.5.2. Analysis of 'Failure'.

Goldingay (2002:242) is of the opinion that David had grown used to killing and deceiving people, and treating woman as things, however, there is no excuse for his wickedness. In this light it would appear as if the manner in the handling of the matter of Uriah, more than the matter of Bathsheba, had awakened the anger of the Lord against David, as it was David's sin of deliberation and determination rather than his sin of passion, that was the root of the problem. In this the root of the problem lay in that David after committing adultery, conspired to cover his transgression by plotting to murder Uriah. In this, David compounded his original sin and this brought the name of the Lord in to disrepute (2 Samuel 12:14) In this state, David continued for some time, apparently unaware of his transgression. This prompts us to enquire how it can happen that a man who loved the Lord, so blatantly disregards the One who showed him so much compassion and grace? As Whyte (1903:125 Vol II) so touchingly comments, "what a bottomless mystery and misery and agony of sin and shame the heart is, and most of all the heart of a man after God's own heart?"

2.6.5.3. 'Failure' Utilised.

It would appear from Scripture that the most important turning point in David's life came about following the visit of Nathan. Vermeulen (1999:49) holds that God often uses people to confront you with your sinful situation, and indeed this is what happened. Nathan presents himself at the court of David and tells

the parable of the of the rich man and the poor man's ewe lamb (2 Samuel 12:1-25), and David realises that Nathan is actually referring to him, and the message hits home. One of the most poignant pieces of Scripture is Psalm 51, which David composed after his visit from Nathan. It is from Psalm 51 we learn the very important lesson that God is willing to forgive the repentant sinner, and from Scripture (Psalm 103:12, Hebrews 10:17) we also learn that God does not hold the transgressions of the repentant sinner against him. From David's deep sense of guilt, as revealed in Psalm 32, and his repentance, as expressed in Psalm 51, we learn that David truly responded to God, and relied on God's grace to create in him a clean heart and to restore the joy of his salvation (Richards, 1999:52). If David 'failed', as it so appears in Scripture, and his 'failure' could be utilised, then perhaps the greatest lesson to be learned was not restricted to David alone, but to all humanity through the ages, that God is willing to forgive, and start again. In the context of modern man, who is very aware of 'failure' and success, it would appear as if it is an invaluable lesson that 'failure' does not mean the end of the world, but perhaps, a better world.

Pastoral Perspectives. From the life history of David we learn that the heart of man can soar to heights not often attained by the average person, and also plumb the dark depths where the vile nature of sin is exposed. We should not be caught off-guard by this, indeed, we should expect it, not only from others, but also of ourselves. David left us a lasting legacy, an awareness that, despite the wickedness of the depraved heart, God is always willing to forgive and even sends someone to rebuke the sinner. An important pastoral perspective is also that the sinner should repent of his/her sins and turn to God for forgiveness. No matter how great the 'failure' may be, the grace of God is always bigger!

2.6.6. Peter.

2.6.6.1. Background.

The four Gospels are full of the name of Peter, and after the name of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, no other name in the Gospels is more frequently mentioned other than that of Peter. The Lord speaks more often to Peter than to any other of the other disciples, sometimes with praise, sometimes with blame, but then no disciple speaks as much as Peter does either! (Viljoen, 1957:268) The life-story of Peter falls into two parts: first, from his call to the ascension of Christ; secondly, from that event to the close of his earthly career. The first period may again be conveniently divided into the events prior to the Passion of Christ and those following (Gray, 1996. ISBE 'Peter'). The first words spoken to Peter by Jesus Christ were "Follow Me" (Mark 1:17 NKJV), and the last words spoken to Peter by Jesus Christ were "Follow you Me" (John 21:22) and Peter never failed to follow - even though he stumbled often (LAB 1989:1629 Peter). Peter is presented to us in the Gospels as someone who was outspoken, without guise, pretense or prejudice, and as he is, so he presents himself to us (Viljoen, 1957:269). Van Der Merwe (1945:154) is of the opinion that this was exactly where Peter's problem lay, as Peter's impulsiveness was one of the major factors that led to his downfall.

2.6.6.2. Analysis of 'Failure'.

Peter's 'failure' came about when he thrice denied Christ in the courtyard of Caiaphas, the high priest. The turning point came with the third instance of his denial. *"Then he began to curse and swear, saying, "I do not know the Man!" Immediately a rooster crowed. And Peter remembered the word of Jesus who had said to him, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." So he went out and wept bitterly."*(Matthew 26:74-75 NKJV). Luke is the only gospel account that mentions the fact that at the time of the third denial, Jesus turned

and looked at Peter, whereupon he remembered the words of Christ that he would thrice deny Him (Luke 22:61). It would appear from the context of the account that Peter met the gaze of his Master, and realizing what had transpired, turned, left the courtyard, and wept bitterly. Peter, previously bold in his confidence of his faithfulness to Jesus succumbed to a fearful denial of Jesus Christ. His first denial was in the courtyard before everyone gathered there, and took the form of an expression of incomprehension. The second denial, accompanied by an oath, was a denial of knowing Jesus Christ. The third denial was a repetition of his knowledge of Jesus Christ, and was accompanied with an oath (Leske, 1998:1325). Boasting of our abilities is an invitation to failure, and that is precisely what Peter discovered (Borchert, 2002:230). Peter failed at this stage of his discipleship, showing that he was merely a fallible human being. This only goes to show that we as human beings do not have to be perfect to become followers of Jesus Christ or to be accepted by God. Peter had good and noble intentions, but he also suffered from human insecurities.

2.6.6.3. 'Failure' Utilised.

Not much is heard or seen of Peter specifically following his denial of Christ other than that he was one of the two disciples who ran to see the empty burial chamber, (John 20:3) and his encounter with the risen Christ as related to us in John 21. The encounter on the beach of Sea of Tiberias is very significant. Borchert (2002:333) holds that John, the evangelist, was affirming a well-known concept that for a person to become right with God and gain a sense of release from the past sense of rebellion that that person should face the reality of where the sin or deviation occurred. Beasley-Murray (1987:404, 405) speaks of the 'peculiar rupture' of the relationship between Jesus Christ and Peter that had to be rehabilitated. Three times Jesus enquired of Peter if he loved Him. However, the English translation has lost some of the original meaning. "So
when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of

*Jonah, do you love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." (John 21:15 NKJV). The word 'love' used by Jesus Christ is the Greek word *agapao* which carries the implication of being Godly love (Thayer, 1977:4 '*agapé*', Louw & Nida, 1994.25.43). Peter replied that Jesus knew that he loved Him, but Peter used the word *phileo*, denoting a 'brotherly love'(Thayer, 1977:653 '*phileo*' Louw & Nida 1994. 25.33). If Peter recognised his mistake is unlikely, as he repeats his words. On the third question whether Peter loved Him, Jesus departed from the use of the word *agapao*, and used the word *phileo* as Peter had done. However, Peter must have realised what was going on, as is indicated by his reply. "Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You" (John 21:17 NKJV). In this instance Peter's grief would most likely have included the realisation of what he had actually been saying. It is at this point that Jesus commissions Peter to look after His sheep, prophesies how Peter would eventually die, and concludes with the admonition that Peter should follow Him, regardless of what happened to John. In this, Peter's restoration following his fall, is complete, and the words of Jesus regarding this are brought to mind. "And the Lord said, "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. "But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren" (Luke 22:31-32). Peter became the apostle to the Jews (circumcised) according to Galatians 2:7-8, and Acts records that he was a mighty instrument in the hand of the Lord, and he remained so, loyal to his beloved Master till the end.*

Pastoral Perspectives. What is learnt from Peter is that enthusiasm has to be backed up by faith and understanding or else it fails. We must understand the character of God in order to comply with the will of God. A proper grasp on the unending and unfailing love of God towards sinners. A second lesson that we learn from Peter is that when God restores a penitent sinner, the restoration

is often to a higher level than that person enjoyed previously. Peter started off as simple fisherman, and ended up being one of the pillars of the early church. When a person 'fails', and is willing to learn from his or her 'failure', the 'failure' may be a blessing in disguise. When we hear the trumpet blow, or the cock crowing, we must be alert to our own failures (Borchert, 2002:236).

2.6.7. Judas.

2.6.7.1. Background.

Judas Iscariot was, as his name indicates, a native of Kerioth, the exact location of Kerioth is, however, doubtful, but it lay probably to the South of Judaea. According to Edersheim (1993:361), he alone was of Judaeen origin, the other apostles were all of Galilean origin. The first Scriptural reference to Judas is his election to the apostleship (*cf* Matthew 10:4; Mark 3:19; Luke 6:16). For any definite allusion to Judas during the interval between his call and the events immediately preceding the betrayal, we are indebted to the gospel of John alone. Kent (2004. Judas Iscariot) observes that very little is told concerning the history of Judas, beyond the bare facts of his call to the apostolate, his treachery and his death. These allusions are made with the seemingly, manifest purpose of showing the nefarious character of Judas from the beginning. What his personal motives were for becoming an apostle are open to conjecture, although he appears to be one of the faithful. One probability will be touched upon in the paragraph regarding the analysis of 'failure' (2.6.7.2). It is probable that his sagacity in business was a natural gift which initially suggested the choice of him as the appointed keeper of the common purse. However, this appointment, probably made by the apostles themselves, was not a good choice as he appropriated some the funds for his own use (John 12:6, 13:29), and appears to have been a greedy person, as indicated by his response to Mary's anointing of Jesus' feet (John 12:4-6). His

relation to Jesus is not mentioned until the episode at Bethany when he protested about the anointing of Jesus by Mary and, it would appear, he had been rebuked by Jesus (Tenney, 1975:732)

2.6.7.2. Analysis of 'Failure'.

The apostasy of Judas did not suddenly appear at the end of Jesus' ministry, but apparently a year before the crucifixion (*cf* John 6:64-70, FDB, 1998. Judas Iscariot). The first indication of the downfall of Judas is given by Jesus Christ, as related to us in Matthew 26:24 "The Son of Man indeed goes just as it is written of Him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born." Newman and Stine (1988. Matthew) contend that it would have been better if that person had not been born at all. With regards to Judas, it indicates that:

1. that the crime which he was about to commit was enormous;
2. that the misery or punishment coupled to the crime would certainly come upon him;
3. that he deserved that misery, or it would not have been threatened ;
- and,
4. that his punishment would be eternal.

Edersheim (1993:526)- correctly- contends that we cannot attempt to fathom the mysterious abyss of the Satanic element in Judas's apostasy, but we may try to follow the course of his apostasy in its psychological development.

Borchert (2002: 90) argues that while Judas has been designated a thief, an evil person and a traitor, there is no question that he is a villain in the gospel according to John, but behind Judas lurks a greater villain, the devil. It would be a mistake to regard Judas as a monster. We should perhaps, see in him something that is all too prevalent in modern society: that of being covetousness. The reasons for Judas' willingness to betray Jesus Christ may have been his love for money, greed, envy or disillusionment (Leske, 1998:1322), thwarted hopes, frustrated ambition or intense ideological

differences (Nelson, 1999:225 Judas; Davies & Allison, 1997:451). Martin (1972:673 NBD Judas) cites Schulthess and Wellhausen who were of the opinion that the word 'Iscariot' was an Aramacized *'isqaryā'ā*, with reference to Acts 21:38, in which reference is made by the Roman commander to a number of assassins. The word 'assassin' (Strong's, G4607 *sikarios*) being of Latin origin, means 'a *dagger man* or *assassin*; a *freebooter* (Jewish *fanatic* outlawed by the Romans): or 'a murderer' (cf ABD:1091, 'Judas'). The reference to a 'Jewish fanatic' has some very interesting substance to it. It is well known, from Scripture, that the Jews expected the Messiah to relieve them of Roman oppression, as is indicated by the question "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6 NKJV). If Judas was a 'Jewish fanatic', colloquially, a freedom fighter perhaps, then it would explain his zeal, and his willingness to bide his time until the right moment came to do what he thought was necessary to further the political aims of a free Judaea. Apart from Judas' quasi-political motives that could have resulted in his subsequent demise, it was the fact that he betrayed Jesus Christ and committed suicide that was his 'failure'. This 'failure' is exacerbated by the fact that while there was remorse, his remorse was not laid at the feet of Jesus Christ, and hence there was no restoration. When the case of Judas is compared to that of Peter, there are some interesting comparisons: Both betrayed Jesus and both went out into the dark of night. Peter was restored, Judas not. Peter took his remorse to Jesus Christ, Judas did not, and therein lies the difference between the two persons. Remorse is of no value, unless it is laid at the feet of Jesus Christ. The question that defies a definite reply is whether, had Judas stayed his hand, and also waited to meet the risen Christ, would he also have been accorded divine pardon and grace and continued as an zealous apostle to the very end of his life as was the case with Peter? If what happened to Peter is any indication, it could be argued that the same pardon could have been extended to Judas as well.

2.6.7.3. 'Failure' Utilised.

Edersheim (1993:526) hypothesizes that it was Judas's ambition towards political freedom, the restoration of the kingdom of Israel, that was the driving force behind Judas, and which eventually led to his downfall. It was the increasing disenchantment that culminated in Jesus' refusal to meet the public challenge of the Pharisees that permeated Judas's heart and soul. The triumphal entry into Jerusalem (Matthew 21:6-11, John 12:14-15) that was customary for kings and dignitaries (*cf* 2 Kings 9:13), could have been the opportunity for which Judas had been waiting patiently, and when nothing happened, his hopes were dashed. As Edersheim (1993:801) nicely puts it, mental and moral alienation went together, affected by and affecting each other. When the Messianic faith in Jesus Christ gave way to utter disappointment, the moral and spiritual character of Christ's teachings would affect him, not sympathetically, but antipathetically. Ericson (1981:319) is of the opinion that Judas disagreed with Jesus' mission, and instead of resolving the problem, repression pointed him to gross and meaningless reaction. ZPED (1977:732) indicates that Jesus' consistent refusal to make His mission political, and His open declaration at the feast of Bethany, that His death was eminent, may have spurred Judas to action. Perhaps it is pure speculation, perhaps there might be a grain of truth in it somewhere, but the possibility surely exists that Judas's betrayal of Christ was a final act of desperation to force him to action and compelling Jesus Christ to start the rebellion that would lead to the restoration of the kingdom of Israel. Borchert (2002:94) cites Beasley-Murray as being of the opinion that Judas was put in a spot during the last supper prior to his betraying of Jesus Christ. When Judas was singled out by the morsel one could ask the question whether this was a last act of love towards Judas. It certainly gives for food for thought. Be that then, as it may, Judas' act of betrayal fits into God's plan for the way in which Jesus Christ would redeem mankind (Williams;1990:963). John. 13:30 makes a poignant statement that it was night when Judas left the upper room to go on his

nefarious mission, and it could not have been darker out than it was in Judas' heart.

Pastoral Perspectives. In Judas we see ourselves, stripped of the veneer of outward appearance, and acting according to the dictates of our hearts. Our own self-centred ideals can consume a person to his or her detriment. If Judas fell into a black abyss, deluded by Satan and ulterior motives, we must learn from his example and be the more careful not only of our actions, but also to the depths of depravity into which one close to Jesus Christ can sink. While Judas is clearly not an example of 'failure' being reversed, his fate is a stark reminder of what lies in waiting for those who reject the grace of Jesus Christ and ultimately pay the price of 'failure'.

2.6.8. Tabitha/Dorcas.

2.6.8.1. Background.

The Biblical account of Tabitha, or Dorcas as she is also known, is very brief, and it is surmised that she may have been one of the early converts of Phillip, the evangelist, who established a Christian church at Joppa (Nelson; 1987:88 Dorcas), and also a possible prototype first-century deaconess (*cf* Richards & Richards, 1999:271). The choice of Tabitha as an illustration, despite the very limited account in Scripture, is deliberately so, as there is much to be learnt from her account. There are only 7 verses pertaining to Dorcas, those being Acts 9:36-42. The most striking aspect of her account is her restoration to life by Peter, however, this is not the matter that we are concerned with, but the fact that she was a widow, and a disciple to boot, engaged in good works and charitable deeds. Lenski (1964:384) asserts that as the account makes no reference to any relatives, it leaves the impression that Tabitha lived by herself. And yet, although she lived alone and with no special object in life, she

fashioned an important place for herself in the life of the young congregation. When Peter arrived in the upper room the widows showed him all the tunics and garments that she had made while she was still with them. This has raised conjectures that there might have been an order of widows in the Christian Church from an early date, and that Tabitha/Dorcas may have been in charge of such an order. On the other hand, Barret (1998:478) argues that it might just have been a community of beneficiaries that included or was related to a clientele of widows who are supplied with clothing. Dorcas was not originally a proper Greek name, but rather a nickname which means 'gazelle' as does the Aramaic name Tabitha. This may suggest that Dorcas was or had been a slave, since extant literature of the period indicated that slaves bore nicknames of this sort much more often than was true of the general population. (ABD:225, 'Dorcas')

2.6.8.2. Analysis of 'Failure'.

Despite the brevity of the account, it would appear that Tabitha was also a widow, and it is this singular fact that lends weight to her case. According to De Vaux (1961, 39-40, 54-55) the widows were sustained at the church's expense. Particular directions are given by Paul regarding those persons entitled to such maintenance (1 Timothy 5:3-16). From all the widows only a certain number were to be enrolled; the qualifications for enrollment were (1) that they were not under sixty years of age; (2) that they had been the wife of one man, probably meaning only once married, and (3) that they had led useful and charitable lives (vv. 9-10). In this particular sense, Tabitha could have been reliant on external subsistence, and could have seen her life reduced to waiting for handouts, and therefore have been a 'failure'. This is a common perception amongst the elderly of our day, as perceived from current service in the ministry, that once the elderly cannot support themselves anymore they view themselves as 'failure's and a burden on the church and society. This sentiment is often heard when the elderly move into a retirement home.

2.6.8.3. 'Failure' Utilised.

Tabitha would also have been entitled to such maintenance as was commonly provided to the destitute, but from the Scriptural account, she endeavoured to support herself. She was a dressmaker, and instead of enriching herself, she enriched her soul and the lives of the others in the congregation. The works that she did was really made for the Lord, and many who have found themselves in her situation would have felt that there is nothing they could do about it, and yet she saw an opportunity and made the most of it (*cf* Lenski, 1964:388). This correlates with Proverbs 31:10-31 where a virtuous wife was not someone who sat at home gossiping and depending on others to help her, but was willing to work to assist in the upkeep of the household. Had Tabitha been trained in this manner, *seeking wool and flax, and willingly working with her hands, stretching out her hands to the distaff, and holding the spindle, she extends her hand to the poor, yes, she reaches out her hands to the needy,*' it stands to reason that she would have continued in her industry after becoming widowed, providing not only for herself, but also those less fortunate in the community. The supposition that she was such an industrious person would explain that her death and restoration to life "became known throughout all Joppa, and many believed on the Lord" (Acts 9:42 NKJV). There was a spin-off to the sickness and death of Tabitha. The gathering of the widows in the upper room (Acts 9:39) had the effect of strengthening and renewing the mutual relations between Peter and the widows of the community and, and amongst the widows and the church in Joppa (Wall, 2002:170).

Pastoral Perspectives. We learn from this account that a person has a choice as to how he or she is going to handle adversity. One can resign yourself to self-pity and defeat, or you can do what you can to alleviate your distress, even to such an extent that hardship can be turned into self-

sufficiency. 2 Corinthians 1:4 also points out that while we are comforted by God in our tribulations in diverse ways, it is incumbent on us to do likewise to those who are in trouble. Furthermore, it is evident that Tabitha's 'death' and resurrection was used by God in the furtherance of the Gospel in Joppa and had the effect of the conversion of a large number of people (Acts 9:42). This indicates that God can turn human 'failure' around to suit His purposes. Had Tabitha not died, the church in Joppa would not have benefited from it and prospered as it had done.

2.6.9 A tabulated view of the case studies and their value.

Biblical Character	'Failure'	'Failure' utilised/reversed
Adam and Eve.	Fall of mankind.	Redemption of all mankind through Christ.
Gideon	Feelings of inadequacy.	God's strength made manifest in human weakness.
Elijah	Falling from a position of assertiveness into abject depression	Restoration to service through the tenderness of God
David	Adultery and murder, and attempting to cover it up.	Being broken before God, and having his sin forgiven and being restored.
Peter	His denial of Christ.	Having plumbed the depths of his own soul, he was instrumental in the growth of the first church.
Judas	His betrayal of Christ	Anybody can fall, but the answer lies in accepting divine forgiveness. Without divine forgiveness, we are condemned.
Dorcas	Being widowed.	She learnt not only to fend for herself, but also to support others in need.

2.7 PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS FROM CHAPTER 2. BASIS-THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON 'FAILURE': EXPOSITORY RESEARCH.

- Man is created in the likeness of God with the ability to respond to God's calling to improve himself.
- The greatest "failure" of man was his fall from a sinless position before God, into sin and all the devastation that it brought about.
- The redemption of man forms the greatest form of restoration from "failure" that man can achieve.
- The expression "failure" in Scripture points to the fact that man 'misses his goal', 'dies' or fails to achieve the goals that God has set out before him.
- The opposite of "failure" could be equated to living according to the will of God for man.
- 'Failure' is often the result of focussing on other people, rather than on God.
- The case studies show that it is no point in wallowing in your own misery. Restoration and elevation above "failure" in Christ is possible, if the penitent is willing to accept it.

Preliminary Conclusions from the case studies.

- **Adam and Eve.** That Adam and Eve 'failed' is evident, as is the fact that God provided an opportunity in Jesus Christ to reverse 'failure'. No person can fall further than Adam and Eve had fallen, no matter what his or her transgression was. No man can fall further than being lost and condemned. The fact that Jesus Christ died on the cross as appropriation for the fallen sinner is irreversible. Therefore, there is a glorious hope for the world's worst 'failure'; he can be renewed in Christ.

and be given the opportunity, through the grace of God alone, to start anew.

- **Gideon.** Perhaps the most important lesson that can be learnt from the Gideon narrative is that the power and ability of God should not be forgotten wherever assistance is sought amongst the daily trials and tribulations of our lives. Philippians 4:13 states reassuringly that all things are possible, through Jesus Christ that strengthens us. However, it must also be admitted that, very often, it is only when man is brought to his wits end, that he is able to release his tenacious grip on his own pitifully meagre abilities, and look to the Lord for his salvation. Gideon's experience reminds us that God uses ordinary people to accomplish His purposes, and that God leads one step at a time (Richards, 1999:105)
- **Elijah.** From the account of Elijah's 'failure' and the subsequent reversal of 'failure', three very important lessons are to be learnt. One, it is a mistake to take your eyes off the Lord. The concomitant result is the 'failure' of your faith. This point has an enormous influence on the ability of the counsellee to see a problem through. Very often blind faith is the last tie that binds the believer to God. The second lesson that is learnt is that the compassion of God exceeds the faults of man. Elijah was witness to the resuscitation of a tired body and spirit through bread and water, and the tender mercy on the mountain. The third lesson that is learnt from Elijah's experience is that 'failure' is ultimately turned around into success by God, and results in the glorifying of God. As Isaiah 61:3 states: "To console those who mourn in Zion, To give them beauty for ashes, The oil of joy for mourning, The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; That they may be called trees of righteousness, The planting of the LORD, *that He may be glorified.*"

- **David.** From the life history of David we learn that the heart of man can soar to heights not often attained by the average person, and also plumb the dark depths where the vile nature of sin is exposed. We should not be caught off-guard by this, indeed, we should expect it, not only from others, but also of ourselves. David left us a lasting legacy, an awareness that, despite the wickedness of the depraved heart, God is always willing to forgive the penitent sinner. No matter how great your 'failure' may be, the grace of God is always bigger.
- **Peter.** Peter teaches us that enthusiasm has to be backed up by faith and understanding or else it fails. We must understand the character of God in order to comply with the will of God. A second lesson that we learn from Peter is that when God restores a penitent sinner, the restoration is often to a higher level than that person enjoyed previously. Peter started off as simple fisherman, and ended up being one of the pillars of the early church. When a person 'fails', and is willing to learn from his or her 'failure', the 'failure' may be a blessing in disguise. When we hear the trumpet blow, or the cock crowing, we must be alert to our own failures.
- **Judas.** In Judas we see ourselves, stripped of the veneer of outward appearance, and acting according to the dictates of our hearts. Our own self-centred ideals can consume a person to his or her detriment. If Judas fell into a black abyss, deluded by Satan and ulterior motives, we must learn from his example and be the more careful not only of our actions, but also to the depths of depravity into which one close to Jesus Christ can sink. While Judas is clearly not an example of 'failure' being reversed, his fate is a stark reminder of what lies in wait for those who reject the grace of Jesus Christ and ultimately pay the price of 'failure'

- **Tabitha.** We learn from this account that a person has a choice as to how he or she is going to handle adversity. One can resign yourself to self-pity and defeat, or you can do what you can to alleviate your distress, even to such an extent that hardship can be turned into self-sufficiency.

**CHAPTER 3. BASIS-THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES OF 'Failure' :
'POPULAR THEOLOGICAL APPROACHES'. (As perceived in popular
Christian literature.)**

3.1. Introduction.

As mentioned in the beginning of Chapter 2, the basis-theoretical perspectives of "failure" can be divided into two groups, the first being the expository perspectives, and a separate division that concentrated on the 'popular theological literature', which will be studied in this chapter. When reference is made to 'popular theology', it refers to a specific *genre* in theological literature that endeavours to convey Biblical norms and values in such a way that the layman can understand and apply these norms and values to his or her life.

Fuller (1990:109) observes that to speak of 'practical theology' often conveys images of the things that the pastor does, such as to pray, preach, mediate and repair, but 'practical theology' actually concerns the entire spectrum of church life, and the application of the counsel of God to all life, implying that there are just about no limitations to what can be included in the discipline of practical theology. Pieterse (1993:5) views practical theology as the communicative activities in the service of the gospel in the lives of believers, and Venter (1996:3) refers to the involvement of theology in the realities of life. Practical theology, pastoral theology and, for that matter, pastoral psychology, differs from systematic theology in that, while systematic theology concerns itself with the dogmatic exegesis of Scripture, pastoral theology is concerned with the practical application of Scripture in tending God's flock, or as Viau (1999:x) posits, the shifting focus of the church's actions in a secularised world. Heyns (1988:111) posits that theology can be likened to a large house that has many

rooms, and that the different rooms represent different divisions in theology. The rooms represent, *inter alia*, Old Testament and New Testament Studies, Church History, Missiology, Dogmatics, and Practical Theology, each with its own subdivisions, while all the rooms share a common foundation and roof called 'Theology'. If this study on 'failure' can be subdivided and placed in its respective 'rooms' of the 'theology house', then the basis-theory would fall under 'Dogmatics', as 'failure' was investigated in terms of the exegesis of the relevant Scripture and popular theology. The following chapter, the meta-theory, would then fall under 'Practical Theology', as it is the intention to study 'failure' in terms of the practical implications it has for the believer. It must be kept in mind that theology is an aggregate of its sub-disciplines and that a field of study is not a section of theology but rather a particular perspective on theology (Heyns & Pieterse, 1990:5). The reason why pastoral psychological and popular theological literature is discussed under this chapter and not under the previous chapter on the basis-theory, is two-fold. Firstly, it would appear as if the inclination of popular theological literature is more to the side of meta-theoretical perspectives, as opposed to a more systematic theological stance, and, secondly, it is the intention of the author to study the pastoral aspects of 'failure' as perceived in the milieu of pastoral counselling. Much of the literature found on the subject of 'failure' tends to make itself more readable to the average 'man in the street' and is not intended to be a systematic-theological discussion of the phenomenon (*cf* Lutzer:1987:11). Scottish preacher Alexander Whyte, cited by Robinson (1992:11), once described the perseverance of the saints as a falling down and getting up, falling down and getting up, falling down and getting up, all the way to heaven. Robinson then adds, that it is not difficult to put together a theology for success; it is not hard to celebrate men and women who are winners and to explain what makes them great. The difficult part is to construct a theology for 'failure's'. Much has been written about the achievements of the successful, but, perhaps true to the human nature that does not readily admit to mistakes and 'failure's' due to the

shame and embarrassment commonly coupled to 'failure', the 'failures' of man are usually kept from public eyes. Should one consider the books and other literature available regarding personal growth and motivational inspiration, 'failure' might be touched on, but mostly as a departure point to achieve 'success'. Seldom is the phenomenon of 'failure' studied, perhaps, because, as the common adage says, 'nobody likes a loser'. It is only relatively recently that 'failure' has been studied from a pastoral point of view, with the aim of assisting counselees to overcome their fear and stigma attached to 'failure' (cf. Lutzer, 2001; Anderson, 2000; Oliver, 1995; Lutzer, 1987).

What then is said in Christian literature on the subject of 'failure'? A practical problem presents itself at this stage of the study. There are very few books written on the subject of 'failure' as seen from a Christian perspective. Howard Hendricks, in the introduction to "'failure': the backdoor to success", (cf. Lutzer:1987:9) aptly makes the observation,

*'failure' is one of the uglies of life. We deny it, run away from it, or, upon being overtaken, fall into permanent paralyzing fear. **Probably because of our reluctance to face it, not much is written about the anatomy of 'failure'**. As Christians we wave our visionary banners proclaiming, "Victory in Christ," refusing often even to admit that the path to ultimate victory may include intermediate bloody noses.*

Lutzer (1987:13-18) cites three examples that illustrate the problem Christians have regarding "'failure'". In the first example, a young man accepted Christ into his life, and subsequently joined the police force where he tried to live out his testimony in all spheres of his life, and was rewarded with ridicule and scorn. The ridicule and embarrassment led the young man to believe that he had failed. He made the comment, *My friends are rejecting Christ, but maybe*

it's just because they don't want to be like me, and on that score who would blame them. Who would like to be like me? Weighed down by a feeling of 'failure', fuelled by the fact that the young man was not a natural leader, nor did he have a winsome personality, he committed suicide.

The second example concerns a young lady who had accepted Christ at a very young age, and married a hot-tempered, egotistical and irrational young executive, naively believing all things would work out well for those who love God. The marriage broke down, the children became rebellious, and she was broken in spirit and weary of life itself. She pondered the question, if God could not bless her marriage, how could she even consider being blessed by God in any other spheres of her life?

The third example recounts the experiences of a young couple who believed they were called to the missionary field, and following their training, they set off for Africa. They suffered a culture shock, as is often the case, and struggled to cope with the feeling that they were not appreciated, which eventually spiralled into feelings of isolation, resentment and feelings of being cheated which led to conflict with other missionaries. In order not to face their friends back home and to publically admit that they were 'failure's, they returned to their home country, but to another city, claiming that they had to leave the missionary field due to health reasons. They were left with thoughts of being second-class citizens in the kingdom of heaven.

Oliver (1995:16) defines 'failure' as: *the condition of not achieving the desired end or ends; the condition of being found insufficient or falling short. When we fail, we have proved ourselves to be deficient, unsuccessful, or undependable; we've lost.* He adds that in many cases, "failure" involves a major psychological crises with its accompanying anguish and confusion, bearing an unnerving resemblance to both birth and death. While it is a force in its own

right, it is also an interpretation we make about what has happened.

3.5.1. Describing 'Failure'.

3.5.1.1. Lutzer (1987:20-26) holds that "'failure'" is the result of measuring with an inadequate yardstick, and gives the following examples of inadequate yardsticks:

- **Comparing abilities.** When we take credit for our successes and blame others for our 'failure's. For example, we compare the results of exams and tests with each other, we compare our children with each other, and we forget that God did not give everyone identical abilities, intelligence or aptitudes.
- **Comparing chequebooks.** One of the most common yardsticks is to compare your chequebook with others, as if the chief end of man is to earn money and enjoy it for ever. Very often status in society is measured in terms of financial ability. However, this is not a wise yardstick, as Christ could then be reckoned to be a 'failure', as He had no purse or home of His own, and had to send Peter to catch a fish to pay their taxes (Matthew 17:27). Can Christ be counted as a 'failure'? Hardly! Luke 16 recounts the parable of Lazarus and the rich man, with Lazarus, the beggar, ending up at Abraham's bosom, while the rich man suffered agony after death, indicating that being rich does not necessarily mean eternal well being.
- **Comparing friends.** Being known in the right circles, having your name mentioned by the famous and outstanding people of society is another inadequate yardstick that we use. No person can be counted a success just because he is acquainted with the famous of our day. James was the brother of Jesus, having grown up as one of the younger brothers, yet nowhere in Scripture does he personally lay claim to the --

fact that he was the brother of Jesus (*cf* James 2:1-10).

- **Comparing results.** This yardstick is often found at pastors' conferences, where the size and growth of congregations are compared, and the pastors of the smaller congregations losing out to the larger congregations. Are 'nickels and noses' (income and attendance) valid yardsticks? If so then Jesus Christ would be a 'failure', as He had only 12 disciples in His inner group, and at one stage His words were so harsh that many of His disciples abandoned Him (John 6:66).

Lutzer (1987:25) posits that in the incident at Meribah (Exodus 17, Numbers 20), Moses was given the task to *speak to the rock* in order to provide water for the Israelites. In a fit of anger Moses struck the rock, and water poured out of the rock. In the eyes of the thirsty Israelites Moses was a success. Everyone had plenty of water to drink, all the livestock could drink their fill. However, where it mattered most, Moses was a 'failure', as his anger prevented him from entering the Promised Land (Numbers 20:12).

This would seem to indicate that when we measure ourselves and others by some form of human yardstick, we are indeed 'missing the mark'. In John 7:24 we are commanded not to judge according to appearance, and the reasoning behind this commandment can be found in 1 Samuel 16:7 *But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have refused him. For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart"* (NKJV). The fact that God sees the heart and not appearance is brought home to us in Luke 18:10-13 where we read of the Pharisee and the tax-gatherer who went up to the temple to pray, and while the Pharisee extolled his virtues, the tax-gatherer was too ashamed to lift up his eyes, and pleaded for God's mercy on him, the sinner. We know that the tax-gatherer and not the Pharisee gained approval before God (Luke 18:14). This would seem to indicate that we fail when we --

make comparisons according to outward appearance and performance, and especially, whether this *conforms to what society expects, or is believed to be, expected from us*. However, as Christians, we cannot rely on approval from others in order to determine our degree of success or lack thereof. Our approval and disapproval, should come from God who is able to see our hearts, and is able to pass fair judgement (John 5:30).

3.5.1.2. Oliver (1995:18-27) presents 5 facts about 'Failure':

- *'Failure' is inevitable.* Cadavers never fail, but they never get anywhere either. Being human implies that mistakes are inevitable, this being a result of our sinful humanity.
- *'Failure' reminds us that we are not God.* 'Failure' reveals that we are ordinary, fallible, fallen people, and that somewhere along the line we have been taught that 'failures' are worthless. Yet Scripture teaches us there are many of God's prophets who were mighty instruments in His hand, while, if they had to be measured according to human standards, would have been thought of as being a 'failure' (cf chapter 2, 1 Corinthians 1:26-29, Hebrews 11).
- *'Failure' helps me find God and see things through His eyes.* In defeat it is easy to develop a 'fault focus' rather than a 'faith focus'. We dwell on what we cannot do rather than on what we can do.
- *'Failure' can be God's warning that I'm stuck in a rut and need to change something.* We enjoy being comfortable in our successes, but danger lurks when we get too comfortable. A comfortable routine can turn into a rut, and a 'rut is nothing more than a grave with the sides kicked out'. Our unhealthy response to 'failure' is the glue that keeps us stuck in the rut of immaturity, irresponsibility and mediocrity. The danger does not lie in 'failure', but in not having tried.
- *'Failure' is an essential part of success.* You cannot separate success from "failure", as they are two sides of the same coin. Oliver (1995: 26)

cites Maxie Anderson who said, "Success in any venture is just the intelligent application of "failure". 'Failure's' can leave many different scars in the form of hurt feelings, wounded relationships, wasted potential, broken marriages and shattered ministries, but they can also be used by God to sharpen the mind, deepen the spirit and strengthen the soul. Those people who have learned to view 'failure' through God's eyes emerge with a softer heart, stronger character, and a fresh awareness of God's grace.

3.5.2. Describing the dynamics of 'Failure'.

'Failure' is not the intended destination for man, it is meant to be a detour that eventually brings us to where God wants us to be. Many people attempt to drive through, or push through "failure" as if they are jumping over an obstacle and want to get it behind them as soon as possible. However, if "failure" is inevitable, as indicated above, then perhaps we should spend more time in trying to find out what is happening to us and what can be learnt from the experience. The following phases are posited by Oliver (1996: 47-63)

Phase I: The Crisis Phase.

The initial experience of 'failure' has been likened to someone falling from the sky without a parachute. A wild, uncontrolled sensation of not being in control and of powerlessness, and a feeling of "there is no turning back." As nobody makes a deliberate choice to fail, this description of the crises is quite apt, as man is often caught unawares by the impending "failure". Six stages are said to comprise the initial crisis phase:

- *Shock.* The first reaction in experiencing "failure" is disbelief, shock, and numbness, and a feeling of a spiralling confusion, and of being

caught unprepared.

- *Denial and Blame.* The next response is most often one of denial. Denial of own culpability often results in finding someone else or some other cause for the “failure” in order to minimize “failure”. A typical response would be “if only I had seen it coming”, or “if only someone else had done something about this situation, I wouldn’t have been the one who was caught out.” The problem with the blame response is that it robs opportunity to identify and take responsibility for the problem. If that step is missed, then the true value of “failure”, that what God wants to teach us, is missed, and that would be a loss and greater “failure”.
- *Withdrawal.* As the pain and pressure grows, so does the tendency towards withdrawal, to run away and avoid other people, especially co-workers and companions.
- *Fear and Anger.* Fear and anger are necessary and can be a very healthy part of the growth process as long as it does not end there. The more withdrawal and isolation takes hold, the more vulnerable people become to fear. Healthy fear focuses on a real and specific threat, alerting us to danger. It’s a God given emotion. But when the focus is on the fear alone and it is allowed to overwhelm a person, it’s no longer serving the function for which God designed it. This unhealthy fear can become paralyzing. If we let our fear get the best of us, it can also turn easily into panic, which can be incapacitating. Anger is a secondary emotion that is usually caused by a primary emotion such as fear, hurt, or frustration. It is common to experience all three of these and thus feel very angry.
- *Shame.* Whenever man’s performance falls short of what is expected of him, he experiences some degree of shame, as evidenced by Adam and Eve’s reaction after the fall. Shame becomes toxic, or polluting, when it is allowed to define who we are, and toxic shame brings with it a sense

of terminal worthlessness and hopelessness clouding man's identity in Christ. Toxic shame keeps us from becoming the unique man or woman God designed us to be. Toxic shame can cause lives to become characterized by remorse, self-hate, accident proneness, jealousy, bitterness, resentment, hopelessness, helplessness, frustration, punishment seeking, depression, irritation, fears, and behaviours such as lying, stealing, and physical violence.

- *Depression and Despair.* Following any kind of loss, most people's grief runs its course in a reasonable length of time. There are places in the process, however, where it's easy for people to get stuck, one of those is shame, another is depression. One of the most effective ways to deal with depression is to admit it, embrace it, feel it, and be allowed to let the tears come. Being depressed is not a sin, it is an admission of humanity.

Phase 2: The Crossroads Phase

The Bible describes the Christian life as a race (*cf* :1 Corinthians 9:24, and Hebrews 12:1). The most difficult part of the race of life can be when 'failure' forces the runner face down on the infield grass after falling. While the other competitors are running away, thoughts of lying down and giving up are commonplace. Coming face-to-face with 'failure', brings the person to a crossroads. One of the main challenges in this stage of 'failure' is to decide what to do about what has happened. A choice can be made from one of three responses: the fight response, the flight response, or the faith response.

- *The Fight Response.* This response is the byproduct of blaming others for your 'failure'.
- *The Flight Response.* This response manifests itself by the person procrastinating or by burying himself in his work, ministry, family, friends, or hobby. An attempt is made to hide away from the problem and
----- pretending that it does not exist.-----

- *The Faith Response.* ‘failure’s can be a turning point in our relationships with God, ourselves, and others. God can take that which feels humiliating and painful and use it as a source of beauty, joy, and strength. Seen through the eyes of faith, every ‘failure’ can be a golden opportunity.
- **Phase 3: The Catalyst Phase.** A catalyst is something that stimulates or precipitates a reaction, development, or change. It rouses the mind or spirit or incites to activity. Other words for catalyst include: stimulus, impetus, incentive, motivation, spur, stimulant, boost, encouragement, inducement, or invitation. When God is allowed to help the person move into the catalyst phase, he will be breaking free and moving on. Most people have never thought much about the value of ‘failure’, perhaps it is due to our culture being so focussed on ambition and success. John Bunyan is cited as saying in his autobiography, ‘Grace Abounding’, “I never saw the heights and depths in grace, and love, and mercy, as I saw this temptation: great sins draw out great grace; and where is most terrible and fierce, there the mercy of God in Christ, when showed to the soul, appears most high and mighty.” In failing, man has the opportunity to discover certain truths about himself that might otherwise have remained hidden and out of reach.

When the above comments on “failure” are reviewed, it becomes apparent that “failure”, like beauty, lies in the eyes of the beholder. When viewed from a purely secular viewpoint, “failure” is a debilitating crises. The shame of not meeting the expectations of your peers can be crippling. ‘Failure’, as seen from a theological viewpoint, is but a detour from the original intended path that God has allowed in His grace and wisdom, and has the potential to be life-enriching.

3.5.3. Learning From 'Failure'.

If 'failure' has the potential to be life-enriching, the question then arises, in what manner can "failure" be advantageous? The following comparisons are presented:

3.5.3.1. 'Failure' and Forgiveness

'Failure' for the Christian means '*to miss the mark*', as, indeed, the definition of sin also means (*cf* chapter 2.4.2.1.), and by implication, means that the person who 'failed' has also sinned. A single occurrence of a particular sin, or "failure", might be forgiven, and more easily understood to be forgiven, than would be the case for repetitious sins, or 'failure's'. As is so vividly illustrated in C.S. Lewis' *Screwtape Letters*, it is the Satan's strategy to keep Christians preoccupied with their 'failure's, and when so occupied, the battle is won.

Retief (1994:134), writing on the subject of 'Forgiveness' comments; 'We now approach a subject of great sensitivity and one filled with great complexities.'

He points out that one of the difficulties in thinking through the issue of Christian forgiveness is the fact that there are at least three different levels of offences and each of these levels demands a different facet of forgiveness. Some offences are committed against God and therefore require God's forgiveness. Other offences are civil or social and therefore require a different treatment. A third category is personal forgiveness which is required when injuries are committed against a person in his personal capacity. In these three levels, "failure" is an injury to God, in a very large extent to the person who 'failed' and to a lesser extent to the community to which the person belongs.

The greatest blunder of Christians is not their 'failure' when trying to live for Christ; a greater mistake is made when they do not understand God's provision

for sin, defeat, and guilt! We are successful to the extent that we understand God's remedy for 'failure'. Christ's death on the cross included a sacrifice for *all* our sins, past, present, and future. Every sin that a person will ever commit has already been paid for. All of our sins were in the future when Christ died two thousand years ago. It follows therefore, that He made one payment for *all* sins past and future (Lutzer, 1987:50-51). With regards to the repetition of sins or 'failure's' the Bible teaches that *I have blotted out, like a thick cloud, your transgressions, And like a cloud, your sins.*(Isa 44:22. NKJV), and again, *As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.* (Psa 103:12, NKJV). If we refuse to accept God's forgiveness, past sins will always be a barrier between man and God. 'Failure' to accept God's forgiveness will lead to despair, and more 'failure'.

A word must be said about forgiving ourselves. God is pleased with Christ's sacrifice. He has forgiven the penitent sinner, but the question that has to be answered, is, has the penitent sinner forgiven himself? Many Christians are handcuffed by regret. By nature, we know that sin has to be paid for; consequently, some people nurse their regrets and cling to their grief in the mistaken belief that such an attitude is necessary to punish themselves. Unconsciously they want to pay for their sins (Lutzer, 1987:59). Van Der Merwe (2004:164) observes that someone that cannot forgive themselves, admits that they cannot achieve the standards that they have set for themselves, and they interpret this as 'failing'. If Christ has paid the penalty for our sins and 'failure's, why should we try to add our continual regret as a burden to His work? Does this not compound the sinners anguish? Christ died to free us from the bondage of our sin toward God and our slavery to past 'failure's. This must be accepted, and made our own, if we are to learn from 'failure'. When self-forgiveness is separated from God's forgiveness, it becomes impossible (Van Der Merwe, 2004:164).

3.5.3.3. 'Failure' and self acceptance.

'Failure' often comes with the loss of self-worth and shame, and an overbearing feeling of emotional pain. When left unattended, "'failure'" tends to repeat itself, and grow with every repetition of "'failure'", until the pain of "'failure'" is larger than the fear of "'failure'" (Oliver, 1995:15) Anderson (2000:184, 185) points out that while God does not fix our past, He does set us free from it. He adds that all of us have some hurtful, traumatic experiences in our past that has scarred us emotionally, and while it is possible to relegate these feelings to some far-away corner of our minds, these feelings can be instantly recalled and prompt an emotional response. While some Christians assert that the past does not have any effect on the present because they are new creations in Christ, Anderson (2000:187) disagrees, arguing that they are either living in denial, or are fortunate to have a conflict-free past. Van Niekerk (1992:14-17) holds that there are 8 negative thought patterns that adversely affect human emotions, and these thought patterns have to be dealt with in order to live a fruitful and fulfilling life. They are:

- *Selective listening.* This is when a person concentrates solely on the negative aspects of something, a "'failure'", and filters out all positive aspects in his life.
- *The Magnifying-Glass mechanism.* This is when a person looks at his 'failure's and faults through a magnifying-glass and exaggerates them.
- *Perfectionism.* This is when people insist on being perfect in everything, and cannot accept it when they fail. They are very hard taskmasters of themselves., refusing to accept even the slightest "'failure'".
- *Generalization.* On the grounds of a single incident, a person believes that he is a "'failure'" as a person.
- *Catastrophizing.* This is when a person is always expecting the worst.
- *Personalizing.* Everything that happens, or is said is internalized in a negative manner, nothing is right, everything is wrong.

- *Scapegoating*. Also known as *blameshifting*. Other people are blamed for one's own 'failure's' which leads to a critical attitude towards others.

It will be seen from this list that the person that suffers from these thought patterns has not come to the point where he, or she, has accepted themselves for the persons that they are, and even less accepted the redemptive work of Christ in which the old things have been made new. Self-acceptance means being able to accept yourself as a complete package, with both negative and positive traits. Lutzer (1987:72-74) holds that the foundation for self-acceptance hinges on two components, accepting your limitations, and realizing that God has given each person gifts and abilities. It is in being able to work with these two components, and being cognizant of the limitations, that a person can find his true identity in Christ, and rest in the knowledge, I am what God intended me to be. Paul commands us: *For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith* (Romans 12:3, NKJV).

3.5.3.4. 'Failure' and Submission.

Romans 8:28 tells us; *And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God* NKJV). This would include "failure" of what ever kind or sort. Job is an interesting character in the Bible, and his woes and trepidations are well known. There is however, a very significant verse, Job 1:10, in which Satan laments, *Have You not made a hedge around him, around his household, and around all that he has on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land.* In this verse, Satan acknowledges the fact that the hand of God holds Job, and by implication, the Christian, in a grip that cannot be loosened by anyone, and that he who is held in the hand of God is safe and secure (cf John 10:27-29,

Psalm 121:8). This would imply then that the Christian can rest in the knowledge that should he fail, he has not 'failed' himself out of the grip of God's hand as it were. Oliver (1995:67-79), writing about God's View of 'failure', points out that:

- God knows that people fail. He is not caught unawares neither is He surprised by human 'failure'.
- God allows people to fail. He did not cause our 'failure's.'
- He is with us when we 'fail', and if our 'failure' involves sin, He is ready to forgive.
- God understands the potential value of our 'failure', and,
- God sees beyond our 'failure'

Lutzer (1986:3,4) recounts the personal history of Moses. Moses lived in the house of Pharaoh for forty years, and when he tried to come to the aid of a fellow Hebrew (he killed an Egyptian) he was forced to flee into the wilderness of Midian. The prince of Egypt became a 'man of Egypt' (Exodus 2:19). It was in the wilderness where he lived for forty years, that Moses learnt to submit to the authority of God. He was destined to lead the Hebrews out of slavery, but not on his terms, and in his authority, but on God's terms and through God's might and authority.

Morley (1989:226-230) is of the opinion that man is raised to be independent. Man is taught to be the captain of his soul, the master of his fate. But it is often in our effort to be self-reliant that man breaks free from God and goes his own independent way. Independence rebels against the influence of God, thinking that it can meet it's own needs. The problem is, however, that God does not want man to trust in himself, but to trust in God. *The turning point of our lives is when we stop seeking the God we want, and start seeking the God who is* (Morley, 1989:230). 'Failure' brings us to this turning point, where we learn to

start trusting God, and submitting to the authority of God.

3.5.3.5. 'Failure' and the Will of God.

Revisiting the Job narrative, it becomes apparent that 'failure' is contained in the will of God, as are all trials and tribulations. But there is an immediate stipulation to this statement. The implication is *not* that God delights in the trials and tribulation of Christians, or that God is some despot that amuses Himself by working out situations where man can fall, or be forced to commit a sin. On the contrary, Scripture informs us it is quite the opposite. Psalm 37:23 states; *The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD, And He delights in his way,* and; Micah 7:18; *Who is a God like You. Pardoning iniquity. And passing over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He does not retain His anger forever, Because He delights in mercy.* 1 Peter 1:6 gives some insight as to why God allows 'failure' in our lives.

In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

God can do as He wishes with His creatures, but it should not be thought that his actions are arbitrary or capricious. He does not cause us suffering for suffering's sake. There is always a higher purpose, and agenda that has eternal implications (Lutzer, 2001:111). Oliver(1995:67) affirms that God not only knows that we will fail, but also allows us to fail. This is apparent from Jude verse 24 that states that God is able to keep us from stumbling. It is obvious that while God *can* keep us from stumbling, He often *allows* us to stumble. With regards to God allowing us to 'fail', **1 Corinthians 10:13** is very

informative and applicable to 'failure'. Two Bible versions are given to expound the text;

- The New Living Translation says; *But remember that the temptations that come into your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will keep the temptation from becoming so strong that you can't stand up against it. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you will not give in to it (NLT:1996).*
- The Amplified Bible says; *For no temptation (no trial regarded as enticing to sin), [no matter how it comes or where it leads] has overtaken you and laid hold on you that is not common to man [that is, no temptation or trial has come to you that is beyond human resistance and that is not adjusted and adapted and belonging to human experience, and such as man can bear]. But God is faithful [to His Word and to His compassionate nature], and He [can be trusted] not to let you be tempted and tried and assayed beyond your ability and strength of resistance and power to endure, but with the temptation He will [always] also provide the way out (the means of escape to a landing place), that you may be capable and strong and powerful to bear up under it patiently (AMP, 1987).*

It becomes apparent from this verse that while God may allow Christians to 'fail', He is always in control of the situation, and will never allow the situation to get out of hand, leading to the destruction of the believer, *unless the believer*

willfully rejects God's guidance in the matter. It should be a source of great comfort in times of 'failure', knowing that God is keeping a close eye on the situation, and that the believer can rest in that assurance.

3.5.3.6. 'Failure' and Choosing.

According to Barnard (1991:13), the philosophy of determinism postulates that man has no choice in what happens to him. Everything that a person does, decides and chooses, is predetermined. It is as a result of your circumstances, education and inherited abilities that you are 'programmed' to be what you are, and to do what you do. According to this philosophy, man has little or no room to manoeuvre or change. While it may be true that factors such as background, needs, hereditary traits and factors, education and milieu play an important part in the make-up of man, he has received a volative and cognitive capacity from God. So much is quite apparent from Scripture (*cf* Ex. 17:9, Ex. 18:21, Deut. 30:19, Jos. 24:15, 1 Sam 17:8, 2 Sam. 24:12, 1 Kings. 18:25, 1 Chron. 21:10,11, Psalm 25:12, Psalm 47:4, Isa 7:15, Isa 7:16. Isa 40:20, Acts 15:22). There are various types of choices man can make, spontaneous decisions made on the spur of the moment, conscious decisions that involve some thought on the matter, and long, or short term decisions, and man's decisions can be influenced by a number of things, including the mood the person is in, circumstances, preferences and religious persuasion. However, in terms of 'failure' the choice(s) that have to be made are not simply of the 'yes' or 'no' kind, it goes much deeper than that. It is required of the Christian to commit himself, or herself, to God. This includes the past, present and future (Lutzer, 1987 :96, 97). Commitment is not based on feelings. Commitment is an act of faith. It is the belief that God is well qualified to take care of that which is given to Him, as indicated by the words of Paul, *For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to*

Him until that Day (2 Timothy 1:12). Oliver (1995:128, 129) concludes that many 'failure's are caused by the fact that we don't trust God. The degree of trust we have in Him will determine what we do, and how we choose to respond to 'failure' is an indication of what we believe about Him and how much we trust Him. God wants us to depend on Him - not our financial resources, quick wit, cleverness, charisma, educational degrees, years of experience, or litany of success, but Him. Surrendering of the control of our lives does not mean 'failure', but rather taking God at His word and obeying Him. Perhaps, man's 'failure's' are but another way God uses to speak to people, calling man to choose what is right and desist from that which is wrong (cf Job 33:15-22).

3.5.3.7. 'Failure' and Triumphant over 'failure'

Following the massacre at the St. James Church in the suburb of Kennilworth in Cape Town, on the evening of the 25th July, 1993, in which 11 people were killed and 55 injured, the pastor of the church, Frank Retief, wrote a book on the incident, called 'Tragedy to Triumph, A Christian response to trials and suffering' and in this work he recounts the lessons that were learnt from this tragedy. But the lessons learnt cannot be reserved for tragedies alone, they also speak to us about what can be learnt from 'failure'. They were:

- Trials are unavoidable.
- Suffering cannot always be explained.
- Trials test our faith.
- God is with us in our sufferings.
- Priorities must be re-ordered.
- Problems often overlap each other.
- The need for evangelism.
- The need for personal penitence.
- The ability to listen to the voice of God in our lives.

Oliver (1995:83) proposes twelve steps that would enable one to work through 'failure':

- Acknowledge God's presence.
- Adopt an attitude of praise.
- Ask God for His guidance.
- Align your perspectives to His.
- Acknowledge the anatomy of 'failure'.
- Admit that you made a mistake.
- Accept responsibility for it.
- Analyze what happened.
- Assess what you would do differently next time.
- Accept God's forgiveness.
- Activate your plan.
- Announce what God has taught you.

Lutzer (1987:127) advises that the past is closed, but the future open for new possibilities, but a meaningful new life cannot be achieved if a person is still tied to the 'failure's of the past. The basic prerequisite for progress in the Christian life is to learn from the past, without being controlled by it. Paul writes to the Philippians (Phil. 3:13, 14) *Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead,*

I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.
(NKJV)

Perhaps a re-evaluation of priorities is called for, a new definition of what constitutes 'success', and what is 'failure', as indicated by Ridenour (1994:136-137):

What success is not....	What success is....
A destination or goal that you can achieve if you are strong enough, clever enough, or sly enough.	A manner of journey - your walk with God.
To be rich, or to be a winner through prestige, power or possessions.	The fruit of the Spirit, and the development of a Christ-like attitude.
To climb ever higher, turn ever faster, and burning out instead of rusting away.	The knowledge of when enough is enough, and always to be prepared to serve at God's pace, not your own.
Self-sufficiency, power, or complete ability in your self.	The power of Christ being made perfect in my weakness so that everything that needs to be done, can be done, whatever the situation.
A feeling that you are irreplaceable.	The knowledge that you are part of God's plan, but never in absolute command thereof.
Conduct that always seeks new public heights and always transcending given boundaries.	A knowledge of your own limitations, keeping within your limitations, striving for excellence but never in such a way that it leaves you feeling tired and burnt out.
The highest prize that must be achieved at all costs.	A by-product of obedience, service and walk with God, and always with the cognizance - that He is Creator, Redeemer and King.

It is lamentable that there are only a few books available that represent a popular Christian view on 'failure', as this is a subject that should receive a lot more attention than has been done to date. Contemporary man is suffering from a lack of identity and the perception of 'failing' is permeating our society.

The further man drifts away from God, the more common this phenomenon is going to occur. Though not always exegetical sound, it was refreshing to see that the authors were willing to utilize the Bible in their research, apply their findings, and often dug into their own experiences to shed light on this matter, and one can only hope that the Spirit of God will call more 'failures' to write about their experiences. May this study also contribute to a valid understanding of 'failure'.

3.6 PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS FROM CHAPTER 3 BASIS-THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON 'FAILURE': POPULAR THEOLOGICAL RESEARCH

- Much has been written about the achievements of the successful, but, perhaps true to the human nature that does not readily admit to mistakes not much had been written on the subject of 'failure', implying that 'failure' is not a popular subject amongst Christians.
- 'Failure' is often the result of comparing oneself with others in which aspects such as *abilities*, where we take credit for our successes and blame others for our 'failure's, *chequebooks*, where success is measured in terms of our ability to earn more money than others, comparing friends, or *being known* in the right circles, *comparing results*, as often found at pastors' conferences, where the size and growth of congregations are compared, and the pastors of the smaller congregations losing out to the larger congregations.
- Success, in the eyes of other people, does not necessarily mean that it also means success in the eyes of God, as is shown in the case of Moses striking the rock at Meriba. (Exodus 17:17)

- “Failure’ comprises of three phases. In the first phase, The **Crisis Phase**, a wild, uncontrolled sensation of not being in control and of powerlessness, and a feeling of “there is no turning back.”, and in this phase shock, denial and blame, withdrawal, fear and anger, shame and depression and despair form the underlying emotions. The second phase is the **Crossroads Phase**, which consists of three responses, the fight response, the flight response, or the faith response. The third phase is the **Catalyst Phase**, where something stimulates or precipitates a reaction, development, or change.
- The foundation for self-acceptance hinges on two components, *accepting your limitations*, and *realizing that God has given each person gifts and abilities*. It is in being able to work with these two components, and being cognizant of the limitations, that a person can find his true identity in Christ, and rest in the knowledge, I am what God intended me to be.
- ‘Failure’ is contained in the will of God, as are all trials and tribulations. There is an immediate stipulation to this statement, the implication is *not* that God delights in the trials and tribulation of Christians, but that trials and temptations are there for the edification of the believer.
- Surrendering of the control of our lives does not mean that we have ‘failed’, but rather that we are taking God at His word and obeying Him.

4. CHAPTER 4. META-THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES OF 'FAILURE'

4.1. INTRODUCTION.

As mentioned previously in chapters 1 and 2, the model proposed by Zerfass, consisting of a basis, meta, and praxis theory, sometimes also referred to as a practice theory, will be utilised in this study (*cf* Heyns & Pieterse, 1990:35,36). This particular part of the study will specifically be referring to the meta theoretical aspects of 'failure', while also referring to popular theological literature, as being part of the meta-theory (see 3.5)

4.1.1. What is a meta-theory?

As indicated in chapter 2.1.1, it is the task of practical theology to evaluate current practical theological theories, and where it is deemed necessary, to develop new praxis theories for use in communicating Biblical values to the church and community, with specific reference to pastoral counselling. It follows then, that where the basis theory focuses on Biblical norms and values, the meta-theory would focus on relevant secular or non-religious fields of study pertaining to counselling, and, assumably, more specifically those areas of counselling that can assist in the development of a pastoral model, or, as stated by Heyns & Pieterse (1990:36), *it is the drawing on other sciences in order to obtain a picture of reality* (emphasis by researcher).

4.2. Aim.

With the abovementioned parameters in mind, it is the objective of this chapter to investigate what the secular sciences, i.e., Psychology, Sociology and Social work has to say regarding human 'failure', in order to develop a praxis theory for pastoral counselling.

4.2.1. Premise.

It may be deduced from chapter two that 'failure', as perceived in our modern society, does not appear to have a Biblical origin, but the simple fact that 'failure' is a common enough occurrence, warrants the study of this phenomenon. Therefore, it is deemed essential first of all, to conduct a preliminary enquiry in order to understand what is meant by 'failure', and to this end, various dictionaries will be consulted. Thereafter the import of 'failure' in secular literature will be investigated. Finally, the meta-theoretical investigation will be concluded with an empirical study, where the phenomenon of 'failure' will be investigated with the co-operation of seven respondents

4.3. 'Failure' - a lexicographical study.

In order to determine what is meant by 'failure' the meaning of the word was looked up in three dictionaries.

4.3.1. The Merriam-Webster Online dictionary (2005) defines 'failure' as:

- 1) a: omission of occurrence or performance; specifically a failing to perform a duty or expected action, b: a state of inability to perform a normal function, c: a fracturing or giving way under stress.
- 2) a: lack of success, b: a failing in business.
- 3) a: a falling short, deficiency, b: deterioration, decay.
- 4) one who has failed.

4.3.2. The Cambridge Dictionaries Online (2005) gives the following definition of 'failure'.

- 1) Not to succeed in what you are trying to achieve or are expected to do.

- 2) Failed - not having succeeded.
- 3) 'Failure' - when someone or something does not succeed.

4.3.3. Rogets Thesaurus (2005) gives a very expanded explanation of 'failure', which is condensed to arrive at a definitive description of 'failure':

Antonyms: success.

Nouns: nonsuccess, nonfulfillment, successlessness, inefficacy, blunder; fault, omission, miss, oversight, slip, trip, stumble, false step, breakdown, collapse, defeat, rout, beating, fall, downfall, ruin, perdition, wreck.

Verbs: fail, be unsuccessful, not succeed, make vain efforts, do in vain, toil in vain, not to complete, lose ground, fall short of, miss, miss one's aim, miss the mark, miss one's footing, slip, trip, stumble, make a slip, blunder, make a mess of, blunder, mismanage, fall, flounder, falter, break down, sink, founder, adversity, be defeated, fall through, collapse, go amiss, go wrong, turn out ill, disappoint, defeat the purpose.

Adjectives: unsuccessful, successless, failing, tripping; at fault, fruitless, ineffectual, ineffective, inefficient, impotent, insufficient, useless, of no effect, nonsuited, foiled, defeated, broken down, downtrodden, overwhelmed, lost, ruined, broken, frustrated, disconcerted, thrown off one's balance, sorry plight; hard hit, stultified, wide of the mark, unattained, uncompleted.

Adverbs: unsuccessfully, to little or no purpose, in vain.

From the above descriptions, being a 'failure' as a person can be described as *not fulfilling your expectations or not succeeding in what you set out to do, and being conscious of this state of affairs to the extent that it disrupts your sanguinity*. In this, there is a remarkable correlation to the Biblical view of 'failure', that is expressed as 'missing the mark' (*cf* chapter 2.5)

A comparison is given between some of the secular and Biblical descriptions of 'failure'. While this list is by no means complete or all-inclusive, it does however, give some indication of the correlation between the secular and Biblical descriptions of 'failure'.

Secular	Biblical
To miss the mark	To miss the mark
Failing to perform an expected action	To fail to attain a certain state or condition
Lack of success	Lacking
Not to succeed in what you set out to do	Rebellion against God
Inefficiency	Failing to conform to the law of God
Not to complete	To be consumed, ended

4.4. 'Failure' in secular literature.

4.4.1. What is 'Failure'?

When the concept of 'failure', as described by the dictionaries, is taken into account, it quickly becomes evident that we have all failed at some time. This does not come as a surprise to counsellors, social workers and psychologists, and any other professionals who are committed to helping others, but little is known about how individuals interpret 'failure' (Cannon, 1997:491).

Deffenbaugh (2005), cites a study that was conducted regarding success and how our perception of success is *always haunted by a fear of 'failure'*. The

study he refers to said that in 1928 a group of the worlds most successful financiers met in the Edgewater Beach Hotel in Chicago. Amongst those present were:

- The president of the largest utility company.
- The greatest wheat speculator.
- The president of the New York Stock Exchange.
- A number of the President's Cabinet.
- The greatest 'bear' in Wall Street.
- The president of the Bank of International Settlements.
- The head of the world's greatest monopoly.

Collectively, these tycoons controlled more wealth than there was in the United States Treasury, and for a number of years the printed media reported on their various successes, and urged the youth of the nation to follow their examples. Twenty five years later a follow-up study was commissioned and this study found the following results.

- Charles Schwab, the president of the largest independent steel company, lived on borrowed money, and died broke.
- Arthur Cutten, wheat speculator, died abroad, insolvent.
- Richard Whitney, President of the New York Stock Exchange had recently been released from prison.
- Albert Fall, member of the President's Cabinet was pardoned from prison so that he could die at home.
- Jesse Livermore, the greatest 'bear' in Wall Street, committed suicide.
- Leon Fraser, president of the Bank of International Settlements, committed suicide.

According to Wall (1994:555), the challenge before us is to determine which perspective will govern our lives, the success and achievement orientated perspective of modern society, or a God-centered faith governed by love,

forgiveness and understanding. From this we understand that modern society would be preoccupied with success and achievement, leaving little room for a faith that lays greater emphasis on faith in God and love and understanding, and has little room for life's 'failure's'. However, it is in the understanding of the concept of 'failure' where the greatest, perhaps even fatal, mistake is made. Cannon (1997:492) makes a very illuminating comment when he states that : *We learn 'failure' from others. New-born infants come into the world having no concept of 'failure' or success. Unlike adults they do not fear 'failure'. However, it does not take long for children to pick up the message that the world puts value on 'right answers', and that 'wrong answers' and failed strategies are for the most part socially unacceptable.*

Perhaps the greatest problem regarding 'failure' is not the 'failure', but the social, personal and moral issues surrounding 'failure'. Rogers and Rogers (2001:34) coin the term 'soul wounds', to describe the trauma children experience, and they make the premise that children who have suffered from 'soul wounds' adapt and become performers - perfectionist overachievers who live outwardly successful lives, while inwardly they live in perpetual motion, fearing a return of their childhood fears. These children would then secretly loathe themselves, always overdoing to prove they are worthy. Ellison & Baker (2001:17) point out that socially oriented psychologists such as Adler, Horney and Sullivan maintain that man was essentially a product of his interpersonal relationships, thus compounding the problem, as it is from our social interactions and experiences we learn what 'failure' is. This places man in a quandary. If man is a product of his interpersonal relationships, and 'failure' is learnt from others, we are continually living in fear of 'failure'. 'Success' can then be coined as being accepted in society and enjoying recognition from your peers as a result of always doing the right thing. 'Failure' then becomes the unenviable situation where your society rejects you as a person, for the things that you did that did not meet their expectations.

The problem is then that, as Ellison and Baker (2001:18) postulate, self-esteem, is based on a *success and 'failure'* foundation, that is inherently temporary, unstable and based on social comparison. They point out that *low self-esteem has it's roots in guilt ('I've done wrong.')*, *shame ('I'm bad; I'm not good enough.')*, *perfectionism ('I have to be perfect to be OK')*, and *passivity ('my thoughts and feelings don't count')* (p. 18), and when these reactions are considered, it corresponds with the Rogets Dictionary's description of 'failure'!(cf Ellison & Baker, 2001:18) Cannon (1997), points out that it is important to appreciate that one individual's concept of 'failure' may not be the same as that held by others, and that the effect and concept of 'failure' would therefore, also vary from one person to the other.

4.4.2. Compensating for 'Failure'.

It would appear from literature, especially from the field of Social Work, that while 'failure' is a recognized entity or phenomenon, dealing with 'failure' is more often a case of working from a 'strengths' perspective, than dealing with the 'failure' itself. For example, Baumeister & Heatherton (1996:1), contend that modern society suffers from the inability of many individuals to discipline and control themselves, resulting in a number of social problems, and add that people lose control when self-regulation, a strengths-based resource, fails. The focus of self-regulation is man's ability to exert a certain amount of control over what is happening to him, within his immediate situation. According to the literature study, the following two methods of dealing with 'failure' would seem to present themselves, :

4.4.2.1. Strengths versus 'Failure'.

Blundo (2001:297) is of the opinion that the preoccupation with problems, human deficits, brokenness and 'failure' has dominated the attention of social work and exists in the form of a medical pathology and scientific paradigm that underlies the traditional theories and models that have been employed in social work, and assumably, also counselling as a profession as a whole. He adds that the challenge facing the profession is to shift from the traditional paradigm to a framework that embraces strengths, resilience and the empowerment of the counsellee. In this vein Barnard (1994:136) admits that he realized that counsellees take for granted, or minimize, what they can do and magnify what they cannot do, and our perceptual lenses focus excessively on the deficits to the detriment of attending to the strengths of the individual. To shy away from deficits and 'failure's, counselling practice has resulted in a shift to strengths-based counselling (Barnard, 1994 :138, *cf.* Josephson, 2001:42-45, Hwang & Cowger, 1998: 25-31, Cowger, 1994:262-269). De Jong & Millar, (1995:729) assert that strengths based counselling rests on certain assumptions.

- First and foremost, despite life's problems, all people and environments possess strengths that can be marshalled to improve the quality of people's lives.
- Secondly, motivation is fostered by a consistent emphasis on strengths (as opposed to weaknesses or 'failure's), as the counsellee defines these.
- Thirdly, discovering strengths requires a process of cooperative exploration between counsellor and counsellee.
- Fourthly, focusing on strengths turns the counsellor's attention away from the temptation to "blame the victim" and toward discovering how counsellees have managed to survive even in the most inhospitable of

circumstances, and,

- Finally, all environments, even the most bleak, contain resources that can be utilized in the restoration of the counsellee.

In the counselling interview, two goals are aimed at: the first being a set of well formed goals, which are meant to be important to the counsellee, and easily achieved, and the second goal, called 'exceptions' where the focus is placed on the times when things were working out well for the counsellee. The emphasis is then placed on the counsellee's strengths relative to their goals, rather than the deficiencies relative to the problems (*cf* De Jong & Millar, 1995:732-733). Early (2001:225) contends that *Social work practice from a strengths perspective is increasingly a preferred mode of practice*. To this end, various measurement scales have been developed to measure strengths in families, for example, The Strengths-Based Measures for Families, the Family Resource Scale, The Family Functioning Scale, The Family Support Scale, The Family Empowerment Scale, The Behavioral and Emotional Rating Scale for Children, The School Success Profile, and The Social Skills Rating System (Early, 2001:226-229).

If society has placed an unwarranted negative focus on 'failure's' in the past, and, the pendulum is swinging away from 'failure's' to strengths and successes, as is indicated by current thought, then the question that remains lingering in the air will have to be answered: *Does this mean that 'failure's are going to be 'ignored', or glossed over to make it more acceptable for the counsellee'?* Are the underlying reasons for 'failure' going to be ignored, and the valuable lessons that may be learnt from them discarded so that the 'failure's' may be repeated at a later stage? Only time will tell. Deffinbaugh (2005), in referring to Peter's 'failure' (*cf*. Matthew 6:33, 26:75), concludes that, *this sin of Peter was a part of God's plan and purpose for his life*. This presents a pressing question. Should 'failure' be regarded as something to be dreaded and avoided at all costs, or should we recognize the fact that 'failure'

is an integral part of our lives that cannot be avoided, and that some good might even be gleaned from our 'failure's'? Seen from a Biblical point of view, our 'failure's' would seem to form an indispensable part of the process of our sanctification.

4.4.2.2. 'Reconstructing' 'Failure'.

Schafer (1978:565-566) expressed his concern over the hurried approach often employed to discharge patients from institutions as a result of political and economic pressures, and returning them to the asocial existence from which they came. The crux of the problem being that the therapeutic approach is not so much to work anything through, as to help the patient seal over the acute disturbance, and to make way for the next patient. Tragic as this state of affairs may be, it could possibly be far more prevalent than we would like to admit. However, there is also the positive side. There is apparently a growing realization that people have within themselves the resources and abilities to solve their own problems, and that a great responsibility rests on the counsellor's ability to construct the context for change. (cf Lawson, 1994:245-249). A recent theory in practice called 'empowerment' has been described as the counsellee's ability and willingness to act upon the goals and choices the person determines as appropriate for his or her situation, and that by combining motivation, cognition and action, the desired results can be attained, or at least worked towards. Empowerment is both an end, and a means to an end (Ackerson & Harrison, 2000:239). Still progressing further away from the negative perceptions regarding therapy to a more positive note, it is of interest to note that in the Business Times section of the Sunday Times of 4th July, 2004, there was an very informative article, titled, "How to fail... and still win"(Gary, 2004). In this article Gary held that you cannot pinpoint the keys to superior performance by just looking at what went well. It is only by adding in information on what went wrong that you uncover the secrets of

break-through performance. Three steps are then proposed to assist in this process, namely: Identifying 'failure', Analysis and Discussion, and thirdly, Experimentation, where *'failure' is encouraged in order that it may be analyzed.*

White (2002:270), referring to DSM-IV-TR of the American Psychiatric Association, (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 4th edition, Text Rev.), contends that the word 'diagnosis' is part of the medical illness-cure tradition, where clients are diagnosed with a mental disorder and subsequently obtain treatment for their disorder, and a problem-saturated identity is further solidified or reinforced. A new model is proposed where the counsellee 'externalizes' his problem, where he, (or she) views the problem subjectively. Four steps in this intervention are then proposed. The first being that the counsellor selects the most appropriate DSM diagnosis and relates the diagnosis to the counsellee, so that he may understand his problem, and then deconstructs the problem by identifying dependent and co-dependent behaviours. The second step is to name the influences, or problems, that are contributing to his perceived problem. Once this is done, the third step is to identify strengths and resources, and the fourth step is then to identify how client resources can be applied to each problem as a means of managing the problem. Borden (1992:135) promotes narrative construction following adverse experience, to shift focus from disability and dysfunction to concern for counsellee strengths, coping and adaptive potential. From this point of view, the counsellor departs from the narrowly circumscribed, structured assessment strategies and adopts an open ended approach that promotes development from the counsellee's perspective. Literally, starting from where the counsellee is, the aim of the counsellor is to assist the counsellee to rebuild his life and cope with adverse experiences, using past experiences and current strengths (Borden, 1992 :141).

When reviewing the literature and the theories involved in current therapeutic processes, it is heartening to note that there appears to be a tendency to

involve the counsellee in his or her restoration, and instead of being a passive element in the therapeutic process, the counsellee has a responsibility 'to help himself'. Malekoff (2001:246), comments that one of the discoveries he made while working with adolescents was that he did not have to control everything, and that he could depend on others, *including the children themselves*, which had the effect of taking a lot of pressure off him at the same time. Blundo (2001:301), and Early (2001:231) concur when they postulate that a fundamental shift in frame of practice is needed in that counsellors need to work in collaboration with families and individuals and that they must tap into the 'clients' support system or environment and thus move into a central role in the entire social work process. Barnard (1994:137) is of the opinion that our perceptual lenses excessively focus on the deficits to the detriment of attending to individual and family strengths.

4.5. 'Failure' and Modern Business Practice.

A study of 'failure' would be incomplete, if a study of the modern business practices and governing ethics were not included. The term 'rat-race', is described as *an exhausting routine that leaves no time for relaxation* (Wordweb, 2003), and colloquially, the term invokes the image of the career-minded professional that has to succeed at all costs, leaving no room for mistakes or 'failure's'. Indeed, Buckingham and Clifton (2001:3) make the observation that for centuries, mankind has been guided by the belief that good is the opposite of bad, and, within this mind set, has pursued its fixation with fault and failing, with the result that, today, in schools and in the workplace, mankind has been encouraged to identify, analyse and correct our weaknesses in order to become strong. Covey (1992:14) posits that just as personal victories precede public victories when effective people progress along the maturity continuum, so also do private 'failure's' portend embarrassing public 'failure's' when ineffective people progress along the

immaturity continuum, *and that such habits have to be broken and replaced with new ones*. Essinger and Wylie (1999:xii) are quite open regarding their basic business beliefs, and state that:

- No business can be generous and caring unless it is first successful.
- No business can be successful unless it places a top priority on outdoing its competitors.
- Many industries - though not all - operate essentially as a 'zero sum game'; if one organization wins, others will have to lose out, because the size of the market is approximately finite.
- Even the most aggressive and greedy organizations play an important role in society because of the taxes they pay and the employment they provide.
- On balance, people are usually more effectively motivated through incentives relating to their personal status and personal wealth than through incentives which make them feel good about the role they are playing in society.
- Ultimately, evolution - and the fundamental selfishness of our genes - has made us, to a fairly large extent, greedy and selfish as far as our interests are concerned. Only saints and the very naive can avoid these attributes completely.

Kotter (1995:158) states, as his 'new rule # 7', *In the increasingly competitive and fast-moving global business environment, winners reap big rewards while those who are unable or unwilling to compete can encounter huge problems. Effective competition requires many things, especially high standards and a strong desire to win*. The underlying message would appear to be quite plain: there is no room for 'failure' or 'failure's' in the corporate world.

Kotter (1995:178) gives us a valuable insight into the driving forces in the corporate world. A study was conducted in 1992 with 115 MBA graduates and

their expectations polled as to what they expected to be doing, ten years into the future. Very few of the MBA's viewed their work in stable terms - same career, same job, same challenges and same income. Their orientation to the future was driven in part by dissatisfaction in not having achieved the expectations they initially had. Expectations established in the 1950s and '60s have often not been fully met. Since their parents had a house nearly twice as big or luxurious as their grandparents', many expected a domicile twice as nice as mom's and dad's. With housing prices up tenfold over the last thirty years, with mortgage rates higher than their parents' was, and with their children's college educations costing five to ten times what they paid, expectations have sometimes been hard to meet, even on an income of \$200,000 a year. The kind of 'twenty year career plans' once found in large firms are becoming museum pieces, the emphasis now being laid on being a good leader and entrepreneur who is willing to take risks. Until recently, many moderately successful people at mid-life looked to a static yet comfortable future at work. Careers were secure, but often boring. Over the last two decades, this arrangement has been changing. The patterns established in the middle of this century - go to school, get a job, progress, peak out, glide for decades into retirement - are being replaced by multiple careers, lifelong learning, and a lot more uncertainty. Kotter (1995:179) observes, 'in an increasingly competitive global marketplace, to stand is to fall back', while this new world can be more exciting and personally more fulfilling, it can also be more terrifying. Concurring with this sentiment, Buckingham & Clifton (2002:20, 21) posit that today's global marketplace is extraordinarily complicated and amoral, and that to succeed in this hostile environment man has to look inside himself and try to identify his strongest traits, reinforce them with practice and learning, and find, or carve out a role that draws on these strengths every day and by doing this, man should be more productive, more fulfilled and more successful.

4.5.1. 'Failure' and Strengths in Modern Business Practice.

It was seen earlier (*cf.* 4.4.2.1.) that it appears as if it is the trend today in counselling to affirm client strengths. This paradigm shift also appears to be true in the business and corporate world. Buckingham and Clifton (2002:25) define a 'strength' as *consistent near perfect performance in an activity*. From this definition they propose three principles that are essential for living a 'strong life':

- For an activity to be deemed to be a strength, a person must be able to do it consistently, it must be a predictable part of his or her performance. The acid test of a strength is the ability to do something repeatedly, happily and successfully.
- A person does not need to have strengths in every aspect of his role in order to excel.
- A person will only excel by maximizing his or her strengths, never by fixing his or her weaknesses. Successful people are people who have learned to work around their weaknesses.

Essinger and Wylie (1999:1) hold that the first deadly skill (for overcoming the opposition!) of competitive excellence is the skill involved in really getting to know yourself, which means getting to know your strengths and weaknesses. Once a person knows his strengths, he or she must do their utmost to capitalize on them and develop them. Once a person knows his weaknesses, he should take every step to eliminate them, or to prevent them from interfering with his or her success.

It would appear then that there is no room in the harshly competitive world of business for a 'failure', or for someone who is unable to learn from his mistakes. The preferred option would be to avoid any form of 'failure' or

mistakes, this would include even the admission of 'failure's', incompetency or weaknesses. It would seem then, as if inordinate pressure bears upon the business community, to be successful and not to be a 'failure' in any way or form.

4.6. Empirical Study.

This part of the study has been divided into two divisions, that of the **theoretical considerations**, regarding an empirical study and the route that has been taken, and, secondly, the **case studies** that were conducted in order to glean the data required for this investigation.

4.6.1. Theoretical Considerations

4.6.2. Introduction.

Practical theology concerns the heartbeat of the church and reflects on what is happening in the congregation and on the activities of the people both in the church and in the community, but practical theology is not responsible for the actions both in and without the church, it merely studies what is happening, or as Heyns & Pieterse (1990:13) point out, it is the task of practical theology to critically mentor the praxis of the activities of the church. The relationship between theory and praxis forms the heart of practical theology. To this end then, it is pertinent to practical theology and this study, to ask, 'what is theory, and what is praxis'?

4.6.3. Theory.

'Praxis' will be dealt with in the following chapter of this study. What then is 'theory'? 'Theory' is a *conceptual framework* (Behr, 1988:6), an *explanation of phenomena or events* (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delport 2002:41) or a *discussion, consideration and planning pertaining to certain praxis* (Heyns & Pieterse, 1990:24) with the intent of understanding what has happened, or is in the process of happening, that has practical relevance. Keeping this in mind, Patton (1990:107) differentiates between 'espoused theories' and 'theories-in-use'. 'Espoused theories' are what people say they do, the stated course of action, while the 'theory-in-use' refers to what is actually happening. The implication being that what is said to be done, is not always true. For example, a pastor may claim that church attendance has been increasing, while it may in actual fact be declining. When working with praxis and theory, it is self evident that the theory component must relate to the theory-in-use, rather than the espoused theory. Translating this to pastoral theology and empirical research, it is important to study what actually is happening to counselees', *theory-in-use*, and not what they perceive to be happening to them, *espoused theory*. Going one step further, it is the aim of this study to investigate how counselees experience 'failure' and how this experience presents itself in practice, with resulting behavioural patterns and experiences, rather than their perceived view on their 'failure'.

4.6.4. The aim of research.

The purpose of research is to extend knowledge, or to learn more about a certain subject or matter. It may involve venturing into areas about which very little is known, the filling in of gaps in existing knowledge, the testing of a hypothesis, or to confirm or reject the validity of previous study or research that

might have been changed due to various factors (Behr, 1988:4). Professional research is a scientific endeavour traditionally aimed at addressing problems that arise in the practice of a human service profession, and it is assumed that the development of scientific theory within a profession must result in better service to its clientele (De Vos *et al*: 2002:47) The problem regarding 'failure' needs to be investigated in order to determine how this problem presents itself and how people have overcome it, in order that practical theology may learn from this phenomenon, and be better equipped to counsel persons who are struggling with perceptions of 'failure' and of being a 'failure'.

4.6.5. Terminology.

Empirical research uses a number of terms pertinent to this study that should be clarified:

- **Empirical.** The term means *that which is verifiable by observation*. It refers to events and things that are observable and can be experienced by the human senses. An empirical study refers to a study or research that has been conducted, of which the results of the study is open to scrutiny by fellow professionals (Behr, 1988:5).
- **Grounded theory.** Grounded theory is a research qualitative research method that uses a systematic set of procedures to develop an inductively derived theory about a phenomenon. The purpose of grounded theory is to build a theory that is faithful to the evidence (Neuman & Kreuger, 2003:158).
- **Hermeneutics.** An approach that was originally used to study written text both in detail and as a whole to enable people to see the deeper meanings contained within it. The approach was expanded in interpretive social science to be a method for developing a deeper

understanding of events in the social world (Neuman & Kreuger 2003:558).

- **Hypothesis.** A hypothesis is a conjectural statement of the relation between two or more variables. The difference between a proposition and a hypothesis is essentially that a proposition states 'this thing is so', while a hypothesis asks the question, 'is this thing so?' (De Vos, 2002:36).
- **Model.** A model is a symbolic or graphic representation to make a theory or construct more easily understandable (Behr, 1988:7), or a description of a social phenomenon without attempting to explain it or predict anything from the description (De Vos, *et al*:2002:38).
- **Paradigm.** The term paradigm originated in linguistics and means the various forms that a word can take in some languages, according to the declension or conjugation of that word. In the social sciences the word refers to the nature, growth and development of the sciences (De Vos, *et al* :2002:43).
- **Phenomenology.** Phenomenological enquiry focuses on the question, 'what is the structure and essence of experience of this phenomenon for these people?' The phenomenon being experienced may be an emotion - loneliness, jealousy, anger, or a relationship, marriage or a job, or a program, organisation or a culture (Patton, 1990:69).
- **Proposition.** A proposition is a truth statement about a theoretical model or theory (De Vos, 2002:35).

4.6.6. Research methods.

Scientific knowledge is defined by De Vos and Schulze (2002:25) as the body of propositions, inclusive of factual statements, theories, hypotheses laws and models, that is accepted, at a given time, by the scientific community, as being

valid and reasonably correct. By definition, scientific knowledge cannot be static, or become stagnant, but must always be relevant. This implies that scientific research is always at the forefront of human endeavour, interpreting human activity and behaviour, and finding solutions for problems as they occur. According to Fouche and Delport, (2002b:78) research originates with a problem, and ends with a conclusion, confirming or rejecting a hypothesis, and arrives at the conclusion on the basis of what the data, and only the data, dictates. The implication for this study regarding 'failure' is that, while 'failure' is a common enough phenomenon in our society, whether Christian or not, very little has been written on the subject, indicating that there has been insufficient research done on the matter, which in turn, emphasises the necessity for current research on the subject.

At present there are two well-known and recognized approaches to research, namely the *qualitative paradigm* and the *quantitative paradigm*. These two methodological paradigms differ vastly from each other:

- The quantitative paradigm is based on positivism, which takes scientific explanation to be based on universal laws. Its main aims are to measure the social world objectively, to test hypotheses and to predict and control human behaviour. A quantitative study may therefore be defined as an inquiry into a social or human problem, based on testing a theory composed of variables, measured with numbers and analysed with statistical procedures in order to determine whether the predictive generalisations of the theory hold true.
- In contrast, the qualitative paradigm stems from an antipositivistic, interpretative approach, is idiographic and thus holistic in nature, and aims mainly to understand social life and the meaning that people attach to everyday life. The qualitative research paradigm in its broadest sense refers to research that elicits participant accounts of meaning, experience or perceptions. It also produces descriptive data in

the participant's own written or spoken words. It thus involves identifying the participant's beliefs and values that underlie the phenomena. The qualitative researcher is therefore concerned with understanding rather than explanation; naturalistic observation rather than controlled measurement; and the subjective exploration of reality from the perspective of an insider as opposed to the outsider perspective that is predominant in the quantitative paradigm. As such, a qualitative study is concerned with non-statistical methods and small samples often purposefully selected (Fouche & Delport, 2002b:77).

The difference between quantitative and qualitative research can be shown as follows:

Quantitative and Qualitative Research Compared.	
Quantitative approach	Qualitative approach
Epistemological roots in positivism	Epistemological roots in phenomenology
Purpose is to test predictive and cause-effect hypotheses about social reality	Purpose is to construct detailed descriptions of social reality
Methods utilise deductive logic	Methods utilise inductive logic
Suitable for a study of phenomena that are conceptually and theoretically well developed; seeks to control phenomena	Suitable for a study of a relatively unknown terrain; seeks to understand phenomena
Concepts are converted into operational definitions; results appear in numeric form and are eventually reported in statistical language	Participants' natural language is used in order to come to a genuine understanding of their world
The research design is standardised according to a fixed procedure and can be replicated	The research design is flexible and unique and evolves throughout the research process; there are no fixed steps that should be followed and the design cannot be exactly replicated
Data are obtained systematically and in a standardised manner	Data sources are determined by the information richness of settings; types of observations are modified to enrich understanding
The unit of analysis is variables that are atomistic (i.e. elements that form part of the whole)	The unit of analysis is holistic, concentrating on the relationships between elements, contexts, etc.; the whole is always more than the sum

Marshall and Rossman (1999:46) present the following guidelines on situations where the qualitative approach to research is to be preferred above that of quantitative research:

- Research that cannot be conducted experimentally for practical or ethical reasons.
- Research that delves in depth into complexities and processes.
- Research for which relevant variables have yet to be identified.
- Research that seeks to explore where and why policy, folk wisdom and practice do not work.
- Research on unknown societies and innovative systems.
- Research on informal and unstructured linkages and processes in organisations.
- Research on real, as opposed to stated, organisational goals.

Using these guidelines, an empirical study of 'failure' would have to be done along the lines of a qualitative study as:

- 'Failure' cannot be measured experimentally, due to the variables involved. No two persons experience of 'failure', even in identical situations, will be the same.
- Human 'failure' is a complex phenomenon, and the reasons why a person experiences 'failure' involves processes that differ from person to person, and is influenced by a persons quaternary relationships, that being, the relationships between himself, God, his neighbour, the world that he lives in.
- Apparently, no research has as yet been done on the phenomenon of human 'failure' within a pastoral context, and,
- This study would like to explore how and why people experience 'failure'.

As the research for this study will be conducted along the lines of qualitative paradigms, it is important to discuss *qualitative research* in more detail.

4.6.7. Qualitative research.

The language of qualitative research is one of interpretation where researchers discuss cases in their social context and develop grounded theories that emphasise tracing the process and sequence of events in specific settings (Neuman & Kreuger, 2003:157). Qualitative research in itself has many diverse fields and three authors are cited to give an indication of the variables encountered in qualitative research.

Fouche (2002b:109-112)

- *Exploratory research* which is conducted to gain insight into a situation, phenomenon, community or individual. The need for such a study could arise out of a lack of basic information on a new area of interest.
- *Descriptive research* which is similar to exploratory research, but differs from it in the sense that descriptive research presents a picture of the specific details of a situation, social setting or relationship and focuses on 'how' and 'why' questions.
- *Explanatory research* which is often conducted when a researcher encounters an issue that is already known and has a description to it, but he is prompted to ask why things are the way they are.
- *Correlational research* is often conducted to detect the relationship between variables and allows for an estimation of the type and strength of the non-causal relationship, or to measure the strength of a relationship between two or more variables.
- *Evaluative research* where the design, implementation and applicability of social interventions is assessed.
- *Intervention research* that targets the addressing the application of

research in practice.

- *Participatory research* which is applied research that treats knowledge as a form of power and dispenses with the line between research and social action. The participants are empowered by the research.

Henning (2004:40-49).

- *Case studies* that focus on the phenomenon that has identifiable boundaries.
- *Ethnographic studies*, in which a group of people's way of life is studied.
- *Ethnomethodological studies* that ask how does an identified group of people construct reality with regard to a specific domain?
- *Discourse and narrative analysis*, that studies how the discourse or narrative was made and how is it maintained as a structural device to format and direct meaning.
- *Grounded theory studies* that ask how does data build substantive theory and has become one of the hallmarks of contemporary qualitative research.
- *Qualitative evaluation* that differs from general qualitative research in that the theories of assessment and evaluation come into play.
- *Action research* where the study is driven by a sense of social action and where the participation of the people for whom the intervention is designed, with the aim of emancipation for the participants.

O'Connor (2005 Web)

- *Participant-observation* involves the process of immersing yourself in the study of people you're not too different from. It is almost always done covertly, with the researcher never revealing their true purpose or identity. Four roles are described:
 - Complete participation -- the researcher participates in deviant or

illegal activities and goes on to actively influence the direction of the group.

- Participant as observer -- the researcher participates in deviant or illegal activities but does not try to influence the direction of the group.

- Observer as participant -- the researcher participates in a one-time deviant or illegal activity but then takes a back seat to any further activities.

- Complete observation -- the researcher is a member of the group but does not participate in any deviant or illegal activities.

- *Ethnography*, which is the process of describing a culture or way of life from a folk peoples' point of view. Another name for it is field research.
- *Photography*, or filmmaking, is ethnography with recording equipment, for example, film reports on the homeless may be just what is needed to mobilize community action.
- *Ethnomethodology*, the study of commonsense knowledge, for example the 'breaking up' the standard routines of folk groups in order to see how strongly and in what ways group members mobilize to restore the cultural order. Refined versions of this method are often referred to as *conversation analysis* or *sociolinguistics*.
- *Dramaturgical interviewing*, or dramaturgy, is a technique of doing research by role playing or play acting your own biases in some symbolic interaction or social performance. Interviewing is seen as a conversation with a purpose.
- *Sociometry*, the measurement of social distance between group members. More precisely, it is the assessment of attractions and repulsions between individuals in a group and with the group structure as defined by feelings.
- *Natural experiment*, which refers to a situation where a split or division has occurred between group members, and the researcher is afforded an opportunity to study the differentiation process of social structure.
- *Case study* occurs when all you have is information about one unique

- offender, and you want to generalize about all offenders of that type.
- *Unobtrusive measures* are ways of gathering data in which subjects are not aware of their being studied, and are sometimes called non-reactive measures. They usually involve clandestine, novel, or oddball collection of trace data that falls into one of two categories: accretion or erosion. Accretion is the stuff left behind by human activity. An example would be going through someone's garbage. Erosion is the stuff that is worn down by human activity. An example would be examining wear and tear on floor tiles to estimate how much employees use the rest room.
 - *Content analysis* is a technique for gathering and analysing the content of text. The content can be words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs, pictures, symbols, or ideas. It can be done quantitatively as well as qualitatively, and computer programs can be used to assist the researcher.
 - *Historiography* is the method of doing historical research or gathering and analysing historical evidence. There are four types of historical evidence: primary sources, secondary sources, running records, and recollections.
 - *Secondary analysis* is the re-analysis of data that was originally compiled by another researcher for other purposes than the one the present researcher intends to use it for.

From the three sources mentioned above, it is apparent that the methodology is often similar, but different terms are coupled to the methodology. The first two authors are from the social sciences, while the last author, O'Connor, is actually a source from within the criminal justice science, which gives an indication of the flexibility that is inherent of the qualitative research paradigm, and yet, also gives an indication of how different sciences can successfully use the same research methods.

From the description given by Fouche, this investigation could be described as *exploratory, explanatory and descriptive*, as it seeks to explain 'failure', from Henning's description this investigation would draw on *case studies*, and from O'Connor, this investigation could be described as a *participant-observation* study. Combining these factors presents us an investigation that is based on case-studies, involves participant observation, that is explanatory, exploratory and descriptive. The goal of this investigation is to study 'failure' as experienced by people, and to determine what happened that caused a person to experience 'failure', how this person experienced 'failure', and how his or her life was affected by 'failure'. This goal cannot be achieved by doing quantitative research, and therefore necessitates a qualitative research method. A quantitative study might be able to report on the number of persons in a targeted area, that have experienced 'failure' in the past, or might still be suffering from the negative feelings resulting from experienced 'failure' and get a common denominator on what they experienced as 'failure'. But the statistical facts regarding the number of people, their ages at which they experienced 'failure' and similar data, it not the object of this research. On the contrary, it is the aim of this research to determine how individuals experienced 'failure' and how they overcame 'failure' in their lives, in order to develop a pastoral model to assist in counselling persons who experience 'failure' in their lives.

4.6.8. Phenomenology.

Phenomenology, as a method of inquiry, has been described as:

...a focus on the question, 'what is the structure and essence of experience of this phenomenon for these people?' The phenomenon being experienced may be an emotion - loneliness, jealousy, anger, or a relationship, marriage or a job, or a program, organisation or a culture

(Patton, 1990:69).

...immersion and introspection (Padgett, 2004:276)

'...a general description of the phenomenon as seen through the eyes of people who have experienced it at first hand.' It is a study that attempts to understand people's perceptions, perspectives and understanding of a particular situation (Fouche & Delport, 2002a:268).

Phenomenology has its roots in a philosophical tradition, from the work developed by the German philosopher Edmund H. Husserl (1859-1938), which was extended by Alfred Schutz (1899-1959), whose work in 1977 established phenomenology as a major philosophical and social science perspective. Other important influences have been Merleau-Ponty (1962), Whitehead (1958), and Zaner (1970), Giorgi (1971), and the work of Moustakas (1988) that had an important influence on certain approaches to psychotherapy (*cf* Ehrich:2003:42-52; Patton, 1990:69). A phenomenological study attempts to understand people's perceptions and understanding of a particular situation (Fouche & Delport, 2002a:268). As it will be appreciated, no two persons will experience the same occurrence in the same way, as a result of differing backgrounds and circumstances, cultural differences, religious persuasion and so forth.

Phenomenological research requires that the researcher aims to understand and interpret the meaning that subjects give to their everyday lives. Eventually, the researcher reduces the experiences to a central meaning, or the essence of experience, and the product of the research is a description of the experience being studied. In order to accomplish this, the researcher should be able to enter the respondents 'life world' or 'life setting' (*Sitz im Leben*) and place himself in the shoes of the subject. The researcher will use mainly participant observation and long interviews (with up to ten people) as

methods of data collection (Fouche: 2002a:273). Patton (1990:69) views phenomenology as the study of how people describe things and experiences through their senses. Yet description and interpretation of experiences can often become intertwined and the researcher must be able to make sense of the person's experience of the phenomenon. It will be appreciated therefore, that phenomenology is a subdivision of qualitative research, rather than that of quantitative research, and it is intended that this method will be used in this research.

4.6.9. Hermeneutical-Phenomenology.

4.6.9.1. Description.

In the light of the above section regarding phenomenology, it is necessary to elucidate the concept of 'hermeneutical-phenomenology, which is a subdivision of phenomenology. Phenomenology is the study of a person's experience of a specific nature. Hermeneutics asks, *What are the conditions under which a human act took place or a product was produced that makes it possible to interpret its meanings?* (Henning, 2004:16, Patton, 1990:84) Four principles are offered by Kvale, as cited by Patton (1990:84), that are applicable to hermeneutic inquiry and analysis:

1. Understanding a human act or product, and hence all learning, is like interpreting a text.
2. All interpretation occurs within a tradition.
3. Interpretation involves opening oneself to a text (or its analogue) and questioning it.
4. I must be able to interpret a text in the light of my situation.

Hermeneutic theory argues that one can only interpret the meaning of something from some perspective, a certain standpoint, a praxis or situational context, whether one is reporting on one's own findings or reporting the

perspectives of people being studied, and thus reporting their standpoint or perspective (Patton, 1990:85). Hermeneutics is considered to be part of the interpretive social sciences and the term comes from a god in Greek mythology, Hermes, who had the job of communicating the desires of the gods to mortals. It literally means making the obscure plain (Neuman & Kreuger, 2003:77). Hermeneutics is largely found in the humanities, philosophy, art history, religious studies, linguistics, and literary criticism.

4.6.9.2. Implementation.

Hermeneutic-phenomenology is therefore a combination or congruence of two research methods, the first being phenomenology, that studies the phenomenon, i.e. 'failure' as a whole or phenomenon, and secondly hermeneutics that asks the question, how did the persons who lived the phenomenon, experience it? What was the 'lived experience'. As in all research, the purpose of this congruent paradigm is to investigate how persons who experienced or suffered 'failure', lived the experience, overcame the 'failure' to such an extent that it had a positive influence on their lives, in order to inform others on the results of this study. This is after all the purpose of any study, namely to investigate and inform others. *Hermeneutic-phenomenology* asks the question - what is the 'lived-experience' of persons who have experienced 'failure' and what can be learnt from their experience? More specifically, the route that will be taken, is the same route that was taken regarding 'failure' as seen in the lives of the Biblical characters, as seen in chapter 2.6, namely what was the background to the 'failure', how was the 'failure' experienced or 'lived', and how did the person who experienced 'failure', had the 'failure' reversed into something positive? It is all very well to say that 'failure' is a common experience, but the crux of the matter is, what is 'failure' and how was 'failure' experienced? This is what *Hermeneutic-phenomenology* is intended to investigate.

4.6.10. Interviewing.

In order to conduct research of any type, be it quantitative or qualitative, data must be gathered, collated and studied, from which certain findings can be made and published. Qualitative research methods utilise three kinds of data collection: (1) in-depth, open-ended interviews; (2) direct observation; and (3) written documents. The data from interviews consist of direct quotations from people about their experiences, opinions, feelings, and knowledge. The data from observations consist of detailed descriptions of people's activities, behaviours, actions, and the full range of inter-personal interactions and organizational processes that are part of observable human experience. (Patton, 1990:10).

Greef (2002:297), suggests three basic approaches to conducting qualitative interviewing:

- **The informal conversational interview.** This type of interview resembles a chat, during which participants may sometimes forget that they are being interviewed. Most questions asked will flow from the immediate context.
- **General interview guide approach,** also known as the guided interview. When employing this approach for interviewing, a basic checklist is prepared to make sure that all relevant topics are covered. This type of interview approach is useful for eliciting information about specific topics.
- **Standardised open-ended interview.** Researchers using this approach prepare a set of open-ended questions, which are carefully worded and arranged for the purpose of minimising variation in the questions posed to the participants. This method is often preferred for collecting interviewing data when two or more researchers are involved in the data collection process.

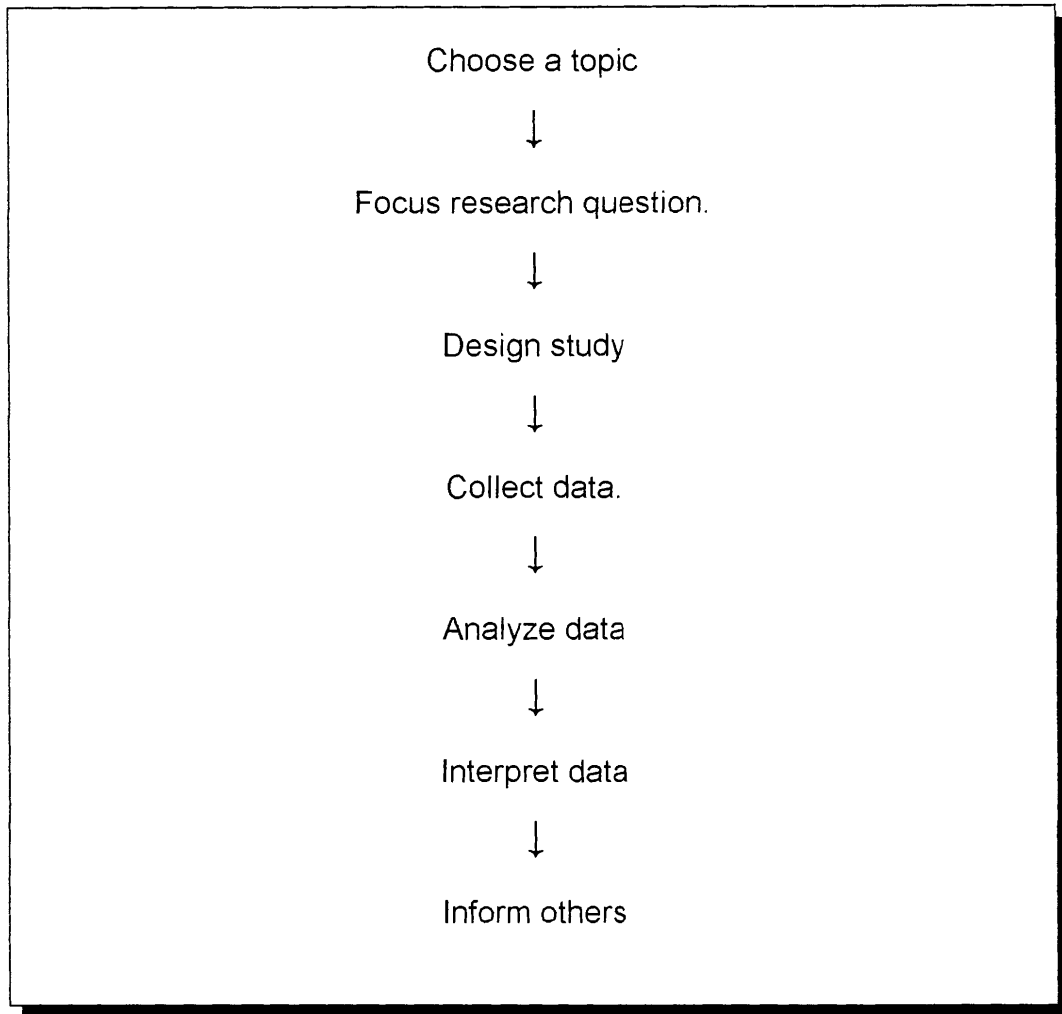
Indepth interviewing is a data collection technique relied on quite extensively by qualitative researchers. It is often described as 'a conversation with a purpose'. This technique can vary depending on the degree the interview is structured beforehand and on the amount of latitude the interviewee is granted in responding to the questions. Qualitative in-depth interviews are much more like conversations rather than formal, structured interviews. The researcher explores a few general topics to help uncover the participant's meaning perspective, but otherwise respects how the participant frames and structures the responses. This, in fact, is an assumption fundamental to qualitative research - the participant's perspective on the social phenomenon of interest should unfold as the participant views it, not as the researcher views it. An interview is a method of data collection that may be described as an interaction involving the interviewer and the interviewee, the purpose of which is to obtain valid and reliable information. Interviews may range from casual conversation or brief questioning to more formal, lengthy inter-actions. Formal interviews are sometimes necessary in research in order to standardize interview topics and general questions. The most important aspect of the interviewer's approach concerns conveying the idea that the participant's information is acceptable and valuable. Interviews have particular strengths. An interview is a useful way to get large amounts of data quickly. When more than one person is used as an informant, the interview process allows for a wide variety of information and a large number of subjects. It also allows for immediate follow-up questions and, if necessary for clarification, follow-up interviews may be scheduled at a later date. Combined with observation, interviews allow the researcher to check description against fact (*cf*, Neuman & Kreuger, 2003:382-385; Greef, 2002:297-303).

For the purposes of this investigation, open-ended, semi-structured interviews

were conducted. The questions were founded on the assumption that the persons who would be interviewed, had already experienced some form of 'failure' and had recovered from that experience to such an extent that the lessons learnt from the experience were being utilised in some form, in their daily lives. The questions were intended to be standardised open-ended questions that allowed for some variance in the answers, without restricting the respondents to giving identical answers to the questions.

4.6.11. Method

The model proposed by Neuman and Kreuger (2003:12) was utilised in preparing and conducting this research. In this model there are seven steps in the research process, viz:



A questionnaire was devised along the lines of the sub-divisions of the case studies in the basis-theory (background, 'failure', and implementation of 'failure'), see Addendum "C". Seven respondents were recruited by the researcher from a number of candidates who were initially approached by word of mouth and email. The respondents were questioned about their 'failure's; and only where the experiences of 'failure' were deemed to be in the past, were questionnaires submitted to the respondents. Persons who were still in the process of experiencing 'failure' were deemed not to be suitable as the course of events in the respondents lives' had not been completed. Should

respondents have been included who were still undergoing the experience of 'failure' the data gleaned from the questionnaires and interviews would have been incomplete and, possibly, biased. Initial interviews were conducted to ascertain their suitability for this research. After acquiring their consent to participate in this research, the questionnaires were given to each respondent. Finally, open-ended interviews conducted with each respondent in order to elucidate the answers that were submitted in the responses.

4.6.2. Case Studies.

As indicated above, (*cf.* 4.2.1 & 4.6.10) seven respondents were recruited to assist in this research. Care was taken to ensure that the respondents did not have identical 'failure's' in order to get a wider scope on the experiences of 'failure'. The approach taken was that of a hermeneutic-phenomenological approach, where the lived experience of the respondents 'failure' was targeted, and in the questionnaires were intended to be structured to ask the same questions from each respondent, but also open-ended to allow for variance in responses. An example of the questionnaire is submitted as an addendum to this study.

4.6.2.1 Case Study 'A'

4.6.2.1.1. Background.

The respondent is a married 42 year old father of three children, and is the owner of a mechanical and electrical engineering business. He was raised in a Christian home, his father being an ordained minister in the Dutch Reformed Church. – After completing his schooling, he went into the South African Army for a two year call-up, and during this time he came to conversion.

Following his call-up, he wanted to enter a full-time ministry, but was lead by the Lord to take up secular work in order to reach more people in a manner that ministers and missionaries were unable to do. He completed his training as a mechanical and electrical engineer, having acquired his National Technical Certificate, Level 6, and was employed on the mines for five years, initially as a Senior Technician and later as a Junior Engineer. After he left the mines, he was employed as an Area Technician for a company that made concrete products and provided ready-mixed concrete to the building industry. During this time he experienced persecution for his religious beliefs, and was forced to resign from the company. He started up his own engineering business, which he successfully runs to this day.

4.6.2.1.2. Analysis of 'Failure'.

Soon after starting up his own business, the respondent was awarded an invitation to tender for a food trolley for the hospitals. This invitation to tender involved the design and building of a prototype that would be evaluated *in situ* prior to the contract being awarded. This meant that expensive, but necessary machinery had to be purchased on credit. In the tender process, an unscrupulous competitor stole the prototype, and with minor adjustments, fobbed it off as his own invention. The result was that the hospital authority gave the tender to the competitor and the respondent lost all he had, jeopardising his new business and the welfare of his family. The overriding debt and loss of income, taxed the respondent and placed an enormous pressure on him. His apparent inability to provide for his family and get out of his mess, a sense of helplessness was described as his experience of 'failure'.

4.6.2.1.3. 'Failure' reversed.

The respondent stated that it was in this time of financial and spiritual crisis, that his dependency on, and faith in the Lord deepened, and resulted in an

overwhelming conviction that the Lord will provide an answer. The business was continued, as a matter of faith, and within a few weeks another engineering concern who had use for the machines that were bought, provided an income for the business. The respondent states that every month sufficient was provided for all his needs, and more, without any guarantees that the accounts for next month would be met. Each month was lived, day by day in total dependency on the provision of God.

Hindsight has been an invaluable tool in seeing how an apparent 'failure' can be turned into success. A number of lessons were learnt in the process, and as an Elder in the Church, a Sunday school teacher, and a well known member of the farming community, these lessons are taught to an audience a minister or missionary would not be able to do. These are:

- God is in control, regardless of what happens.
- God never makes mistakes, even though we often think so.
- God can be relied on for solving the big and the small problems in life.
- When circumstances are at their darkest, the outcome is at its nearest.
- That which seems impossible for man, is possible for God.
- To be aware of the hand of God in his life and in all his dealings.

4.6.2.2. Case Study 'B'

4.6.2.2.1. Background

This respondent is married, aged 57, and a minister in the church. He enjoyed a happy childhood in a Christian home, had no traumas and upsets as a child. At the age of 35 he completed his training as a minister in the church and was relatively happy and contented in his work.

4.6.2.2.2. Analysis of 'Failure'.

Five years ago an unsavoury incident, that was not of his doing, took place in the congregation where he was serving, this resulted in his ties and responsibilities being severed from the congregation and he was freed from the ministry. This also meant that he had to vacate the parsonage and was left with no income and no home. He moved to a farm but nine months later suffered a further setback when the homestead burnt down. A combination of factors, being freed from the ministry, having no income or home, having his house burnt down around him and a fear of fire, resulted in a build-up of tension which this resulted in a stroke that left the right-hand side of his body completely paralysed. Without a medical aid to bear the brunt of the costs, being unemployed and unemployable, was the respondents description of his 'failure'. Prevailing emotions centred around anger, heartache, and being betrayed by those to whom he looked for support. The disappointing awareness that not even his closest allies could be trusted, left it's mark.

4.6.2.2.3. 'Failure' reversed.

Physiotherapy, occupational therapy and a deepening spiritual life helped the respondent to remain positive and to keep a positive and buoyant outlook. A select few prayer warriors assisted in the struggle and by the grace of God, *the respondent was able to answer a call back into the ministry, having been completely healed of the stroke, with no side effects remaining.* One crucial aspect of the healing process was the issue of forgiveness. Accepting forgiveness, and forgiving those whom he trusted and counted upon and who betrayed him. Forgiveness is described by the respondent as 'being able to remember without the pain.' The respondent adds that he came out much stronger, and more blessed, with a richer spirituality and 'people-sense' than he had before.

4.6.2.3. Case Study 'C'.

4.6.2.3.1. Background

This respondent is a thirty-nine year old divorcee with three children. At the age of five, she was converted, and spent her childhood in a Christian, and happy home. She was molested by her grandfather since her early childhood, and despite informing her parents about the issue, they turned a deaf ear to her pleas for help. It was only at the close of her school years that this matter was brought to an end. The respondent later married, and three children were born. Her husband, a minister in the church, later divorced her, claiming that he was homosexual.

4.6.2.3.2. Analysis of 'Failure'.

The respondents description of 'failure' can be categorised into two groups, her childhood experiences and marriage. The childhood experiences left her with the impression that God had turned His back on her, and for many long years struggled with the Lord. On the one hand was her determination to serve the Lord, and on the other hand was the impression that it was all a waste of time. The second incident that the respondent deems as being part of her 'failure' was her divorce. After struggling with her emotions for many years, she met her future husband, with the impression that God had eventually seen her, and answered her prayers. They were tremendously happy, and, in the words of the respondent, this resulted in some healing of her childhood wounds. A few years later, her husband divorced her, and turned his back on the church and the Lord. This had a devastating effect on her, she had never, even remotely, thought about divorce. Fear for the future without her husband, no support for the children, left her contemplating

suicide, and she had to use antidepressants to combat depression. The most overwhelming emotion was that of impotence and dismay.

4.6.2.3.3. 'Failure' reversed.

The respondent, who as a child had perceptions of God turning His back on her, had, after the divorce, the opposite impression. God, in some mysterious way, enabled her to carry on. Enriched by her own experiences, the respondent is currently a marriage counsellor, specialising in pre-divorce counselling. The lessons learnt in the process were:

- That the Lord will never forsake you.
- You are not given strength *before* a crisis, but rather *in* the crisis.
- You are given strength sufficient for your needs.
- Being a Christian does not preserve you from harm.
- Everything, including bad things, work together for those who love the Lord.
- A person is stronger and can handle more adversities than he thinks.

4.6.2.4. Case Study 'D'.

4.6.2.4.1. Background.

This respondent is a forty-one year-old divorced male, who grew up in the city. As a five-year-old child he experienced the trauma of the death of his father in a motorcar accident. Following the death of his father, his maternal grandfather came to live with them, and apart from this incident, he had an otherwise happy and normal childhood. He did not excel at school, and did not participate in any sporting activities. Both junior-, and high school years were

otherwise uneventful. In his pre-matric year he received a calling to the ministry, and attended University for four years with the ministry in mind, but finally admitted defeat. A window of opportunity opened for him at a theological seminary, where he not only passed the course in the required time limit, but also found out that he could acquire a few distinctions along the way. When he was called up for active service, he served as a chaplain in a military hospital, which he enjoyed. On release from the Army, he entered full-time service in a congregation, and was married to a member of the congregation, six months later. After serving for eighteen-months, he was abruptly dismissed from the congregation, on the grounds of unsubstantiated rumours. He worked in another congregation, in a very poor suburb, and after three years suffered burn-out and left the ministry. Soon afterwards, in 1995, he was diagnosed as having cancer, underwent chemotherapy, and the cancer went into remission and has not reappeared since. In 2003, he was retrenched from his place of employment, and he realised that he was unemployed. Late in 2004 his wife sued for divorce.

4.6.2.4.2. Analysis of 'Failure'.

According to the respondent, his 'failure' was constituted in his three traumatic experiences. Being dismissed from the ministry was a very hurtful experience, especially for someone who trusted in the Lord. Compounding the issue was the fact that the instigators behind the dismissal were the people who were supposed to be the pillars of the church, and whose financial contribution gave them a hold over the governing body, and therefore the power to manipulate matters to their own taste. Another issue was the fact that his young wife, to whom he had been married for eight months, could not cope, and had not been

trained to cope with the pressures of the ministry. A third issue was his own inability to fit in to the predetermined requirements for a perfect pastor. Being dismissed from the congregation, was for him, the worst thing that could happen. With all his heart he wanted to serve the Lord, but was prevented from doing so. The governing body of the congregation even went as far as to tell him that as a pastor he was a miserable 'failure'. Feelings of utmost dejection and 'failure' prevailed. Adding salt to the wounds, was the diagnosis of cancer, and a feeling of having his life come to an abrupt halt. As the respondent put it, "a feeling of having the rug pulled out from under my feet." The third crises, that of his divorce left him with a feeling of disappointment, especially as a pastor who married couples for a living. How do you marry couples when you are a victim of divorce?

4.6.2.4.3. 'Failure' reversed.

The respondent has returned to the ministry, specialising in missionary work, and currently supports himself by doing freelance work as a 'rent-a-pastor' where he officiates at weddings and baptisms. His experience has enabled him to give deeper pre-nuptial counselling. According to the respondent, a number of factors assisted in his overcoming his 'failure', they were:

Reading a lot of material and books on divorce.

A support group of other divorced husbands.

Prayer support groups.

Listening to inspirational music, especially positive music with a decidedly worshipful nature.

Keeping a positive outlook on life. This meant making a daily, cognisant and deliberate choice to be positive.

Not allowing circumstances to side-track him, but, again, making a deliberate choice to be actively involved in the world around him.

4.6.2.5. Case Study 'E'.

4.6.2.5.1. Background

This respondent is a 37 year-old, remarried divorcee with two children from her previous marriage. She was the elder of two siblings, the brother being two years younger than herself. Her mother was the eldest sister of eight siblings, and due to poverty, spent her whole schooling in a boarding-school hostel. Her father was the middle child of five siblings, of a reasonably wealthy family. Her paternal grandfather was an alcoholic, as was her father, and three of his siblings. Only one child was not an alcoholic. Jealousy and discord in her childhood home played a very prominent role, tension between all the members of the family was a constant factor. Her brother was a sickly child, and received most of the attention, in an already distraught family, which left her with the lasting impression that she did not count, and experienced a lot of rejection, and could never achieve well enough to merit any attention. With a father that was said to be a perfectionist, and a brother who was everything, the respondent could never amount to anything in the home.

4.6.2.5.2. Analysis of 'Failure'.

According to the respondent, her 'failure' was getting married to the wrong person for the wrong reasons. Not being allowed to have any boy-friends at all during her school years, she met a young man, and despite warnings from her

parents that he was not a suitable companion, she nevertheless went out with him, just to escape the constant bickering and shouting at home. At the age of twenty-four she became pregnant, and, perforce, married the father. At six-months she miscarried, but her parents had no knowledge of the fact that she was even pregnant. Her husband's parents both came from families who were alcoholics, his father was said to have been an alcoholic since the age of five years! Her husband was a very unstable character, also said to be a perfectionist and highly critical of every-one and everything, and also had a tendency to drink. In the seven years they were married, they relocated seventeen times, and she lived in constant fear of him. After the divorce she discovered that her husband had been unfaithful to her. After the divorce, the respondent was involved in a relationship with another perfectionist and alcoholic, which did not work out, and she subsequently left him. The respondent states that after the divorce and disastrous relationship, she felt like a total 'failure', in her words, she always managed to disappoint her parents, and could never do anything right. Feelings of anger, disappointment, depression, fear, guilt and a very impaired self-image characterised her self-perception.

4.6.2.5.3. 'Failure' reversed.

The respondent is happily remarried, and has worked hard at instilling a healthy self-image. She started her own business, a computer centre for children, enrolled as a student, and successfully completed, an executive secretarial course. This was followed by a diploma course as a counsellor which gave her the opportunity to sort out a number of personal issues, and managed to get her life on track. On discovering a hidden talent for working with children, the respondent is now a lay pastoral counsellor. On the road to recovery and success, the respondent, who is a pianist and artist used music and art to work out her frustrations and to get some perspective in her life. A

significant discovery that the respondent made, was to find out that life is full of choices, and you can choose to remain a 'failure' or to get up and do something about it. Every negative situation had something positive to it, and when the positive is actively sought out, a difference is brought about.

4.6.2.6. Case Study 'F'

4.6.2.6.1. Background.

This respondent is a thirty-six year old, happily remarried divorcee with no children. Her father was a minister in the church, and the respondents role-model. At the age of ten years, the respondents father suffered a major stroke, which left him in a coma for forty-seven days. She was sexually molested by a nephew, who threatened to harm her if she told anybody. Two and a half years after her father's stroke, the respondent saw her father again, and the image of a shorn head, a massive surgery scar on his head, very thick glasses and a blind man's walking stick, sent her running away, and she only reappeared two weeks later, during which time she had built up sufficient courage to meet the broken man who had once been her role-model. The father started drinking, a fact which was kept secret from the congregation, and the mother would sometimes disappear for a week, leaving the respondent to care for her father. The mother made derogatory comments about the respondent, saying she was fat, ugly and stupid, which left a lasting impression. At the age of twenty-three the respondent got engaged, and a month before the marriage, found her fiancé in bed with another man. Her fiancé's partner terrorised the respondent, to the extent of shooting at her through the front door of the flat.

4.6.2.6.2. Analysis of 'Failure'.

The respondent is very forthright in identifying her 'failure' - herself. Stating that she is a 'purist and unbelievable perfectionist' she acknowledges that she was blessed with many talents, but the derogatory remarks made by her mother, was overriding, and the respondent believed that she was fat, ugly, stupid, worthless and incompetent. The first marriage was a 'complete disaster' and the divorce a heaven sent release. However, the divorce left it's mark. Knowing that divorce was not God's will, the respondent felt that she was a total 'failure' and turned into an 'apprehensive, pathetic fugitive that became so depressed that she would not even make up her bed in the mornings. The worst part of it all was a bitter impression that she had disappointed herself, and, worst of all, God. The respondent describes her emotional state as being filled with hate, despising, bitterness, guilt, frustration, endless hopelessness and of being a complete 'failure'.

4.6.2.6.3. 'Failure' reversed.

Despite conflicting emotions, and a realisation that she had failed and disappointed God, the knowledge that she was important to God, carried the day, even though the respondent could not explain why God would still care about her. This knowledge, this unshakeable certainty that somehow God had not turned His back on her, was the anchor that held firm. A support group of friends prayed with her, and for her, listened and helped where they could. The will to survive, somehow, and pure determination to hold on until the light shone through, were the major factors in reversing the 'failure'. Other instrumental aspects that helped to turn things around was an appetite for reading non-fiction books, and hours playing the piano. On the other side of the 'failure' the respondent admits to having a closer and deeper relationship with God, and being wiser and richer for the experience, with a passion for the -----

sanctity of marriage, and is enrolled as a student in pastoral counselling, with the aim of specialising in pre-marital counselling.

4.6.2.7. Case Study 'G'

4.6.2.7.1. Background.

This respondent is a forty-two year old, remarried divorcee who was raised in a happy home and did not experience any trouble or problems in her childhood. She married at the age of twenty-two, her first husband being twenty-two years older than she was, and he brought into the marriage four children of his own. Two children, one daughter and one son were born into the family. The marriage only lasted seven years before it ended in the divorce court. The reason for the divorce was cited as the husband's drinking problem and infidelity. The husband had enjoyed a senior, well paid job, until he was laid off a year after the divorce. The husband went steadily downhill from there, both mentally and physically, and became depressed. Visiting rights were granted to the father, and he made use of this quite frequently. Three years after the divorce, the father picked up the two children, aged four and eleven years, for a day out at the zoo, and on the following Monday detectives informed the respondent that the children had been murdered by the father. The father was subsequently sentenced to a double life-sentence. On the day of the death of the two children, the respondent had a further setback when she had a miscarriage.

4.6.2.7.2. Analysis of 'Failure'.

The respondent states that her life was shattered, she could not go on living without her two children, her life was empty and without a purpose. The loss of three children on one day was too much for her. She contemplated suicide, and visited numerous doctors and psychologists, and eventually ended up in a

psychiatric facility. Amongst her feelings of hate towards her ex-husband, and feelings of disappointment towards God, she could not find it in her heart to forgive her ex-husband. A recurring problem that the respondent still wrestles with, is the heartache she experiences on the birthdays of her two deceased children

4.6.2.7.3. 'Failure' reversed.

The respondent was hospitalized for three months, where a combination of medication, therapy and counselling and motivational talks brought some semblance of normality. However, it was only after meeting and marrying her current husband that things changed for the better. A new relationship with a loving and caring husband, and a reaffirmation of her faith has turned her life around. One of the specific things that she had to do was to sort out her relationship with God, find forgiveness for the feelings that she harboured, and re-commit her life to God. Two children were born in the second marriage. The respondent states that there were two important lessons from this 'failure', the first being to appreciate, and to express appreciation, for your loved ones, as they are only lent to you, and the second lesson was that, however difficult it may be, you must trust in the Lord, accepting that He will not forsake you, and will not give you a burden to bear, beyond your capacity to do so.

4.7. PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS FROM CHAPTER 4.

4.7.1. From the theoretical perspectives.

- One individual's concept of 'failure' may not be the same as that held by others, and that the effect and concept of 'failure' would therefore, also vary from one person to the other.

- 'Failure' is a learned social construct.
- Modern counselling practise places greater emphasis on client strengths and empowerment as a means of compensation for 'failure' rather than investigating why 'failure' occurred and endeavouring to utilise the 'failure'.
- There is apparently no room in the harshly competitive world of business for a 'failure', or for someone who is unable to learn from his mistakes. The preferred option is to avoid any form of 'failure' or mistakes, this would include even the admission of 'failure's', incompetency or weaknesses. Inordinate pressure bears upon the business community, to be successful and not te be a 'failure' in any way or form.

4.7.2. Qualitative and Quantitative research.

- 'Failure' cannot be measured experimentally, due to the variables involved. No two persons experience of 'failure', even in identical situations, will be the same.
- Human 'failure' is a complex phenomenon, and the reasons why a person experiences 'failure' involves processes that differ from person to person, and is influenced by a persons quaternary relationships, that being, the relationships between himself, God, his neighbour, the world that he lives in.

4.7.3. From the case studies.

4.7.3.1. Background.

- 'Failure' is very often experienced without any prior indication of the impending 'failure'.
- The respondents deemed themselves to be a 'failure' rather than that of the circumstances being perceived to be the 'failure'. This means that instead of 'scapegoating' and blaming others for their 'failure', the respondents saw themselves as the 'failure'.
- 'Failure' can be many things to many people.

4.7.3.2. Analysis of 'Failure'.

- The initial experience of 'failure' is often one of a situation getting out of hand, and the person experiencing 'failure' finds himself unable to control, or slow down the disaster.
- A perception of disappointing the Lord, and being a 'failure' in the eyes of the Lord, was a common denominator.
- Negative emotions, *inter alia*, helplessness, anger, frustration, disappointment, loss of hope, depression, were characteristic emotions accompanying 'failure'.
- 'Failure' is perceived to be the realisation that the person has not met the expectations that they had set for themselves.

4.7.3.3. 'Failure' reversed.

Various methods and 'tools' can be successfully implemented in the reversal of 'failure':

- A prayer support group.
- A social support group (caring friends)
- A deeper faith.
- A firm resolution not to succumb to the 'failure'. This includes the adoption of a resolution to start each day with a positive frame of mind.
- Reading books and articles on the 'failure', whether it be alcoholism or divorce, etc.
- Music, either playing a musical instrument, or listening to music.
- Involvement in community work.
- Painting, or the decorative arts.
- The ability, and willingness to learn from past mistakes.
- A realisation that overturning 'failure' may take longer than the initial 'failure' itself.
- Forgiveness, that of yourself and of others played a very important role in overcoming 'failure'.

CHAPTER 5. TOWARDS A THERAPEUTIC MODEL FOR COUNSELLING ON 'FAILURE'.

5.1. Introduction.

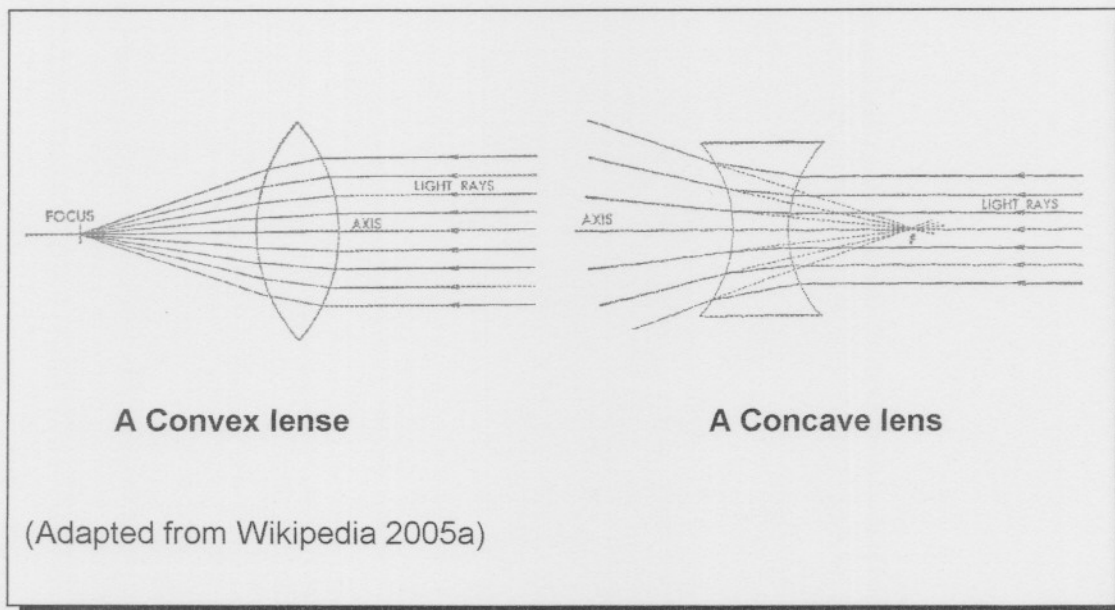
5.2 Premise. Seeing through a lens.

It is the premise of this chapter, indeed of the whole study, that incidents of 'failure' in the past *can* negatively effect a person's perceptions and attitudes in the present, and therefore seriously impact on the quality of life being experienced at the moment. It would be beneficial to revisit the 'failures of the past, where 'failure's' had a negative influence, and still have a negative influence on the counsellee, in order to correct misconceptions and distorted images, so that a normalised worldview and self-image may be adopted in order the counsellee may live his or her life to the full, and to the glory of God.

5.2.1. Lenses, mirrors and Literature

5.2.1.1. Lenses.

The principle of seeing through a lens, and having a distorted image of what is being seen is more or less common knowledge. Viewing an object through a lens, as shown by the diagrams below, produces either a magnifying or reducing effect providing the lens is not distorted or cracked. In the event of the lens being cracked or distorted either from misuse or faulty production, the image that the eye would see would appear to be distorted or diffused. The shape or condition of the lens which the eye looks through plays a very important role in the understanding or perception of the matter being observed.

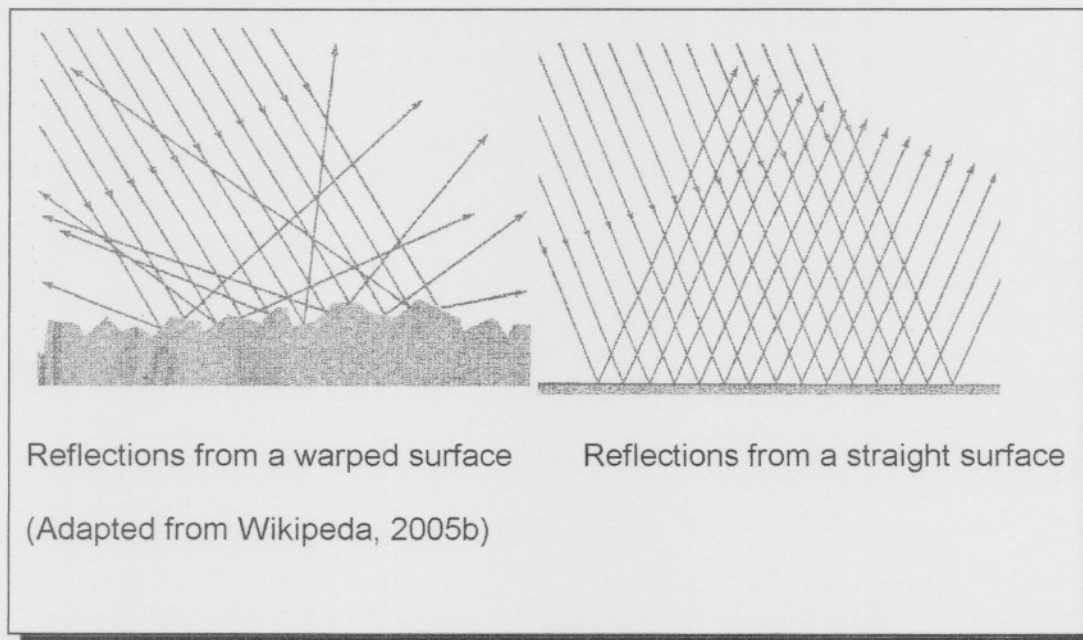


Children often play with the coloured, translucent cellophane wrappers of sweets, and hold the coloured wrappers to their eyes, and should the wrapper be green, the perceived world would be tinted green. (Or blue, red, orange as the case may be.) Here, a very important principle comes to the fore. When looking through a translucent green wrapper, *the viewer is not seeing a correct image*. While the object being viewed may be seen to be green, for example, it may in actual fact be white, or whatever the case may be. So the object being viewed, may appear to be vastly different from the actual object. This principle plays a very important role in counselling, as the manner in which the counsellor perceives his 'failure' can have a marked effect on the outcome of the counselling process.

5.2.1.2. Mirrors.

Another example from daily life can be taken from the amusement parks of days gone by. Often amusement parks had "Halls of Mirrors" and in these halls there were mirrors that were bent in various forms. Depending on the

shape of the mirror, a person may appear to be fat or thin, or with an elongated neck, shortened body, depending on the reflected image. A cracked mirror would also present a distorted image. When these principles are applied to a counsellor's perception of life, it becomes apparent that it is possible for a counsellor to perceive a very distorted view of life, that actually bears no resemblance to reality.



As seen from the above two diagrams, when light strikes a flat surface, it reflects a true image of the of the object. However, when light strikes a distorted surface, the light is reflected in various directions, resulting in a poor or distorted image.

The central truth learnt from a lens, whether clear or translucent, and from a mirror is that should there be a fault in the lens or the mirror, the reflection will not be true to the original. This truth can be applied to theology and pastoral theology as well, as will be seen in the following section.

5.2.1.3. Literature.

Viewing matter through a lens, determines how that matter is perceived. For example, the Bible may be studied from a feminist point of view, and a number of contentious issues raised, for example, the roles of men and women in the Bible. The same may be said when reading the Bible through various other lenses, for example, a *racial lens*, a *liberation theology lens*, a *prosperity gospel lens* and various others. This means the Scriptures are being seen or examined from a specific viewpoint. For example, a search was conducted in the Internet using EBSCOHOST, in the fields of the ATLA and ATLASerials databases, and a variety of articles were found that mentioned the word *lens* with reference to a viewpoint. A few examples are given to elucidate.

America seen through a different lens: the Bible in the works of Yoshiko Uchida. Matsuoka, F. *Semeia*. No 90-91 p. 1-337

A Direction Lens on the Mennonite Brethren. Mok, E., 2002. *Direction* 31 No 2, Fall. P. 220-232.

Cultural bias and liberal neutrality: reconsidering the relationship between religion and liberalism through the lens of the physician-assisted suicide debate. Jones, R.P. 2002. *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics*. 22. Fall. P. 229-263.

Through a classical lens: Hebrews 2:16. Gudorf, M.E., 2000. *Journal of Biblical Literature*. 119 No. 1. Spring. -. 105-108.

Getz & Wall (2000) use the 'three lens principle', or paradigm, to illustrate that church growth is influenced by three lenses, the lens of *Scripture*, *History* and

Culture, and they postulate that we cannot study the Bible without seeing the influence of culture affecting our perception. The same sentiments are echoed by authors such as Malina and Neyrey (1991:67) who state that when Americans read the Gospels, their inevitable frame of reference is psychological and individualistic, and the Gospels are read as if the first century Mediterraneans are twentieth-century Americans. This 'frame of mind' plays a very important part in the life of the counsellor, as it also bears upon issues such as forgiveness of sins, accountability for past actions, as well as 'failure's' that continue to influence present day conduct. Lotter (1989:23), in commenting on distorted faith consideration of the workaholic, mentions that the feigned consciousness of guilt, is precisely that, *feigned*, and is triggered by a subjective transference where the accent in his faith is transferred from God, to the person's ability to do everything successfully, by himself, which leads to a perceived alienation from God.

Pastoral psychology and counselling differs from other counselling for the very same reason: the frame of reference differs. While other social sciences that are concerned with human activity do not necessarily take into account the creation account of man, pastoral theology cannot escape the consequences of the fall of man and the resultant effects that sin has on human conduct. This is evident from the field of psychology, for example, where psychology is cognizant of the fact that man is not a perfect being and is concerned with the pathology of man, but, secular psychology is not necessarily concerned with sin and the fall of man. While volumes have been written on the creation, fall and redemption of man in general, this section of the study is slanted specifically towards how it affects pastoral counselling in general.

Plug, Louw, Gouws, & Meyer deem counselling and pastoral psychology to be sufficiently different as to warrant two separate entries in their psychological

dictionary. (cf 1997:405-406 'voorligting'- [counselling] and 'pastorale sielkunde' - [pastoral psychology] p274). Mitchell (1999:832) contends that 'pastoral care may be broadly defined as spiritual care and guidance or the shepherding of human souls'. In the same volume there is an enormous amount of material devoted to 'psychology' indicating that, as with Plug *et al*, pastoral counselling and psychology form two distinct fields of study. While pastoral counselling and psychology may be complementary to each other, they remain distinct from each other. This distinction is recognised by pastoral counsellors, as indicated by Collins (1988:23) who is of the opinion that psychology can be of great help to the Christian counsellor.

Pastoral counselling is distinct from secular psychology in that the foundation of pastoral counselling lies in the realm of the counsellee's relationship with Christ, within the framework of the Bible, founded in the community of God's people functioning together and living out God's answers to life's problems (Crabb, 1987 :21). Bookman (1994:154) states that by definition, the biblical (pastoral) counsellor is one who is persuaded of an allegiance to a Christian worldview, someone who consciously sees all the realities and relationships from a perspective that is biblically coherent and consistent. He adds that the one element that most dramatically distinguishes it from all pretenders is the commitment to a theocentric perspective on all life and thought. Sigmund Freud defined the driving force in personality as the *id* which was seen as the primitive component of the psyche, and functioned according to the primary processes of unconscious sexual and aggressive instincts (cf Schoeman, 2004:17). Keeping this in mind, it is important to note that Freud is considered to be the forerunner of modern psychology and therefore much of modern secular counselling has evolved from his school of thought, and when a comparison is made of the various main schools of psychology, it becomes obvious that secular psychology and secular counselling march to a different drummer than is the case in pastoral counselling (cf Sharf, 2000:26-450,

Ryckman, 1993:27-552, Meyer, Moore & Viljoen, 1993:30-459).

Accepting then, that there is a significant difference in pastoral counselling and secular counselling, it must be recognized that pastoral counselling, specifically, has to do with man as a creation of God, that underwent the traumatic experience of sin and the fall, and the possible subsequent restoration of man in Jesus Christ. No pastoral counselling can be called 'pastoral counselling' without taking the fall of man into account. (*cf*, MacMinn, 1996:51, MacArthur, 1994:98-115, Collins, 1988:16-20, Adams, 1979:xiii)

5.2.2. Lenses and the Scripture.

There are but two verses in Scripture that refer to an image seen in a mirror, 1 Corinthians 13 vers 12 that states "*For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.* (NKJV), and 2 Corinthians 3 vers 18 *But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.* (NKJV). Both these verses carry the implication that, that which is seen or known, or even being experienced, does not represent the sum total of our heritage in Christ. We can only see and experience a minor part, and even then, it is tainted by sin. Originally, in Biblical times, mirrors were of polished brass, the Hebrew word for this being *gillayon*; Isaiah 3:23, or *mar'ah*; Exodus 38:8, and the Greek *esoptron*; 1 Corinthians 13:12, and James 1:23 (Porter, 1996. ISBN, Glass)

5.3. Viewing the present through the lens of the past.

From the discussion above it is possible to make the hypothesis that there could be experiences in the past that could negatively impact on a person's

current well-being, and, more specifically, perceived 'failures'. Should unresolved 'failures' exist in the present, they could form a lens or mirror through which the counsellee looks at the present, and what the counsellee sees would be a distorted image. In reviewing the case studies of the empirical study, this is seen to be true, as seen for example in case study 'F', where the respondent believed that she was the 'failure', and as a result everything that she did, resulted in more 'failure's, eventually leading to the point where she was afraid to do anything. As was seen in all the case studies, once this perception was reversed, the respondent could look forward without fear of 'failure'. Their perceptions of the future was undistorted. The realization that future 'failure's were not excluded, did not negatively impact on the respondent's perceptions of the world around him, or her, but rather obversely, gave them hope for the future. A very important aspect regarding the perception of 'failure' presents itself. Whilst the respondents in the case studies, expressed their sentiments, believing that they had 'failed' at some stage in the past, they now viewed their past perceived 'failure' as a learning experience. Therefore, their 'failure's were not really 'failure's but, in accordance to Romans 8:28 that states that all things work together for the good for those who love God, their 'failure's were actually instrumental and necessary in order that they be made more fit for the calling that lay before them. *The respondents were unanimous in their belief that their experiences of 'failure' brought them nearer to God, and equipped them for service that would not have been the case otherwise.* It is therefore a logical conclusion that what is often deemed to be a 'failure', is not a 'failure' after all. It is a misconstrued conception, based upon distorted values emphasized by the community that we live in, and denies the person the opportunity to learn from the 'failure', thereby becoming a better richer and wiser person than he was before. It follows then, that, painful though 'failure's might be, they should be embraced, studied and mined for the wealth that lies hidden in them.

5.4. A Proposed Model for the Counselling of Individuals who Suffer from 'Failure'.

5.4.1. Introduction

Chapters two and three of this study was devoted to the basis-theoretical perspectives regarding 'failure', in order to ascertain how the concept of 'failure' was viewed by theologians and pastoral practitioners. Chapter three examined the met-theoretical perspectives of 'failure' as seen by the secular sciences, including Social Welfare and Sociology. Chapter four examined the experiences of seven respondents who had experienced 'failure' but who had also managed to learn from their experience to such an extent that they were able to put their knowledge and experience to practical use.

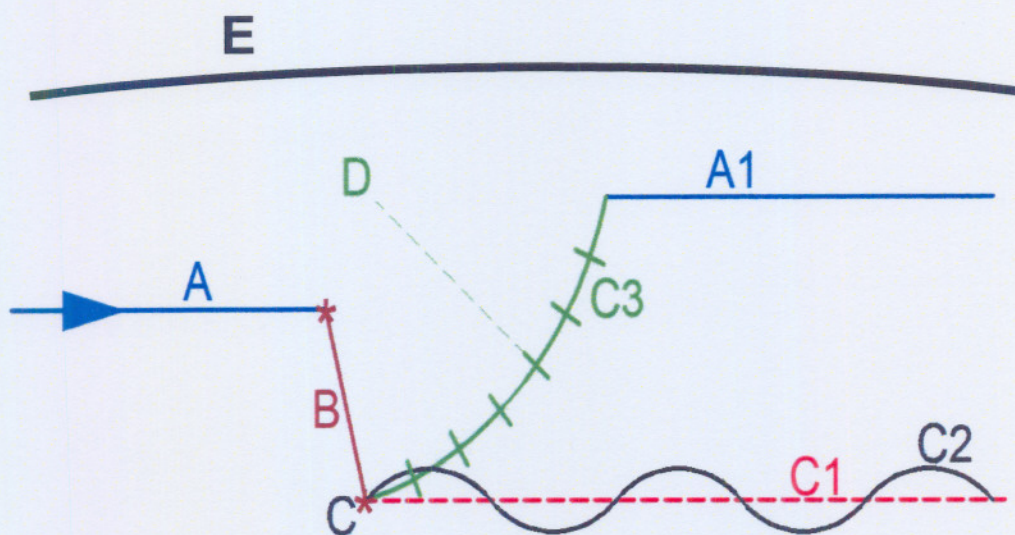
5.4.2. Aim.

As was mentioned earlier, this study focussed on the personal experiences of respondents, within the guidelines of Background, Analysis of 'failure' and 'failure' Reversed' in order to determine how they experienced 'failure', how it was overcome, and how they benefitted from 'failure'. This chapter is intended to provide a counselling model for persons experiencing 'failure'. The proposed model will function along the three guiding synesthetic metaphors, namely Background, Analysis of 'failure', and the Reversal of 'failure'.

5.4.3. A Schematic Representation of the Hermeneutic-Phenomenological Model.

(See following page.)

A Schematic Representation of the Hermeneutic-Phenomenological Model



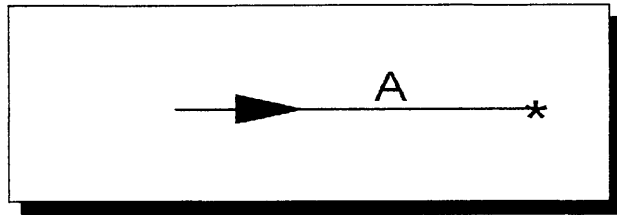
Key:

- A: Life prior to 'failure' also referred to as "Background"
- A1: Life after the successful reversal of 'failure'
- B: 'Failure' being experienced, also referred to as 'Analysis of Failure'
- C: Realization of having 'failed'
- C1: Life after 'failure' and coping with 'failure'
- C2: Life without resolving 'failure'
- C3: 'Failure' Learning Curve, also referred to as "Reversal of Failure"
- D: Tools and Life Skills available to successfully reverse 'failure'
- E: Representing the complete control of God

5.4.3.1 The Model explained.

Using the model as a reference point, the various components of the model will be explained.

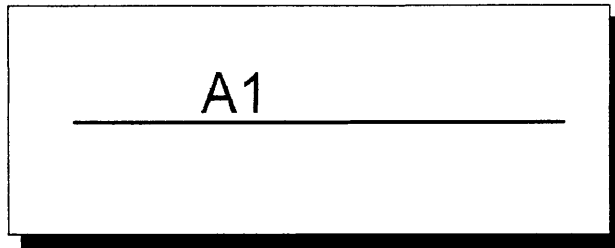
i) 'A': Life prior to the 'failure'.



As was seen from the case studies, both from Scripture and the respondents in the empirical study, the incident(s) that were regarded as their 'failure', were incidents that occurred some time, or at a specific point, in their lives, but did not necessarily exist prior to their being seen as part of their 'failure'. If there were pre-existing conditions that eventually contributed to the 'failure', these conditions were seen as being a normal part of their lives. For example, in the case of Dorcas (see 2.6.8), she had apparently been a slave, but this did not necessarily impact negatively on her life, as she was married, and under the care of her master. Seen in the context of the time in which she lived, this would have been considered to be normal practice. Indeed, Exodus 21:6 allows for a freed slave to submit voluntarily to indefinite slavery. However, at some time, Dorcas, and quite possibly her husband as well, would have acquired their freedom. When her husband died, she did not allow circumstances to get her down, but was able to turn what could have been a 'failure', into a success story by making and selling clothing. In the same vein, being married to an alcoholic is not a 'failure' but is could very well be a contributing factor that leads to a divorce, and the divorce is seen as the counsellor's 'failure'. When working with a counsellor, the circumstances that existed prior to the 'failure' may be investigated in order to help the counsellor to get a clearer picture of what had happened and to bring the

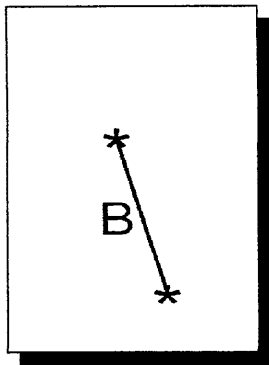
'failure' into focus. It must also be remembered that the counsellee's perception of his past might be distorted by his 'failure' and the positive elements in his past be tainted by his or her perception of 'failure'.

ii) **A1: Life after the successful reversal of 'failure'.**



It will be seen from the diagram that the line **A1**, is on a higher plane than that of line **A**. In his work, *A Theology of Christian Counseling. More than Redemption*, (Adams, 1979), Adams posits that after redemption, man enjoyed a higher position than that which he had enjoyed prior to his redemption. The accrued values from redemption and being in Christ, made him a more significant person, than he previously was. It is my contention that when a person has learnt from his 'failure' and has become richer, wiser and more usable in the work of God, they are better off post-'failure' than they were pre-'failure'. This is evident from the respondents in the empirical study. As a result of their experiencing 'failure' they were able to use the insights and wisdom, acquired from their 'failure' not only to overcome their own 'failure' but also to use it in the counselling of others. It is in this sense that a counsellee can understand the meaning of Romans 8:28, that a 'failure' is not really a 'failure', but should be seen as part of the equipping process, where the counsellee is being prepared for a higher service in the kingdom of God. It is unfortunate that our society sees 'failure' as something that disqualifies a person from living a full life, and this perception needs to be changed, this is especially relevant for the counsellee.

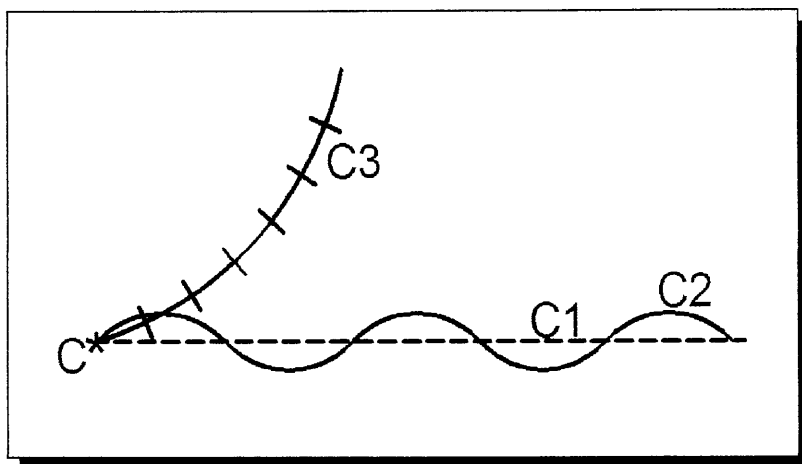
iii) **Line B**



Line **B** represents the moment of 'failure' in the counsellee's life. In the case studies, both from Scripture as well as the empirical study, this part of the model was referred to as 'failure'. (Background, 'failure', and 'failure' Reversed.) The start of the 'failure' is marked by a star, indicating the abrupt start of 'failure'. As mentioned in **i)** above, 'failure' can be triggered amongst pre-existing conditions, and need not be something new, although this may also be the case. Line **B** is purposely drawn as a sharp decline, as many respondents indicated that during their experience of 'failure' they were experiencing feelings of helplessness and an inability to do something about the situation. The bottom end of line **B** is also marked by a star, indicating that at some point, the 'failure' loses momentum, the initial crises is passed, and life returns to some semblance of normality, even though it is wrecked by the 'failure'. Because the counsellee is often a victim of circumstances beyond his control, and the counsellee is engulfed by diverging and often conflicting emotions, the task of the counsellor would be to stabilize the counsellee as much as possible in order to bring some semblance of control back in to his life. 'Failure's such as those experienced by the respondents to the empirical survey that included divorce, the sudden loss of income, or the awareness of being a 'failure' and having 'failed' again, only hit home well into the crisis. Once they became aware of being in the midst of 'failing' the respondents

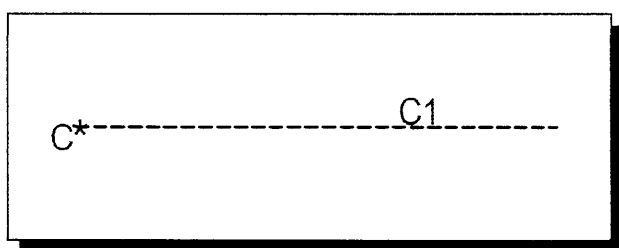
could not do much to change the situation, and often had to ride out the storm.

iv). **Line C**



Line **C** is indicative of the third element of the model, as it was used in the case studies, namely the Reversal of 'failure'. Line **C** also indicates the **three post-'failure' options** available to the counsellee. Following the initial crisis of 'failure', the counsellee has three options available to him or her:

C1

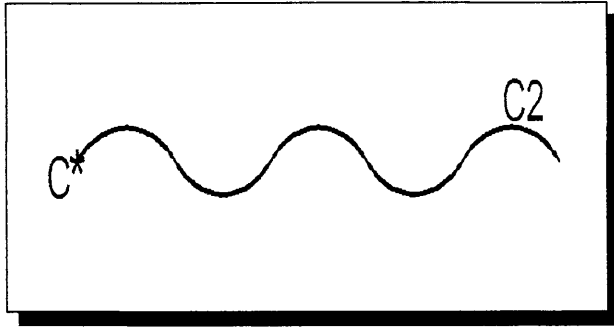


In this scenario, the counsellee has learnt *to cope* with the 'failure'. In this scenario, the counsellee 'survives' and tries to cope with his or her life, as opposed to trying to benefit from his 'failure'. Farrington (2005) states that when bad things happen, feeling upset can be a normal, first

response, but it is the second response that indicates whether the person moves in a positive or negative direction. Farrington (2005) posits that three differing options are given. One answer implies that the respondent reacts negatively, the second answer implies that the respondent accepts matters as they are and tries to carry on with his life. The third answer implies that the respondent tries to learn from the situation and tries to turn things into a more positive direction. Coping is defined as 'constantly changing cognitive and behavioural efforts to manage specific external and, or, internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person (Kliwer, 1999:271). A typical example of 'coping' is presented by Haggerty, Black and Smith (2005:40) where a child is taught to replace inappropriate "externalized" behavioural outbursts with more appropriate replacement behaviours. In the event of a counsellee losing his work, for example, he may try to find other employment, without trying to find out what went wrong and why he lost his work in the first place. The 'failure' did not affect him too adversely, and he accepts that losing his work is part of life, and the counsellee attempts to find other work that is less demanding. In this scenario, the counsellee has learnt to accept that something went wrong but did learn anything meaningful from the experience. This would not be the advised and optimal response to 'failure.'

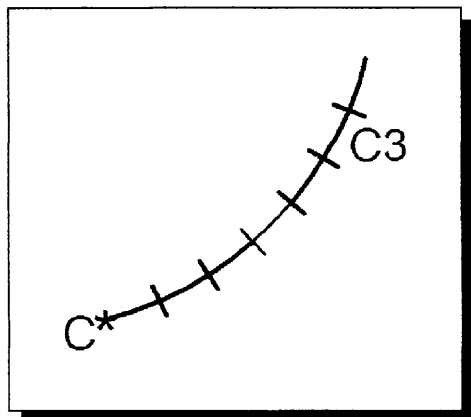
Counsellees who shrug off the experience without learning from it, are bound to repeat their mistakes, and it is the task of the counsellor to attempt to convince the counsellee of the error in his judgment should he not wish to learn from this 'failure' (Hosea 14:9; Jeremiah 2:19; Revelation 3:19)

C2



Line **C2** represents the life of a person who experienced 'failure' of some sort, but instead of learning from the experience, or learning to cope, merely carries on with his or her life, as if nothing had happened. The apparent unwillingness or inability to learn from past mistakes results in the person frequently making, and even repeating mistakes. In response to the negative emotions involved, the person changes direction in his or her life, until they meet up with another 'failure', live through it somehow, change direction, and carry on with their lives. This is often seen in mal-adapted persons who cannot hold down a job, cannot make a success of their marriage or relations with members of the opposite sex (Isaiah 26:10;). The respondent from case study 'E' had a father-in-law that came from a family that were nearly all alcoholics, and yet she married someone who had a drink problem, and this resulted in their divorce. Fortunately, this respondent did not make the same mistake when she remarried, but if she had not been carefull, she could quite easily have made the same mistake again.

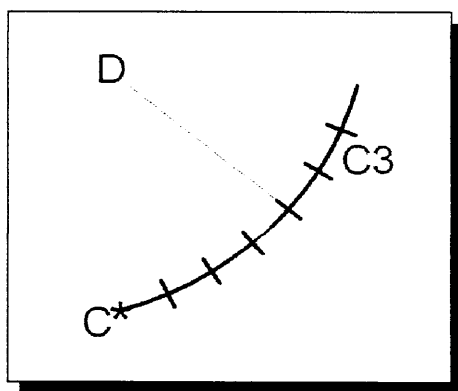
C3



Line **C3** represents the person who has 'failed' and has benefited from their 'failure'. As is seen from the diagram, these persons who follow this route, experience 'failure' as all the others do, and instead of opting for the wrong choices, **C1** and **C2**, they are determined to learn from their mistakes, and put their newfound knowledge to work, and are prepared to go on a 'learning curve.' A 'learning curve' is described as when a person is introduced to new information or a new skill that may take several learning sessions to acquire. Behavioural psychologists have noted that the degree, or strength of learning reflects three factors. First, the degree of learning is associated with the number of reinforcements received during the acquisition of the behaviour. In animal research, these reinforcements may be food pellets; in human research the reinforcement may simply be the knowledge about the number of correct and incorrect answers. Secondly, there is a maximal level of performance associated with any behaviour, called the asymptote. Once the asymptote is reached, no further improvement in performance is possible. Thirdly, the greatest increase in the acquisition of behaviour will occur in the initial phases of learning. As the performance of the behaviour reaches the asymptote, there is

increasingly less room for improvement (Gale, 2005). From this description of a learning curve, it means that the counsellor, who has experienced 'failure', can embark on a learning process, that is initially characterized by a many new things and skills that have to be learnt, and when the counsellor becomes more proficient, masters his 'failure', and reaches the stage where the counsellor can think and work for himself. The moment the counsellor reaches his asymptote, the counsellor would have completed his task, and the counselling process completed satisfactorily. However, it must be stressed that personal experience in counselling has indicated that it is up to the counsellor to decide to embark on his or her learning curve, and the counsellor must be committed to work together with the counsellor. As indicated previously (see 2.4.2.2), prior to hitting 'rockbottom' alcoholics, addicts, and the list may be extended to include 'failure's, may deny that they have a problem, and while in the denial phase, any treatment is unlikely to be effective. Brokenness is the key to effective ministry and the final ingredient for discipleship counselling.

v) **Line 'D'**



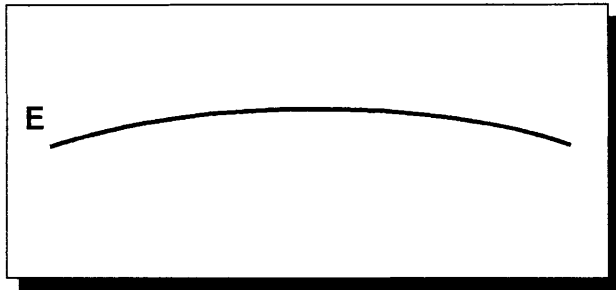
Line **D** does not form a separate entity in the model, but it is incorporated into line **C3** and represents the tools and life skills available to the counsellor in the learning curve. It must be recognised that at in the learning curve, it is the work of the Holy Spirit (Comforter)

that works in the heart of the counsellee, and opens up various avenues which enables the counsellee to learn from his 'failure'. The respondents indicated that it was when they accepted the authority of God in their situations, that they returned to their quiet time, read their Bible, and found that there were prayer and support groups that were willing to assist them and carry some of the burden. It must also be noted that the Holy Spirit could be using the 'failure' to work in the heart of an unbeliever, and would be calling him to repentance and conversion (Job 33:14-22; Ezekiel, 33:11; John 16:7-11; 2 Corinthians 7:10). The counsellee would be wise to elicit the spiritual state of the counsellee early on in the counselling process. If the Holy Spirit is calling the counsellee to conversion, and the counsellor is not cognisant of this, a lot of time and effort will be wasted. From the case studies, the following tools and life skills were available to the counsellee to assist in reaching his or her goal. (Not arranged in order of importance. The counsellor would have to draw up a list of priorities with the counsellee and work through them with the counsellee.)

- Prayer Groups.
- Social support groups.
- Music, whether playing an instrument or listening to inspiring music.
- Re-affirmation of faith.
- Reading up on the subject of the counsellee's 'failure'.
- Being involved in the community and church.
- Bible study.
- Developing artistic talents.
- Enrolling in courses, or attending seminars on the subject concerning the counsellee's 'failure'.
- Developing new skills.

- Re-examination of the 'failure', in order to determine what went wrong, and why in order to dispel any misconceptions regarding their 'failure' and injury to their self-worth.
- Forgiveness.
- Narrative catharsis.
- Physical exercise.
- Accepting personal boundaries.

vi **Line 'E'**



Line E represents the authority and control of God over the entire situation, from before the 'failure' occurred, through the reaction to the 'failure' and beyond where the counsellee carries on with his life, regardless of which course of action he opted to follow. The ideal, in God's view, would be that the counsellee follows the route indicated by the lines C3 to A1. From the basis-theory it was learnt that God uses 'failure' to work in the heart of the counsellee, and should the counsellee heed the calling of God, then no matter what the 'failure' was deemed to be, or how serious the 'failure' was, the 'failure' is reversed and turned into success (Romans 8:28). From the meta-theory it was learnt that contemporary thought would have the counsellee focus on the strengths in his life, and pay no real attention to the pleadings of the Holy Spirit. When viewed from this perspective, no matter how

successful the counsellee may have been in turning his 'failure' around, if the counsellee did not react in a positive manner to the workings of the Holy Spirit and come to the Lord, then the 'failure' has been aggravated (Proverbs 29:1; Jeremiah 17:23, 19:5; Hebrews 13:3). This would be especially true for an un-believer who refuses to turn to God, and suffers the ultimate 'failure', that of being lost, having no hope, and without God in this world (Ephesians 2:12).

5.5. PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS FROM CHAPTER 5.

- 'Failure' is often a distorted image the counsellee has of what has happened to him, or her and this distorted image affects the counsellee's self-worth and self-image as well as having a marked effect on the outcome of the counselling process.
- This 'frame of mind' plays a very important part in the life of the counsellee, as it also bears upon issues such as forgiveness of sins, accountability for past actions, as well as 'failure's' that continue to influence present day conduct.
- Pastoral psychology and counselling differs from other counselling as the frame of reference differs between the two counselling methods. While other social sciences that are concerned with human activity do not necessarily take into account the creation account of man, pastoral theology cannot escape the consequences of the fall of man and the resultant effects that sin has on human conduct.

- Pastoral counselling is distinct from secular psychology in that the foundation of pastoral counselling lies in the realm of the counsellee's relationship with Christ, within the framework of the Bible, founded in the community of God's people functioning together and living out God's answers to life's problems.

- Should unresolved 'failures' exist in the present, they could form a lens or mirror through which the counsellee looks at the present, and what the counsellee sees would be a distorted image.

- 'Failure', is not a 'failure'. It is a misconstrued conception, based upon distorted values emphasized by the community that we live in, and denies the person the opportunity to learn from the 'failure', thereby becoming a better, richer and wiser person than he was before. Painful though 'failure's might be, they should be embraced, studied and mined for the wealth that lies hidden in them.

- The proposed Hermeneutic-Phenomenological model consists of three phases, which are:
 - ▶ The Background Phase, in which the counsellee's background prior to the 'failure' is explored and discussed.
 - ▶ The Analysis of "failure" Phase, in which the 'failure' is explored and discussed.
 - ▶ The Reversal of 'failure' Phase in which the counsellee is assisted in a learning curve, where various tools and life-skills may be utilised in overcoming 'failure'.

CHAPTER 6.

FINAL CONCLUSIONS.

CHAPTER 2 . BASIS-THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON 'FAILURE: EXPOSITORY RESEARCH.

- Man is created in the likeness of God with the ability to respond to God's calling to improve himself.
- The greatest "failure" of man was his fall from a sinless position before God, into sin and all the devastation that it brought about.
- The redemption of man forms the greatest form of restoration from "failure" that man can achieve.
- The expression "failure" in Scripture points to the fact that man 'misses his goal', 'dies' or fails to achieve the goals that God has set out before him.
- The opposite of "failure" could be equated to living according to the will of God for man.
- 'Failure' is often the result of focussing on other people, rather than on God.
- The case studies show that it is no point in wallowing in your own misery. Restoration and elevation above "failure" in Christ is possible, if the penitent is willing to accept it.

Conclusions from the case studies.

- **Adam and Eve.** That Adam and Eve 'failed' is evident, as is the fact that God provided an opportunity in Jesus Christ to reverse 'failure'. No person can fall further than Adam and Eve had fallen, no matter what

his or her transgression was. No man can fall further than being lost and condemned. The fact that Jesus Christ died on the cross as appropriation for the fallen sinner is irreversible. Therefore, there is a glorious hope for the worlds worst 'failure'; he can be renewed in Christ, and be given the opportunity, through the grace of God alone, to start anew.

- **Gideon.** Perhaps the most important lesson that can be learnt from the Gideon narrative is that the power and ability of God should not be forgotten wherever assistance is sought amongst the daily trials and tribulations of our lives. Philippians 4:13 states reassuringly that all things are possible, through Jesus Christ that strengthens us. However, it must also be admitted that, very often, it is only when man is brought to his wits end, that he is able to release his tenacious grip on his own pitifully meagre abilities, and look to the Lord for his salvation. Gideon's experience reminds us that God uses ordinary people to accomplish His purposes, and that God leads one step at a time (Richards, 1999:105)
- **Elijah.** From the account of Elijah's 'failure' and the subsequent reversal of 'failure', three very important lessons are to be learnt. One, it is a mistake to take your eyes off the Lord. The concomitant result is the 'failure' of your faith. This point has an enormous influence on the ability of the counsellee to see a problem through. Very often blind faith is the last tie that binds the believer to God. The second lesson that is learnt is that the compassion of God exceeds the faults of man. Elijah was witness to the resuscitation of a tired body and spirit through bread and water, and the tender mercy on the mountain. The third lesson that is learnt from Elijah's experience is that 'failure' is ultimately turned around into success by God, and results in the glorifying of God. As

Isaiah 61:3 states: "To console those who mourn in Zion, To give them beauty for ashes, The oil of joy for mourning, The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; That they may be called trees of righteousness, The planting of the LORD, *that He may be glorified.*"

- **David.** From the life history of David we learn that the heart of man can soar to heights not often attained by the average person, and also plumb the dark depths where the vile nature of sin is exposed. We should not be caught off-guard by this, indeed, we should expect it, not only from others, but also of ourselves. David left us a lasting legacy, an awareness that, despite the wickedness of the depraved heart, God is always willing to forgive the penitent sinner. No matter how great your 'failure' may be, the grace of God is always bigger.
- **Peter.** Peter teaches us that enthusiasm has to be backed up by faith and understanding or else it fails. We must understand the character of God in order to comply with the will of God. A second lesson that we learn from Peter is that when God restores a penitent sinner, the restoration is often to a higher level than that person enjoyed previously. Peter started off as simple fisherman, and ended up being one of the pillars of the early church. When a person 'fails', and is willing to learn from his or her 'failure', the 'failure' may be a blessing in disguise. When we hear the trumpet blow, or the cock crowing, we must be alert to our own failures.
- **Judas.** In Judas we see ourselves, stripped of the veneer of outward appearance, and acting according to the dictates of our hearts. Our own self-centred ideals can consume a person to his or her detriment. If Judas fell into a black abyss, deluded by Satan and ulterior motives,

- we must learn from his example and be the more careful not only of our actions, but also to the depths of depravity into which one close to Jesus Christ can sink. While Judas is clearly not an example of ‘failure’ being reversed, his fate is a stark reminder of what lies in wait for those who reject the grace of Jesus Christ and ultimately pay the price of ‘failure
- **Tabitha** . We learn from this account that a person has a choice as to how he or she is going to handle adversity. One can resign yourself to self-pity and defeat, or you can do what you can to alleviate your distress, even to such an extent that hardship can be turned into self-sufficiency.

CHAPTER 3. BASIS-THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON ‘FAILURE’: POPULAR THEOLOGICAL RESEARCH.

- Much has been written about the achievements of the successful, but, perhaps true to the human nature that does not readily admit to mistakes not much had been written on the subject of ‘failure’, implying that ‘failure’ is not a popular subject amongst Christians.
- ‘Failure’ is often the result of comparing oneself with others in which aspects such as *abilities*, where we take credit for our successes and blame others for our ‘failure’s, *chequebooks*, where success is measured in terms of our ability to earn more money than others, comparing friends, or *being known* in the right circles, *comparing results*, as often found at pastors’ conferences, where the size and growth of congregations are compared, and the pastors of the smaller congregations losing out to the larger congregations.

- Success, in the eyes of other people, does not necessarily mean that it also means success in the eyes of God, as is shown in the case of Moses striking the rock at Meriba. (Exodus 17:17)
- ‘Failure’ comprises of three phases. In the first phase, The **Crisis Phase**, a wild, uncontrolled sensation of not being in control and of powerlessness, and a feeling of “there is no turning back.”, and in this phase shock, denial and blame, withdrawal, fear and anger, shame and depression and despair form the underlying emotions. The second phase is the **Crossroads Phase**, which consists of three responses, the fight response, the flight response, or the faith response. The third phase is the **Catalyst Phase**, where something stimulates or precipitates a reaction, development, or change.
- The foundation for self-acceptance hinges on two components, *accepting your limitations*, and *realizing that God has given each person gifts and abilities*. It is in being able to work with these two components, and being cognizant of the limitations, that a person can find his true identity in Christ, and rest in the knowledge, I am what God intended me to be.
- ‘Failure’ is contained in the will of God, as are all trials and tribulations. There is an immediate stipulation to this statement, the implication is *not* that God delights in the trials and tribulation of Christians, but that trials and temptations are there for the edification of the believer.
- Surrendering of the control of our lives does not mean that we have ‘failed’, but rather that we are taking God at His word and obeying Him.

CHAPTER 4. CONCLUSIONS FROM CHAPTER 4

From the theoretical perspectives.

- One individual's concept of 'failure' may not be the same as that held by others, and that the effect and concept of 'failure' would therefore, also vary from one person to the other.
- 'Failure' is a learned social construct.
- Modern counselling practise places greater emphasis on client strengths and empowerment as a means of compensation for 'failure' rather than investigating why 'failure' occurred and endeavouring to utilise the 'failure'.
- There is apparently no room in the harshly competitive world of business for a 'failure', or for someone who is unable to learn from his mistakes. The preferred option is to avoid any form of 'failure' or mistakes, this would include even the admission of 'failure's', incompetency or weaknesses. Inordinate pressure bears upon the business community, to be successful and not te be a 'failure' in any way or form.

From Qualitative and Quantitative research.

- 'Failure' cannot be measured experimentally, due to the variables involved. No two persons experience of 'failure', even in identical situations, will be the same.

- Human 'failure' is a complex phenomenon, and the reasons why a person experiences 'failure' involves processes that differ from person to person, and is influenced by a persons quaternary relationships, that being, the relationships between himself, God, his neighbour, the world that he lives in.

From the case studies.

- 'Failure' is very often experienced without any prior indication of the impending 'failure'.
- The respondents deemed himself/herself to be a 'failure' rather than that of the circumstances being perceived to be the 'failure'. This means that instead of 'scapegoating' and blaming others for their 'failure', the respondents saw themselves as the 'failure'.
- 'Failure' can be many things to many people.
- The initial experience of 'failure' is often one of a situation getting out of hand, and the person experiencing 'failure' finds himself unable to control, or slow down the disaster.
- A perception of disappointing the Lord, and being a 'failure' in the eyes of the Lord, was a common denominator.
- Negative emotions, *inter alia*, helplessness, anger, frustration, disappointment, loss of hope, depression, were characteristic emotions accompanying 'failure'.

- 'Failure' is perceived to be the realisation that the person has not met the expectations that they had set for themselves.
- Various methods and 'tools' can be successfully implemented in the reversal of 'failure':
 - A prayer support group.
 - A social support group (caring friends).
 - A deeper faith.
 - A firm resolution not to succumb to the 'failure'. This includes the adoption of a resolution to start each day with a positive frame of mind.
 - Reading - books and articles on the 'failure', whether it be alcoholism or divorce, etc.
 - Music, either playing a musical instrument, or listening to music.
 - Involvement in community work.
 - Painting, or the decorative arts.
 - The ability, and willingness to learn from past mistakes.
 - A realisation that overturning 'failure' may take longer than the initial 'failure' itself.
 - Forgiveness, that of yourself and of others played a very important role in overcoming 'failure'.

CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSIONS FROM CHAPTER 5.

- 'Failure' is often a distorted image the counsellee has of what has happened to him, or her and this distorted image affects the counsellee's self-worth and self-image as well as having a marked effect on the outcome of the counselling process.

- This 'frame of mind' plays a very important part in the life of the counsellee, as it also bears upon issues such as forgiveness of sins, accountability for past actions, as well as 'failure's' that continue to influence present day conduct.
- Pastoral psychology and counselling differs from other counselling as the frame of reference differs between the two counselling methods. While other social sciences that are concerned with human activity do not necessarily take into account the creation account of man, pastoral theology cannot escape the consequences of the fall of man and the resultant effects that sin has on human conduct.
- Pastoral counselling is distinct from secular psychology in that the foundation of pastoral counselling lies in the realm of the counsellee's relationship with Christ, within the framework of the Bible, founded in the community of God's people functioning together and living out God's answers to life's problems.
- Should unresolved 'failures' exist in the present, they could form a lens or mirror through which the counsellee looks at the present, and what the counsellee sees would be a distorted image.
- 'Failure', is not a 'failure'. It is a misconstrued conception, based upon distorted values emphasized by the community that we live in, and denies the person the opportunity to learn from the 'failure', thereby becoming a better, richer and wiser person than he was before. Painful though 'failure's' might be, they should be embraced, studied and mined for the wealth that lies hidden in them.

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CONCLUSION:

This study has confirmed the fact that 'failure' is a common experience in the lives of people, and that it is experienced in various ways. 'Failure' is in fact a term used to describe a phenomenon where the person has the perception that he or she did not meet the expectations set, either by themselves, or by the community, and is therefore a 'failure'. In the light of Scripture and popular theology, what the secular world perceives to be a 'failure', theology views 'failure' as part of God's plan, and is in fact, an essential element of the equipping of the person, for service. When 'failure' is learnt from and utilized, the person is left richer and wiser than before, therefore, nullifying the 'failure'.

The final conclusion of this study is that a Biblical understanding of the phenomenon of 'failure' is possible and necessary, and can assist people who experience 'failure', to overcome their 'failure' and turn it into success.

RECOMMENDED FIELDS OF STUDY.

1. A Practical Theological study on 'self-forgiveness'.
2. A pastoral study of 'failure' in the lives of children.
3. The role of 'failure' and suicide.
4. The role of life-skills and equipping as preventative measures against 'failure'.
5. A development of the relationship between 'coping' with 'failure', resolving 'failure' and ignoring 'failure'.

SUMMARY.

‘Failure’: A PASTORAL STUDY’.

This study deals with the role that ‘failure’ plays in the lives of people, as seen from a pastoral-theological perspective. In this respect, a number of questions presented themselves, including;

- How the phenomenon known as ‘failure’ is viewed within the community of the secular sciences?
- How is the phenomenon known as ‘failure’ viewed from a Biblical point of view?
- Can ‘failure’ be reversed and turned into something beneficial?

In the secular world, a ‘failure’ is seen as someone who does not live up to expectations, or to a person who continually make mistakes and who does not learn from the experience. There is scant room in the secular world for ‘failure’, and there is an enormous amount of pressure on individuals in society to be ‘successful.’ This peer pressure to conform to certain expectations carries with it a corresponding fear of ‘failure’, and therefore being rejected by society. Scripture would appear to view ‘failure’ in a more lenient light, but at the same time, carries a wider connotation to ‘failure’ than society does.

The purpose of this study is to investigate what is meant by ‘failure’, both from a basis-theoretical and a meta-theoretical perspective, in accordance with Zerfass’s model, in order to develop a counselling model, designed to assist counsellors in the counselling of people who suffer from the effects of ‘failure’.

The basis-theoretical part of this study found that Scripture does not recognise

the phenomenon we call 'failure', apart from man missing God's mark, and sinning. The greatest, or worst form of 'failure' encountered in Scripture is indicative of the sinner not accepting the redemptive work of Christ, and being condemned to perish in eternal damnation. What is colloquially known as 'failure', Scripture treats as stepping stones to success and sanctification.

The meta-theoretical part of this investigation brought up an interesting thought: that 'failure' was learned behaviour, a negative set of values that society impresses upon individuals to they must conform to. Where 'failure' is experienced, society teaches the person to cope with 'failure' by utilizing inherent strengths and negating weaknesses, rather than exploring the 'failure' in an endeavour to mine the salient values that are present.

From an empirical research, using hermeneutic-phenomenological principles, a model was developed that is intended to assist the counsellor in reversing counsellee 'failure' into success.

The conclusion of this research is that while broader society may not have an answer to 'failure', pastoral-theology is perfectly positioned to assist with the counselling of people who deem themselves to be 'failure's'.

KEY WORDS.

- 'Failure'.
- Counsellee.
- Pastoral.

OPSOMMING.

“MISLUKKING: ‘n PASTORALE STUDIE.”

Hierdie studie handel oor die rol wat ‘mislukking’ speel in die lewens van individue, soos gesien vanuit ‘n pastoraal-teologiese vertrekpunt. In hierdie verband, ontstaan daar enkele vrae, o.a.:

- Hoe word die fenomeen wat bekend staan as ‘mislukking’ beskou van uit die gemeenskap van die sekulêre wetenskappe?
- Hoe word die fenomeen bekend as ‘mislukking’ beskou van uit ‘n Bybelse perspektief?
- Kan ‘mislukking’ omgekeer word in iets tot voordeel van die individu?

In die sekulêre wêreld, word iemand as ‘n ‘mislukking’ beskou as hy nie voldoen aan verwagtinge nie, of wat dikwels dieselfde foute maak sonder om iets te leer uit sy foute. Daar is weinig plek in die samelewing vir ‘mislukkings’ en daar is geweldige druk wat uitgeoefen word, deur die samelewing, op individue om ‘suksesvol’ te wees. Die groepsdruk om te voldoen aan sekere verwagtinge gaan gepaard met ‘n ooreenstemmende vrees vir ‘mislukking’ en verwerping deur die gemeenskap. Dit blyk dat die Skrif ‘n meer toegewender houding teenoor ‘mislukking’ in neem, maar het tegelykertyd, ‘n baie wyer begrip van ‘mislukking’ as wat die samelewing daaraan koppel.

Die doel van hierdie studie is om ‘n ondersoek te doen na wat bedoel word by ‘mislukking’, beide van ‘n basis-teoretiese, sowel as ‘n meta-teoretiese perspektief, in ooreenstemming met Zerfass se model, met die oogmerk dat ‘n beradings model daargestel kan word wat beraders kan behulpsaam wees in die berading van persone wat ly aan die gevolge van ‘mislukking’.

Die basis-teoretiese komponent van hierdie studie het gevind dat die Skrif erken nie die fenomeen wat ons 'mislukking' noem nie, buiten dat die mens God se doel in sy lewe mis, en sondig. Die ergste vorm van 'mislukking' wat ons in die Skrif raakloop is aanduidend daarvan dat die sondaar nie die versoeningswerk van Christus aanvaar nie, en veroordeel word om die ewigheid in die verdoemenis deur te bring. Wat in die algemeen bekend staan as 'mislukking' hanteer die Skrif as trappe tot sukses en heiligmaking.

Die meta-teoretiese deel van hierdie ondersoek het 'n baie interessante punt na vore gebring, naamlik dat 'mislukking' aangeleerde gedrag was, 'n negatiewe stel waardes wat die samelewing gebruik om druk uit te oefen sodat individue kan konformeer aan die eise wat aan hulle gestel word, Waar 'mislukking' ervaar word,, leer die samelewing die persoon om saam te leef met sy 'mislukking' deur klem te lê op die persoon se sterk punte en die swak punte te negeer, eerder as om die 'mislukking' te ondersoek en die inherente positiewe waardes wat daarin ingesluit is, te ontluik.

Uit die empiriese navorsing wat gebruik gemaak het van hermeneuties-fenomenologiese beginsels, is 'n model ontwerp wat ten doel het om die berader behulpsaam te wees om die beradene te help om die 'mislukking' om te keer in 'n sukses.

Die gevolgtrekking van hierdie navorsing is dat terwyl die breëre samelewing nie 'n antwoord het vir 'mislukking' nie, is pastorale-teologie perfek geposisioneer om behulpsaam te wees in die berading van persone wat hulleself as 'mislukkings' beskou.

SLEUTELTERME.

- Mislukking.
- Beradene.
- Pastoraal.

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ADDENDA

ADDENDUM 'A'. The Occurrence of the word 'Success' in the King James Version.

ADDENDUM 'B'. The Occurrence of the word 'Fail', 'Faieth', 'Failed' and 'Failing' in the King James Version.

ADDENDUM 'C' RESPONDENTS QUESTIONNAIRE. (Sample)

ADDENDUM 'A'. The Occurrence of the word 'Success' in the King James Version.

Reference	Hebrew	Strong's Number	Meaning of Hebrew word used.
Genesis 24:12	תפנה וצד qârah + pâniym	H-7136 + 6440	'to bring about' + 'the face' translated - 'good speed'
Joshua 1:8	יכל 'sâkâl	H-7919	'to be circumspect, act intelligently'
Job 6:13	תושיה תושיה tûshiyâh	H-8454	'substantiate, support' translated as 'wisdom'
Job 30:22	שדה shâvâh	H-7738	'to destroy' translated as 'substance'
Ecclesiastes 10:10	יתרון yithrôn	H-3504	'preeminence, gain' translated as 'profitable'

Note: The Hebrew and The Hebrew and Greek meanings of the words were obtained from: The King James Version with Strong's Numbers. (e-Sword) The Hebrew words and fonts were obtained from DAVAR Hebrew Dictionary Electronic Database.

ADDENDUM 'B' The Occurrence of the word 'Fail', 'Fai leth', 'Failed' and 'Failing' in the King James Version

Reference	Hebrew/Greek	Strong's Number	Meaning on Hebrew Greek word used.
Genesis 42:28	יָצָא <i>yátsá</i>	H-3318	'to go out'
Genesis 47:15	הָפֵחַ <i>'áphés</i>	H-656	'to dissappear'
Genesis 47:16	הָפֵחַ <i>'áphés</i>	H-656	'to dissappear'
Deuteronomy 28:32	כָּלָה <i>káleh</i>	H-3616	'pining'
Deuteronomy 28:65	כִּלְיֹוֹן <i>killáyôn</i>	H-3631	'pining, destruction'
Deuteronomy 31:6	רָפְחָה <i>râphâh</i>	H-7503	'to slacken'
Deuteronomy 31:8	רָפְחָה <i>râphâh</i>	H-7503	'to slacken'
Joshua 1:5	רָפְחָה <i>râphâh</i>	H-7503	'to slacken'
Joshua 3:16	זָנַח <i>támam</i>	H-8552	'to complete or come to an end.'
Joshua 21:45	פָּתַל <i>nâphal</i>	H-5307	'to fall' - used in a variety of applications.
Joshua 23:14	פָּתַל <i>nâphal</i>	H-5307	'to fall' - used in a variety of applications.
1Samuel 17:32	פָּתַל <i>nâphal</i>	H-5307	'to fall' - used in a variety of applications.

2 Samuel 3:29	כָּצַו	kârath	H-3772	'to cut off'
1 Kings 2:4	כָּצַו	kârath	H-3772	'to cut off'
1 Kings 8:25	כָּצַו	kârath	H-3772	'to cut off'
1 Kings 8:56	פָּתַל	nâphal	H-5307	'to fall' - used in a variety of applications.
1 Kings 9:5	כָּצַו	kârath	H-3772	'to cut off'
1 Kings 17:14	גָּקַץ	châsêr	H-2637	'to lack', 'want'
1 Kings 17:16	גָּקַץ	châsêr	H-2637	'to lack', 'want'
1 Chronicles 28:20	צָחַד	râphâh	H-7503	'to slacken'
2 Chronicles 6:16	כָּצַו	kârath	H-3772	'to cut off'
2 Chronicles 7:18	כָּצַו	kârath	H-3772	'to cut off'
Ezra 4:22	לָד	shâlû shâlûth	H-7960	'a fault'
Ezra 6:9	לָד	shâlû shâlûth	H-7960	'a fault'
Esther 6:10	פָּתַל	nâphal	H-5307	'to fall' - used in a variety of applications.
Esther 9:27	אָבַר	âbar	H-5764	'to cross over, to cover'
Esther 9:28	אָבַר	âbar	H-5764	'to cross over, to cover'
Job 11:20	כָּלַה	kâlâh	H-3615	'to end, to cease, to complete'

Job 14:11	טל 'ázaI	H-235	'to go away, to disappear'
Job 17:5	כלד káláh	H-3615	'to end, to cease, to complete'
Job 19:14	גשול châdal	H-2308	'be flabby, to desist, be lacking or idle'
Job 21:10	ברל gâ'al	H-1602	'to detest, to reject'
Job 31:16	כלד káláh	H-3615	'to end, to cease, to complete'
Psalms 12:1	תקק pásas	H-6461	'to disperse, to disappear'
Psalms 31:10	כיל hâshal	H-3782	'to totter, waver, falter or stumble'
Psalms 38:10	הטא 'ázab	H-5800	'to loosen, relinquish'
Psalms 40:12	הטא 'ázab	H-5800	'to loosen, relinquish'
Psalms 69:3	כלד káláh	H-3615	'to end, to cease, to complete'
Psalms 71:9	כלד káláh	H-3615	'to end, to cease, to complete'
Psalms 73:26	כלד káláh	H-3615	'to end, to cease, to complete'
Psalms 77:8	בנצ gâmar	H-1584	'to end, in a sense of completion or 'failure''
Psalms 89:33	רצ shâqar	H-8266	'to cheat, to be untrue'
Psalms 109:24	כני kâchash	H-3584	'to be untrue'
Psalms 119:82	כלד káláh	H-3615	'to end, to cease, to complete'
Psalms 119:123	כלד káláh	H-3615	'to end, to cease, to complete'

Psalm 142:4	אָשׁ <i>'abad</i>	H-6	'to wander away'
Psalm 143:7	כָּלַד <i>kâlâh</i>	H-3615	'to end, to cease, to complete'
Proverbs 22:8	כָּלַד <i>kâlâh</i>	H-3615	'to end, to cease, to complete'
Ecclesiastes 10:3	חָסֵר <i>châsêr</i>	H-2638	'lacking, destitute'
Ecclesiastes 12:5	פָּרַר <i>pârar</i>	H-6565	'to break up, to violate'
Song. 5:6	יָצָא <i>yâtsâ</i>	H-3318	'to go out'
Isaiah 15:6	כָּלַד <i>kâlâh</i>	H-3615	'to end, to cease, to complete'
Isaiah 19:3	אָרַר <i>bâraqq</i>	H-1238	'to pour out, to empty'
Isaiah 19:5	פִּיז <i>nâshath</i>	H-5405	'to eliminate, to dry up'
Isaiah 21:16	כָּלַד <i>kâlâh</i>	H-3615	'to end, to cease, to complete'
Isaiah 31:3	כָּלַד <i>kâlâh</i>	H-3615	'to end, to cease, to complete'
Isaiah 32:6	חָסֵר <i>châsêr</i>	H-2637	'to lack', 'want'
Isaiah 32:10	כָּלַד <i>kâlâh</i>	H-3615	'to end, to cease, to complete'
Isaiah 34:16	אָדַר <i>'âdar</i>	H-5737	'to arrange, to muster, and thus be wanting'
Isaiah 38:14	דָּלַל <i>dâlal</i>	H-1809	'to slacken, be feeble or oppressed'
Isaiah 40:26	אָדַר <i>'âdar</i>	H-5737	'to arrange, to muster, and thus be wanting'
Isaiah 41:17	פִּיז <i>nâshath</i>	H-5405	'to eliminate, dry out'

Isaiah 42:4	כָּלֵךְ <i>kālâh</i>	H-3615	'to end, to cease, to complete'
Isaiah 44:12	אֵין <i>'ayin</i>	H-369	'to be nothing, not to exist'
Isaiah 51:14	חָסֵר <i>châsêr</i>	H-2637	'to lack', 'want'
Isaiah 57:16	אָתַם <i>'âtaf</i>	H-5848	'to shroud, clothe'
Isaiah 58:11	כָּזַב <i>kâzab</i>	H-3576	'to lie, deceive'
Isaiah 59:15	הָיָה רֵשַׁע דָּרְךְ <i>hâyâh + 'âdar</i>	H-1961 + 5737	'to be, become or come to pass, + to arrange'
Jeremiah 14:6	כָּלֵךְ <i>kālâh</i>	H-3615	'to end, to cease, to complete'
Jeremiah 15:18	אָמַן <i>'âman</i>	H-539	'to build up, support, foster'
Jeremiah 48:33	שָׁבַת <i>shâbath</i>	H-7673	'to repose, to desist'
Jeremiah 51:30	נָשַׁת <i>nâshath</i>	H-5405	'to eliminate, dry out'
Lamentations 2:11	כָּלֵךְ <i>kâlâh</i>	H-3615	'to end, to cease, to complete'
Lamentations 3:22	כָּלֵךְ <i>kâlâh</i>	H-3615	'to end, to cease, to complete'
Lamentations 4:17	כָּלֵךְ <i>kâlâh</i>	H-3615	'to end, to cease, to complete'
Ezekiel 12:22	אָבַד <i>'âbad</i>	H-6	'to wander away'
Hosea 9:2	כָּחַשׁ <i>kâchash</i>	H-3584	'to be untrue'
Amos 8:4	אָזַן <i>shâbath</i>	H-7673	'to repose, to desist'
Habakkuk 3:17	כָּחַשׁ <i>kâchash</i>	H-3584	'to be untrue'

Zephaniah 3:5	צָוָה 'ádar	H-5737	'to arrange, to muster, and thus be wanting'
Luke 12:33	ἀνέκλειπτον <i>anakleipton</i>	G-413	'not to be left out, inexhaustible'
Luke 16:9	ἐκλίπη <i>eklipé</i>	G-1587	'to omit, to cease'
Luke 21:26	ἀποψυχ <i>apōpsuchō</i>	G-674	'to breathe out'
Luke 22:32	ἐκλίπη <i>eklipé</i>	G-1587	'to omit, to cease'
Romans 11:12.	παράπτωμα <i>paraptōma</i>	G-3900	'lapse, deviation or transgression'
1 Corinthians 6:7.	ἥττημα <i>hētēma</i>	G-2275	'deterioration, loss'
1 Corinthians 13:8	ἐκπίπτει <i>ekripté</i>	G-1601	'to drop away'
1 Corinthians 13:8	καταργεω <i>katergeō</i>	G-2673	'to be entirely idle'
Hebrews 1:12	ἐκλίπη <i>eklipé</i>	G-1587	'to omit, to cease'
Hebrews 11:32	ἐπιλείψει <i>epileipé</i>	G-1952	'to leave upon, be insufficient'
Hebrews 12:15	ὕστερων <i>hustereōn</i>	G-5302	'to be later, fall short, be inferior'

Note: The Hebrew and Greek meanings of the words were obtained from : The King James Version with Strong's Numbers. (e-Sword) The Hebrew words and fonts were obtained from DAVAR Hebrew Dictionary Electronic Database.

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14-02-2005

In Sake: Navorsings Vraelys.

Ek, Ockert Schoeman, is 'n student aan die Noord-Wes Universiteit, Potchestroom kampus, en is tans besig met my tesis vir die graad Ph.D in Pastorale Teologie, onder leiding van Prof. G. Lotter van die Departement Teologie. As deel van my tesis doen ek navorsing oor die tema, "Mislukking: 'n Pastorale Studie" en wil graag die hulp inroep van gewillige respondente wat 'n agtergrond vraelys sal invul, en met wie ek ook 'n persoonlike onderhoud sal voer, ten einde die nodige inligting rakende 'mislukkings' te kan versamel. Daar is geen vergoeding wat aangebied word vir deelname nie, en deelname is absoluut vrywillig.

Baie dankie,
die uwe,
O.Schoeman.

To whom it may concern:

Re: Research Questionnaire.

I, Ockert Schoeman, am a student at the North-West University, Potchestroom campus, and am currently busy with my thesis for the Ph.D degree in Pastoral Theology, under the supervision of Prof. G. Lotter of the Theology Department. As part of my thesis on the subject of "failure': A Pastoral Study', I would like to get the assistance of a number of willing respondents that will fill out a questionnaire and agree to a follow-up interview so that I can gather the necessary information on 'failure's. There is no remuneration involved, and participation is absolutely voluntary.

Thank you,
yours sincerely,
O. Schoeman

Navorsings vraelys.

Baie dankie vir u gewilligheid om te help met hierdie navorsingsprojek, Die doel van hierdie navorsing is om persone wat een of ander ervaring, wat as 'n mislukking in hulle lewe beskou kan word, se ervaring van die 'mislukking' na te vors en te probeer vasstel wat u ervaring was tydens die insident, wat u geleer het uit die insident, en dan, hoe u dit wat u geleer het uit u mislukking, toepas in u daaglikse lewe.

Die inligting wat u verskaf vir hierdie ondersoek is vertroulik, en word met niemand bespreek nie, en geen inligting wat u dalk kan identifiseer word in die finale verslag weergee nie.

Research questionnaire.

Thank you for your kind cooperation in this research project. The purpose of this research is to investigate an experience that could be deemed a 'failure' in a person's life, and to try to investigate what your experience of this 'failure' was, what you learnt from this experience, and how you put your acquired to use in your daily life.

The information submitted for this research is confidential and is not discussed with anybody and no information that might identify you is repeated in the report.

Navorsing Deelnemers Vraelys

Hierdie vraelys kan elektronies voltooi en terug ge-e-pos word aan ockies@i-web.co.za

Research Participants Questionnaire.

This questionnaire may be completed electronically and emailed to ockies@i-web.co.za

Datum vorm voltooi

Date questionnaire completed.....

Ouderdom

Age

Geslag:

Gender.....

Huweliks status: ongetroud/ getroud/ geskei

Marital status unmarried/ married/ divorced

Aantal afhanklikes

No. of dependants.....

Hoogste akademiese kwalifikasie

Highest academical qualification.....

Huis taal

Home language.....

Kerkverband

Church

Denomination.....

Sien u 'n sielkundige/psigiater of enige ander terapeut? Indien wel, waarvoor, en hoe lank al?

Do you see a psychologist/psychiatrist or any other therapists? If so, why and for how long?

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Het u enige medikasie gebruik ten tye van u krisis/mislukking? Indien wel wat het u gebruik en onder wie se toesig?

Did you require medication at the time of the crisis/'failure'? If so, what what was prescribed and by whom?

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Vraag 1 Gee 'n kort beskrywing van u agtergrond. Begin by u kinderjare asb.en vertel van die insidente wat aanleiding gegee het tot u 'mislukking'. Die aspekte van u 'mislukking' word in die volgende vraag gevra.

Question 1 Please give a short resume of your background. Please start at your childhood and recount the incidents that led to your 'failure'. The aspects of your 'failure' are covered in the next question.

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Vraag 2. Beskryf u 'mislukking'.

Question 2. Describe your 'failure'.

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Vraag 3. Beskryf die gevoelens wat u ervaar het ten tye van u 'mislukking':

Question 3. Describe the feelings you experienced at the time of your "failure":

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Vraag 4. Beskryf in detail hoe u die 'mislukking' te bowe gekom het.

Question 4. Describe in detail how you overcame your problem.

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Vraag 5. Wat het u geleer uit u 'mislukking'?

Question 5. What have you learnt out of your 'failure'?

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Vraag 6. Het u terugvalle van u 'mislukking' gehad? Indien wel, wat het gebeur?

Question 6. *Have you had any relapses of your 'failure'? If so, what happened?*

Vraag 7. Wat het u gebaat uit die 'mislukking'?

Question 7. *What did you gain from your 'failure'?*

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Vraag 8. Hoe benut u dit wat u geleer het uit jou mislukking tot voordeel van uself en andere?

Question 8. How do you utilize that which you learnt from your 'failure' to your own benefit as well as others?

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Dankie vir u deelname.

Thank you for your participation

NOTE: Room for the respondents replies to the questions has been truncated for inclusion in the report.