

Falling Short

hope amidst our failures

a newstory church series

Pt I: Failure

Pastor Tom Kang

REMINDER: This guide is intended to spark meaningful conversation, not exhaustive coverage. The goal is connection, not completion. So feel free to spend extended time on just a few questions that resonate with the group. Aim for heartfelt connection & personal application. Finally, trust the Holy Spirit to guide your discussion in the areas most needed by your group.

Ice Breaker: When is the last time you apologized to someone about making a mistake (however big or small)?

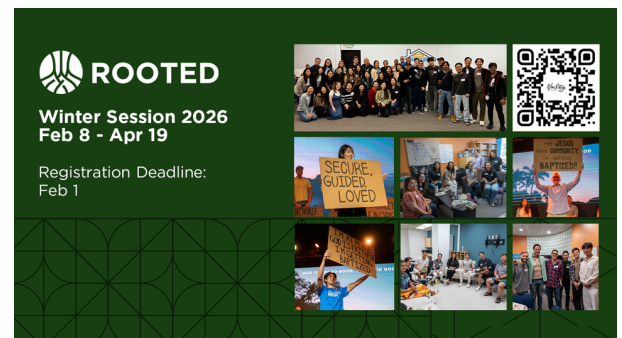
1. Pastor Tom described his honest reaction to the Philip Yancey news as one of "ping-ponging between superiority and insecurity." When you hear about a public failure (moral or otherwise), what's your honest first reaction? Which wall do you tend to hit – superiority or insecurity?
2. Read Psalm 32:3-5. David's own words about the cost of hidden sin and the relief of confession. What physical and emotional symptoms did David experience while keeping his sin hidden? Have you ever experienced something similar?
3. Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote in *Life Together*: "He who is alone with his sin is utterly alone... But it is the grace of the Gospel, which is so hard for the pious to understand, that it confronts us with the truth and says: You are a sinner, a great, desperate sinner; now come, as the sinner that you are, to God who loves you." How does Bonhoeffer's insight connect to the sermon's emphasis on confession within community?
 - a. James 5:16 says, "Confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, so that you may be healed." The sermon emphasized that confession is communal, not just private.
 - b. What makes confessing to another person so difficult? What has been your experience when you've risked vulnerability with a trusted friend or group?
4. The sermon identified three categories: *Mighty Fall*, *Slow Leak*, and *Burned-Out Statistic*. Without necessarily sharing details, which category resonates most with where you are right now? What makes it hard to admit that to yourself or others?
5. Read 1 Kings 11:1-6. Solomon's drift happened "as he grew old" – after decades of wisdom, worship, and success. What warning does this give us about assuming spiritual maturity makes us immune to slow leaks? What specific safeguards might have helped Solomon stay the course?
6. Discuss the theology of *Sin Degrees* – equal need for grace, but varying weight and consequences. Read John 19:11 and Proverbs 6:16-19. In John, Jesus tells Pilate that the one who handed him over "is guilty of a greater sin." In Proverbs, God names specific things he hates and finds detestable. How do these verses help us hold two truths simultaneously: that all sin separates us from God, yet some sins carry greater weight and consequences?

Closing Prayer Focus

Pray for courage to bring hidden struggles into the light. Pray for this group to be a safe place for honesty. Pray for anyone in the room who may be in a *Mighty Fall* situation right now – that they would experience the kindness of God that leads to repentance (Romans 2:4).

ROOTED

Rooted is a powerful 10-week discipleship journey with other brothers and sisters who are hungry to connect with God and with one another to discover God's purpose in life. If you have not gone through it yet, please register to join the Winter Session.



The graphic features the ROOTED logo (a stylized tree icon) and the text "ROOTED Winter Session 2026 Feb 8 - Apr 19". Below this, it says "Registration Deadline: Feb 1". To the right is a QR code. The bottom half of the graphic is a collage of six photos showing diverse groups of people in various settings: a large group photo, people at a table, a person holding a sign that says "SECURE. GUIDED. LOVED", a person holding a sign that says "BAPTIST", and other group shots.