



Learning Lifeline

A LETTER ABOUT LEARNING FROM ESTHER WILKISON

Final tests, late assignments, grades due, end-of-year parties, graduation—all signs that another school year is wrapping up. I used to end every year of teaching feeling like a failure.

Part of my failure feeling was exhaustion. It takes a great deal of energy to end well while also cheerleading a group of kids to hang with you to the last day.

Another part of my failure feeling was grief. When your kids move on—either to another grade or on to whatever is next—there is a mix of sorrow and relief as you let go. We want them to fully flourish, but seeing them go leaves an empty place as the way we care for them changes. The grief can get lost in the business and celebrations that mark the moving on, but it affects us even if we forget it is there.

Probably the greatest component of my failure feeling was how confused I was as to what I thought success would look like. At year's end, the students I worked with still had miles to go academically, relationally, and spiritually. Realistically, I knew it would take the work of God's Spirit and far more time than I had to invest to see the total-life transformation that I longed for them. I couldn't logically base my success on something that was out of my hands. Yet, what else was there?

God reminded me of 1 Corinthians 4:2: *"It is required that managers be found faithful."*

What would I say now to that younger me—or to any of you who might be feeling let down as this year wraps up? This: *Friend, you cannot possibly know all God was doing this year. He used you in ways you will never be aware of. Faithfulness is not about perfection, but about growing. You grew in how you relate to God and how you love others. Are you concerned about areas where you are sure you failed? Confess that, but know that God's faithfulness is not limited. Be assured that He sees our faithfulness for the success that it is. Now, get some rest. Take time to grieve the losses and accept God's comfort. Then, thank Him for how He empowered you to be found faithful.*

I pray this reflection helps alleviate any failure feelings that may have surfaced in you, along with the weariness that accompanies the end of a school year. I encourage you to celebrate the ways you succeeded in faithfully growing and loving. Have a blessed summer.

News, Prayer Request, & Survey

This is our last Lifeline of the 2021-22 school year. This summer—Lord willing—with help from a book coach and editor and lots of prayers, I'm working to complete a book and online courses on helping students overcome overwhelm. And—I'll be laying the groundwork for a podcast.

As we wrap up this year, will you please invest a few minutes to help me with a three-question survey? Just reply to this email with your answers.

1) What topic(s) were of most interest to you in this year's *Lifelines*?

—Click below on the archives tab for a list of our 25 newsletters.



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2) What do you find most helpful about the podcasts you listen to?

—Feel free to include any names of podcasts that you enjoy, any podcast advice you have as a listener, or any podcasts you think I should try to connect with for a guest interview.

3) What are the greatest needs you and those you influence are facing?

Please respond today!

Thank you for your help.