

*"You don't say anything to a .400
hitter except, 'How do you do, sir?'"*

Joe McCarthy

.400

In the "modern era" of Major League baseball, there have been only thirty-five instances where a hitter's batting average for the season was over .400. Of those thirty-five times, ten occurred in 1887, when a player was awarded a hit for receiving a base on balls (walk). The last person to hit .400 for a season was Ted Williams, in 1941, and the closest anyone has come since then was Tony Gwynn, who hit .394 in 1994.

Which means the very best hitters in all of Major League Baseball know that over the course of a 162 game season, **they are going to fail at least 60 to 70 times out of every 100 at bats!!**

Baseball teaches us to understand that failure is part of the game, just as failures in life are part of the overall experience. You should never expect that you are always going to win, or be 100% successful in everything you do. You are certainly not going to end every at-bat in baseball with a single, double, triple, or home run. The way you deal with the times you are not successful - the strike outs, and ground outs and fly outs, and especially those times when you hit the ball right on "the meat of the bat," and the screaming line drive is caught by a fielder – those are the moments that define the person you are and the person you will become later in life.

The players who walk back to the dugout saying "What do I need to do differently in my next at bat?" and "Hey, I'll get a hit off that pitcher next time" - those are the ones who will be successful later in life, because of their character, conviction, and perseverance. Recovering from failure is one of baseball's greatest lessons – so the next time you are feeling frustrated after an at bat and ready to throw your bat in a rage of anger, remember a couple of men named Josh and Peter.

.400 (cont.)

Josh – as in Josh Hamilton, of the Texas Rangers - was considered by many to be a “failure” just a few short years ago. He had fallen from being the #1 overall pick in Major League baseball in 1999, to being banned from the game for alcohol and drug abuse. After making his Major League comeback in 2007, he was traded to the Texas Rangers prior to the 2008 season, and went on to be an integral part of the first Rangers team in history to make it to the World Series in 2010. In fact, Josh was named the 2010 American League Most Valuable Player - quite a comeback for someone who was deemed by many to be a “failure!” Josh credits all of his success to his faith in God, and his Lord, Jesus Christ – and he is an inspiration to millions of fans, regardless of their team affiliation. His book, *Beyond Belief*, is a MUST read!

Peter – as in Simon Peter - was one of the twelve apostles of Jesus. In fact, he is regarded by many to possibly be His most loyal, and faithful follower – his “Rock.” Yet on the night before Jesus’ trial and crucifixion, Peter denied that he even knew Jesus at all. Three times in a row he denied knowing Him, just as Jesus had predicted! Despite this failure on Peter’s part, he later went on to spread the Gospel around the world, create a number of early churches, and become widely regarded as the first Pope of the Roman Catholic Church. For more great stories about the teachings and later successes of Peter, go to the Book of Acts in the New Testament.

Discussion guide for Players / Parents:

- Talk about a time in your life when you have failed at something, and how you took the lessons from that event and used it for later success.
- Think of another famous athlete or celebrity who has experienced failure, and later hit a “home run” in life.
- Find one or two other people in the Bible from whom you can learn a thing or two about failure and persistence.