



PETER

THE DISCIPLE

Daily Devotions and Small Group Discussion Questions | Week One

Peter, The Disciple

Has your faith journey ever seemed to be one step forward and two steps back? The disciple, Peter, is an incredible illustration of the highs and lows we all experience in our journey with God. Walk alongside Peter as he leaves his life as a fisherman; walks upon a raging sea; is haunted by the sound of a rooster's crow; and finally finds himself staring into an empty tomb.

Let's follow Peter's story and learn to experience a life of faith together.

This Week's Memory Verse

..to keep in your pocket, memorize, and hide in your heart:

For whoever would save his life will lose it,
but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.
- Matthew 16:25 (ESV)

Week One | Small Group Discussion Questions

The following small group discussion questions are based on North Way's weekly teaching within the series, "Peter, The Disciple." If you or your small group didn't have a chance to watch the sermon, please visit www.northway.org or North Way's app to access the video message and watch prior to or during your small group gathering.

Spend a few minutes reviewing the primary points from week one's teaching. What stood out to you the most? Were there things you didn't understand? What challenged you this week?

What aspects of your life hinder you from following Jesus as swiftly as Peter and his fellow fishermen did?

How has your answer to Jesus' question, "Who do you say that I am?," changed over the past year? What is your answer to that question today?

What would it look like in your life to be a fisher of men?

How do you try to save your life instead of losing it to Jesus?

What parts of crucifying the old self and living as the new self are harder and/or easier than only giving Jesus pieces of our lives?

What are some ways that we try to be good enough to get to God? Do you think any of those things will ever be enough? Why or why not?

Peter's response to God's call was to leave everything and follow Him immediately. Do we have that same willingness & sense of urgency today? What is it that keeps you from following Christ immediately like the first disciples did—without a second thought?

What experiences in your life have caused you to either have a conviction or not have a conviction about Christ?

Are there things you feel God is calling you to do right now that you are still mulling over and considering rather than following unwaveringly?

As a small group, how can you work together to put your faith into action in response to this week's message?

Week One, Day One

Scripture Reading

Matthew 16:24-26

Devotional Reading

The call Jesus gives to his disciples, indeed to all of us, is to lose our lives. It is only in this way, he teaches, that we can truly find our lives. As believers, it is easy to see this idea of losing our lives as a process with stages or phases or degrees of accomplishment.

When we first become a Christian, step one, we think, is to quit doing all of the really bad stuff. We swear off the cheating, the stealing, the lying. Next comes the smaller stuff, like the cursing, the smoking, the fibbing. Soon we find ourselves behaving pretty well, doing the things we are supposed to be doing.

Here's the problem: that's not what Jesus has called us to.

The calling to lose our lives is, as C.S. Lewis said, both harder and easier than this. It is harder because Jesus has not asked us to lose the parts of our lives that he doesn't necessarily like. He has required that we give him our whole lives, to crucify them and in doing so, he promises...life. That's the easier part. Jesus says that as we crucify our old selves and follow him, he gives us a new life, a better life, his own life. He tells us his yoke is easy and his burden is light.

Following Jesus isn't done in stages or phases or degrees, it's done holistically. We are called to daily make the decision to lay down our lives (every part of them), to take up our cross, and to follow him. Life ensues.

Faith In Action

Identify the areas of your life that you are holding on to and release them to God. Ask Jesus to define your life with his calling, purpose, and will for you.

Today's Prayer

Jesus, today I acknowledge your longing to have my whole life, especially the parts that are messy, dirty, and sinful. I confess that I try to hold on to parts of my old life, as well as try to be good enough to earn your love, favor, and grace. Thank you for your promise that if I give my life for your Kingdom's sake that you will freely give me true life in return.

Week One, Day Two

Scripture Reading

Matthew 4:18-22

Devotional Reading

I often wonder how I would have responded if I was alive when Jesus was here on earth as a man. As a believer in the 21st century in our western culture, I've perfected the art of excuses. But no, they aren't excuses; they are simply reasons why God is clearly not calling me to live radically. He wouldn't ask me to leave everything to follow him - would he?

If He came to my workplace and said, "{your name}, put down your pen, leave your laptop and phone. Follow me."

Would I follow him? Would I believe? Would I be one of the skeptics?

It's easy to say, "I would definitely leave everything and follow him if Jesus was standing in front of me. Of course!" But would I really? Would his presence completely change or remove the excuses I'm so quick to give when he asks this question of me now?

I love this description of Jesus calling to Peter and Andrew. It's short. It's not even very descriptive, but I think the lack of explanation or reason - the lack of excuses - I think that is part of the beauty.

Jesus doesn't need to convince them or give them reasons to leave their fishing - their careers.

He simply says, "Follow me." And they're gone.

Faith In Action

It's easy in our culture to live with one foot on the boat while we straddle the shore, trying to follow Christ at the same time. Take a few moments to evaluate your life. Are you leaving your nets and following him? Ask God for the courage to follow him and for the wisdom for what that looks like for you personally.

Today's Prayer

Lord, reveal to me areas where I am straddling the boat and the shore. I believe in your sovereignty and plan, yet I struggle to let go. Today I am jumping ship and walking with you - not bound to the things this world deems most important. Thank you for inviting me to follow you, Jesus. Today I am choosing to do just that.

Week One, Day Three

Scripture Reading

Matthew 4:18-22

Devotional Reading

Again, we see the first disciples in the middle of their work day when a simple invitation from Jesus causes them to immediately leave their work and their family to follow the Messiah. Simon (Peter), Andrew, James, and John did not consult their loved ones before following. They did not make a list of pros and cons. They did not even consider the job requirements of this new position. They simply heard the call and responded. Today, we will focus on the call.

It is likely that these early disciples had seen or at least heard about Jesus and his teaching before this moment, which could have informed their decision. Yet even still, their swift action seems full of impulse. But there was something in his voice, something about his presence that led them to say, "I'm in." Christ's invitation was full of possibility.

The call of the disciples reveals two necessities in following Jesus:

- 1) conviction - some acknowledgment that we have seen and/or heard Jesus' claims and find them to be true and worthy.
- 2) faith/risk - a willingness to act on our conviction regardless of the cost and uncertainty.

Peter didn't hesitate.

Have you heard God's call in such a way that you believe it with every fiber of your being and are willing to risk all because he is worthy?

Faith In Action

Search your heart to see if you believe Jesus is worthy to be followed. Ask God to remove any hindrances to hearing his glorious call, and listen as he speaks afresh to you today.

Today's Prayer

God, I want to hear your call and not hesitate. Please give me faith, by your Holy Spirit, to commit to you all of my ways. Reveal to me what I might be holding on to that you want me to leave behind as I pursue you more. I want to follow you immediately, whenever and however you call.

Scripture Reading

Matthew 16:13-20

Devotional Reading

Think about the number of questions you will face in your lifetime. It's a staggering thought! Depending on your job or family situation, you may be called upon to answer dozens of questions every single day. Most of these decisions and answers will be more or less inconsequential to the larger narrative of your life. "Qdoba or Chipotle?", while hotly contested in the fast food burrito world, probably won't make a significant dent on the next 10 years of your life.

In Matthew 16, we see a group of men faced with a question that's not just significant, but the most important question any of us will ever be asked. There were many competing answers in Peter's day (Elijah, John the Baptist, etc.), and that's still the case today. Prophet. Great spiritual leader. Exaggerated legend. In this sea of opinions, will we stand with Peter and declare, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God"?

We might be tempted to read this story (and others) and shake our heads at those poor disciples. Are they just now, 16 chapters in, understanding who Jesus is? Maybe it's a decision we made years ago that seems less pressing now. But Jesus' question is still here for you who follow Him: "Who do you say that I am?"

If he is your Savior and Lord, awesome! But why did He save you, and from what? Each day, how do you answer that question? What does your life speak about his identity and authority? He is God. He is Lord forevermore.

Faith In Action

If you don't have a journal, go buy one (or grab a piece of paper, any blank sheet will do). Then, journal a lengthy, prayerful response to Jesus' question, "Who do you say that I am?"

Today's Prayer

Jesus, you are the Christ, the Son of the living God! You are fascinating and unfathomable. I desire to know you more. Teach me today more about who you are and help me to live in light of the truth of your character and lordship.

Scripture Reading

Luke 5:1-11

Devotional Reading

Let's talk about Peter. A regular, broken man. In many ways, I imagine he was like you or I. Good qualities and not-so-good qualities.

Yet in the fifth chapter of Luke, Peter is faced with the reality of who he is before Christ. As the fish fly into the boat, Peter's wonder propels him to the feet of Jesus. He recognizes Christ's holiness and counts himself as unworthy to be in his presence; being a decent person has no consequence. Peter knows his heart and in that moment he sees a clear picture of his own depravity. He is a sinner. And yet, as Peter lays humbled on the floor of a drenched and grimy boat begging Jesus to leave, Jesus lifts him up and calls Peter to come on an adventure that will change his life.

Peter's call was not based on him being good enough. Rather, this story focuses on Peter's confession in the midst of a messy fishing boat. His confession displayed his dependence. He needed a Savior.

I need a Savior.

You need a Savior.

Thankfully, we aren't left on our own. Christ has come to lift us up out of the boat and call us on a journey. How will you respond to his grace?

Faith In Action

If you haven't yet confessed your need for Christ, consider responding today by placing your trust in Him as your Savior and Lord. Only through Him, by no works of our own, can we know God. If you do know Christ as your Lord, spend some time today meditating on what His grace has saved you from. Share this with a friend.

Today's Prayer

Jesus, thank you that it is not up to me to save myself. I confess my deep need for you. You alone are righteousness. Help me to hear your voice and follow your lead.



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