



# PETER

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*THE DISCIPLE*

**Daily Devotions and Small Group Discussion Questions | Week Two**

## 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:

But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying,  
"Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid."

- Matthew 14:27 (ESV)

## Week Two | 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](http://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 this week's teaching. What stood out to you the most? Were there things you didn't understand? What challenged you?

Where is Jesus nudging you to get out of your comfort zone and take a step of faith? What is stopping you from doing this?

How have you felt his rescuing hand in times of near failure?

What are you afraid of? Does this fear reveal an underlying lack of trust in God's sovereignty?

How would your life be different if God delivered you from your fears?

Are there any examples in your own life where you have felt like a fallen performer, letting God down? What would it look like in your life to have confidence that God is not surprised when you struggle?

Share a story of a time when you or someone you knew faced a seemingly impossible hardship and yet became a stronger or wiser person because of it.

What do you think it means to resist the devil? What are some practical examples?

What are some areas in your life where you are seeking the favor of people, more than or instead of, God? In these same areas, what would it look like to begin seeking his favor instead?

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

## Week Two, Day One

### Scripture Reading

Matthew 14:22-33

### Devotional Reading

The story of Peter walking on the water with Jesus is one of my favorites. I remember reading it as a child, and how amazed I was. Quite honestly, sometimes as an adult I struggle to find that same awe and amazement.

When you really take time to read this story, Jesus was walking on water. He was walking on water!! How can you not be in absolute awe? As you wrap your mind around what the disciples were truly seeing - something our world would say is impossible - do you wonder what your response would be?

Would you yell, "Ghost! Ghost!" and shake in fear?

When you realize it is Jesus, would you respond like Peter and join him out there? On the water?

We can learn a lot from Peter. He continually jumps feet first, all in, when the Lord asks him to do so. He is unashamed. He is bold. He is easily distracted. Can you relate?

When Peter saw the wind, his fear overtook him. How often does God invite us into a glorious encounter with him and all we can see is the wind? Let us choose today to fix our gaze on Jesus - despite the wind of our circumstances - and remember that nothing is impossible with God.

### Faith In Action

Ask God to show you an area of your life where you need to step out of the boat and pursue Christ. Spend some time confessing to him your fears and doubt related to this area.

### Today's Prayer

Jesus, you walked on water! Nothing is impossible for you. You know the circumstances of my life and the areas where fear has taken root. I pray today that you remove all of the fears and distractions that are keeping me from experiencing what you have for me outside of the boat. Be my courage today.

## Week Two, Day Two

### Scripture Reading

Matthew 14:22-33

### Devotional Reading

Moses parting the water, Abraham leaving his home, the woman touching Jesus' cloak, Peter walking on water, and so forth. The Bible is full of instances where God performs life-changing miracles in the lives of risk-takers! And it wasn't always pretty.

We may know that our Savior is calling to us, and we may even act in obedience though the circumstances are sometimes overwhelming. Like Peter, we may even take several steps toward him, but when external forces begin to shake us, we lose focus.

Nevertheless, Jesus is there to rescue us.

He is honored by our faith, and like a good father, is there to catch us when we fall. Jesus is like the tender and loving parent who encourages a toddler to take his first steps and is there to scoop us up when we fall. What a gracious God. He rescues us when we need it.

Remember that even the wind and waves obey him (Matthew 8:27). Do not be afraid of external circumstances. Do not be afraid to take a step. A willingness to trust God in unfamiliar territory, coupled with his heart to grab our hand when we start to sink, is the recipe for miraculous living.

### Faith In Action

Think back on the times that God has rescued you. There may have been many. Spend time thanking him for his gracious hand at just the right time.

### Today's Prayer

Lord, as I pursue your calling and reach out to you, speak to me and help me to keep my eyes focused on you. Thank you for your constant presence. Naturally, Lord, my flesh may fail, but with your divine help I know that you can provide the strength that will allow me to do things I never could have imagined!

## Week Two, Day Three

### Scripture Reading

Ephesians 1:1-14

### Devotional Reading

Have you ever witnessed a world-class event? One in which performers were expected to perfectly execute their skills, such as a famous ballet, gymnastic event or renowned symphony? Watching the Olympic Games may be the best example.

We are awestruck by the practice, dedication, and inherent talent it takes to complete that balance beam routine, that melodious opera, that striking concerto.

Inevitably, what sometimes happens? The gymnast falls on the landing, the vocalist forgets his next line, the violinist screeches dissonantly off-key. Instinctually, the audience gasps. We're heartbroken for the performer. We're disappointed that the world-class routine we have come to see has let us down.

Do you ever believe that God is shocked by your sin, your shortfalls, your screw-ups? Do you compare yourself to these performers, putting on a show, striving for perfection? Do you hear God gasp when you slip up, when you fall back into sin, when you struggle with disbelief?

There's no clearer example in scripture to the contrary than Jesus foretelling Peter's denial. We see clearly not only that Jesus is not surprised, but that he is not appalled, not angry, and not caught off-guard.

In Ephesians 1, we read that we were chosen in Christ before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless. Before we had ever sinned, in the midst of our ongoing struggles, and for the future shortfalls we will face, Christ is seated at the right hand of God, making the way for our everlasting forgiveness and right-standing with God the Father. Amen.

### Faith In Action

Recognize that guilt and shame are never from God. The forgiveness we've received in Christ identifies us as children of God, not performers. He is never appalled by our actions and nothing can separate us from the love of Christ. Rest in that truth today.

### Today's Prayer

God, thank you that you are our Father and not an audience, that we cannot earn more of your love or disappoint you out of loving us. Give us confidence when we fall to draw even closer to your love and forgiveness.

## Week Two, Day Four

### Scripture Reading

Matthew 26:31-75

### Devotional Reading

We may never face a crucible of faith quite like Peter did while Jesus was on trial. Three times he was asked about his association with Jesus. Each time at the very moment people were hurling false accusations, insults, and physical abuse at this man named Jesus. If he had admitted to being Jesus' disciple in that courtyard, would he too be made to suffer torture and death? We'll never know, of course, because Peter famously denied his knowledge of Jesus.

Even though most of us will probably be spared a trial this intense, every day we face decisions to acknowledge our association with Jesus or distance ourselves from him out of fear or pride.

Will we talk about Jesus with our neighbors, friends, and coworkers? Will we claim Christ's authority in our lives both publicly and privately?

If we are honest with our failures, we, like Peter, have gone astray and denied our Lord. But we should not despair! Peter's denials - along with yours and mine - were the very things that Jesus overcame, once and for all, on the cross. May our hearts break over our acts of denial, and may his everlasting forgiveness encourage us to be brave, despite what others may say, think or do.

### Faith In Action

Make a list of the ways you have denied Jesus' role in your life. Tear up the list and throw it away, thanking him for obliterating the record of your sin with his awesome sacrifice.

### Today's Prayer

Jesus, I have denied you as my Savior and Lord time and time again. Yet you are never ashamed of me. Thank you so much for loving me and dying for me in the midst of my disobedience!

## Week Two, Day Five

### Scripture Reading

Luke 22:31-32; 1 Peter 5:6-11

### Devotional Reading

In the film, *The Usual Suspects*, there's a memorable line: "The greatest trick the devil ever pulled was to convince the world he didn't exist."

Isn't it easy to go through life forgetting that there is a very real spiritual battle raging around us?

In Luke 22, Jesus warns Peter of this very thing, urging Peter to pay attention and listen up. Using the imagery of wheat being sifted from impurities, Jesus cautions Peter that Satan (in a similar manner of his request in Job 1:6-7) has begged to separate Peter from his faith. Jesus, however, reiterates his authority over Satan by confidently encouraging Peter that, though he will be challenged, he will return strengthened.

Notice that Christ doesn't ask for God to spare Peter from the testing, but for strength in the midst of it. Hardship was allowed. The ultimate result was a faith that propelled this fisherman to become the rock on which the movement of Christ-followers was built!

Years after his denial of Christ, Peter pens a letter to fellow believers encouraging them in the face of persecution. He warns them to resist the devil, trusting the One who will, "restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish," them. There is a spiritual battle and an enemy who wants to destroy our faith. We have confidence that the One who has overcome is on our side.

### Faith In Action

Is there a major hardship you are currently going through? Think of Peter. Christ's grace rescued him in his weakest moments. Resist the enemy's lies and discouragement, and believe that God is establishing you for his good work.

### Today's Prayer

Lord, help me to be more aware of the battle around me. Show me how to resist the enemy and trust in your authority and sufficiency. Help me to fight alongside my brothers and sisters in Christ, that we may face hardship with hope and godly perspective.



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