



PETER

THE DISCIPLE

Daily Devotions and Small Group Discussion Questions | Week Four

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:

He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?"
Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?"
and he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you."
Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep."
- John 21:17 (ESV)

Week Four | 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 this week's teaching. What stood out to you the most? Were there things you didn't understand? What challenged you?

Peter often expressed his love for Christ more dramatically than the other disciples. What are ways that Christians today extravagantly express their love for Christ? How do you best express your love for Christ?

Do you think loving Christ and feeding his sheep are always correlated? Why or why not? If so, what does feeding his sheep look like for you?

Why do you think the disciples might have gone fishing after Christ's death?

What do you think is significant about the multiple repetitions of Jesus' question to Peter (see Matthew 26)?

Read 2 Timothy 2:1-7. Paul compares this calling to a soldier, an athlete and a farmer to Timothy. Why do you think Paul chose to use those three examples? What do they mean to you?

When in your life have you played the role of a student or disciple in your faith? When have you played the role of teacher?

Romans 8:1 tells us there is no condemnation in Christ Jesus. Are there areas in your life in which you are living as though you are condemned? Is there anyone in your life from whom you're withholding forgiveness and still condemning them (even just mentally) for their sin?

Jesus came to Peter to restore him. When and where have you felt restored by God?

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

Week Four, Day One

Scripture Reading

John 21:15-19

Devotional Reading

Some of us tend to have a bent towards the dramatic. We make claims like, "The iPhone will change your life!" or "I am obsessed with Downton Abbey." Grandiose comments like these are part of our vocabulary, and exaggerations are used in pursuit of our appeal to others. Peter was no exception.

Shortly after his public declaration that he would never fall away, he finds himself denying the crux of his proclaimed devotion, being left to question just how sincere his initial dedication to Jesus had been.

Peter had to decide if he had been more in love with the majestic presence of Christ than with Christ himself.

As Christ sits by the fire with Peter, he asks Peter three times, "Do you love me?" Could it be that this simple question, answered from the heart, could remedy the damage from Peter's three accounts of denying Christ? Peter, perhaps learning to no longer make impulsive statements, does not compare his love and devotion to that of the other disciples as he had done before. Instead, in his grief and awareness of his own sin, he is vulnerable before Christ.

It can be easy for us to sing songs of worship with strong proclamations. We promise to surrender all, to lay down our lives. And yet, are we sometimes more in love with the ideology of Christianity, the good feeling we get in his presence, than we are with the person of Christ?

May our extravagant expressions of faith be fueled by a heart and mind that is devoted to Christ alone.

Faith In Action

Listen to one or two of your favorite worship songs and write out the words that stand out to you. Pray through these words, asking God to make these statements true and evident in your life.

Today's Prayer

Lord, thank you for your grace that covers over my denial of you. Thank you for searching my heart and questioning my love for you. I want to live devoted to the person of Christ and not to the amazing things that life with him brings. Purify my heart.

Week Four, Day Two

Scripture Reading

John 21:15-19

Devotional Reading

Repetition is one of the pillars of learning. Should I repeat that?

In this dynamic account, Peter is asked three times by Jesus: "Do you love me?" You might wonder why on earth is he asking so many times? It is important to look at the words, the situation and Peter.

The words. When Peter answers Christ's first question, he responds in a way of saying "love" that shows no more love than he would love his friends or fellow disciples. Obviously, Jesus wasn't satisfied with that answer. So, he asks again. And again. The situation in the Greek is actually a good deal more complicated than this might lead you to think. Twice Jesus uses the Greek word from which we derive agape, and twice Peter responds with his nonchalant love as a friend. The third time, Jesus uses the same word that Peter uses and Peter a third time responds in kind. This raises a big question as to what is really going on here and, for that matter, if the two words have come to be synonymous in usage!

The situation. Jesus is preparing his disciples for the time when he must leave them. In asking Peter these questions, he is reminding both Peter and the others that their love for Christ must be the motivation in sharing the bread of life with his followers.

Peter. Jesus didn't let Peter off the hook with his first answer. He got to the core of Peter's heart and responded with a powerful word. By asking Peter three times, Jesus lets his disciples know that the answer to this question is important to him and what was to come.

"The third time he said to him, 'Simon, son of John, do you love me?' Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, 'Do you love me?' He said, 'Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.' Jesus said, 'Feed my sheep.'" - John 21:17

Faith In Action

Honestly answer Jesus' question, "Do you love me?" Make an attempt to describe to the Lord how you feel about him.

Today's Prayer

God, I must love you first before I can truly love others. You are worthy of all of my heart. Expand my capacity to love and serve others in your name.

Week Four, Day Three

Scripture Reading

John 21:1-17

Devotional Reading

Consider the build-up to chapter 21 of John's account. Jesus has preached from town to town about repentance from sins, belief in him, and God's salvation. All the while he has been giving sight to the blind, supernaturally feeding the hungry, healing dying children, and even raising people from the dead. He has been falsely accused, beaten, mocked, and killed. Then things get really interesting.

Some of his female followers visit his tomb and find that, though it had been firmly sealed, it is now mysteriously open and empty! Then Jesus appears – resurrected – to Mary and his disciples. All of Jesus' teachings, all of the prophecies, and all of life are now finally able to make sense to the disciples.

So what do we find them doing in chapter 21? Searching high and low for the elusive risen Jesus? Conferring to pray and discover God's mission for them? Proclaiming the resurrection in every temple, market, and field so that everyone may know true forgiveness and eternal life?

Nope.

Fishing. All day long.

They have returned to their familiar pastime, their former line of work and way of life. We may not know why. It could have been doubts, fear or confusion that drove them to their fishing nets. Whatever the reason, they have set aside this profound and awe-inspiring mystery for an old habit.

What about you? Is there an area of focus that has taken over your life? Is there a habit that you've turned to even though your savior is alive and calling your name?

Faith In Action

Draw a picture of this scene from John 21 but with yourself in the boat. Draw underwater whatever it is you tend to "fish for" instead of recognizing Jesus.

Today's Prayer

Jesus, you have been raised from the dead and offer victory over sin and death. Thank you that you are alive today and invite me to follow you and share the hope that comes from trusting you. Help me to pursue you above all else.

Week Four, Day Four

Scripture Reading

John 21:1-13; 15-19

Devotional Reading

As we looked at yesterday, after Jesus' death and Peter's denial of Christ, Peter retreated to what was old and familiar to him: fishing.

He had first encountered Jesus while fishing and again Jesus comes to him there. Jesus poignantly asks, "Do you love me?" Upon Jesus' third repetition of this question, the Bible tells us (v. 17), "Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, 'Do you love me?' He said, 'Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.'"

Our failure and sin can make us feel worthless for use by God.

But Christ came to Peter gently. By allowing Peter to state his true heart for Christ, he restored him and ultimately, commissioned him to continue the good work he had already begun.

Do you believe that Jesus can forgive your many denials of him? Do you doubt his fondness of you? That doubt is not from God.

He shows us in this story that he longs to restore and redeem us -- the whole reason he died on the cross!

You may be disappointed in your life by your own wrongful actions, but Christ's willingness to forgive is greater than even the most severely perceived disappointments.

Be consumed by his forgiveness today.

Faith In Action

Too often we live in self-condemnation and let our sin derail the work of Christ in and through us. Ask God to reveal to you the areas of your life that you need to receive his forgiveness. As he lifts the shame, ask him to show you ways that you can continue to share the good news of Christ with the hungry.

Today's Prayer

Father, you are a gentle God, abounding in love and rich in mercy. Please restore my relationship with you and help me not be paralyzed by my shortcomings. I want to live with the confidence that I am forgiven and fully yours. Thank you for longing to restore me and providing the path to true life. It is an honor to receive truth from you and share it with others!

Week Four, Day Five

Scripture Reading

2 Timothy 2:1-7

Devotional Reading

In the final years of Paul's life, these instructions for his disciple, Timothy, to, "entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also" is another example in the Bible of a charge by the teacher for his students to pass along the gospel message.

Famously we have the Great Commission in Matthew 28 to, "Go and make disciples," and in this week's sermon, we saw Jesus exhort Peter to, "feed my lambs" and, "feed my sheep."

2 Timothy 2:2, from Paul to Timothy, refers to a chain of four links – Paul to Timothy to faithful men to others – to carry forward the gospel of Jesus forever. The calling from Jesus to his disciples and from Paul to Timothy is for us as well.

We are called to be students, disciples, understudies of those who have come before us in spreading the gospel message. In addition, we are called to become teachers, sharers, spreaders of the way, the truth and the life.

God in his omnipotence could have chosen any way for his message of hope to be shared with the world, yet the system he implemented is to use us – the once spiritually dead who have been resurrected.

It is a humbling, high calling, and it is for us all.

Faith In Action

Using the gifts, skills, and talents that God has graciously given you, commit to becoming both a student and a teacher in the spreading of Christ's message. Take one practical step this week.

Today's Prayer

God, today I recognize the invitation that you have given every believer to play a part in learning and teaching your gospel message. I confess that sometimes it's easy to sit on the sidelines and believe it's the responsibility of others to learn and/or to teach. Thank you for choosing to use me in the spreading of your word. I pray that you would provide me with opportunities to learn and share, as your words are passed from generation to generation to generation!



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