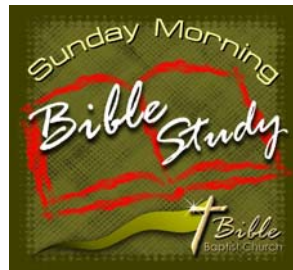




THE LIFE OF PETER

STUDY 2

SPIRITUAL INSIGHT



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INTRODUCTION

In our last study we observed Peter's choice to make a monumental course change for his life. With minimal evidence, Peter and the other disciples that joined Jesus at the beginning of His ministry, completely abandoned their life's ambitions and personal agendas to follow Jesus. Despite the conflict at home, the uncertain financial future, and the rejection of those close to them, Peter and the other disciples obeyed Christ's call on their lives. They knew they were *called to more*; and when they were invited to come along for the journey, something in Jesus' eyes or His voice convinced them it was the right thing to do.

Last time we determined that things are the same for the person who meets the Messiah today. Christ calls each of us to something more. And while each born again Christian is not called to full time, vocational ministry; each one of us is called to full time Christianity.

Today, we join Jesus, Peter, and the rest of the disciples about half way into Christ's three year earthly ministry. In this study, we will observe 3 episodes where Peter's *spiritual insight* can be observed. And we will try to determine if each of us *can*, or even *is* supposed to be able to exercise similar insight regarding spiritual things.

TRUTH

Turn to Luke chapter 5. The following passage contains the record of the event where Jesus causes a great catch of fish for the not-so-successful, seasoned, professional fishermen.

Turn to Luke 5:3-8

3 And he entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And he sat down, and taught the people out of the ship. 4 Now when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. 5 And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net. 6 And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake. 7 And they beckoned unto their partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink. 8 When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord. 9 For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken:

Spiritual Insight – Episode 1 After the miracle of the great catch, while the other disciples may have been astonished (verse 9), Peter was brought to his knees. Peter's reaction was driven by his *spiritual insight*. Peter was not only aware that Jesus was holy, but that in contrast, Peter was utterly sinful.

Group Questions

- Were the others with Peter and Jesus any less sinful than Peter?
- Why didn't they make the same confession that Peter did?

Let's look at spiritual insight episode2. Turn to Matthew 14:22. This passage contains the record of the event where Jesus comes to the disciples on the water.

Matthew 14:22-29

22 And straightway Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship, and to go before him unto the other side, while he sent the multitudes away. 23 And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone. 24 But the ship was now in the midst of

the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary. 25 And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea. 26 And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit [*ghost, apparition*]; and they cried out for fear. 27 But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid. 28 And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water. 29 And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus.

Spiritual Insight – Episode 2 It was night, the disciples were 3 to 4 miles out on the water, and they were in the middle of a storm. They looked out and saw Jesus walking on top of the water. Everybody in the boat freaked out and thought they were seeing a ghost – *except Peter*. As soon as Jesus identified Himself, Peter's *spiritual insight* convinced him it was Jesus and he then immediately wanted to get closer to the Lord. Peter was willing to jump out of the boat – even though the laws of physics would have to be broken or else Peter would die trying to get to Jesus.

Group Questions

- Was Peter just an adrenalin junkie or was there something more here?
- What other “laws” of this world must we consider breaking in order to act on our spiritual insight?
- Why was Peter the only one confident to get out of the boat – what was holding the others back?

I’m glad you asked. Turn to Mark 6 for a clue as to why the others stayed in the boat. The other disciples at this point in time did not share the same conviction from their spiritual insight that Peter did. Let’s look at Mark’s record of the conclusion of this event.

Mark 6:51-52

51 And he went up unto them into the ship; and the wind ceased: and they were sore amazed in themselves beyond measure, and wondered. 52 For they considered not the miracle of the loaves: for their heart was hardened.

The disciples were completely shocked beyond description and they didn't understand how Jesus could have done what He did. And note the reason Mark gives for their *lack of spiritual insight*.

In verse 52 it says they didn't *consider* (KJV), which means *put together or realize*, the significance of the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand that had just happened earlier that day. They hadn't *connected the dots* of the seeming impossibility of feeding 5,000+ people with only a few fish and couple of loaves of bread. And because they had not contemplated this miracle and drawn the conclusion that *God was operating in their world*, their hearts were still hardened. They were still not believing, not watching for, or expecting, or seeing the hand of God actively involved in the events of their lives.

Let's look at our last spiritual insight episode for today, episode 3. *Turn to Matthew 16:13.* This passage contains the familiar record of Peter's statement of faith that Jesus was the Messiah, God's Son.

Matthew 16:13-16

When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? 14 And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. 15 He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? 16 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Listen to another time Peter voices his spiritual insight. In John 6:67-69, many of Jesus' followers stop following Him after He had given some difficult teachings. Jesus then questions His twelve remaining disciples.

John 6:67-69

Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? 68 Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. 69 And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.

At this point in time, the rest of the twelve (excluding Judas), are sharing Peter's conviction of who Jesus Christ really was. They knew that He was not just a man with God's power on His life but that He *was* God. It is encouraging to see that spiritual insight was and is something that can develop over time and that it is not a specialized giftedness that only a select few can have. Each believer in Christ can develop their spiritual insight as much as they are willing to act on.

And listen to Jesus' response to Peter's statement of faith:

Matthew 16:17

And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

Peter, you are blessed because this spiritual insight came from My heavenly Father. Spiritual insight is the ability to observe and understand people, things, and events in this life from God's perspective. It is the ability to look beyond ourselves, beyond the things of this physical world and see "behind the scenes." Spiritual insight looks for, watches for, and expects God to do things around us, for us, and through us. And spiritual insight has to come from God. It makes sense, God is a *spirit* (John 4:24), so if we are going to develop *spiritual* insight, He must be the source of it.

FISHING

As we close, let's talk about us. Are we all supposed to have spiritual insight?

Sure. If spiritual insight is thinking, speaking and acting by faith, it is a given that each Christian should be seeking to develop their spiritual insight; after all, "...without faith it is impossible to please Him..." (Hebrews 11:6).

On the Handout

What is necessary in order to develop spiritual insight?

1. It is necessary to spend **time with Jesus Christ in order to develop spiritual insight.** Spending time with Jesus teaches us to think outside the box compared to the way this world handles life and solves problems. The believer who pursues staying close to Christ comes to expect and watches for supernatural activity in this life.

A. Time with Jesus reveals the **weakness of our flesh.** Peter recognized his own human sinfulness and rightfully humbled himself in Jesus' presence.

B. Time with Jesus exposes us to miraculous **problem solving.** The believer with spiritual insight knows Christ can calm the storm and trusts Him to calm our heart if He chooses to have us endure the storm.

2. It is necessary to **contemplate the **events** in your life to develop spiritual insight.** Intentionally looking for God's hand in the seemingly coincidental events of your life will cause confidence in your faith to the point of speaking and acting on it.

3. It is necessary sometimes to **defy the "rules" of this world in order to develop spiritual insight.** At various points in time, opportunities are be presented to us by God to radically exercise faith. We must choose to *step out* or *speak out* when our spiritual insight stirs our conviction. Radical faith operates illogically from the rules of this world. Christians throughout history can testify of supernatural things happening because they dared to believe God would act in their behalf.



THE CATCH

JESUS TOLD PETER HE WAS BLESSED BECAUSE THE FATHER HAD DEVELOPED HIS SPIRITUAL INSIGHT.

1. Do I believe that Christ wants me to have spiritual insight?
Yes No
2. How would I rate my ability to see things from a spiritual point of view?
1 2 3 4 How about if Jesus rates me? 1 2 3 4
3. Am I spending enough time with Jesus to recognize my own weaknesses?
4. Am I spending enough time with Jesus to see His methods of handling life? If not, whose methods am I using to solve issues in my life?
5. Do I contemplate the events and circumstances in my life looking for God's involvement? Do I just believe things happen as they do and God really isn't actively involved in His creation?
6. If I think I am in the process of developing spiritual insight, where have I been defying the rules of this world's system and exercising radical faith?
7. When this past week did I *speak out* with conviction due to my spiritual insight? When this week did I *step out* with conviction due to my spiritual insight?

REMEMBER

JESUS WANTS TO TELL YOU THAT YOU ARE BLESSED BECAUSE THE FATHER HAS DEVELOPED YOUR SPIRITUAL INSIGHT.