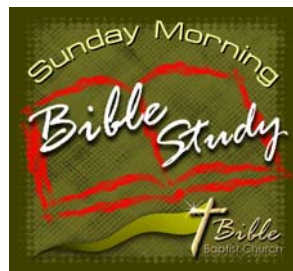




THE LIFE OF PETER

STUDY 5

PERSONALITY FOR PURPOSE



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INTRODUCTION

God creates His children with the personality and giftedness that He intends to use for His specific purposes. In our last study we observed how Peter and Jesus mended their broken relationship. Jesus sought out Peter in John 21 in order to bring healing to the relationship that Peter had damaged. Until their relationship was restored, Peter's entire life was in disarray. Not only was he experiencing a serious lack of fulfillment while he avoided God's call on his life, but the personality Peter was designed with was actually working against God, against himself, and against those around him. In John 21, Peter had stopped spreading the gospel and gone back to fishing and his influential personality caused some of the other disciples to stop spreading the news about Messiah and to also return to fishing jobs. Fortunately, Jesus met Peter where he was at and with their relationship restored was able to remind Peter of Christ's call on his life to be a caretaker of Messiah's believers.

Which brings us to today's study. Today we will observe Peter's God designed personality immersed in God's purposes. We will see Peter as a leader, a confronter, and a unifier; 3 performances from one personality empowered by a strong connection with Jesus Christ, the Vine.

TRUTH

PERSONALITY TRAIT #1 ~ LEADERSHIP

Acts 1:15

And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty,)

1 Corinthians 3:21-23

Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours; 22 Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; 23 And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's.

Galatians 2:9

And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.

The record shows Peter as a strong leader in the early church.

After 3x denying the Messiah, Peter could easily have thrown in the towel convinced he misunderstood God's call on his life. Jesus made sure Peter did not misunderstand what He was expecting Peter to do during his life here on earth. Peter was to be a shepherd, a pastor, to the believers of the day (John 21). While there is no Biblical evidence that Peter was assigned by God to be pope or was specially appointed to be the head of the church or the head of the other disciples, the Biblical record shows Peter to have been one of the prominent leaders of the early church along with Paul, Apollos, James, John, and Barnabas.

Group Questions

- What are 3 things that caused Peter to be able to jump right into the position of leadership that is recorded in the Bible? **1. A functioning relationship with Jesus (John 21); 2. the free flow of the Holy Spirit in his yielded life; 3. the personality he was given (John 1:42-43 "rock") for this specific purpose God had in mind for him.**
- Why can't we perform today with the same power that Peter did back then? **We CAN perform with the same power as Peter did back then! The same 3 things that enabled Peter to have a powerful ministry in others' lives can enable us today: 1 – a growing relationship with Christ, 2 – free flow of the Holy Spirit in our yielded lives, and 3 – using the gifts and personality we have been purposefully created with.**



PERSONALITY TRAIT #2 ~ CONFRONTATION

Acts 2:22-24, 36-37, 41-42

22 Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: 23 Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: 24 Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.

36 Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. 37 Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?

41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. 42 And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

The record shows Peter directly confronting opposition to the Messiah and the truth of the gospel. Peter was not a master of “political correctness.” When you engaged Peter in conversation you were entering the “no spin zone.” Peter may have been blunt, but God designed his outspoken style of communicating the truth to be just the thing to draw his listeners to Christ.

Group Questions

- How do people usually respond when they are accused of something? *They usually become defensive at first.*
- How did Peter overcome his listeners' defensiveness? *Peter spoke the truth; his Jewish audience could not deny their actions; BUT Peter also offered a solution (accept Christ and get baptized) that accompanied his accusation.*
- What lesson can Christians learn from this event when dealing with communicating the truth today? *Share the truth but offer Biblical solutions.*

PERSONALITY TRAIT #3 ~ UNITY

Acts 15:5-12

But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses. 6 And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter. 7 And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. 8 And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; 9 And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. 10 Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? 11 But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they. 12 Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them.

The record shows Peter as a peacemaker between Jews and Gentiles bringing unity in Christ based on direct revelation from God. Peter, the rock, proved to have the ability to bring peaceful unity to the first century Christians. When some of the Pharisees who had trusted Christ for salvation still wanted to impose Jewish law on the non-Jewish Christians, Peter was able to settle the dispute and did so without alienating either group.

Group Questions

- How did Peter bring peaceful unity to the Jewish and non-Jewish Christians? **1. He shared what God had directly revealed (Acts 10) – the truth that to God there are only two kinds of people – saved and unsaved. 2. He identified with both Jewish and non-Jewish Christians by using inclusive language and pronouns such as “we” (verse 11) and made no issue of a Christian’s background before their salvation as to having anything to do with their salvation or the practice of their relationship with Christ.**
- Is unity among Christians important? Support your yes or no answer with Scripture. **Yes. John 17:20-21; Ephesians 4:3-6.**

- What are some obstacles to unity Christians face? **Selfish agendas; grudges or lack of forgiveness; personal preferences, tastes, styles, or methods. Others?**
- What can Christians do to overcome some of these obstacles?

FISHING

ON THE HANDOUT

1. When maintaining their relationship with Christ, Christians can use their God-given **personality** and abilities to boldly perform in the **position** God has for them in this world.
2. Christians created with a confrontational personality must **include** themselves when bringing correction to other believers; and be careful to base all instruction to others on **Scripture** not personal preference.
3. Christians will be more effective when influencing others for God when they offer Biblical **solutions** to problems rather than simply **identifying** a problem or issue in someone else's life.
4. According to John 17:21, unbreakable **unity** is one of the strongest methods Christians can use to **attract** unbelievers to Christ.
5. Christians must learn to identify things in their lives that are causing them to be **disunited** from one or more other believers in their **church** family.



THE CATCH

PETER EXPERIENCED TREMENDOUS FULFILLMENT IN HIS LIFE
AS GOD PRODUCED ETERNAL FRUIT THROUGH THE
PERSONALITY AND POSITION HE HAD DESIGNED FOR HIM.

1. *Kids and adults:* Am I actively using my personality and abilities in my home to influence my family for Christ? *Yes No Why or why not?*
2. Am I actively using my personality and abilities in some role within my church family? *Yes No Why or why not?*
3. Am I too direct with fellow Christians? *Yes No Give examples.*
4. Am I too timid with fellow Christians? *Yes No Give examples.*
5. How effective am I at drawing unbelievers to Christ by my unity with fellow Christians from my church?
6. What can I do to actively improve unity within my "circle of influence" within our church family? *Be specific.*

REMEMBER

YOU CAN EXPERIENCE TREMENDOUS FULFILLMENT IN YOUR
LIFE AS GOD PRODUCES ETERNAL FRUIT THROUGH THE
PERSONALITY AND POSITION HE HAS DESIGNED FOR YOU.