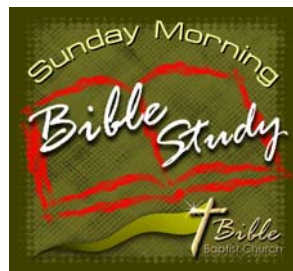




# THE LIFE OF PETER

## STUDY 7

### THE PETER CHALLENGE



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## INTRODUCTION

**We have studied 6 lessons on the life of Peter.** It has been interesting to see how God in His divine wisdom preserved for us the record of Peter's successes and failures. Most of us can relate to Peter. Most of us here are "average" Christians living "average lives." And while we may not feel especially called to some great mission for God, the Lord actually does want to influence eternity through each one of us.

Peter was a challenging individual who often faced as many challenges as he offered. And many times the challenges Peter faced were due to his reliance on himself instead of his Lord. But when he stayed close to Jesus, Peter's boldness not only withstood the religious elite of his day but held up against the Roman government dominating Jerusalem 2,000 years ago.

The record of Peter's life challenges the modern day Christian's life. As we close our study of Peter today, we'll take the Peter challenge and see how we stack up before our Lord and what we can do to help each other in answering the call to a life with Christ.



## PETER CHALLENGE #1

**Turn to John 1:40-42** One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. 41 He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. 42 And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone.

**Turn to Matthew 4:18-20** And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. 19 And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. 20 And they straightway left their nets, and followed him.

In the previous passages, Peter meets Jesus, is renamed by Him, and obeys Jesus' call on Peter's life which radically changes the direction of Peter's life forever.

### CHALLENGE #1 DEFINED: UNDERGOING TOTAL LIFE CHANGE

- What were some of the things that were changed in Peter's life when He became a Christian? **His behavior. His social circles. His religious circles. His finances. His job. Relationships with friends and family. His home life and on the road life. His reason for being here on earth.**
- When someone becomes a Christian today, do they face the same life changes that Peter? **Yes or No** Should they? **Review areas above.**
- Which changes do you think are the hardest for Christians today?
- How well do you respond to this challenge of total life change in Christ?
- How do you help another Christian who faces this challenge? **We can only coach someone as far as we have come so we have got to deal with the areas in our lives that God is trying to bring to our attention.**

🐟 ONCE PETER MET THE MESSIAH, HE LEARNED THE MESSIAH HAD BEEN PURPOSEFULLY SEEKING HIM.

**Worksheet Question #1.** If you believe in the Messiah, you must believe that He has a **purpose** and **objectives** for your life.

## PETER CHALLENGE #2

**Turn to Luke 5:8-9** 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:

**Turn back to Matthew 14:28-29** 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.

**And over to Matthew 16:16-17** And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. 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.

In these previous passages we observed 3 episodes where Peter's *spiritual insight* could be observed. And we determined each of us *can*, or even *is* supposed to be able to exercise similar insight regarding spiritual things.

### CHALLENGE #2 DEFINED: DEVELOPING SPIRITUAL INSIGHT

- Where did Peter's spiritual insight come from? **The heavenly Father.**
- What caused it to grow? **Spending time with Jesus. Peter began to "think outside the box" of the world's way of doing business.**
- What does spending time with Jesus do for a Christian? **Helps them see their need for Him in their life as they are weak. Time with Jesus exposes us to miraculous problem solving. We begin to see life differently than we used to.**
- What advice can you offer to another Christian about developing their spiritual insight? **Again, you can't lead someone where you haven't been. A good place to start however is for Christians to contemplate the events in their lives to develop spiritual insight.**

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

**Worksheet Question #2.** Jesus wants to tell **you** that you are **blessed** because the Father has developed your spiritual insight.

## PETER CHALLENGE #3

**Listen to Matthew 26:70-75** But he denied before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest. 71 And when he was gone out into the porch, another maid saw him, and said unto them that were there, This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth. 72 And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man. 73 And after a while came unto him they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou also art one of them; for thy speech bewrayeth thee. 74 Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew. 75 And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly.

**Listen to John 21:3** Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing.

**And listen to John 21:15-17** So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. 16 He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. 17 He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

**All Christians experience regret when they think about times when they have failed Jesus.** Regret is a powerful and deceptive tool of the devil. Some Christians think that Christ would never want them back. Nothing could be farther from the truth. The record of Peter's denial of Christ and the impact it had on Peter and the other disciples was preserved for us to learn from. Recovering from failing God is something all Christians face.

### CHALLENGE #3 DEFINED: RECOVERING FROM FAILING GOD

- Will all Christians fail God at some point? **It would be wonderful to say "no" but in reality the answer is more than likely, "yes."**
- What must we be careful of when we have fallen into a sinful snare? **To avoid the "in for a penny in for a pound" mentality. Also be careful not to believe the lies that will follow failure such as, "God doesn't want you back..." or "See, you're no good to God after all...."**

- What can Christians learn about Jesus from the way He conducted Himself with Peter in John 21? 1. That regardless of how badly we have hurt Christ, He is always willing to restore relationship with us if we are willing. 2. Jesus meets us where we are at – Jesus showed up first and Peter responded by going to meet with Him. 3. Jesus is very fair – He gave Peter an opportunity to state his love for Christ as many times as he had earlier denied Him.
- What truth can Christians learn from Peter's restoration and reinstatement to service? That no matter how great or ugly past sins are, Christ still wants to be in a growing relationship with us and still has a position for us in which to serve and receive fulfillment and satisfaction.
- What can we do to help a fellow Christian be restored to Christ and returned to serving Him? Don't judge and don't be prideful. Galatians 6:1 Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Hebrews 3:12-13 Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. 13 But exhort [warn] one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. James 5:19-20 Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; 20 Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.

✚ PETER LEARNED THAT ALONG WITH A RESTORED RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS CHRIST COMES REINSTATEMENT TO A SATISFYING MISSION OF BUILDING GOD'S KINGDOM.

**Worksheet Question #3.** Christians must learn that along with a **restored** relationship with Jesus Christ comes **reinstatement** to a satisfying mission of building God's Kingdom.

**Christian, take the Peter Challenge.** Forget your past, let God flow through the personality He gave you, and participate with your church in reaching others for eternity. It will be a life full of challenge but one that offers rewarding satisfaction beyond what you could imagine!