



Peter – Week Three

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Overview

During today's lesson, we examine the Apostle Peter's infamous *ComeBack* story: The Denial of Christ. Through his epic failure, we discover how God can restore us and use us mightily.

Discussion Questions

As followers of Jesus, we are a new creation in Christ. Yet there are still times when we sin, do wrong, and blow it. We all face failures either of our own making or as a result of difficult circumstances. The good news is that *failure is not final*, not if we invite God in.

- Have you run from a failure that God wants to rewrite with a new ending?

Peter's Denial of Jesus

Today, we explore the account of the apostle Peter's denial of Christ found in **Luke 22:54-62**. As Jesus was illegally brought before the High Priest in the middle of the night, Peter followed at a distance. Sitting by the courtyard fire, Peter is confronted with three separate assertions that he was a follower of Jesus. Adamant and defensive, Peter dismisses each accusation. After his third vehement denial, a rooster crows, reminding Peter of Jesus' prophecy that this moment would happen. Devastated and ashamed, Peter went out and wept bitterly.

- What do you think led to Peter's denial, even after Jesus forewarned him?
- What are some areas in your life in which you may be following Jesus *from a distance*?

Three Snapshots of Peter

1. The fall

During one of Peter's biggest tests and trials, he failed. Like Peter, we've all failed due to our bad choices and sin.

- Examine yourself. Do you often find yourself defending certain areas of your life?
- Are there some weaknesses that you've underestimated?

2. The focus

Luke 22:62 reads, "*So Peter went out and wept bitterly.*" When we fail, we can become bitter with ourselves, others, and God. This scheme of the devil attempts to shift our focus from God and His promises to our "unforgivable" sin and "massive" failures.

- Instead of falling into Satan's trap, what should have Peter realized?
- Do you find it challenging to cling to God's promises when you have sinned?

3. **The future.**

After the resurrection, Jesus asks Peter the same question three times, "Do you love me?" In this dialogue found in **John 21:15-17**, Jesus restores Peter's faith and hope.

- **Ephesians 2:10** reads, *"For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago."*
- According to Peter's example and the Scripture above, God's purpose for us is unchanging. What God-given purpose or promise have you given up on because of past failures? How can you allow God to restore your faith in this area?

Three Ways to Start Fresh

1. **Return to God and confess your sin.**

1 John 1:9 says, *"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."*

- Once you've confessed and turned from your sin, be quick to let go of your wrongs, failures, and hurts.

2. **Live renewed in God's love.**

After confession and repentance, we can bathe afresh in God's unconditional love.

- **Romans 8:35-39** reminds us that nothing *will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

3. **Learn from it and let it go.**

When we fail because of circumstances, rather than our own sin, learning and letting is challenging but necessary. Conversely, holding on to the past leads to self-pity and bitterness that hinder our future.

- Has someone failed you? How can you use Christ's example with Peter to reach out and forgive that person?

Life Challenge

Are you stuck on past failures? What is one step you can do to move from your past failures toward God's purpose and future for you?

Prayer

Jesus, Your love for me is unmatched! Thank you that You created me with a unique plan and purpose to bring glory to Your Name. Lord, reveal to me any past or present sin or failures that are hindering me from fulfilling the good works You have planned for me that I may confess them to You, turn from them, and receive your restoration. Amen. Pray for the specific needs of the group.