

Peter - From an Immature to a Mature Christian

- I. The life of Peter is an interesting study for many reasons.
 1. Peter started out as an unlearned fisherman.
 2. Peter was immature in his early Christian life.
 3. Peter's immaturity and worldliness lead to his downfall.
 4. Though his beginning was rough, Peter's latter end was blessed.
 5. Peter is a great example of a man who had weaknesses and failures, but nevertheless kept on trying to serve Jesus Christ.

- II. Peter was a fisherman before Jesus called him to follow Him (**Mat 4:18-19**).
 1. Peter left his job *straightway* to follow Jesus (**Mat 4:20**).
 - A. Straightway *adv.* - 1. By a direct course, straight from or to a place. 2. Immediately; without interval or delay; at once. 1526 Tindale Matt. iv. 20 They strayght waye lefte there nettes.
 - B. In other words, Peter immediately left his job to follow Jesus.
 - C. How many of us would leave our jobs to follow Jesus?
 - D. James and John immediately left their father and their job to follow Jesus (**Mat 4:21-22**).
 - E. How many of us would leave our parents and our jobs to follow Jesus?
 2. Peter started out well.
 3. We can never ride on the great acts of faith in our past though.

- III. Peter's name was Simon (**Mar 1:16**).
 1. Jesus surnamed him Peter (**Mar 3:16**) which is what he usually went by for the rest of his life.
 2. In this respect, Peter was like other people who were renamed after their conversions like Saul of Tarsus (**Act 13:9**), Abram (**Gen 17:5**), Sarai (**Gen 17:15**), and Jacob (**Gen 32:28**).

- IV. Peter was zealous, though sometimes without knowledge.
 1. Peter boldly told Jesus that He would not be crucified (**Mat 16:21-22**).
 2. Peter said that he would never deny Him (**Mat 26:33,35**).
 3. Peter was the only disciple to walk on water with Jesus (**Mat 14:25-32**).
 4. Peter wanted to build three tabernacles, one for Jesus, Moses, and Elijah on the mount of transfiguration (**Mar 9:2-6**).
 5. After telling Jesus that he would not allow Him to wash his feet, and then learning that he would have no part with Christ if He didn't, Peter wanted him to wash his whole body (**Joh 13:6-10**).
 6. Peter cut off the ear of a soldier who was trying to arrest Jesus (**Joh 18:10**).
 7. Peter was the first of the apostles to run to check Jesus' grave and to enter it (**Joh 20:2-8**).
 8. Peter jumped out of the boat to get to Jesus while the rest of the disciples rowed to shore (**Joh 21:7-8**).
 9. When God told Peter to kill and eat the unclean animals in the vision, Peter told God "Not so, Lord" (**Act 10:13-15**).
 10. It's better to be a little too zealous and impulsive than lukewarm though (**Rev 3:15-17**).

V. Peter's failures

1. Peter denied Christ three times (**Mat 26:69-75**).

A. This failure of Peter did not occur by happenstance, but was a culmination of sins and foolish decisions.

- i. Jesus had warned Peter that Satan desired to have him, and the other disciples as well (**Luk 22:31**).
 - a. Peter didn't heed Jesus' warning.
 - b. Peter was heading for a fall.
- ii. Peter contradicted the words of Jesus Christ.
 - a. When Jesus told Peter that He would be crucified, Peter told Him He was wrong (**Mat 16:21-22**).
 - b. Peter told Jesus that He would not allow Him to wash his feet (**Joh 13:6-8**).
 - c. We are to esteem all God's precepts to be right, not contradict them (**Psa 119:128**).
 - d. Peter was heading for a fall.
- iii. Peter was proud, and pride goeth before destruction (**Pro 16:18; Pro 18:12**).
 - a. Jesus told Peter that he would deny him thrice (**Mar 14:30**).
 - b. Peter arrogantly and vehemently said that though all men would deny Him, he wouldn't (**Mar 14:31**).
 - c. Peter was heading for a fall.
- iv. Peter did not wait on an answer from Jesus, but rather acted on his impulse and committed violence (**Luk 22:49-51 c/w Joh 18:10**).
 - a. He that hasteth with his feet sinneth (**Pro 19:2**).
 - b. Peter was impetuous, not seeking God's counsel before acting.
 - c. Peter was heading for a fall.
- v. Peter forsook Jesus when He was arrested (**Mar 14:50**).
 - a. One must forsake all to be Jesus' disciple (**Luk 14:33**).
 - b. Instead of forsaking himself, Peter forsook Jesus.
 - c. Peter was heading for a fall.
- vi. Peter followed Jesus *afar off* (**Mat 26:58**).
 - a. We are to *draw nigh* unto God, not follow Him *afar off* (**Jam 4:8**).
 - b. Peter was heading for a fall.
- vii. Peter was hanging out with the wrong crowd and keeping his distance from Jesus (**Mat 26:58,69,71**).
 - a. Evil communications corrupts good manners (**1Co 15:33**).
 - b. A companion of fools shall be destroyed (**Pro 13:20**).
 - c. Peter was heading for a fall.

B. These foolish decisions and sinful actions put Peter in a position and a mindset which culminated in his denial of Christ.

2. Later in life Peter was much more mature, but still not flawless.

A. This was evident when he ditched the Gentiles when the Jews came around for fear of them, for which Paul had to rebuke him to the face (**Gal 2:11-14**).

B. Conversion is a process (**Pro 4:18**).

VI. Peter's recovery from failure

1. After Peter denied Jesus, it appears that Peter was ready to throw in the towel and go back to his old way of life, saying "I go a fishing" (**Joh 21:2-3**).
 - A. Jesus had told Peter that He would make him a fisher of men (**Mat 4:19**).
 - B. With Jesus recently having been resurrected, there were plenty to people to tell the good news to.
 - C. But it appears that Peter decided that, having failed Jesus, he was of no use to Him any longer and he was going to go back to his old job.
 - D. Jesus confronts Peter and asks him three times if he loves him, once for each time he denied him (**Joh 21:15-17**).
 - E. After each affirmation of Peter's love for Jesus, He tells Peter to feed his sheep (**Joh 21:15-17**).
 - F. Peter would be a shepherd and pastor, not a fisherman, for the rest of his life (**1Pe 5:1-4**).
2. Peter went from being a weak Christian to a pillar in the church of God (**Gal 2:9**).
3. Peter went on to boldly preach the Lord Jesus Christ (**Act 2:14; Act 3:12-26; Act 4:8-14; Act 4:29**).
4. Peter preached Christ even when it caused him persecution (**Act 5:40-42**).
5. Jesus used Peter to open the door of faith to the Gentiles (**Act 15:7**).
6. Peter would end up glorifying Jesus Christ in his death (**Joh 21:18-19**).