

you mean." 71 And when he went out to the entrance, another servant girl saw him, and she said to the bystanders, "This man was with Jesus of Nazareth." 72 And again he denied it with an oath: "I do not know the man." 73 After a little while the bystanders came up and said to Peter, "Certainly you too are one of them, for your accent betrays you." 74 Then he began to invoke a curse on himself and to swear, "I do not know the man." And immediately the rooster crowed. 75 And Peter remembered the saying of Jesus, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times." And he went out and wept bitterly.

Q2 John 21:7 NIV - 7 Then the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" As soon as Simon Peter heard him say, "It is the Lord," he wrapped his outer garment around him (for he had taken it off) and jumped into the water.

Genesis 3:17, 21 NIV - 17 To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat from it,' "Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life. ... 21 The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them.

Luke 15:20-22 NKJV - 20 "And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. 21 "And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.' 22 "But the father said to his servants, 'Bring out the best robe and put [it] on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on [his] feet.

Q3. John 21: 15-19 ESV - 15 When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "Feed my lambs." 16 He said to him a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "Tend my sheep." 17 He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" and he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep. 18 Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you used to dress yourself and walk wherever you wanted, but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will dress you and carry you where you do not want to go." 19 (This he said to show by what kind of death he was to glorify God.) And after saying this he said to him, "Follow me."

Q4 Isaiah 43:25 NIV - 25 "I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more.

"Peter, Do You Love Me" *Out of the Blue- week #3*

INTRODUCTION

Jesus engaged in forty days of earthly ministry before He ascended to heaven. One very touching encounter during that time is recorded in the book of John. Here we find Peter has returned to fishing, as he had done before he followed Jesus. We know when confronted during the night of Jesus' arrest Peter denied even knowing Jesus, though hours earlier he had pledged never to do so. And when Peter found himself failing Jesus so profoundly, he sobbed in grief and pain. (Matt 26:75) In this later encounter with Jesus we find that Jesus did not allow Peter's past failures to disqualify him from his call to ministry. And what was true for Peter is true for us; despite the messes we make in our lives, God does not give up on us.

Ice Breaker (Optional—8 min)

What was the last big mess you had to clean up?

STUDY QUESTIONS (45 MIN)

Messes Happen

Q1. Read Matthew 26:33-35, Matthew 26:69-75

Nobody intentionally messes up. Certainly, it was not Peter's intention to abandon Jesus. In fact, what was his stated intention in Matt 26:35? Undoubtedly, he believed he would be able to follow through on that promise, but in Matthew 26:69-75 we find that was not the case.

When he came face to face with his failure Peter was devastated. If you have ever faced a major failure in your own life, how did it affect you in terms of your view of yourself, your relationships, how you approached future challenges or any other way you were impacted? Did your resolution of this failure involve reconciling with someone? If so, how did that go?

Allowing God's Love & Forgiveness to Restore You

Q2. Read John 21:7; Genesis 3:17, 21; Luke 15:20-22

Many of us try to deal with our failures by ourselves without involving God. What are some of the ways we might try to deal with our own failures when we don't allow God in? Are you more likely to hide, beat yourself up, try to work harder, better, faster or compensate in some other way?

God's love for us is certainly greater and more powerful than all the failures of our lives combine. But when we are focused on our failures they can become overwhelming. Our natural tendency after the pain of a failure might be to avoid anything related, but avoidance is the last thing we should do.

How did Peter respond when he saw that Jesus had appeared? (John 21:7)

Jesus didn't wait for Peter to seek Him out, but rather Jesus pursued Peter to restore him and point him in the right direction once again. Jesus made the first move by showing up, as he does for us today. Peter didn't allow guilt to keep him separated from Jesus.

Can you think of some other illustrations from the Bible where God lovingly intervened to offer restoration? (e.g. Adam and Eve, prodigal son)

Jesus meets us where we are

Q3. Read John 21: 15-19

In their conversation on the shore Jesus asks Peter if he does indeed love him. But what the English language doesn't show us are the subtle differences each time he posed the question. In this passage, two different Greek words are used for love; *agapaō* (all giving, unselfish love) and *phileō* (a fondness, friendly affection).

Initially Jesus asks, "Do you *agapaō*" me more than these [referring to the disciples]?" Peter replies, "I *phileō*" you."

Why do you think Peter did not reply "I *agapaō*" you?"

The second time Jesus asks, "Do you *agapaō*" me?", but this time doesn't compare Peter's love to the disciples. Peter's answer was unchanged. "I *phileō*" you." But in his final question Jesus asks, "Do you *phileō*" me?"

Why do you think Jesus revised his question from *agapaō* (highest love) to *phileō* (fondness for)? Why would this cause Peter to weep?

Future Restored

Q4. Read Isaiah 43:25

God was not letting Peter's past failures disqualify him from his future calling. After each of Peter's responses, what did Jesus instruct him to do? Jesus wasn't referring to livestock, he was commissioning Peter into the ministry as a shepherd over the flock of God. How does God treat our sins after we have accepted His love and forgiveness according to Isaiah 43:25?

When Peter accepted Jesus love and forgiveness God put him back on the path to his future calling. Maybe there is a past failure you are trying to deal with apart from God's love and forgiveness. You might feel your failures have

disqualified you, when in fact it is your unwillingness to accept forgiveness that prevents you from stepping into the future God intends.

What are some lies that Satan might use to derail our restoration and future calling? If anyone in your group is struggling with guilt over past failures, pray together that God's grace will set them free to walk into their future calling.

Take a few minutes in your group to share "I see in you..." statements to reinforce what you see in each other that is evidence of God in their life. (for example, "I see in you God's compassion when you pray for me and encourage me.")

WRAP-UP

We all have experienced failures in the past. But God is not willing to let that disqualify us from our future potential. Peter had to face his guilt and reconcile with Jesus after denying him. But Jesus made the first move, and met Peter right where he was at, even in his limitations. When Peter accepted God's love and forgiveness, Jesus set him back on the path to walk with him into the future that God intended for him.

Memory Verse

"I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more. -Isaiah 43:25 NIV

Challenge- Is there a past failure that prevents you from moving into your future calling? Ask God to show you the next step to walk where He has called you and don't let the past hold you back.

PRAYER (20 MIN)

Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life: _____

Pray for your group members' needs: (see back for more space)

Bible Verses

Q1 Matthew 26:33-35 ESV - 33 Peter answered him, "Though they all fall away because of you, I will never fall away." 34 Jesus said to him, "Truly, I tell you, this very night, before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times." 35 Peter said to him, "Even if I must die with you, I will not deny you!" And all the disciples said the same.

Matthew 26:69-75 ESV - 69 Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. And a servant girl came up to him and said, "You also were with Jesus the Galilean." 70 But he denied it before them all, saying, "I do not know what