

### 3. Your Faith, God's Faithfulness

In Matthew's account, Peter got out of the boat, walked on water, and then sank.

*In what ways did Peter succeed? In what ways did he fail?*

*The decision to grow [spiritually] always involves a choice between risk and comfort. This means that to be a follower of Jesus you must renounce comfort as the ultimate value of your life."*  
- John Ortberg

Peter put his trust in Jesus, rather than the boat. And when he stepped out, Peter was able to do more than was humanly possible. Jesus is still looking for disciples who love and trust him enough to step out in faith.

*In what ways might God be calling you to get out of your boat and walk by faith, not by circumstance?*

#### WRAP-UP

Following Jesus is a journey of faith. He challenges us to trust in Him more than everything else we look to for comfort and safety. He calls us, like Peter, to get out of the boat and come to Him. When He prompts us, we need to keep our eyes fixed on Him, not only as we take the first step, but as we take every step after that. Because when our faith meets His faithfulness, we will accomplish more than is humanly possible.

#### Memory Verse

*"Come," he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus.*  
-Matthew 14:29 NIV

#### 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)

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*Challenge- If your prayers typically focus more on changing your circumstances, instead try praying for more of Jesus this week.*

## **"Get Out of the Boat"** *Million Little Things - Week #2*

#### INTRODUCTION

In our current sermon series, we are seeking life change for the long haul. Last week we found that means walking with Jesus actually costs us something. In this study we're looking not only at how the journey of change starts but how it continues. Like Matthew in our story last week, we start by heeding the call and following Jesus, but how do we keep the journey going after that first courageous act of obedience? Step one million is as important as step one.

#### Ice Breaker (Optional—8 min)

What is the most courageous act you have ever witnessed?

#### STUDY QUESTIONS (45 MIN)

##### 1. Walk by Faith Not Circumstance

*Matthew 14:24-31 NLT - 24 Meanwhile, the disciples were in trouble far away from land, for a strong wind had risen, and they were fighting heavy waves. 25 About three o'clock in the morning Jesus came toward them, walking on the water. 26 When the disciples saw him walking on the water, they were terrified. In their fear, they cried out, "It's a ghost!" 27 But Jesus spoke to them at once. "Don't be afraid," he said. "Take courage. I am here!" 28 Then Peter called to him, "Lord, if it's really you, tell me to come to you, walking on the water." 29 "Yes, come," Jesus said. So Peter went over the side of the boat and walked on the water toward Jesus. 30 But when he saw the strong wind and the waves, he was terrified and began to sink. "Save me, Lord!" he shouted. 31 Jesus immediately reached out and grabbed him. "You have so little faith," Jesus said. "Why did you doubt me?"*

Most people have heard about Jesus walking on the water. Far less realize that Peter also walked on water, at least for a while. Before we simply analyze this event, let's try to relate to the circumstances. The disciples were accomplished fishermen. They knew how to handle a storm. But in Matthew 14:24 we see at 3 a.m. after many hours battling wind and waves, their circumstances were life-threatening. In the darkness of night, they saw the shape of a man walking toward them.

*What was their first assumption (v. 26)? What did Jesus do to allay their fears? When you face overwhelming circumstances, do you typically fear the worst? How have you experienced Jesus calming your fears?*

Peter's response was surprising considering the he seemed to doubt that it was Jesus (v. 28). But Peter had courageous faith and actually initiated the idea that he too might walk on water.

*Peter could have asked Jesus to come to him, or he could have asked Jesus to calm the storm but what did Peter asked for? Even more than safety or comfort, Peter wanted to come to Jesus.*

The 17<sup>th</sup> century commentator Matthew Henry made this observation *"To quit the safety of the ship, and throw himself into the jaws of death, to despise the threatening waves he so lately dreaded, argued a very strong dependence upon the power and word of Christ. What difficulty or danger could stand before such a faith and such a zeal?"*

In light of Peter's faith and Jesus' power, Peter was able to walk on water, but only when his eyes were on Jesus and off of his circumstances (the storm).

*What is the storm in your life that fights to draw your attention away from Jesus and cause you to slip in your faith? As a group, commit to pray for one another that you would draw nearer to Jesus, so that the circumstances of life don't overwhelm you.*

## **2. As You Walk, Focus on God**

Peter didn't have a promise from Jesus that he would be able to walk on water. He only had a prompt – "Come." Many times, we hear God's prompt, but then what does it take to get going and keep going?

When Joshua was told to take Jericho, God gave him specific instructions, but it required seven days and fifty-nine laps around the city before anything really happened.

*Joshua 6:2-5 NLT - 2 But the LORD said to Joshua, "I have given you Jericho, its king, and all its strong warriors. 3 You and your fighting men should march around the town once a day for six days. 4 Seven priests will walk ahead of the Ark, each carrying a ram's horn. On the seventh day you are to march around the town seven times, with the priests blowing the horns. 5 When you hear the priests give one long blast on the rams' horns, have all the people shout as loud as they can. Then the walls of the town will collapse, and the people can charge straight into the town."*

*If they looked only at their circumstances undoubtedly the army would have been discouraged, but how does Joshua 6:8 describe the marching?*

*Joshua 6:8 NLT - 8 After Joshua spoke to the people, the seven priests with the rams' horns started marching in the presence of the LORD, blowing the horns as they marched. And the Ark of the LORD's Covenant followed behind them.*

*What are some of the "Big Dreams" or calling that God has given you? Do they involve your family, ministry, employment or perhaps something else? Have you seen some completed in your life already?*

The truth is, when we tackle any big thing God has called us to do, we, like Joshua's army, need to stay in God's presence every moment.