



## Can Jesus' Resurrection Revive My Faltering Faith?

**Mark 16:6-7:** (NASB) *6And he said to them, Do not be amazed; you are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who has been crucified. He has risen; he is not here; behold, here is the place where they laid him. 7But go, tell his disciples and Peter, He is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you.*



When thinking about world altering events, there is one that stands alone as the single most powerful world-changing event in the history of humanity: the raising of Jesus from the dead. When this event occurred so many centuries ago, the vast majority of the world had no idea of its significance. Today, 2,000 years later, most still do not have a clue. Jesus' resurrection sealed the future hope of every man, woman and child who ever lived by guaranteeing their own resurrection. Even more than this, Jesus' resurrection changed individual lives back then as it still does today. After the Apostle Peter

abandoned Jesus in his greatest hour of trial, Peter needed the renewing power of his resurrection. We, too, can falter as Peter did. How can we claim that same renewing power?

Sinful humanity is frail. We can have the best of intentions but get tripped up when it comes to putting those intentions into practice. There is no better New Testament example of this than the Apostle Peter. He was a ferociously loyal apostle who spoke what was on his mind and seemed to always be the first to act. The other 11 followed his lead.

To help us key in on our own frailty, let's focus on some of Peter's worst moments - denying Jesus three times on the night before his crucifixion:



**First Denial**

**Luke 22:55-57:** (ASV) *55And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the court, and had sat down together, Peter sat in the midst of them. 56And a certain maid seeing him as he sat in the light of the fire, and looking stedfastly upon him, said, This man also was with him. 57But he denied, saying, Woman, I know him not.*



**Second Denial**

**John 18:25:** (NRSV) *25Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. They asked him, You are not also one of his disciples, are you? He denied it and said, I am not.*



**Third Denial**

**Luke 22:59-63 and John 28:26:** (ASV) *And after the space of about one one of the slaves of the high priest, another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this man also was with him; for he is a Galilaeen. But Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew. And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how that he said unto him, Before the cock crow this day thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly.*



How does someone so faithful and dedicated fall into such devastating failure?

This WAS a devastating failure. How could it happen? The whole point of our discussion today is to ask the following question as well: How are we at risk of falling into a devastating pattern of failure like Peter did?



To answer these questions, let's jump ahead and also focus on the Apostle Peter's leadership as a mature Christian:

1 Peter 4:12-14: (NASB) <sup>12</sup>*Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; <sup>13</sup>but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation. <sup>14</sup>If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the spirit of glory and of God rests on you.*

This is what Peter grew into - he did not always have this maturity:

- Trials are expected experiences.
- Rejoicing in them can only come in proportion to our sharing Jesus' sufferings.
- To be reviled for the name of Christ is to be blessed.

Peter is saying these are the three things we need to know and understand about our experiences: there is an **expectation** aspect, a **rejoicing** aspect and a **blessing** aspect. How did he know? He learned it through his own experience.

While these verses are encouraging, they do not tell us how to avoid the pitfalls of our own hearts and minds leading us into patterns of failure.

Jesus knew Peter would deny him. He could have done one of two things with that knowledge. First, he could have said: *Well, Peter is going to fail so I will just let him fail and he will have to figure it out.* Jesus would never do that!

Second, Jesus could have said: *I know Peter will fail. I will teach him everything I can to give him the foresight to know what's coming and I will also give him the tools to handle the rebuilding of his faith after it has been shattered.*

Jesus was planting seeds for Peter and us.

A review of the events of the evening before Jesus' crucifixion reveal how Jesus was continually positioning Peter to approach his coming experiences with humility. Jesus knew what was to come and did everything he could to prepare Peter for this difficult experience.

The lessons Jesus presented to Peter BEFORE his fall are relevant to our individual experiences should we be heading for a fall. The preparation put into Peter may be just the preparation put into us as well. We are also sinful, and we fail.



**FIRST LESSON: PERSONAL HUMILITY NEEDS TO BE BASED ON MORE THAN OUR OWN UNDERSTANDING.**

This is an important foundation. Jesus explains this to us by his words and example.

### Washing the disciples' feet:

**John 13:3-10:** (NASB) <sup>3</sup>Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come forth from God and was going back to God, <sup>4</sup>got up from supper, and laid aside his garments; and taking a towel, he girded himself. <sup>5</sup>Then he poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel with which he was girded.

**Jesus is quietly and humbly doing the job of the lowest servant. He saw the need and performed the service:**

<sup>6</sup>So he came to Simon Peter. He said to him, Lord, do you wash my feet? <sup>7</sup>Jesus answered and said to him, What I do you do not realize now, but you will understand hereafter.

Peter challenged him. Jesus alluded to the fact that it would be after his resurrection that the understanding of this experience would become relevant.

<sup>8</sup>Peter said to him, Never shall you wash my feet! Jesus answered him, If I do not wash you, you have no part with me. <sup>9</sup>Simon Peter said to him, Lord, then wash not only my feet, but also my hands and my head. <sup>10</sup>Jesus said to him, He who has bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you.

Peter again challenges, and Jesus again responds. Peter (being Peter) hears what Jesus says and jumps in with both feet! He wanted to express his feelings and closeness to Jesus.

There are four basic points to understand from this event:

- Jesus washing the disciples' feet was a surprising development.
- Peter met this washing with a sincere reaction. He did not understand why Jesus did this.
- Jesus gave him a gentle correction.
- Peter had a humble response.

Let's look at what Jesus taught Peter BEFORE Peter fails through three different perspectives:

**First: The general lesson - from Faltering Faith to Faithful Follower**

**Second: From the perspective of Peter's immature faith**

**Third: From the perspective our own immature faith**





Faith builds trust. We need to trust in that faith - and that takes humility.

**From the perspective of Peter's immature faith:** Peter was **humble** before Jesus, but only after he challenged him. Jesus was gentle in his response as he demonstrated to Peter how profoundly important he was to Jesus, and how Jesus cared for him. We see the sensitivity of Jesus as he helps Peter grow out of being impetuous. Peter's immature faith needed to be developed.

**Regarding My Immature Faith:**

HUMILITY REQUIRES LISTENING AND APPLYING.

DOES MY HUMILITY STEP OUTSIDE OF MY OWN THINKING AND EMBRACE TRUE TRUST IN GOD'S PROVIDENCE?

These lessons with Peter remind us of Proverbs 3:5-6. These will be broken up into four parts throughout this episode.

*Proverbs Lesson*  
PART 1

"Trust in the LORD with all your heart."  
Proverbs 3:5



Trust is a basis for us in our humility.

**Later Peter, the apostle, elder and a foundation pillar of the church writes:**  
1 Peter 5:6-8: (NASB) <sup>6</sup>Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, <sup>7</sup>casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you. <sup>8</sup>Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

The idea of humbling ourselves and casting our cares upon God is an act of trust. This is what Jesus taught Peter to prepare him for the massive failure that would happen just a few hours later.

Jesus taught Peter what the foundation of Christianity would look like. Am I paying attention to this lesson?

**With humility as a broad-based lesson in place, what else would Jesus teach Peter to prepare him for his failure?**

It is so important to see the reality of our circumstances. The pointed teachings of Jesus on this night before he was crucified were not just meant for those 11 apostles, they were meant for us as well. It is appropriate to put ourselves in Peter's place, as HIS weaknesses can be OUR weaknesses.



**SECOND LESSON: LOYALTY TO OUR GOD AND LORD MUST BE BASED ON MORE THAN THE WORDS OF AN EMOTIONALLY-BASED DECISION.**





## The Last Supper and Peter's predicted denial:

Matthew 26:31-35: (ASV) <sup>31</sup>Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended in me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad. <sup>32</sup>But after I am raised up, I will go before you into Galilee.

There is a lot in these few sentences that Jesus speaks here. Guess who jumps all over the point Jesus is making?

<sup>33</sup>But Peter answered and said unto him, *If all shall be offended in thee, I will never be offended.*  
<sup>34</sup>Jesus said unto him, *Verily I say unto thee, that this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.*

Peter jumps up and says: *Wait a minute! I do not care who is offended by you and runs away - I am NOT running!* Jesus responds: *Good that you brought that up, because you, Peter, will actually deny me three different times.*



**Wait a minute!**

<sup>35</sup>Peter saith unto him, *Even if I must die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples.*

Peter is again being Peter - he is sure of his faith because he is sure of Jesus. But the problem here is that he is too sure of himself!



- Jesus gave them a solemn warning about their scattering.
- Peter met it with a sincere and firm reply.
- Jesus gave Peter a very pointed warning.
- Peter did not listen to Jesus - he stood firm in his perspective.

Peter influenced the other 10 apostles, and they all said to Jesus: *We will not abandon you.* This is an important point on influence. We must be careful what we do with the influence we have. All the other apostles jumped onto Peter's bandwagon, showing this outward show of loyalty (however, we know how this story goes). There are cracks in this foundation of loyalty they are proclaiming.

When Jesus told Peter that he would deny Jesus three times, Peter argued with our Lord! *Nope, no, this is not going to happen.* Remember with the first lesson of the washing of the feet, Peter says: *Well, then, wash all of me, Lord!* Now it is: *Oh no, you do not have this right.* Jesus knew that the direction Peter was going needed to be dealt with.

Let's look at these lessons again from three perspectives:

**First: The general lesson - from Faltering Faith to Faithful Follower**

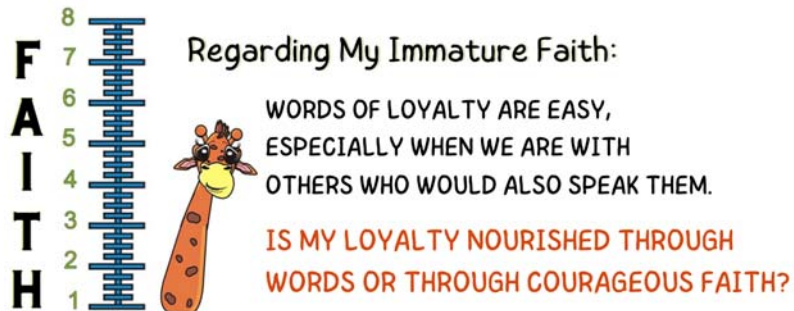
**Second: From the perspective of Peter's immature faith**

**Third: From the perspective our own immature faith**



**From the perspective of Peter's immature faith:** Peter was serious in his proclamation to stand by Jesus. Because he had never experienced a circumstance where Jesus was not in control, he had no reference point for how he would respond.

He has never been in a situation where Jesus did not take over. He stands firm because of Jesus' track record. But he also has way too much pride in his own abilities.



This is a lesson about dealing with our peers. When we are in a group, it is pretty easy to say a lot of things and be very positive about what we would do: *Are you in? Yeah, I'm in. Let's go!* It is easy to spur that on. What is the core loyalty going to produce? This was a hard lesson that Peter had to learn and that we may need to learn as well.

*Proverbs Lesson*  
PART 2

"Do not lean on your own understanding."  
Proverbs 3:5

Our own understanding gets passed around our peer group, doesn't it? We all get into that same boat together and we are all in lockstep. This may not be where the providence of God might lead us. We need to be standing up above whenever possible. So now we understand those lessons of not arguing with Jesus and making sure our loyalty is not just word-based.



Let's look again at Peter's later, more mature view.



**Later Peter, the apostle, elder and a foundation pillar of the church writes:**

**1 Peter 2:11-12:** (NASB) <sup>11</sup>*Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul.* <sup>12</sup>*Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation.*



**THIRD LESSON: BEING WATCHFUL MUST BE BASED ON MORE THAN OUR PHYSICAL CAPACITY.**

This is sensitive. Remember, Jesus is working with Peter before he falls.

**In the Garden of Gethsemane:**

**Mark 14:32-38:** (NRSV) <sup>32</sup>*They went to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, Sit here while I pray.*

Jesus took all of the disciples into Gethsemane and told them to wait while he goes further into the garden to pray.

**He takes three apostles with him:**

<sup>33</sup>*He took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be distressed and agitated.* <sup>34</sup>*And he said to them, I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and keep awake.*

Jesus seems so serious. What would have been going through Peter's mind at this point?

- Jesus asks for support for a deeply serious experience. This is an unusual thing for Jesus to do, as he was always in control.

<sup>35</sup>*And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him.* <sup>36</sup>*He said, Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want.*

Jesus pours his heart out to his Father as he comes to grips with the issues before him.



Check out our CQ Kids videos:  
**WHAT HAPPENED IN THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE?**  
[christianquestions.com/youtube](http://christianquestions.com/youtube)

**Now, he will come back for his followers:**

<sup>37</sup>*He came and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep awake one hour?* <sup>38</sup>*Keep awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.*

Despite Peter's emphatic assurances that he will stay by the Lord always, never denying him, he falls asleep.

- Peter's response is filled with fleshly weakness.
- Jesus calls him out and warns him about what is coming!

Jesus is saying: *Bigger trouble is coming; you need to stay with me!*

He is feeding Peter everything he needs, and he is feeding us as well.



**From the perspective of Peter's immature faith:** Peter and the others were simply too tired to watch. Yet, when had Jesus ever asked them for support? When had Jesus ever been so disturbed?

In [Luke 22:32](#), Jesus prayed for Peter that his faith would not fail him. If Jesus had not done this, would Peter have gone through this trial successfully? This was a life-changing trial. Perhaps that prayer ahead of time (which Jesus let Peter know about), along with all of Jesus' teachings is what carried Peter through.

What about our immature faith? Jesus does not need me the way he needed Peter.



This kind of trial has to do with our preferences, the things we are focused on that we naturally want. Where is my watching? Is my focus drawn to the things that are entertaining? Or am I drawn to the things that will spiritually develop me?



**Later Peter, the apostle, elder and a foundation pillar of the church writes:**  
**1 Peter 3:13-15: (NASB)** <sup>13</sup>*Who is there to harm you if you prove zealous for what is good?* <sup>14</sup>*But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. And do not fear their intimidation, and do not be troubled,* <sup>15</sup>*but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence.*



Being zealous and always being ready are the keys to watchfulness. If we do not take these keys and apply them, it is like watching paint dry - there is no meaning or purpose to our watching.



**FOURTH LESSON: BEING A PROTECTOR OF GODLY THINGS MUST BE BASED ON MORE THAN REACTIONARY EMOTIONS.**

**Jesus arrested:**

Luke 22:47-49: (NASB) <sup>47</sup>While he was still speaking, behold, a crowd came, and the one called Judas, one of the twelve, was preceding them; and he approached Jesus to kiss him. <sup>48</sup>But Jesus said to him, Judas, are you betraying the son of man with a kiss?

Imagine the rage Peter must have had towards Judas. What Judas did was incomprehensible.

**Imagine the shock of a former friend and confidant showing up with armed forces to take Jesus away:**

<sup>49</sup>When those who were around him saw what was going to happen, they said, Lord, shall we strike with the sword?

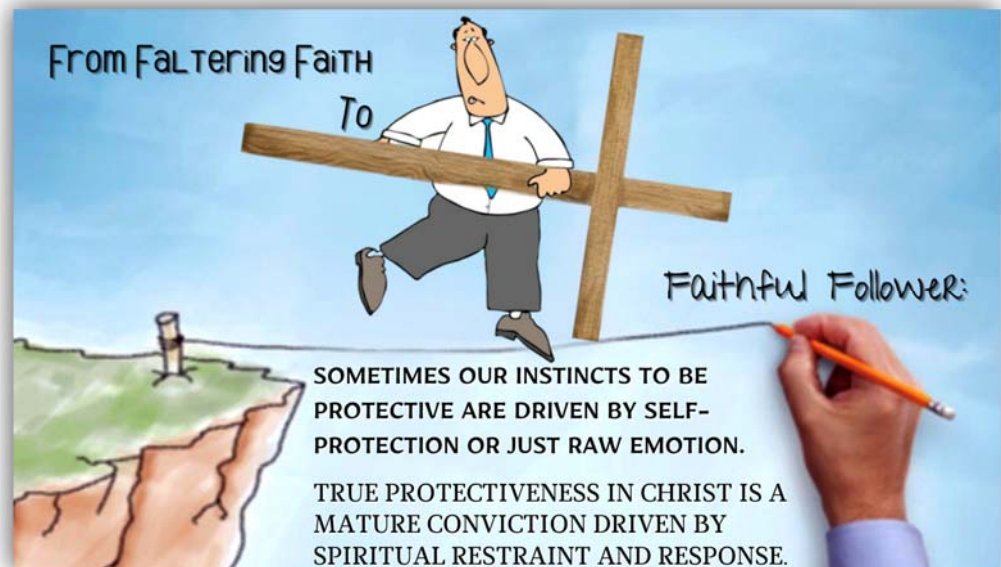
They ask: *Lord, what should we do? We have the swords you told us to bring; should we use them?*

John 18:10-11: (NASB) <sup>10</sup>Simon Peter then, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's slave, and cut off his right ear; and the slave's name was Malchus.

- Peter does not wait for Jesus' response - he just acted. Peter further responds in his fleshly weakness with aggression. He is a protector, but this time he steps outside of what Jesus is teaching.

<sup>11</sup>So Jesus said to Peter, Put the sword into the sheath; the cup which the Father has given me, shall I not drink it?" (Back to Luke) <sup>51</sup>...And he touched his ear and healed him.

- Jesus responds to him with a firm rebuke and warning. Peter's aggression was reversed by healing.



**From the perspective of Peter's immature faith:** Peter was fierce in his protection of Jesus, but his fierceness was out of line with God's purposes. Peter had been taught, but he had not yet learned.

**Regarding My Immature Faith:**  
 WHERE IS THE FIERCENESS OF MY PROTECTIVENESS FOCUSED?  
 AM I EASILY PROVOKED TO PROTECT FLESHLY THINGS AND DESIRES, OR DO I STAND TO PROTECT GODLY PRINCIPLES?

The heart wants what the heart wants. Do I stand protective of what my heart wants, or do I stand protective of the will of God in my life? Those two things are often very different.



**Later Peter, the apostle, elder and a foundation pillar of the church writes:**  
**1 Peter 1:13-16:** (NASB) <sup>13</sup>Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. <sup>14</sup>As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, <sup>15</sup>but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; <sup>16</sup>because it is written, You shall be holy, for I am holy.

He who is holy does not react emotionally. He does not protect out of rage or emotion and responds to whatever is needed in a godly fashion. These are big lessons that God was teaching Peter (and us).

It is remarkable to see how attentive Jesus was to Peter. Even more remarkable is how attentive Jesus is to us!

**The time for warning and teaching has ended.  
 Jesus is the willing prisoner of the high priest. Now what?**

The long and tortuous night of trial began with a betrayal and would now continue with Peter's denials. Peter's humility would be found lacking, as he would trade his discipleship for self-preservation. Jesus was brought before Annas the high priest. Peter and John followed Jesus.

**John was able to go into the courtyard with Jesus, and eventually Peter was able to join him:**

**John 18:25-27:** (NRSV) and **Luke 22:55-65:** (ASV) *And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the court, and had sat down together, Peter sat in the midst of them. And a certain maid seeing him as he sat in the light of the fire, and looking steadfastly upon him, said, This man also was with him. But he denied, saying, Woman, I know him not...*

Peter wanted to be close to Jesus. He wanted to know what was happening. He worked his way in and found a place where he could see. He was able to observe what was happening. But then he denied Jesus!



Each denial was different; it was a building process.



**First Denial**

A response to an abrupt and unexpected challenge from a lowly servant woman. Peter drew near to the fire to warm the night's chill away.

Peter broadly denied even knowing Jesus. This was a tremendous lie.

Peter was loyal, and yet that loyalty was proven to be shallow and based on his own perspective.

*The Lesson*

Sometimes we are taken by surprise as we seek comfort in a hard time. This is when rationalization sets in. We rationalize during difficulty because we suddenly have to scramble. In our times, it can be too easy to just "go with the flow," and we end up being swept away. We, too, can be shallow in our loyalty. We say we will stand for Jesus until it gets difficult, and then we end up standing to protect ourselves.

We can only imagine the fear and confusion in Peter's mind. Not too many hours ago Jesus had washed his feet, and Peter had begged to be washed completely to be able to be closer to his Lord. Soon after that, Peter had cut a man's ear off in the heat of the moment to defend his Lord. Now he had just denied that he even knew Jesus!

**What was happening?**

<sup>25</sup>Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. They asked him, You are not also one of his disciples, are you? He denied it and said, I am not.



**Second Denial**

A response to more than one accusation from several observers and was not a surprise. Peter is now standing, still drawn to the warmth of the fire, perhaps because he was close enough to hear what was happening with Jesus and perhaps because he felt hidden in a crowd?

He specifically denied being a disciple of Jesus. This was a serious denial.

Peter's watchfulness was only focused on himself. The change from sitting to standing may indicate Peter was uncomfortable in his previous specific location. He changed only to have the likely source of his discomfort follow him. That source was his own lack of courage and faith.

*The Lesson*

How often does this happen in our own lives? We change our circumstances but are still our own worst enemy. Sometimes we find ourselves in a pattern that encourages sin. When the discomfort of our sin is placed before us, we move away from that confrontation. But we have brought our worst enemy with us.

The issue was one of watchfulness. Peter was not watching the right things.



Unfortunately, our movement is often not away from our sin and when that sin is more forcibly presented, we deny it with greater force as well:

John 18:13-27: (NRSV) and Luke 22:54-65: (ASV) *And after the space of about one hour one of the slaves of the high priest, confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this man also was with him; for he is a Galilaean. But Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew.*

Just think - an hour goes by - there was plenty of time to think about what was happening and try and find his center again. *Do not be afraid - stand up for Jesus! He's innocent!* It is so significant that the Scriptures tell us this hour went by because he had time. **And so do we!** We look at Peter and wonder how he could do that, but we need only to look in a mirror and ask ourselves the same question.



### Third Denial

Not a response to a question but a denial of a confident testimony of truth by someone who had seen Peter with Jesus.

Peter stood firm in a lie that blatantly contradicted another's truthful testimony. The situation just got deeper and more serious. **This was a massive failure.**

Peter protected his own lies and did not stand up for his Lord. This denial was a blatant abandoning of all that Peter had previously said and stood for. For years full of faith, he learned and witnessed the amazing works of Jesus, but this was where he landed.

**Just when we think the situation cannot get more desperate, it moves a step further:**

*And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how that he said unto him, Before the cock crow this day thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly.*

Then the moment came when the world stopped turning - imagine Jesus, your Lord, your savior and your friend hears your denials and turns and looks at you - he looks right through you! And just as he said, the cock crows and suddenly all you have left is failure and tears - bitter tears of pain and sorrow for your public cowardice.

The Scriptures really help us understand how deep and hard this was for Peter.

### The Lesson

Sometimes we also have this same rude awakening to sin in our lives. We realize we have sinned before God and our Lord, and the devastation we have caused becomes blatantly evident. **We can no longer try to hide from it.**

Remember, Jesus KNEW Peter would deny him and he prepared him anyway. Why? When Peter was ready to again stand for his Lord, he would have that much more strength behind his NEW stand. It helps us understand that Jesus knew all this ahead of time and specifically prepared him for later.



A devastated Peter left. As he left, the night of the greatest trial in the life of Jesus begins:

*And the men that held Jesus mocked him, and beat him. And they blindfolded him, and asked him, saying, Prophecy: who is he that struck thee? And many other things spake they against him, reviling him.*

The horrible treatment of such an innocent man is hard to comprehend. Peter walked away because he could not handle his own failure. How sad that he was unable to support Jesus during this awful time.



**From the perspective of Peter's immature faith:** Peter was sincere. He loved Jesus, but he was weak. Peter needed to know how to grow through that weakness. Jesus laid down a learning foundation for Peter and soon would teach him. Jesus patiently waited until the time Peter could actually understand the lessons.

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**Regarding My Immature Faith:**

AM I COMFORTABLE IN MY COMPROMISES AND WEAKNESSES?

AM I WILLING TO LOOK AT MYSELF AND SEE HOW JESUS HAS SHOWN ME MY WEAKNESSES SO I CAN GROW THROUGH THEM?

This is an issue of personal pride. Am I willing to be humble, loyal and watchful enough to act as I should? Will I protect what my heart wants or God's will for me?

**Later Peter, the apostle, elder and a foundation pillar of the church writes:**

*1 Peter 1:3-7: (NASB) <sup>3</sup>Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, <sup>4</sup>to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, <sup>5</sup>who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.*



*Protected by the power of God* - the denials were about Peter's protectiveness going astray. Later on in his life he looks back and is able to tell us, *we are protected by God through faith*. We are to use that protection to help us do what we must do.

*<sup>6</sup>In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, <sup>7</sup>so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.*

## Proverbs Lesson PART 3

"In all your ways, acknowledge Him."

Proverbs 3:6

Once Peter acknowledged Jesus (and thereby acknowledging his Father, as the Proverb urges), he could write a letter like that of the book of 1 Peter. He could say: *I have been there. I know what it is like to have a trial that tries you with fire. I lived it. Here are the lessons you can learn from my mistakes.* We see the great maturity that Peter had gained because of his experiences. This is the silver lining to the very dark cloud of these denials.

As hard as it is to look at Peter's denials, it is also encouraging to see his experiences as learning tools for us!

**For Peter, it must have seemed like his life was worthless.  
How would Jesus lift him up after such failure?**

The timing of these events in Peter's life was extraordinary. He last sees Jesus when he denies being his follower, and then Jesus is crucified. Peter is left completely empty. The recurring thoughts running through his mind were likely his denials and the resulting look in the eyes of Jesus when he turned to Peter after he denied him the third time.

As bad as this was, all was about to change.



We need to remember this and take heart when we go through great trials, when we cannot believe that our Lord can work with us anymore. There is always hope when Jesus is involved if we are humble enough to move forward.

**Let us look now at the transitional piece that would change everything - the resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ:**

**Mark 16:1-7:** (NASB) <sup>1</sup>When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, bought spices, so that they might come and anoint him. <sup>2</sup>Very early on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen. <sup>3</sup>They were saying to one another, Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb? <sup>4</sup>Looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled away, although it was extremely large.

The women were going to the tomb to honor and respect their Master, not knowing how they would be able to get into the tomb as the stone was too big. But the stone had been rolled away! It was a miracle.

<sup>5</sup>Entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting at the right, wearing a white robe; and they were amazed. <sup>6</sup>And he said to them, Do not be amazed; you are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who has been crucified. He has risen; he is not here; behold, here is the place where they laid him. <sup>7</sup>But go, tell his disciples and Peter, he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you.



1. We wonder, if once Jesus was risen, he spoke to the angel to give him the message to tell the women. The angel specifically referred to Peter by name. This had to be encouraging to him after he recently denied Jesus.

*"...tell his disciples and Peter..."*

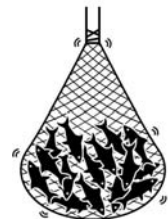
2. The angel told them to go to Galilee to see Jesus. Remember in [Matthew 26:32](#) Jesus told them, *After I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee.*

Peter did not know how to follow the Master since he had denied him. The days went by, and the last thing he knew was that he had denied Jesus...now what? The risen Lord Jesus would resummon Peter's humility, only now on a level where Peter would see his need to trust (humility needed trust) in Jesus for every step.



Check out our CQ Kids videos:  
WHAT IS HUMILITY?  
[christianquestions.com/youtube](http://christianquestions.com/youtube)

Peter went back to fishing. After the risen Jesus helped the apostles catch a boatload of fish, Jesus waited on the shore, having prepared breakfast. He was waiting for his beloved followers to come to him.



**They came to the shore and fellowshiped together:**

John 21:15: (NASB) <sup>15</sup>So when they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, son of John, do you love (*agape* - selfless love) me more than these? He said to him, Yes, Lord; you know that I love (*phileo* - to be a friend, fond of) you. He said to him, Tend (feed/pasture) my lambs.



In other words: *Feed my lambs, the young ones, the new followers of Christ. They have specific needs.*



Jesus asks this big question: *Do you love (agape) me?*  
In other words: *Do you selflessly love me?*



Peter is honest: *Lord; you know that I love (phileo) you!*  
In other words: *You are my friend that I want to walk alongside of through life.*

Peter did not admit to that higher degree of love because he did not yet know how. Jesus' response was: *Take care of my little ones, pasture them, feed them.*



The risen Lord Jesus is resummoning Peter's **loyalty**, only now on a level of a loyalty spurred on to action (*feed my lambs*) by a godly response. He knew Peter's heart and knew that his hurtful denials would serve as a steppingstone to move forward.



Jesus knew that of Peter and also knows that of us. Is our job, career, hobby, interests, the things that fill our time - getting in the way?

Peter went back to fishing because that was all he knew. Jesus called him back from fishing because there was something bigger - to feed and care for the little ones who were so important to Jesus. Peter was the right man for the job.



**Later, Peter the apostle, elder and a foundation pillar of the church writes:**

1 Peter 2:21-25: (NASB) <sup>21</sup>For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in his steps, <sup>22</sup>who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in his mouth; <sup>23</sup>and while being reviled, he did not revile in return; while suffering, he uttered no threats, but kept entrusting himself to him who judges righteously; <sup>24</sup>and he himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by his wounds you were healed. <sup>25</sup>For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.

Peter was teaching with great maturity after learning from all the mistakes he made. *You were continually straying like sheep* - he knew what it was like to be that sheep gone astray. He also knew that Jesus told him to feed his lambs. He was drawing on that experience, teaching the flock how to stand firmly. *You have been called for this purpose* - there is something important you need to stand for.

**Jesus continues reclaiming Peter:**

John 21:16: (NASB) *He said to him again a second time, Simon, son of John, do you love (agape) me? He said to him, Yes, Lord; you know that I love (phileo) you. He said to him, Shepherd my sheep.*

Now Jesus shows Peter that he needs to guide the strong and able sheep who had been followers of Christ for quite some time. Jesus does not say to feed them; he says to shepherd them. Shepherding is the bigger picture.



*Peter, there is nobody who is outside the reach of your responsibility. Do you love me? This is what you will do to prove your love.*



*Peter is not quite there in his reply, Lord you know that I love (phileo) you; I am fond of you. He just cannot get to that selflessness kind of love yet.*

The risen Lord Jesus is resummoning Peter's **watchfulness**, only now on a level of watching over others with godly purpose and motivation. For instance, where are the sheep? How are they doing? Are they fed? Are they safe? Are they in the right pasture? All of those questions are the practical "shepherd" questions. Peter has to interpret things in the realm of spiritual care and guidance.





This is hard, but Jesus gives Peter the job because he knows Peter is capable. Jesus was handing Peter a major responsibility and would not have given it to someone who could not carry the weight.



In our own experiences, this has to do with our minds that lead us down all these "thinking roads" - which are appropriate, and which are not? Did I learn from my mistakes like Peter did?

Jesus is challenging him, drawing him and forgiving him so that Peter can stand and do the really hard work.



**Later, Peter the apostle, elder and a foundation pillar of the church writes:**

**1 Peter 5:1-3:** (NASB) *<sup>1</sup>Therefore, I exhort the elders (these are the shepherds) among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, <sup>2</sup>shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; <sup>3</sup>nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock.*

*Not under compulsion - do these shepherding jobs voluntarily*

*Not for sordid gain - not paid*

*Nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge - not lording over the congregation*

**Jesus continues reclaiming Peter with one more question:**

**John 21:17:** (NASB) *He said to him the third time, Simon, son of John, do you love (phileo) me? Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, Do you love me? And he said to him, Lord, you know all things; you know that I love (phileo) you. Jesus said to him, Tend (feed/pasture) my sheep.*

These refer to the older, mature sheep, the ones with special spiritual and physical needs. It is interesting that the older ones still need feeding and tending; they are still "sheep" needing care. Jesus is teaching Peter to care for them if they are young, right in the middle and robust, or older. It does not matter; they need care and they need you. Meet them where they are.

The risen Lord Jesus is resummoning Peter's **protectiveness**, only now on a level of the mature conviction needed to feed Jesus' entire flock. Jesus needed Peter to wisely deliver on all levels of love and all levels of action.



We can see how Jesus is directing Peter's path with these three questions about love.



With the third question, Jesus asks, *Do you (phileo) love me?* In other words: *Yes, you are fond of me. Do the things that show that brotherly love!*



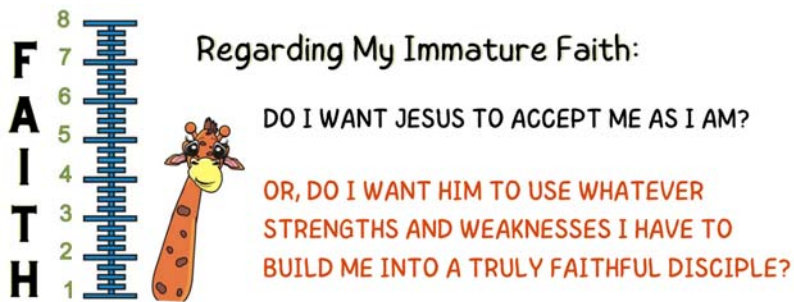
Later, Peter the apostle, elder and a foundation pillar of the church writes:

1 Peter 1:22: (NASB) *Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren (philadelphia - a fraternal affection), fervently love (agape) one another from the heart.*

Peter as an older, mature Christian mastered both kinds of love, and said: *I learned how and you can, too.*



From the perspective of Peter's immature faith: Peter was humble, loyal, watchful and protective when Jesus invited him to be a follower. Jesus used the exposing of Peter's weakness and immaturity in these good things to help him develop into a foundation pillar of the entire called-out body of Christ. He had those characteristics, but he was way too childish. Jesus used the failures to help Peter grow up.



Come as you are - just do not stay that way!

Peter had to learn through the experience of deep, heartfelt, gut-wrenching failure. Jesus allowed that to happen - he taught him everything he could possibly do, warned him as much as he possibly could, and Peter still failed. The good news is Jesus knew the failure would come and taught him anyway. Why? Because that gave him the foundation to build upon later when Peter was ready.



It is the same with our lives. We have the ability to build on the foundation Jesus already put in place. When I try to build my character with godly principle of **humility**, **loyalty**, being **watchful** and being **protective**, am I doing it for his sake or for my own?

It is all about letting the resurrected Lord Jesus bring us to maturity.

All quoted scriptures are from the 1995 version of NASB unless otherwise indicated.



Join us next week for our podcast on April 25, 2022

Ep. 1226: Am I Being Punished or Favored?

*So, can Jesus' resurrection revive my faltering faith?  
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...  
Think about it...!*

Christian Questions Weekly Newsletter

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to **22828** to get started.



# Study QUESTIONS

## Ep. 1225: Can Jesus' Resurrection Revive My Faltering Faith?

<https://christianquestions.com/inspiration/1225-easter>

See:  CQ Rewind  
SHOW NOTES

1. Who was Peter? Describe his devastating failure on the night of our Lord's death. What was Peter's teaching as a mature Christian about failure and trial? What three aspects should we expect in our experiences? (See Luke 22:54-61, John 18:25, 1 Peter 4:12-14)
2. What was the first lesson Jesus gave Peter to prepare him for failure and trial? What action did Jesus take to illustrate this lesson? What was Peter's reaction and Jesus' response? Evaluate the three perspectives for this lesson. How have you trusted in God's providence? (See John 13:3-10)
3. How does Peter's advice tie together trust and humility? List all the aspects of advice he gives in this short passage. How does Proverbs 3:5 relate? (See 1 Peter 5:6-8)
4. What is Jesus' prediction during the Last Supper? What was Peter's reaction and Jesus' response? How did the other apostles respond to Peter's words? How did Peter's immature faith cause his reaction? What was he trusting in rather than God? (See Matthew 26:31-35, Proverbs 3:5,6)
5. During the Gethsemane experience, what opportunity did Peter, James and John miss when they fell asleep? What opportunities have you missed because of the distractions of the world? How should we react when we are asked about "the hope that is in you"? (See Mark 14:32-42, Luke 22:32, 1 Peter 3:13-15)
6. Why did Peter react with aggression when Judas and the soldiers came to arrest Jesus? How did Jesus react? Why was his fierce protectiveness of Jesus wrong? How can we keep ourselves from reacting emotionally? (See Luke 22:47-53, John 18:10-11, 1 Peter 1:13-16)
7. Describe the progression of the three denials: What are the lessons we gain from this massive failure on Peter's part? What is necessary for us to grow through our weaknesses? How are we protected in our trials? (See John 18:13-27, Luke 22:54-65, 1 Peter 1:3-7, Proverbs 3:6)
8. What did the angel tell the women who went to Jesus' tomb to do? How does the risen Lord Jesus resummon Peter's loyalty? What action was Peter to take? Why did Peter use a reference to sheep in 1 Peter 2:21-25? (See Mark 16:1-7, Matthew 26:32, John 21:15-17)
9. How does the risen Lord Jesus resummon Peter's watchfulness? What responsibilities was Peter given? What three pieces of advice does he give in regards to these jobs? (See John 21:16, 1 Peter 5:1-3)
10. What is Jesus' final question referring to? How does this resummon Peter's protectiveness? How does he finally show his grasp of the two levels of love in 1 Peter 1:22? (See John 21:17)
11. Was Peter worth all the bother Jesus went through to prepare him to fail? Are you? How has Jesus been working in your life to properly bring out your humility, loyalty, watchfulness and protectiveness? How can you recover from a failure of faith?