

Learn Like Peter: Learn by Following.

WEEK 1 — Getting Out of the Boat

-Matthew 14:22–33

Introduction: Read the passage slowly. Do not explain. Ask:

- Where do you see yourself in this story?
- What would you be feeling before stepping out?

Let silence sit longer than feels natural.

Facilitator Toolbox (Thoughts for different scenarios- to be digested not read aloud)

People may avoid the tension or give safe answers. Some will answer from past experiences. What God has already done. Press in, Life is full of new lessons and challenges. Where is God calling you today? If everyone in the room is concluding that they are not being asked to step out, is God simply finished teaching us these lessons? Could it be we've just grown accustomed to a comfortable boat?

Do not move on too quickly. Gently ask these questions to help sharpen their ears to what God may be calling them too. Why is it easier to talk about the past moment of being called out? Do you think God is done teaching you how to walk in new seasons? How do we sharpen our hearing?

Naming the Experience

Initiation— wisdom begins when we move, not when we study facts. Faith moves.

DBS Emphasis: Jesus didn't explain the situation. He invited action.

Jesus One-Liner: John 7:17. "If anyone chooses to do God's will, he will find out..."

Facilitator Moment (Shift moment)

Ask: "Did Peter understand what Jesus was calling him to that night? Was it just about getting out of the boat; or was it an invitation into something much bigger? When did Jesus stop asking Peter to step out in faith?"

-Let others answer these questions. Don't answer for them.

Homework: Do one thing this week you sense God prompting—before you feel ready. Hoping to hear how your "studies" go next week. 😊

Learn Like Peter: By Asking Questions.

WEEK 2 —When Understanding Doesn't Come

Matthew 15:15-20

Introduction: Check on homework from last week. Be ready to share yourself!

After reading the passage, ask: What could have been going through Peter's mind right before this passage? And then take it further... Was this hard for "the leader" to ask?

When was the last time you didn't understand something but stayed quiet?

Consider. Luke 11:1 "Was this a hard question?" Consider the topic of Luke 9&10. One could say that learning by "Getting out of the boat" made them examine the basics.

(Facilitator Toolbox) People may answer these questions very differently. Sometimes we aren't sure we are on the same page. Sometimes we don't want to look like a know-it-all and sometimes we don't know at all. Real questions are genuine moments of humility. Keep asking questions on their thoughts to bring them back to a feeling of vulnerability.

Last week we stepped out before we felt ready.

This week, we deal with what that exposes—

the moments where we realize we don't fully understand.

Naming the Experience- Honesty — wisdom grows when we admit confusion. We take a chance to shine a light on our lack understanding so it can be addressed.

DBS Emphasis

Pretending to understand blocks growth. The older we get the more often it seems to happen. Its like we believe the older we get, the less questions we should have, normally because others assume we've been there, done that, and figured it out a long time ago. If we haven't, and we are older, we feel more shame that we've not done the work. Thus ,we hide harder. (It's comparable to knowing someone's name at church. I can ask the new members, or visitors. I give myself grace. But after I've been introduced a few times and I still forgot, I feel shame in asking again.

Jesus One-Liner

Matthew 7:7. "Ask... seek... knock..."

Facilitator Moment (Shift moment)

Ask:

- Why don't we ask more questions like Peter did? Why allow pride to hide what honest questions could help with? If we let pride prevent us from asking questions, nothing gets fixed. We might not look like we lack wisdom in a moment, but we continue to live lacking wisdom.

Practice

Ask someone in our group one honest question this week—and if they don't know the answer, both of you ask God and sit with it.

Learn Like Peter: By Learning What You Know.

WEEK 3 — Saying the Right Thing and Letting Truth Shape You Are Different Layers of Understanding **-Matthew 16:13-23**

Introduction

Ask: Have you ever said something true but not really understood the depth of that truth? Then read Peter's Confession again; verse 16.

Does Peter understand who Christ is? Have people explain their answers.

After people have shared, consider verses 21-23. If Peter understands who Christ is, why forbid God to do what He says must happen? Give people a chance to explain how this fits with their answers.

Naming the Experience: **Tension** — Often truth is received before it's formed in us.

DBS Emphasis- We often speak truth before we're shaped by it. -Have you ever had to reconsider what "truths" apply in your life? -Have you ever called Jesus Lord, and then complained about the direction He points you in?

Jesus One-Liner

Luke 6:46. "Why do you call me 'Lord' and do not do what I say?"

Facilitator Moment (Shift moment)

Using the image, ask people to go deeper with the self-examination. Where in your life have you said the right thing but not followed through? Is God calling you to an area that you resist? If so how have His Words pierced you?

If people are replying, "No, God isn't asking me to do anything", here are some comments I would make:

-So God isn't working on you all at right now?
-You are a finished work?
-Have you been given any talents outside of "growing in knowledge"?

....Let conviction do the work.

Practice

Act on something you already know—not something new. If you've been praying that God uses you, stop looking at the door you would prefer open and start looking elsewhere in your life.

-Knowledge	MIND
-Belief	HEART
-Faith	STRENGTH (WILL / ACTION)
-Identity	SOUL

Learn Like Peter: By Admitting I May Be the Problem.

WEEK 4 — Learning to Hold Our Conclusions Loosely.

-Matthew 18:21–22

Introduction: Go back briefly to Matthew 16:22. Peter doesn't ask Jesus a question. He corrects Him: “**This shall never happen to you!**”

Now read Matthew 18:21–22. What is different about Peter's approach? He still has an answer—*seven times*—but what does he do with it?

Consider other moments after Matthew 16:21-23 “*Get behind me Satan*”

Matthew 19:27 — “We have left everything... **What then will there be for us?**”

John 13:6 — “Lord, **are you going to wash my feet?**”

Facilitator Toolbox. Is Peter becoming more cautious about his own conclusions?

Don't suggest that Peter suddenly stops speaking impulsively. He doesn't. Instead, look for growth in **how he approaches Jesus with what he thinks he knows.**

Matthew 16: “*I know, so I'll tell Jesus.*” Vs. Matthew 18: “*I think I know, so I'll ask Jesus.*”

Peter still reaches conclusions. Sometimes they're still wrong. But he appears increasingly willing to place those conclusions before Jesus and allow Him to correct them. This pattern can be found in other places. If you use Mt 16 as the divide, feel free to explore the bluntness vs caution of before and after experiences.

Naming the Experience. **-Humility** — holding our conclusions loosely enough for Jesus to correct them. Humility doesn't mean having no conclusions. It means remembering that Jesus is still the Teacher.

DBS Emphasis. Press into whether maturity sometimes makes us **less** likely to do this. The longer we've believed something, experienced something, or taught something, the harder it may become to question our own conclusions. What are some conclusions “you've made” over and over without bringing what you think you know to God? Why do we do this?

Jesus One-Liner Matthew 18:4 — “Whoever humbles himself like this child...”

Facilitator Moment (Shift moment). Ask: What's the difference between having convictions and becoming unteachable? What conclusions have become difficult for God—or anyone else—to challenge?

Peter didn't stop having answers. He was learning what to **do with his answers.**

Practice: Take one conclusion you're confident about and honestly put it back before God this week: “**This is what I believe. Am I seeing it the way You do?**”

Learn Like Peter: By Washing Feet.

WEEK 5 — When What Seems Right Gets in the Way. -John 13:6–10

Introduction: Check briefly on last week's practice: Did anyone bring a conclusion before God and reconsider it? As we continue this process, we allow God to lead us rather than depend on our own wisdom. Read John 13:6–10.

Notice how Peter begins: “**Lord, are you going to wash my feet?**” He's asking before concluding—something we've watched him begin to learn. But then Jesus answers and Peter moves from a question to a declaration: “**You shall never wash my feet.**”

Ask: Why would Peter believe allowing Jesus to wash his feet was wrong? What was Peter trying to protect—Jesus' dignity, their roles, his own understanding of what a Lord should do?

Then consider Jesus' response: “**Unless I wash you, you have no part with me.**”

Facilitator Toolbox -Don't make Peter's objection sound rebellious for the sake of rebellion. From Peter's perspective, refusing Jesus may have actually seemed like the **respectful** thing to do. Sometimes our resistance to God isn't because we want to do something obviously wrong. Sometimes we're resisting because what God is doing conflicts with what **we believe is right**. Peter has to discover that sincerity doesn't make his judgment authoritative.

Naming the Experience: **Surrender** — allowing Jesus to define what is right when my own judgment tells me otherwise.

DBS Emphasis. Humility brings my conclusions to Jesus for correction. Surrender accepts His answer when I don't like where that correction leads. Jesus concludes, “As followers, they should wash one another's feet.” Like Peter, there are 2 ways we might resist this lesson.

Reverence: “God shouldn't have to lower Himself.” **Pride:** “I shouldn't have to lower myself.”

Ask: Have you ever resisted something God was doing because you didn't want Him to go places/do things you were unwilling to go or do? Often, we prefer God adjust to our standard. Can our own sense of tradition, dignity, or morality become something we place above Jesus?

One-Liner -John 13:7 You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand.

Facilitator Moment (Shift moment) Ask: Where have you decided what God *should* or *shouldn't* do? Is there an area where obedience is waiting for your understanding or approval? Peter didn't understand first and surrender second. At some point, **he had to trust the Master more than his own judgment.**

Practice: Identify one place where you have been asking God to make sense to you before you'll follow. Pray honestly: “**I don't understand this—but I trust You more than I trust my own understanding.**”

Learn Like Peter: By Examining Your Failures.

WEEK 6: When Failure Teaches You About Yourself. -Luke 22:31–34, 54–62

Introduction: Read Luke 22:31–34. Ask: Does Peter believe Jesus—or himself?

Peter isn't questioning Jesus anymore. He simply believes he knows himself: **“I am ready to go with you to prison and to death.”** Now read verses 54–62. What did Peter discover about himself that night?

Facilitator Toolbox. Don't rush toward rescuing Peter, let Peter's failure sit. Peter was sincere when he promised loyalty. His failure exposed a weakness that good intentions couldn't reveal. Sometimes the lesson isn't that we misunderstood God. **We misunderstood ourselves.**

Naming the Experience: -**Breaking** Failure exposes things about ourselves that success can hide. Even Paul learned that Christ's power is perfected in his weakness. —2 Cor. 12:9.

DBS Emphasis. Peter had surrendered many conclusions to Jesus. But he was still confident in **Peter**. Ask: Why are our failures sometimes better teachers than our successes? What have your failures taught you about yourself? When is the last time God used a life experience to teach you something about yourself? Was the lesson taught once or multiple times?

Jesus One-Liner. Luke 22:32 — “When you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.”

Facilitator Moment (Shift moment)

Focus on verse 61: **“The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter.”**

What do you think Peter understood in that moment that he hadn't understood hours earlier? Where has failure exposed something in you that you needed to see?

Don't fix Peter yet. **That's God's job, and until Peter gets the lesson God will patiently push**

Practice: Bring one failure before God this week without excuses or explanations. Don't allow shame to convince you to hide or ignore the character defect. Often a person will distract themselves from working on an issue. What is the difference between bingeing a TV series and taking a walk in the woods? *“besides the mosquitos, because I'm sure someone will be funny”* Ask yourself, “Is God part of my hiding place?” With answers like woods, ocean, garden, Christian music... yes. If you answer TV, Games, Addictions, No. And sometimes an answer could go either way, we can corrupt good things. Even turning to the Bible, just to prove I'm right could be a pride thing, not a God thing.

Ask simply: **“What are You teaching me about myself?”**

Learn Like Peter: Accepting Grace

WEEK 7 — Learning to Move Again. -John 21:15–19

Introduction: Read John 21:15–19.

Ask Why: Peter begins his journey of “Sanctification as Jesus calls him from catching fish to men. Once people get comfortable in their walk with God, we begin to see the lessons in Peter’s life unfold. Peter went from telling others “including God” what they should do, to being less pushy about his agenda. He approached topics with more caution, less set on his own. He let God work on him til the lesson became more about him than an agenda he felt God should work on.

Once that gear switches, surrender and breaking come next. Peter had to start allowing God to change him. So, after three years of lessons, Peter sees some major character defects in his life. Yet instead of focusing on these, Jesus points him elsewhere. Why take so long to help Peter examine himself, only to move forward?

Facilitator Toolbox: Peter cannot undo the courtyard. Jesus doesn't ask him to. Don't let the discussion become about proving whether Peter really loves Jesus. Jesus is moving Peter from what happened **behind him** toward what He is still calling Peter to do. “Failures” became a teacher, but it was never meant to become Peter's identity.

Naming the Experience - Sanctification — God patiently shaping us as we learn, surrender, fail, and grow. Maturing ‘Followers’ is what the Spirit specializes in.

DBS Emphasis: Jesus doesn't restore Peter so he can return to who he was. He sends forward a Peter who now knows himself differently.

Ask: Can refusing to move forward after failure become another way of resisting Jesus? How often do we keep the focus off ourselves by telling everyone else what they should do. Hiding in plain sight is a tactic that “religious people” often do without realizing it. God wants to work on us, but we keep the attention on how bad the world is. “The world” is a big distraction with plenty of evil in it. We could deflect for a lifetime, or we can *Learn Like Peter*

God didn't expose Peter so Peter could stare at himself. He exposed Peter so Peter could become someone different.

Jesus One-Liner. -Luke 22:32 — “When you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.”

Facilitator Moment (Shift moment) Ask: What would have happened if Peter allowed his worst moment to define him? Where has God forgiven you, but you still haven't moved forward?

Practice: Take one step this week in an area where failure has made you hesitant. Don't prove yourself. **Follow Him.**

Learn Like Peter: By Imitating Christ.

WEEK 8 — When Learning Becomes Visible. -Acts 4:8–13

Introduction: Ask: What do you recognize about this Peter compared with the Peter we've followed through the Gospels? Then focus on verse 13: **“They took note that these men had been with Jesus.”** What had Peter learned that people could now see?

Facilitator Toolbox: Don't make transformation mean Peter became perfect. Peter will still need correction later. The difference is that years of following, questioning, being corrected, surrendering, failing, and being restored have produced something visible.

Peter didn't simply know more about Jesus. **Being with Jesus had changed Peter.**

Naming the Experience: **Transformation** — what we learn from Jesus eventually becomes visible in how we live.

DBS Emphasis: Wisdom isn't measured only by what we know. Eventually, what we've learned should become recognizable in us. Ask: If someone watched your life, what would they conclude you've learned from being with Jesus?

Jesus One-Liner: **John 13:17** — “Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.” **(Short Story Attached Below)**

Facilitator Moment (Shift moment). Look back over Peter's journey:

Initiation → Honesty → Tension → Humility → Surrender → Breaking → Sanctification → Transformation

Which experience has God been using most in your life? Which one have you been resisting? Identity the phase may help you identify a lesson God has been expressing over and over.

Practice

Don't finish this study asking: **“What did I learn?”**

Ask: **“What will be different because I've learned it?”**

Short Story “Looking for God”

There was once a man who had become increasingly frustrated with the world around him. Everywhere he looked, people seemed rude, selfish, and angry. Evil was easy to find, and eventually he took his frustration to a preacher at a local church.

The preacher listened and then surprised him.

“You’re mistaken about something. Jesus has embedded Himself into your life. He’s been there all along, quietly revealing Himself. You’ve just been too distracted by everything wrong with the world to notice.”

The thought made the man nervous. What if it were true? What if Jesus had been right in front of him and he had completely missed Him?

So he started looking.

Could Jesus be the doorman outside his busy apartment building? Every morning the man watched him greet people, offering an encouraging word to nearly everyone who passed.

Could Jesus be the busboy at his favorite café? He rarely said much, but he always seemed to be smiling and humming a tune as he worked.

Could Jesus be the woman who regularly came by asking for donations? She heard “no” far more often than “yes.” Sometimes she was even told not to loiter. Yet she kept returning, never seeming discouraged.

The man couldn't know, of course. But what if?

So he began treating them differently.

He returned the doorman's encouragement twofold. He tipped the busboy generously and sometimes whistled along when he recognized the song. The woman collecting donations received not only some money but an extra volunteer.

Soon it spread to other people—the very people he had once kept at a distance.

Then one day, while volunteering, someone noticed him and asked, “How do you stay such a light with everything that's wrong in the world?”

His own answer surprised him.

“I don't know. Everything just changed when I started looking for Jesus.”