



5 DAY DEVOTIONAL

A Living Hope for the Fallen | John 18:12-14

Day 1: The Danger of Overconfidence

Reading: 1 Corinthians 10:12-13, Mark 14:27-31

Peter's bold declaration that he would never deny Jesus reveals a common spiritual trap: overconfidence in our own strength. Like Peter, we often overestimate our faithfulness and underestimate our vulnerability to sin. Paul warns us that those who think they stand should take heed lest they fall. The safest Christian is not the most confident but the most dependent on Christ. Apart from Him, we can do nothing. Today, examine areas where you might be trusting in your own resolve rather than God's grace. Remember, you are one sin away from compromising your witness, but God's grace is sufficient. Cultivate humility by acknowledging your complete dependence on Christ for every moment of faithfulness.

Day 2: The Power of Prayer in Testing

Reading: Luke 22:39-46, 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

In Gethsemane, Jesus prayed with such intensity that He sweat drops of blood, while Peter slept. When testing came, Jesus stood firm while Peter compromised. An overconfident heart always results in a prayerless life. We often say "all I can do is pray" as a last resort, but prayer should be our first response and greatest weapon. Prayer is not weakness; it is accessing divine strength before the battle begins. When trials come—diagnosis, financial crisis, relational breakdown—do not wait until you are in the courtyard of compromise. Fight on your knees now. Develop a lifestyle of constant communion with God, watching and praying, so you do not fall into temptation.

Day 3: The Peril of Distance

Reading: Psalm 1:1-6, Luke 22:54-62

Peter followed Jesus at a distance—close enough to observe, far enough to stay safe. That distance led to compromise, denial, and bitter weeping. Many believers today maintain a comfortable distance from Christ: we believe quietly, follow cautiously, obey selectively. We want enough Jesus to feel secure but not enough to feel challenged. Psalm 1 describes this progression: walking with the wicked becomes standing with sinners, which becomes sitting with mockers. Distance from Christ always weakens devotion to Him. Closeness strengthens it. Abiding means sitting at His feet, immersing yourself in His Word, praying

continually, and surrounding yourself with His people. The safest place for your soul is not at a distance but right next to Jesus.

Day 4: I AM vs. I Am Not

Reading: John 18:1-27, Exodus 3:13-15

John intentionally contrasts two declarations: Jesus saying "I AM" in the garden and Peter saying "I am not" in the courtyard. When Jesus spoke His divine name, soldiers fell backward. When Peter spoke his denial, he fell into shame. "I am not" describes all of us—we are not faithful enough, strong enough, or courageous enough on our own. But praise God, the faithful "I AM" went to the cross anyway for all the "I am nots." While Peter warmed himself by a charcoal fire denying Christ, Jesus moved steadily toward crucifixion, abandoned and betrayed, yet victorious. Our hope is not in our faithfulness but in His. The great I AM absorbed God's wrath so that our failures would not define us.

Day 5: Restoration at the Charcoal Fire

Reading: John 21:15-19, 1 Peter 1:3-9

Peter's story does not end with denial and bitter tears. After the resurrection, Jesus intentionally met Peter at another charcoal fire—the scene of his greatest failure—and restored him. Three denials were met with three affirmations of love. This becomes Peter's message in his letters: a living hope for sinners who need a Savior, a living hope that restores the fallen, rooted not in our faithfulness but in God's. Because Christ lives, there is restoration after failure, grace after denial, and freedom from sin. Your worst moment does not have to be your final moment. Jesus specializes in meeting us at the scene of our failures and writing redemption stories. If you have failed, denied, or drifted, hear this: the living hope never fails you.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

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1. Peter denied Jesus three times despite his bold promises of loyalty. In what areas of your life are you most vulnerable to denying Christ through compromise or silence?
2. The sermon emphasizes that an overconfident heart always results in a prayerless life. How does self-reliance show up in your spiritual walk, and what would it look like to become more dependent on Christ through prayer?
3. Peter followed Jesus at a distance, close enough to observe but far enough to stay safe. Are there areas where you are keeping Jesus at a comfortable distance rather than fully surrendering to Him?
4. Jesus stepped forward saying I am while Peter later said I am not. What does this contrast teach us about the nature of Christ's faithfulness compared to our human weakness?
5. The sermon mentions that we are all one sin away from blowing up our lives and only God's grace prevents that. How does this perspective change the way you view your own spiritual strength and the grace you extend to others who fall?
6. Judas and Peter both betrayed Jesus, yet their stories ended differently. What distinguishes Peter's response to his failure from Judas's, and what can we learn about repentance and restoration?
7. Jesus faced illegal trials and physical violence yet entrusted himself to the God who judges righteously without reviling or threatening. How can we apply this posture of surrender when we face injustice or mistreatment?
8. The sermon states that the safest Christian is not the most confident one but the most dependent one. What practices or disciplines help you cultivate a posture of dependence on Christ rather than self-sufficiency?
9. Peter's first small compromise made the subsequent denials easier and harder to correct. Can you identify any small compromises in your faith that might be setting you up for greater drift from Christ?
10. The story ends with hope that Jesus will meet Peter at another charcoal fire for restoration. How does knowing that Christ pursues us even after our greatest failures change the way you approach confession and repentance?



SMALL GROUP GUIDE

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Key Takeaways:

1. **Compromise begins small** - The first "I am not" makes subsequent denials easier and correction harder.
2. **Overconfidence leads to prayerlessness** - When we trust our own strength, we neglect dependence on God through prayer.
3. **Distance leads to drift** - Following Jesus "at a distance" inevitably leads to compromise and denial.
4. **Our hope is in His faithfulness, not ours** - Peter's story doesn't end in failure; Jesus restores him at another charcoal fire (John 21).
5. **Abiding is essential** - Apart from Christ, we can do nothing (John 15:5). Our safety is in closeness to Him, not in our own resolve.

Discussion Questions:

Understanding Peter's Path to Denial

1. Pastor Josh identified three "mirrors" in Peter's failure: overconfidence, prayerlessness, and distance. Which of these resonates most with you personally, and why?
2. Peter's first denial seemed almost unnecessary; John had already gotten in without incident. Why do you think Peter denied Jesus even when there didn't seem to be immediate danger?
3. Discuss this statement: "Once uttered, the first 'I am not' made it easier to repeat and harder to correct." Have you experienced this pattern of compromise in your own life?

The Danger of Distance

1. The sermon described Peter as following Jesus "at a distance"—close enough to observe, far enough to stay safe. What does following Jesus at a distance look like in modern life?
2. Read Psalm 1:1: "Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits at the seat of mockers." How does this progression (walk → stand → sit) mirror Peter's experience in the courtyard?
3. What are some practical ways we can guard against drifting into a "comfortable distance" from Jesus?

Overconfidence vs. Dependence

1. Peter was absolutely convinced of his own strength, even comparing himself favorably to the other disciples. When are you most tempted to rely on your own strength rather than depending on Christ?
2. Pastor Josh said, "The safest Christian is not the most confident one; it's the most dependent one." What's the difference between godly confidence and self-reliance?