

Junior 1 Year 1 Book 3 Lesson 4

Peter

Passages: Mt 4:17–20; Mk 1:17–18; Lk 5:3–11; 22:56–62; Jn 1:40–42; 21:15–22

Memory Verse

“Then He said to them, ‘Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.’ They immediately left their nets and followed Him.” (Matthew 4:19–20)

Knowledge of God’s Will [God’s Word]	Knowledge of God [God’s Divine Nature]	Good Work [Behavior]
Peter transformed from a fisherman to a fisher of men.	God is loving and patient.	Pray to be transformed through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Overview

Events and Spiritual Teachings

- A. Jesus Calls Peter
- B. Peter Lacks Spiritual Maturity
- C. Peter Denies Jesus
- D. Jesus Restores Peter
- E. Peter Transforms into a Rock

Life Application: Transform Through Jesus’ Love and Power

Memory Verse

Conclusion: Through the power of His Holy Spirit, let us gain the strength to overcome our weaknesses and be transformed into a steadfast worker for the Lord.

Spiritual Teachings

Introduction

When Jesus Christ called Peter, Peter was only a lowly fisherman from the village of Bethsaida. However, Jesus Christ could see Peter's potential to become a pillar and rock for the church. Though Peter's transformation took years, filled with many ups and downs, he eventually grew into a strong worker for the Lord. Today, we're going to look at some key events in Peter's life to gain a better understanding of his transformation and discipleship.

A. Jesus Calls Peter (Jn 1:40–42; Mt 4:17–20; Mk 1:16–18; Lk 5:3–11)

"[Andrew] first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, 'We have found the Messiah' (which is translated, the Christ). And he brought him to Jesus. Now when Jesus looked at him, He said, 'You are Simon the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas' (which is translated, A Stone)."

(John 1:41–42)

Peter's brother Andrew brought him to Jesus; it is in this first meeting that Jesus Christ calls Peter *Cephas* (Aramaic), or *Peter* (Greek), meaning "stone." This change in Peter's name signifies a turning point in his life. Jesus Christ recognized Peter's potential, knowing that he would become a foundation and pillar for the apostolic church.

After their first meeting, Jesus walked by the Sea of Galilee one day and called to Peter and Andrew, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Mt 4:19). Hearing Jesus' call, they immediately left their nets and followed Him, and became two of Jesus' first disciples. They responded to Jesus' calling immediately, for though they did not completely understand who Jesus was, they discerned that He was unlike any other man.

B. Peter Lacks Spiritual Maturity

Though Peter followed Jesus Christ, he was often impulsive in both speech and in action.

Let's look at some examples.

Passage	Event	Peter's Reaction
Mk 9:2–8	Jesus transfigured before Peter, James, and John on a high mountain	He was afraid and spoke without understanding, saying, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."
Mt 16:21–23	Jesus told His disciples that He was going to Jerusalem to suffer and be killed and then resurrected on the third day	He rebuked Jesus saying, "Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!"
Mt 26:31–35	Jesus told His disciples that they would all stumble because of Him	He said to Jesus, "Even if all are made to stumble because of You, I will never be made to stumble. [...] Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!"
Jn 13:5–9	Jesus washed His disciples' feet	He said, "You shall never wash my feet!" Jesus replied, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me."

		Then Peter replied, “Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head!”
Jn 18:10–11	Jesus was arrested in the garden of Gethsemane	He drew a sword and cut off the right ear of the high priest’s servant.

From these examples, we can see Peter’s tendency to speak and act without understanding, due to his lack of spiritual maturity and wisdom. Instead of meditating on God’s words, he reacted according to his emotions. He didn’t take the time to consider why Jesus did and said these things. Most importantly, he didn’t have full understanding of God’s will: for Jesus Christ to suffer and die for the sins of mankind. Zealous and devoted, Peter believed that he would never deny Jesus because he was blind to the fear and doubt in his heart. Similarly, it can be easy for us to think that our faith is strong when our lives are peaceful. However, the true test of a person’s faith comes when we must act in the face of adversity.

C. Peter Denies Jesus

Just as Jesus predicted, He was captured in the garden of Gethsemane, prompting His disciples to scatter. However, Peter continued to follow Jesus from afar (Jn 18:15–16). As Jesus stood before the high priest to be questioned, Peter waited outside near the door.

Peter’s three denials (Lk 22:56–60; cf. Mt 26:68–74; Mk 14:66–71; Jn 18:17–27)

1	And a certain servant girl, seeing him as he sat by the fire, looked intently at him and said, “This man was also with Him.” But he denied Him, saying, “Woman, I do not know Him. ”
2	And after a little while another saw him and said, “You also are of them.” But Peter said, “Man, I am not! ”
3	Then after about an hour had passed, another confidently affirmed, saying, “Surely this fellow also was with Him, for he is a Galilean.” But Peter said, “Man, I do not know what you are saying! ” Immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed.

It is understandable why Peter denied Jesus. All of his peers had fled, and the teacher that he had followed for the past three years was arrested and facing trial. He was alone. Oftentimes, when we are around family and fellow church members, it can be easy to say that we are followers of Christ. But when we have to defend our beliefs in the midst of people who do not share our beliefs, it becomes difficult.

“And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said to him, ‘Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.’ So Peter went out and wept bitterly.”

(Luke 22:61–62)

Peter’s heart broke when Jesus turned and looked at him. Though he had spoken so boldly before, he now saw that his words had been empty. The shame of this realization caused him to weep bitterly. Peter saw his weakness clearly for the first time and realized that he was not as strong as he thought.

However, Jesus already knew about Peter’s weakness and even prayed that Peter would be able to rise again after his failure (Lk 22:31–32).

D. Jesus Restores Peter

Let us turn to John 21:1–13.

Jesus Christ’s disciples were greatly disheartened after He was crucified on the cross. A few, including Peter, even returned to being fishermen because they were without direction. They fished all night long but caught no fish. In the morning, Jesus Christ stood on the shore, but the disciples didn’t know it was Him. He asked them, “Children, have you any food?” (v. 5). They answered, “No.” He then told them they would find some if they cast their nets on the right side of the boat. When they followed His command, they caught so many fish that they were unable to pull up the net.

Likewise, there may be times when we encounter failure in our walk of faith. Though we strive to do good, our bodies do not listen, so we feel defeated and discouraged. At that point, it may seem easier to revert to our old selves that lived in sin. However, we cannot allow our failures to remain failures. Rather, we must grasp them as opportunities for us to learn from our mistakes and, through God’s power, stand up once again.

When Peter heard one of the disciples say, “It is the Lord!”, Peter jumped into the water and swam to Jesus on the shore while the rest of the disciples followed close behind in the boat. Jesus saw their despondence and lack of direction without Him. As a result, He called upon Peter to stand up once more and guide His sheep.

Jesus asks Peter if he loves Him (Jn 21:15–17)

1	So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of Jonah, 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. ”
2	He said to him again a second time, “Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?” He said to Him, “Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.” He said to him, “ Tend My sheep. ”
3	He said to him the third time, “Simon, son of Jonah, 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 all things; You know that I love You.” Jesus said to him, “ Feed My sheep. ”

Just as Peter denied Jesus three times, Jesus Christ asked Peter three times to feed and take care of His sheep. Why? To strengthen Peter and build up his faith after he had denied Jesus. Jesus’ first question to Peter was: “Do you love me?” The Greek word for “love” was *agapaō*, a sacrificial love. Peter replied, “Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.” Here, Peter used a different Greek word for “love,” *phileō*, which referred to a brotherly kind of love. When Jesus repeated His question, Peter responded the same way.

Before Jesus’ crucifixion, Peter claimed to love Him, even to death. However, after Jesus died on the cross and resurrected, Peter realized his love for Jesus was not at that point yet. So, when Jesus asked

Peter if he loved Him sacrificially, Peter replied honestly. He indeed loved Jesus, but not sacrificially. From this, we can see that he had come to understand himself better after denying Him.

Then, Jesus asked the question, “Do you love Me?”, using *phileō* instead. Here we can see the Lord’s heart. Jesus Christ understood Peter’s limitations and was willing to meet him where he was. At the same time, Jesus gave him a mission to tend and feed His sheep. Jesus wanted Peter to know that to tend His sheep, his *phileō* must transform into *agapaō*.

After instructing Peter to tend and feed His sheep, Jesus Christ once again commanded Peter, “Follow Me” (Jn 21:19, 22). Jesus first said this phrase to Peter during his initial calling (Mt 4:19). Peter had followed Jesus for three years already. He witnessed many miracles and signs as Jesus worked to glorify God. He listened to Jesus as He taught God’s word. He saw Jesus’ transfiguration on a mountain. However, with his denials of Jesus Christ, Peter realized that he had not truly “followed” Jesus. Now, Jesus Christ was giving him a second chance to follow Him once again. This was the beginning of Peter’s transformation.

E. Peter Transforms into a Rock

After Jesus Christ ascended to heaven, it was time for the disciples to begin the work that had been entrusted to them. First, they had to wait in Jerusalem for the helper that Jesus Christ had promised to send them. On the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit descended on around 120 people who were praying together in the upper room.

With the Holy Spirit abiding within, Peter was transformed. His bold words were no longer empty—his first sermon was full of wisdom and a clear understanding of the Scriptures. When he preached to the gathered Jews, his words cut through their hearts and around 3,000 people came to be baptized that day (Acts 2:41). The Holy Spirit also gave Peter the power to perform great miracles. He healed a lame beggar and boldly preached to the Sanhedrin (Acts 4:8). He cast out evil spirits, and the ill were healed just by touching his shadow (Acts 5:15). He willingly suffered persecution and imprisonment, and even rejoiced that he was “counted worthy to suffer shame for [Jesus Christ’s] name” (Acts 5:40–42). Most importantly, God used Peter to preach the gospel of salvation to the Gentiles (Acts 10).

Later in life, Peter wrote 1 and 2 Peter. His letters encouraged members who were facing persecution and warned them to fight against the false teachings that had entered the church. Jesus Christ once said: “And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church” (Mt 16:18). Peter truly became a steadfast worker in the church of God who strengthened members (Gal 2:9). His letters also reveal his transformation from impulsiveness to humility. Peter encouraged members to clothe themselves with humility towards one another. The low points in Peter’s life opened his eyes and allowed him to understand the importance of submitting to the will of God. It is when we are humbled that God will be there to lift us up.

Despite his many weaknesses and failures, Jesus Christ restored and empowered Peter, allowing him to transform into the “rock” of the church. Jesus’ prayer for Peter’s faith and the power of the Holy Spirit worked together to turn Peter from a brash disciple to a great and powerful worker for the Lord. The once lowly fisherman had now become a great fisher of men for God.

Check for Understanding

1. Who brought Peter to Jesus Christ? Andrew, Peter’s brother.

2. **Why did Jesus change Peter's name from Simon to Peter?** To indicate Peter's role in the church after Jesus Christ ascended to heaven.
3. **What was Peter's weakness? Please give an example to support your answer.** Peter's lack of spiritual maturity caused him to act impulsively; Mk 9:2–8; Mt 16:21–23; 26:31–35; Jn 13:5–9; 18:10–11.
4. **When did Peter finally see his weakness clearly?** After he denied Jesus three times.
5. **Why did Jesus ask Peter "Do you love Me?" three times?** To restore Peter and also to demonstrate His forgiveness and love towards him.
6. **How was Peter transformed after he received the Holy Spirit?** He received power in preaching, in healing, and in enduring persecution.

Life Application

Transform Through Jesus' Love and Power

Though Peter started his journey as a lowly fisherman, Jesus Christ called him to do a greater work: to be a fisher of men. However, Peter had to experience a transformation before becoming the rock that Jesus knew he would one day become. It was through Jesus Christ's love and patience, and the abidance of the Holy Spirit, that Peter was finally able to live up to his name. Today, God also waits for us and desires to help us transform into a rock and pillar for His church.

1. Understand the depth of Jesus' love and patience

Peter made many mistakes over the course of his time with Jesus Christ. He even denied Jesus three times, and it was at this point that Peter thought he had failed. However, Jesus still loved him despite his failures. Jesus patiently encouraged and restored him once more. As a result, Peter was able to stand up once again and eventually grow into a strong worker for the Lord. Just like Peter, we will also encounter low points in our faith, or times when we make mistakes. These are opportunities for God to reveal to us our weaknesses and opportunities for us to stand up again through the power of His love for us.

- Share a time when you experienced God's love and patience. How did you know God was patiently waiting for you?

2. God wants us to return to Him and to strengthen our brethren

After Jesus asked Peter three times, "Do you love Me?", He called upon Peter to feed and take care of His sheep. Jesus used this opportunity to reaffirm that Peter would be instrumental in establishing the church. After we have encountered low points, God wants us to find courage and return back to Him. There is work that He wants us to accomplish for Him. God wants us to feed His sheep and tend His lambs. We have been called to serve Him by spreading the gospel and building up the church.

- What are some ways we can feed and tend the sheep of God to show our love for Him?
Examples:
 - Share the word of God with friends
 - Pray for members in need
 - Keep the church clean

3. God can grant us power to stand up and serve Him

Strengthened by the Holy Spirit, Peter gave a mighty sermon on the Day of Pentecost and became a

bold worker for Christ. The power of the Holy Spirit transformed him from a lowly fisherman to a great fisher of men. Today, we also can experience the same transformative power of the Holy Spirit in our lives! The Holy Spirit can give us the strength to overcome our weaknesses and the courage to share our faith boldly with those around us.

- How has the Holy Spirit transformed you or someone that you know?

Memory Verse

“Then He said to them, ‘Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.’ They immediately left their nets and followed Him.” (Matthew 4:19–20)

Meaning

1. No longer would they catch fish; now they would preach to “catch,” or save, men’s souls.
2. Peter and Andrew did not hesitate or question Jesus’ calling. They followed His calling immediately.
3. Peter and Andrew were willing to leave behind their lives as fisherman to become followers of Jesus Christ.

Conclusion

From their first meeting, Jesus already saw the great works that Peter would accomplish for His kingdom. Peter’s journey of self-discovery and growth as a follower of Jesus was not without its failures; his impulsiveness could clearly be seen in several instances. However, Jesus Christ continued to love and have patience for Peter. In the end, Jesus Christ restored Peter and called upon him to do the great work of tending and feeding His sheep. And, with the power of the Holy Spirit, Peter eventually became one of the pillars of the early church.

Peter’s life story is tremendously encouraging to anyone who has failed but is still willing to be used by God. God wants to use us to strengthen others and to accomplish important work for His kingdom. Through the power of His Holy Spirit, let us gain the strength to overcome our weaknesses and be transformed into a steadfast worker for the Lord.

Lesson 4 Homework Assignment Answer Key

1. What can we learn from Peter and Andrew's reaction to Jesus' calling?
Neither Peter nor Andrew hesitated to follow Jesus; they followed His calling immediately, willingly leaving their lives behind to become followers of Christ and fishers of men.
2. What was Peter's weakness? Name two examples.
He lacked spiritual maturity, and he was often impulsive in both speech and actions. (For examples, see: Spiritual Teachings Section B. Peter Lacks Spiritual Maturity.)
3. Why did Jesus ask Peter three times if he loved Him?
Jesus wanted to strengthen Peter and build up his faith after he had denied Jesus.
4. What was the key difference in Peter and Jesus' word usage, and why?
Jesus used the word "agapaō," a sacrificial love, whereas Peter used "phileō," a brotherly love. After his failure, Peter understood that he was not capable of sacrificing himself for Jesus. The third time Jesus also used "phileō," but He wanted Peter to understand that to tend His sheep, this must transform into agapaō.
5. How did the Holy Spirit transform Peter? Name two examples.
His bold words were no longer empty. His words and actions became full of wisdom and demonstrated a clear understanding of the Scripture. He also spoke without fear of persecution and willingly suffered for Christ. Peter was no longer impulsive, but became spiritually mature, clothed in humility and wisdom of the Lord. (For examples, see: Spiritual Teachings Section E. Peter Transforms into a Rock.)
6. What is a weakness of yours that you think needs to be transformed? What are steps you can take to begin this transformation?
Personal answers.