



Peter's Metamorphoses

*Study Notes 3 of 4
Peters Ultimate Test
November 18, 2020*

Whoever acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven. But whoever disowns me before others, I will disown before my Father in heaven.” These are among Jesus’ most potent and challenging teachings while he was here on earth. They ring out as a warning to us as well as those who heard them in the first century. They are both encouraging as we contemplate Jesus acknowledging us as one of his own before God in heaven, but they are very sobering with the possibility of him disowning us before the Father. Never in his wildest imaginations did he think in the 3 ½ years of being trained by Jesus that he would be one who would disown the Savior! On one occasion, Peter told Jesus, “I am ready to go with you to prison and to death” (Luke 22:33). In Matthew’s account, his words were, “Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will” and then added, “Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you” (Matthew 26:33, 35).

PETER FAILS THE TEST

To get the full story, read Matthew 26. But for our purposes today, read verses 69-75. Next to the cross itself, Peter’s disowning the Lord has to rank as one of the greatest disappointments ever recorded in history!

WHY? HOW COULD THIS HAPPEN TO PETER, THE “ROCK”? Here are some reasons for you and me to understand and learn a great lesson from them: PETER’S ULTIMATE TEST “Jesus looked at him and said, ‘You are Simon son of John. You will be called Peter (a rock).’” John 1:42 Series:

1. Sheer ^A _____! He could be quite bold, courageous but when death stared him in the face, he caved to his fears.
2. He was still very, very ^B _____. We find him at this stage in his development, still showing signs of human weakness. While Jesus prays his heart out, Peter gives in to his need to sleep. When confronted by his accusers, he goes back to his old life, the pre-Jesus years, and begins to rain down curses.
3. His bravado, it seems, was just a ^C _____. As we’ve noted over and over, he was usually the first one to speak out or speak up. His assertions of staying faithful to Jesus were very bold and passionate. Could it be that Peter felt strong and brave when in the presence of Jesus, but found himself weak as a kitten when on his own?
4. Peter hung with the ^D _____! In Mark’s account, the Bible says, “Peter followed him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest and warmed himself at the fire” (Mark 14:54). While Jesus was being falsely charged, beaten with the guards’ fists, and spat upon, Peter was “below in the courtyard” when the servant girl identified him while he was still warming at the fire among the enemies. Two problems here: keeping himself at a distance from Jesus and hanging with the wrong crowd.
5. Could it be that the concept of Jesus’ ^E _____ was still cloudy? Peter had the boldness to protect Jesus when he was arrested by attacking one of the soldiers, cutting off his ear. Even the midst of that gruesome act and the tension of the moment, Jesus stays true to who he is by healing the ear of the enemy soldier. Yet Peter is acting physically, not spiritually. He had enough courage to attack the soldier but not enough faith to carry him through the cross (which Jesus had told them about) and stay on track to the fulfillment of Jesus’ mission on earth. There were still some disconnects among the apostles as to the spiritual nature of Jesus’ kingdom.

The Bible describes a very heart-wrenching moment when it says in Luke 22:61, “Jesus turned and looked straight at Peter.” This was after his three denials and the crowing of the rooster. Can you imagine that look? Can you imagine how the Lord felt? Can you imagine how Peter felt? He experienced bitter sorrow as he broke down and wept bitterly. Surely, he had failed the “ultimate test!”



Peter's Metamorphosis

Daily Devotionals or Bible Studies

3 of 4— Peter's Ultimate Test

November Week 3

1. The passage in Matthew 10:32-33 is one of Jesus' most pointed commands. How do you personally feel about that? Do you first notice the positive or the adverse outcomes? List some possible situations in your personal life where this challenge could take place in a real-life scenario.
2. When you read Peter's denials (as in Matthew 26:69-75, Mark 14:66-72, Luke 22:54-62, and John 18:15- 18, 25-27), what emotions do you feel? Do you agree with the statement in the message that says, "Next to the cross, Peter's disowning the Lord has to rank as one of the greatest disappointments ever recorded in history"? Why or why not? What are some lessons to be learned here about our own spiritual progress?
3. Of the five reasons for his denial listed in this lesson, which of the five seems to be the most substantial reason to you for his denial? Can you list other reasons to add to this list?
4. The moment that "Jesus turned and looked straight at Peter" is one of high drama and sadness. How would you describe that "look"? How would you describe what Jesus was feeling and how it must have made Peter feel? Are there any applications to be made from this for us?
5. This lesson ends with some hope as Peter stayed in contact with the other disciples, and as they went fishing early one morning. These two actions of Peter show some depth of character in that he did not totally turn away and hide. It allowed Jesus to appear to them a third time and to reinforce his love and resurrection to them. What are some ways God uses contact with other followers of Christ to keep us secure and in his presence in our world today?