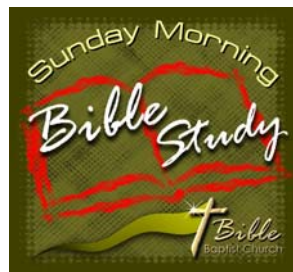




THE LIFE OF PETER

STUDY 3

THE DARK SIDE OF SELF



www.BibleBaptistKissimmee.com

THE LIFE OF PETER

STUDY 3 – THE DARK SIDE OF SELF

INTRODUCTION

Some 2,000 years ago, Christ assembled a ministry team. As God in the flesh, Jesus had a unique insight enabling Him to choose individuals for His mission based on the qualities of the personality they had been created with. God has created each believer with just the right mix of personality and gifts that He wants them to have for the purposes He wants them to fulfill (Job 31:15; Isaiah 14:27; 44:24; Jeremiah 1:5; Acts 26:16; Romans 8:28; 12:4-6; 1 Corinthians 12:4-6; Ephesians 1:11; 2 Timothy 1:9). And when we are walking with Christ, and we are in step with Him, life IS fulfilling! Because the *way* we have been designed perfectly fits *what* we were designed to do. But when we operate without Christ, those same gifts, abilities, and personality actually work against God and others.

As branches in the Vine (John 15:1-11), our degree of “connectedness to Christ” empowers the Christian to be an extension of Christ’s life into this time and place, here and now. When our intimacy with Christ is on the rise, Christ’s life force is able to flow through us impacting others lives today as it did when He physically walked on earth. However, when self reliance and pride choke our connection with Christ, what was a powerful influence drawing others *to* God becomes a negative impact on others driving them *away* from God.

This temptation to live life disconnected from God is something every believer struggles with whether they are aware of it or not. For today’s study, we will refer to this tendency to “handle” life on our own as the “Dark Side of Self”.

Today, we will look at some snapshots in Peter’s life where the “dark side of self” interrupted Christ’s power flow in Peter and how Peter and others were impacted by self reliance.

SNAPSHOT #1 ~ TURN TO MATTHEW 15:15-16

Matthew 15:15-16

Then answered Peter and said unto him, Declare unto us this parable.
16 And Jesus said, Are **ye** also yet without understanding?

A Spokesman for the Others. Here is an instance where Peter's bold personality speaks up and voices what the other disciples are thinking.

Group Questions

- How do we know Peter was speaking for the whole group when he asked Jesus to explain the parable? (Answer: "Ye" is King James Version English for the plural form of "you". Or in St. Cloud, "ya'll.")
- What if Peter had not been in the group that day, what might have happened? (Perhaps no one else would have asked and they would have continued on with a lack of understanding.)

Peter was created with an outspoken, bold personality. Jesus knew how He intended to use Peter in those founding years of the early church. Jesus knew He needed a driven individual who was not shy and not afraid to speak what he believed. When in step with Christ, Peter's God-created personality was the perfect tool to be used by God.

SNAPSHOT #2 ~ TURN TO MATTHEW 16:21-23

Matthew 16:21-23

21 From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. 22 Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it

far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. 23 But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence [*stumbling block*] unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men. [*“thou savourest not the things that be of God” means “you are not being mindful of the things of God”*]

Peter’s Disillusionment. Here, Peter is horrified at the thought of Jesus’ suffering and death and didn’t hear or understand the part about Jesus being raised on the third day. Peter’s bold personality takes on the job of attempting to talk Jesus out of this plan.

Group Questions

- What does Jesus tell Peter he is guilty of? (That Peter is guilty of thinking only in earthly terms and is disregarding spiritual matters of God.)
- How do Christians today become disillusioned? (When their expectations are based on personal agendas or their expectations are in sync with what this world dictates as important or successful.)
- What impact is Peter having on Jesus? (Peter is told he is being an obstruction to Jesus Christ.)
- How can Christians today avoid the same mistake Peter made here? (By evaluating their own perspective on life to see if it is in union with how God sees things versus how humanity sees things.)
- What impact do Christians today have on others when their words and actions are based on the things of this world with no regard for spiritual things? (Unbelievers are not attracted to Christ and their current worldly view of life is reinforced. Believers’ confidence in Christ can be weakened.)

SNAPSHOT #3 ~ TURN TO MATTHEW 26:30-35

Matthew 26:30-35

30 And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives. 31 Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the

sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad. 32 But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee. 33 Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended. 34 Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. 35 Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples.

Peter's Self Confidence. Peter's love and belief in Christ could not be questioned. He and the other disciples had given up all they had proving their commitment and loyalty to the Messiah. But when Christ reveals that they will all run for their lives, Peter passionately disagrees with Jesus' prediction and pridefully sets himself apart from the others. Christ knows that the dark side of Peter's God-given boldness is self reliance and Jesus must reveal that Peter will not only abandon Christ that night but would deny even knowing Him three times before dawn.

Group Questions

- Was it wrong for Peter to be passionate about his loyalty to Jesus?
No.
- What were two things about Peter's boast that were sinful? (Peter's boast was based on Peter's own ability to remain loyal to Christ. Peter was depending on Peter, not on Christ. Apparently he had missed the point just moments before when Christ told them, "Without Me, you can do nothing." John 15:5 Secondly, Peter directly contradicted Jesus' own prediction.)
- What impact did Peter's bold assertion have on the other disciples? (It caused them to jump on the same prideful band wagon – they likewise started claiming they'd never abandon Christ.)
- How do you think the other disciples looked at Peter after he set himself apart from the others? (They probably didn't appreciate Peter's pride and may have wanted to distance themselves from him.)
- What are some ways Christians "turn off" other Christians today?
- What are some ways Christians "turn off" unbelievers today?

Self Reliance versus God Dependence. When Christ works through a Christian's God given personality and ability, others are impacted for eternity. But when believers are deceived into thinking that it is their own ability and doing that influences others then pride and self reliance have set in. The heavenly Father has only one course of action when Christians become prideful; He must humble them.

Here, Peter's boldness and closeness to Christ resulted in a raised self image that was *self reliant* and not *God dependent*.

FISHING

ON THE HANDOUT

1. God creates believers with **personalities** and **abilities** that are best fit for His plans and purposes (Job 31:15; Isaiah 14:27; 44:24; Jeremiah 1:5; Acts 26:16; Romans 8:28; 12:4-6; 1 Corinthians 12:4-6; Ephesians 1:11; 2 Timothy 1:9).
2. When staying closely **connected** to Jesus (the Vine), He can touch others through us (branches); but when disconnected, **pride** can set in.
3. Christians can **protect** themselves from disillusionment by **aligning** their expectations for life with God's ways for living life.
4. Christians must remember that accomplishments happen because **God** works through us and that without **God** we really can do nothing.
5. A Christian's personality and giftedness when disconnected from **Christ** become a source for sinful **pride**.
6. Christians' pride never affects just **them**; believers and unbelievers are negatively **influenced** by our lack of dependence on Christ.
7. Our heavenly Father cares too much for us to let us remain immobilized by **pride**; He will work to **humble** us in order to restore our relationship with Him and with others.

THE CATCH

PETER KNEW HE HAD BEEN RECRUITED BY CHRIST FOR SOMETHING SPECIAL; PETER HAD TO REMEMBER IT WAS HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH CHRIST THAT MADE HIM SPECIAL.

1. Do I believe that Christ designed me to be used in special ways? *Y N*
2. What are three things that are special about me that Christ could use for some purpose of His?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
3. Am I disappointed with my place in life right now or am I "cautiously optimistic" about the direction my life is heading? Give details.
4. What can I do this week to be more aligned with the mind of God? Be specific.

REMEMBER

YOU KNOW YOU HAVE BEEN RECRUITED BY CHRIST FOR SOMETHING SPECIAL; YOU MUST REMEMBER IT IS YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH CHRIST THAT MAKES YOU SPECIAL.

