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JOHN 21:4-12,15-25

FISHERS OF PEOPLE

THIS WEEK'S focus

When someone face plants—literally or figuratively—you might hear someone else say under their breath, “It’ll be hard to come back from that.” Peter, fresh off his spiritual face plant, returned to the work he’d done before he met Jesus: fishing. When his catastrophic fishing trip turned into a divinely bountiful catch based on the wisdom of an unknown man ashore, it reminded him of another fishing trip: the first time he met Jesus. At that encounter, he had left everything to follow Jesus and become a fisher of people. This time, after realizing that this unknown man was Jesus, Peter leapt into the water in faith. Once ashore, he experienced Jesus’s tender restoration and calling. Peter soon learned that even though believers will fail, God forgives them, commissions them, and challenges them to keep their eyes on Him.



CENTRAL truth

God forgives us, commissions us, and challenges us to keep our eyes on Him.



EXPLORE.

scripture

JOHN 21:4-12,15-25

JOHN 21:4-12

4 When daybreak came, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not know it was Jesus. 5 “Friends,” Jesus called to them, “you don’t have any fish, do you?” “No,” they answered. 6 “Cast the net on the right side of the boat,” he told them, “and you’ll find some.” So they did, and they were unable to haul it in because of the large number of fish. 7 The disciple, the one Jesus loved, said to Peter, “It is the Lord!” When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he tied his outer clothing around him (for he had taken it off) and plunged into the sea.

8 Since they were not far from land (about a hundred yards away), the other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish. 9 When they got out on land, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish lying on it, and bread. 10 “Bring some of the fish you’ve just caught,” Jesus told them. 11 So Simon Peter climbed up and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish — 153 of them. Even though there were so many, the net was not torn. 12 “Come and have breakfast,” Jesus told them. None of the disciples dared ask him, “Who are you?” because they knew it was the Lord.

JOHN 21:15-19

15 When they had eaten breakfast, Jesus asked Simon Peter, “Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?” “Yes, Lord,” he said to him, “you know that I love you.” “Feed my lambs,” he told him. 16 A second time he asked him, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” “Yes, Lord,” he said to him, “you know that I love you.” “Shepherd my sheep,” he told him. 17 He asked him the third time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” Peter was grieved that he asked him the third

time, “Do you love me?” He said, “Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.” “Feed my sheep,” Jesus said. 18 “Truly I tell you, when you were younger, you would tie your belt and walk wherever you wanted. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands and someone else will tie you and carry you where you don’t want to go.” 19 He said this to indicate by what kind of death Peter would glorify God. After saying this, he told him, “Follow me.”

JOHN 21:20-25

20 So Peter turned around and saw the disciple Jesus loved following them, the one who had leaned back against Jesus at the supper and asked, “Lord, who is the one that’s going to betray you?” 21 When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, “Lord, what about him?” 22 “If I want him to remain until I come,” Jesus answered, “what is that to you? As for you, follow me.” 23 So this rumor spread to the brothers and sisters that this disciple would not die. Yet Jesus did not

tell him that he would not die, but, “If I want him to remain until I come, what is that to you?” 24 This is the disciple who testifies to these things and who wrote them down. We know that his testimony is true. 25 And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which, if every one of them were written down, I suppose not even the world itself could contain the books that would be written.

DAILY devotions

MEMORIZE JOHN 21:22

7 ARROWS FOR BIBLE READING



What does this passage say?



What does this passage tell us about God?



What did this passage mean to its original audience?



How does this passage change the way I relate to people?



What does this passage tell us about humans?



How does this passage prompt me to pray?



What does this passage demand of me?

day 1

JOHN 21:1-8

DWELL

When Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene after His resurrection, He had instructed her to tell His disciples He would meet them in Galilee (see Mark 16:7). In John 21, the disciples were fishing in the Sea of Tiberias—which is also called the Sea of Galilee. Perhaps these men had gone to this body of water in faith, trusting that if they were in Galilee, they would again see Jesus. When they hauled in the miraculous load of fish, suddenly John knew: Jesus was here! Peter leapt into the water.

← Who was present at this appearance of Jesus? How do you think this experience impacted these men?

↻ John's Gospel records signs that Jesus performed to reveal His identity. What does this sign reveal about His identity?

MEMORIZE

Using colored pencils or pens, creatively write out John 21:22 on a piece of paper. Read the verse out loud five times. Finally, try to say it out loud five times without looking, trying to picture it in your mind instead.

PRAY

Ask God to help you recognize when He is at work in you and around you today.

day 2

JOHN 21:9-14

DWELL

John recorded the number of fish (153) not because it's some kind of special number but to demonstrate two things: that he was an eyewitness who was there for the fishing trip and the counting of the fish, and that it was a lot of fish! He also mentions that the net wasn't torn, which surprised them given the number of fish. These specifics remind us that God loves to operate in abundance. In fact, it was the abundance of fish that alerted John that the man ashore was Jesus (see vv. 6-7)!

↑ What other evidence in Scripture or in your life do you have that demonstrates God is a God of abundance?

↔ How can this truth about God encourage someone you know?

MEMORIZE

Invent motions that match the words John 21:22, and practice them while saying the words out loud a few times. It probably feels a little weird, but hey, sometimes movement can help engage our brains!

PRAY

Think of some ways that God has brought abundance into your life, either recently or in the past, and praise Him for His goodness. Remember: abundance might not just mean money or physical things!

day 3

JOHN 21:15-19

DWELL

The last recorded meal that Jesus had shared with these men (with the exception of some fish he ate in their presence in Luke 24:41-43 to help them see He was truly resurrected!) had been the Last Supper, when Jesus predicted Peter's three-fold betrayal. In John 21, the men ate together again, and this time, Jesus offered Peter a three-fold restoration. Jesus was clear that Peter was forgiven, Peter was still called to follow Him, and Peter had important work to do.

↑ What do these two meals reveal about Jesus?

↪ How does Peter's restoration encourage you to pray about your past failures?

MEMORIZE

Write out John 21:22 on a piece of paper or note card, and place it next to your bed. Make it a goal to say it five times before you go to bed and five times when you wake up.

PRAY

Share with God any faith failures that are weighing on you. Ask Him to restore you.

day 4

JOHN 21:20-23

DWELL

Even Jesus's disciples weren't immune to comparison. As the details of the difficult faith journey ahead began to sink in, Peter probably started to panic. "What about him?" Peter asked Jesus, while pointing to John. Apparently, Jesus's response had been misinterpreted so that many people thought John wouldn't die—but Jesus's real point was essentially this: *John's calling has no bearing on what I've called you to do. Keep your eyes on Me.*



Why do you think it's challenging for Jesus's followers to keep their eyes on Him?



In what areas of your life do you need to consciously fix your eyes on Jesus?

MEMORIZE

Write down the first letter of each word of John 21:22 on a note card. At least five times today, see if you can say the verse just by looking at the letters.

PRAY

Look up Hebrews 12:1-2 and use it as a prayer, asking God to help you run the race He's set for you with your eyes fixed on Him.

day 5

JOHN 21:24-25

DWELL

John concluded his Gospel with two important details. First, he reminded his readers that he was an eyewitness. In a court of law, his words would hold tremendous weight! Second, he could have included so many more stories! Back in John 20:30-31, John was clear that he offered the narratives he offered because they would help us believe. But it would be impossible to record everything Jesus did. The world itself could not contain the books that would be written!



How does John's conclusion increase your faith in this book and in Jesus?



How could you use John's conclusion to help a friend who is struggling with belief?

MEMORIZE

Share John 21:22 with a friend or family member, and explain what it means. Then, invite them to randomly quiz you at some point today to see if you can remember the verse.

PRAY

Praise God for John's witness to all that Jesus did! Praise Him that there isn't enough space for all that could be said about Him.

