

S T U D Y G U I D E



*THE
LIFE
OF
PETER*

MOLDED *in the*
MASTER'S HANDS

DEREK W.H.
THOMAS

The Life of Peter

STUDY GUIDE



LIGONIER MINISTRIES

The Life of Peter Study Guide
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How to Use This Study Guide

This study guide includes a chapter synopsis, a lesson objective, key passages, key points, and discussion questions from each chapter in *The Life of Peter*, as well as questions that focus on a relevant passage of Scripture from each chapter. Participants should first read each corresponding chapter of the book in order to make the best use of this guide.

Chapter Synopsis: This section summarizes the material in the chapter and provides a reminder of what the chapter covered. It serves to help readers remember what they've already read in the book.

Lesson Objective: This section explains the purpose of the chapter and the intended outcome of the study guide lesson.

Key Passages: This section quotes several passages from the chapter so that readers can remember some of the more significant things the author said. It can also serve as a starting point for discussion if the group leader would like to ask questions or provide thoughts related to excerpts from the book.

Key Points: This section outlines many of the basic ideas that the author mentioned in the chapter. It helps readers recall not just the big idea of the chapter but also its supporting ideas and their flow.

Scripture Reading: This section highlights one of the chapter's key points in God's Word. It helps readers identify the scriptural basis of important Christian doctrines and develops their ability to understand Scripture through questions about the reading. These questions are also ideal for group study.

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Reflection Questions: This section provides readers with questions that could be asked of themselves or in a small-group setting. The questions are designed to help readers understand the chapter and apply that knowledge to their lives.

Prayer: This section closes the study with an opportunity to come before the Lord in prayer based on what readers have learned.

What Is Your Name?

CHAPTER SYNOPSIS

Peter's first interaction with Jesus changed his life forever. Although he was initially interested in John the Baptist, his brother brought him to see Jesus, the Messiah. Peter was an eyewitness of Jesus, and he desired for the church to hear and receive his testimony about Him. A man who was once catching fish was later commissioned to be one of the chief fishers of men. This transformation could occur only because Peter himself was transformed by his encounter with Jesus—so much so that he was even given a new name. In this chapter, Dr. Thomas shows how Peter's first interaction with Jesus shaped his life and calling forever.

LESSON OBJECTIVE

This chapter describes how Peter's first encounter with Jesus was life-changing so that you might trust Peter's testimony and find Jesus for yourself.

KEY PASSAGES

Do you ever wonder what it would be like to meet Jesus in person? Every Christian does. All kinds of questions run through your head: What does He look like? How tall is He? What does His voice sound like? Peter knew the answers to these questions. Meeting Jesus was a life-changing moment for him. (p. 3)

Scholars sometimes scoff at the reliability of eyewitness recollections, particularly after many years have passed. In today's legal system, testimonies often reveal wide-ranging recollections of past events, giving eyewitness accounts little credibility. But recent scholarship has demonstrated that when issues of deep religious significance are witnessed, the story is recalled over and over and embedded in the

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mind with accurate details. . . . Peter would later recall Jesus' transfiguration and write, "We were eyewitnesses of his majesty" (2 Peter 1:16). Peter wanted us to know that he was there when it happened. "I saw it with my own eyes!" (p. 6)

What is crucial is that we find Jesus and, when we do, that we believe in Him. Without Him, we are lost. When we find Him, we also find ourselves. With Jesus, life takes on an entirely new meaning and purpose. (p. 7)

Having one's name changed is deeply significant in Scripture. Think of Abram/ Abraham, Jacob/Israel, and Gideon/Jerubbaal, for example (Gen. 17:5; 35:10; Judg. 6:32). Each one was pivotal in the shaping of redemptive history. Jesus seems to be telling Peter: "I am going to build My church, and you will be important in that story. You will be a foundational rock." Though Peter will stumble, Jesus will restore him so that Peter can play the part destined for him and play it magnificently. (p. 8)

KEY POINTS

Introducing Peter (pp. 3–5): Peter met Jesus, and it changed his life. He was a fisherman from Bethsaida, Galilee, but he had likely been educated in the synagogue, being taught Greek, Hebrew, Aramaic, and possibly Latin. His knowledge of the Old Testament would have been strong both because of the synagogue's teachings and because of his Jewish upbringing. These factors shaped the way in which Peter categorized and made sense of the man who was declared as "the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29).

An Eyewitness of Jesus (pp. 5–6): Thanks to his brother, Andrew, Peter was introduced to Jesus. Andrew and John heard John the Baptist declare Jesus to be "the Lamb of God," and they were immediately attracted to Him. After bringing Peter to Him, they stayed with Jesus for some time. Peter had no idea how influential this encounter would be. He would become an eyewitness of Jesus' entire ministry, seeing things that most of the other disciples did not. His own eyewitness experiences were important for shaping how he understood his calling to build up the church and preserve the events of the New Testament as Scripture.

A Seeker, but of Whom? (pp. 6–7): When they had departed to hear John the Baptist preach, Peter had no idea that he would meet the Messiah. Because

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of his familiarity with the Old Testament teachings about the “seed of the woman” (see Gen. 3:15, NASB 1995) and the Messiah who would take away the sins of Israel, Peter’s experience with Jesus reshaped him to recognize that He was the One who would fulfill those promises. This moment would be a powerful reminder to him about when he believed, and it should encourage you to consider when you believed in Jesus. Knowing the precise time is not what’s important; the important thing is that you have believed that Jesus is the Lord who has taken away your sins.

A New Name (pp. 7–8): Peter’s first encounter with Jesus must have been shocking and confusing. Upon meeting him, Jesus declared his name, and then gave him a new one. “Cephas” was Aramaic for “rock” or “stone.” This initial meeting, although Peter had no idea at the time, would foreshadow another instance when Jesus would tell him, “You are *Peter*, and on this *rock* I will build my church” (Matt. 16:18; emphasis added). This is biblically significant, for when God changes someone’s name, that person is pivotal in redemptive history. Peter’s historical influence would likely surpass his expectations. God changed his name and used him to lay the foundation for the last days of redemptive history. All of this began when he first met Jesus and was given a new name.

SCRIPTURE READING

John 1:35–42 The next day again John was standing with two of his disciples, and he looked at Jesus as he walked by and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God!” The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. Jesus turned and saw them following and said to them, “What are you seeking?” And they said to him, “Rabbi” (which means Teacher), “where are you staying?” He said to them, “Come and you will see.” So they came and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day, for it was about the tenth hour. One of the two who heard John speak and followed Jesus was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. He first found his own brother Simon and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which means Christ). He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, “You are Simon the son of John. You shall be called Cephas” (which means Peter).

- In this chapter, Dr. Thomas described the significance of name changes in the Old Testament. How do you think Peter experienced Jesus’ changing his name after hearing from Andrew that Jesus was the Messiah?

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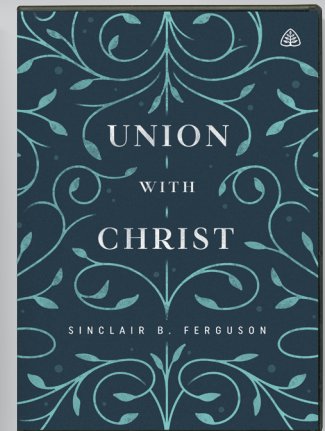
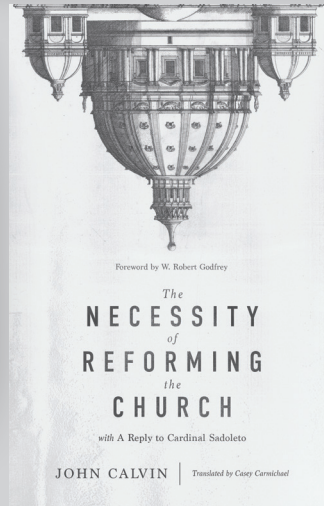
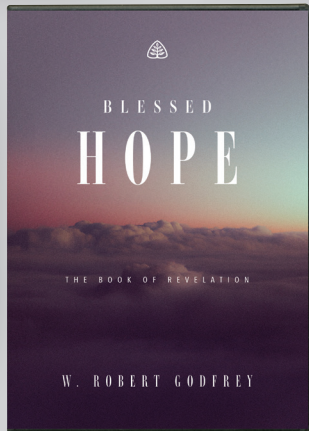
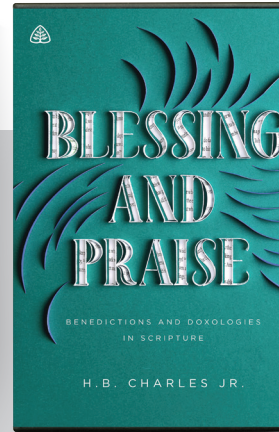
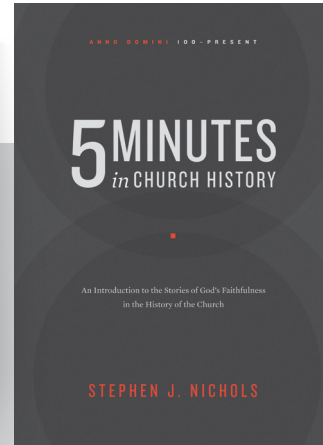
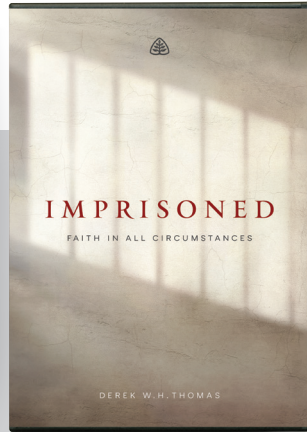
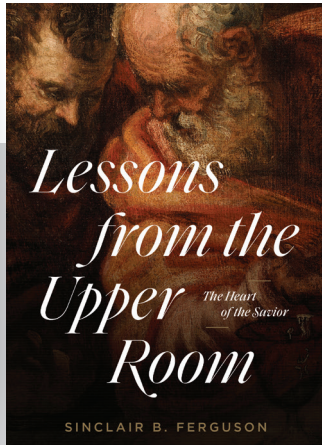
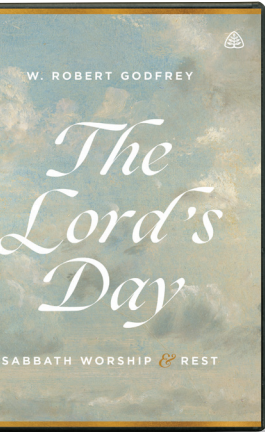
REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What was significant about Peter's being an eyewitness?
2. How was Peter's name change significant for his transformation and calling?
3. In what ways have you been changed by your interactions with Jesus?
4. How is knowing that Jesus commissioned Peter, despite knowing that he would deny Him, encouraging to you?

PRAYER

- Praise God that He raised up Peter and the Apostles to be the foundation of the church.
- Confess the ways that you resist believing, receiving, and resting on Christ and His promises.
- Thank God for the transformation that He has worked in your life through knowing Christ.
- Ask God to help you bear witness to Christ in the lives of those around you.

We want to see men and women around the world connect
the deep truths of the Christian faith to everyday life.



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