

MU SYDNEY BIBLE STUDIES
2013



Peter



***From fisherman to fisher
of men and women***



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Suggestions For Using The Studies

1. Make sure that each person has a copy of the study booklet you are using. People have hearing problems and no-one concentrates all the time, so they need a written copy of the questions to take part in the discussions.
2. Copies of the studies can be bought from the MU Office for each person, or you may wish to buy one copy and use your church facilities to photocopy the number you need.
3. If possible it is good to hand out the studies a week or so before the day, so people have time to prepare in advance. If you do this it is wise to have some extra copies available on the day in case some people forget to bring theirs, or extra people join you.
4. It is essential that the leader has fully prepared the study beforehand. You will find that the summary is relevant to the answers of the questions.
5. You may need to choose a selection of questions to discuss if your group has limited time available for discussion. Choose your selection beforehand, don't simply end when you run out of time.
6. You can increase participation by asking several people to read the Bible passages aloud for the group. This also provides a variety of voices and helps to keep people engaged with the study. Make sure you ask your potential readers ahead of time, and also make sure they are comfortable doing this.
7. It is generally better for discussion to sit in a semi-circle rather than to sit in rows. It is hard to talk to the back of someone's head, and it is generally easier to hear when sitting in semi-circles.
8. If you have a large group (twenty or more), consider breaking into smaller groups of about six to ten for the discussion time. The person leading the study could do an introduction, small groups could then discuss the questions with an assigned leader for each group (who has prepared beforehand), and then all could rejoin for a conclusion time directed by the leader.
9. Another alternative for a large group is to choose several questions that don't need just factual answers but require discussion, then ask the members of the group to discuss that question with the person next to them. If appropriate ask if anyone would like to share their thoughts with the rest of the group.
10. All Bible readings are taken from THE HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®, NIV® Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

Introduction

Some people have a *moment of conversion*, like Saul/Paul on the road to Damascus (**Acts 9:1-31**). One moment they are not followers of Jesus, and a moment later they have accepted him as Lord and Saviour, committing their lives to following him.

For others their journey to faith is more a process than a point of decision. They learn about Jesus first, see him working in the lives of others, make steps towards believing, and sometimes some backwards steps as well. Over time they come to accept him as the living God, and their Lord and Saviour. However they can't pinpoint one particular moment of conversion from unbeliever to believer.

Peter seems to have been in the second category. He was brought to meet Jesus by his brother Andrew. It's true that he chose to follow Jesus when Jesus called him, and we see flashes of faith and insight when he walked on the water to Jesus and recognised that Jesus was *the Christ, the Son of the Living God*. But he also sank into the water when his faith wavered and moments after his declaration that Jesus was the Christ, Jesus rebuked him saying "Get behind me, Satan!" when Peter's words tempted Jesus to avoid the cross.

Jesus had renamed Simon, using the name Peter meaning *the rock*. In the Gospels we see a rather crumbling rock. Someone who slept when Jesus needed his support in Gethsemane, and denied Jesus three times despite the fact he had claimed he would lay down his life for Jesus, just a few short hours before. But Jesus still loved Peter and the other disciples despite their fallibility, and it was on the basis of their faith in him as Lord and God that he built his church.

We see a different side of Peter in the book of Acts, after Peter and the other disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit. Now there was no more denying, and Peter had the courage to face death so that others could come to believe in Jesus.

When God looks at us, he knows all our sins and failures but he still loves us. Like Peter, he calls us to follow him and to be his witnesses so others will believe in Jesus and follow him too. We may sometimes feel we are more like Peter before Pentecost than after, but we are not. We have the same Holy Spirit in us that filled Peter and the others on that day, and Jesus has promised he will never leave us or forsake us, even when we let him down. Let us be encouraged as we study Peter's life and see the way living with Jesus changed him from being a humble fisherman, to being a fisher of men and women in Jesus' service.

The four studies are:

- Study 1 Called to Follow
- Study 2 Who do you say I am?
- Study 3 Failure and Forgiveness
- Study 4 Pentecost and Prison

Study 1 – Called to Follow

If we start with the Gospels of Matthew and Mark, we might be tempted to think Jesus came along, called two sets of fishermen he had never met before to follow him, and they immediately dropped what they were doing and followed a total stranger. However, we get a fuller account when we read the other Gospels.

Reading: John 1:35-42

³⁵ The next day John was there again with two of his disciples. ³⁶ When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, “Look, the Lamb of God!”

³⁷ When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. ³⁸ Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, “What do you want?”

They said, “Rabbi” (which means “Teacher”), “where are you staying?”

³⁹ “Come,” he replied, “and you will see.”

So they went and saw where he was staying, and they spent that day with him. It was about four in the afternoon.

⁴⁰ Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. ⁴¹ The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, “We have found the Messiah” (that is, the Christ). ⁴² And he brought him to Jesus.

Jesus looked at him and said, “You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas” (which, when translated, is Peter).^a

^a Cephas (Aramaic) and Peter (Greek) both mean rock.

Reading: Exodus 12:1-3,5-7,11-14

¹ The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in Egypt, ² “This month is to be for you the first month, the first month of your year. ³ Tell the whole community of Israel that on the tenth day of this month each man is to take a lamb for his family, one for each household ⁵ The animals you choose must be year-old males without defect, and you may take them from the sheep or the goats. ⁶ Take care of them until the fourteenth day of the month, when all the members of the community of Israel must slaughter them at twilight. ⁷ Then they are to take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the doorframes of the houses where they eat the lambs ¹¹ This is how you are to eat it: with your cloak tucked into your belt, your sandals on your feet and your staff in your hand. Eat it in haste; it is the LORD’s Passover.

¹² “On that same night I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn of both people and animals, and I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am the LORD. ¹³ The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are, and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt.

¹⁴ “This is a day you are to commemorate; for the generations to come you shall celebrate it as a festival to the LORD—a lasting ordinance.

1. What did John call Jesus, and what did John’s disciples do as a result of his comment?

2. From the Exodus passage, what significance did a lamb have to the Jews of Jesus' time?

3. Why do you think John called Jesus by this title? What idea does this introduce at the very beginning of Jesus' ministry?

4. After spending time with Jesus, what did Andrew conclude, and what did he do about that?

5. *(Personal, to consider)* We have a special responsibility for family members. Which member of your family is God placing on your heart to pray for? Is there another way you can reach out to them as well?

Reading: Matthew 4:18-22

¹⁸ As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. ¹⁹ "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will send you out to fish for people." ²⁰ At once they left their nets and followed him.

²¹ Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them, ²² and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

Reading: Mark 1:14-20

¹⁴ After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. ¹⁵ "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!"

¹⁶ As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. ¹⁷ "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will send you out to fish for people." ¹⁸ At once they left their nets and followed him.

¹⁹ When he had gone a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat, preparing their nets. ²⁰ Without delay he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him.

6. How did Jesus respond to John's imprisonment?

7. What did Jesus say when he called Simon Peter to follow him?

Becoming a Christian does change a person. In **John 3:3** Jesus told Nicodemus that he had to be *born again*. And **Romans 12:2** says:

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

However God also uses the personality and talents he has created in us, as we work for him. He also uses the skills we have acquired.

8. *(Personal, to consider)* How can you use your gifts and training for God's work today and in the future?

9. How did Simon Peter and Andrew, James and John all respond when Jesus called them to follow him? Why do you think they responded that way?

Luke fills in some more details about Jesus' calling of Simon Peter, Andrew, James and John to follow him.

Reading: Luke 5:1-11

¹ One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret, the people were crowding around him and listening to the word of God. ² He saw at the water's edge two boats, left there by the fishermen, who were washing their nets. ³ He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from shore. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat.

⁴ When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch."

⁵ Simon answered, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets."

⁶ When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break.

⁷ So they signalled their partners in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink.

⁸ When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!" ⁹ For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken,

¹⁰ and so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon's partners.

Then Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will fish for people." ¹¹ So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him.

10. What had Simon Peter heard, before Jesus asked him to follow? (verse 3)

11. What did Peter experience next, and what was his reaction?

12. Why do you think he reacted that way? What was he thinking about Jesus? What did Jesus do?

13. How did God prepare you to follow Jesus? Who influenced you?

After Jesus called specific people, including Peter, to follow him, he chose a specific group of twelve and commissioned them to be his representatives. These were called *Apostles*.

Reading: Matthew 10:1-7

¹ Jesus called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out impure spirits and to heal every disease and sickness.

² These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon (who is called Peter) and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; ³ Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; ⁴ Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

⁵ These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: “Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. ⁶ Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel. ⁷ As you go, proclaim this message: ‘The kingdom of heaven has come near.’”

Reading: Luke 6:12-16

¹² One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God.

¹³ When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them, whom he also designated apostles: ¹⁴ Simon (whom he named Peter), his brother Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, ¹⁵ Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Simon who was called the Zealot,

¹⁶ Judas son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.

14. From the Luke reference, what did Jesus do before he chose his twelve apostles?

15. What specific work did Jesus give these twelve men he chose, and who did he send them to?

Reading: John 15:16-17

¹⁶ You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. ¹⁷ This is my command: Love each other.

Jesus chose Peter and the other Apostles and gave them specific work to do.

16. What does Jesus say about all his followers in **John 15:16**?

17. What work has Jesus given us to do? Who has he given us to help us do this work?

18. Our lives bear the fruit of the things that are most important to us. *(Personal)* What is the most important thing in your life? How lasting is the fruit you are bearing?

Simon Peter’s decision to follow Jesus was not an impulsive choice to follow a charismatic stranger. He had been introduced to Jesus by his brother Andrew, had heard Jesus teach and had seen a miraculous catch of fish that led him to realise that Jesus was no ordinary man.

Peter’s decision was based on a growing awareness that Jesus was different from anyone he had met, and he wanted to know more, so he obeyed Jesus’ call to follow him.

We don’t have to have all the answers about Jesus to be his followers. We do need to be prepared to spend time with him through reading the Bible and praying. As we do that we will receive some answers, and we will find that some questions don’t matter anymore.

What is your response to Jesus’ call to follow him and be a fisher of men and women?

Summary: Study 1 – Called to Follow

Andrew, and another disciple of John the Baptist had been intrigued by John's description of Jesus as the *Lamb of God*. Any Jew of Jesus' time, hearing this phrase would think of the Passover Lamb. This was the lamb that had been killed as a sacrifice so the angel of death would *pass over* the Jewish houses in Egypt, and this was remembered each year in the Passover Feast. By using that description for Jesus, John was introducing the concept of sacrifice at the very beginning of Jesus' ministry.

After spending the day with Jesus, Andrew concluded that Jesus was the Messiah, the king God had promised to send to the Jews. His immediate reaction was to go and tell his brother, Simon, about this extraordinary man he had met. When Simon came to Jesus to meet him for himself, Jesus gave him a new name, Peter, which means *rock*. As we follow Peter's path we may be tempted to think that he is a bit of a crumbly rock, but Jesus looks past our present shortcomings, and sees us as we will be when we are complete, with him in heaven.

Like Andrew, we have a special responsibility to our family to share what we know about Jesus with them. Not all will react like Peter, and come to follow him for themselves. We can't make anyone else become a Christian, no matter how much we would like to. That is between them and God, but we can continue to pray for them, and to share with them as much of our faith as they will let us share. Never give up praying.

After calling a number of individuals to follow him, Jesus prayerfully chose twelve men to be his Apostles, his representatives, who he sent out to preach, heal and share the fact that the "kingdom of heaven has come near". When Jesus calls us to follow him, he also has work for us to do. That work is called *bearing fruit*. Our lives bear the fruit of the things that are most important to us.

Simon Peter didn't decide to follow Jesus as a whim on the spur of the moment. It was not an impulsive choice to follow a charismatic stranger. After being introduced to Jesus by his brother Andrew, he had spent time with Jesus. He had heard Jesus teach, and seen a miraculous catch of fish, and all this had led him to realise that Jesus was no ordinary man. Peter's decision to follow Jesus was based on a growing awareness that Jesus was different from anyone he had met, and he wanted to know more, so he obeyed Jesus' call to follow him.

We don't have to have all the answers about Jesus to be his followers. We do need to be prepared to spend time with him through reading the Bible and praying. As we do that we will receive some answers, and we will find that some questions don't matter anymore.

What is your response to Jesus' call to follow him and be a fisher of men and women?

Who is God laying on your heart to pray for and to speak to about your faith today?

Study 2 – Who do you say I am?

Andrew introduced his brother, Simon, to Jesus with the words “we have found the Messiah”, so from the beginning Simon had that in his mind. As he walked with Jesus he became convinced that Jesus really was the Messiah, even though his understanding of what that meant was unclear. Jesus gave Simon the name *Peter* and from the time Jesus called Peter to follow him, Peter seems to have been one of Jesus’ *inner circle* of followers. As Peter learnt more about Jesus, he also experienced Jesus’ power at work in his own family.

Reading: Matthew 8:14-17

¹⁴ When Jesus came into Peter’s house, he saw Peter’s mother-in-law lying in bed with a fever.
¹⁵ He touched her hand and the fever left her, and she got up and began to wait on him.
¹⁶ When evening came, many who were demon-possessed were brought to him, and he drove out the spirits with a word and healed all the sick. ¹⁷ This was to fulfil what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah: “He took up our infirmities and bore our diseases.”

1. How did Jesus meet Peter’s sick mother-in-law?

2. What happened to Peter’s mother-in-law and what was her reaction?

3. *(Personal, to consider)* What is your reaction to Jesus healing you spiritually? What has he saved you from? What are you doing as a result?

The following passage immediately follows Jesus’ miraculous feeding of over 5000 people from just two small fish and five loaves of bread.

Reading: Matthew 14:22-34

²² Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. ²³ After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. Later that night, he was there alone, ²⁴ and the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it.

²⁵ Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. ²⁶ When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. “It’s a ghost,” they said, and cried out in fear.

²⁷ But Jesus immediately said to them: “Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.”

²⁸ “Lord, if it’s you,” Peter replied, “tell me to come to you on the water.”

²⁹ “Come,” he said.

Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. ³⁰ But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, “Lord, save me!”

³¹ Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. “You of little faith,” he said, “why did you doubt?”

³² And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. ³³ Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.”

³⁴ When they had crossed over, they landed at Gennesaret.

4. What was Jesus doing, and what was the disciples’ reaction? Why?

5. What did Peter ask of Jesus and how did Jesus respond?

There can be times when, like Peter, we have an opportunity which allows us to step out in faith and we take it. But then we become afraid, and the situation threatens to overwhelm us and we ask if we made a mistake in the first place, did we get it wrong?

6. What happened next to Peter, and why did it happen? What did Jesus do and when?

7. How can we avoid making same mistake Peter made?

8. What did this show Jesus' disciples about him? How did they react? What is your reaction?

Reading: Matthew 16:13-17

¹³ When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?"

¹⁴ They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

¹⁵ "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?"

¹⁶ Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."

¹⁷ Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven."

9. What were the disciples' answers to Jesus' question about who people say he is? How are they similar to people's reactions to Jesus today?

10. What was Peter's answer? What was Jesus' response to that?

11. Who do you say Jesus is? What effect does that have on your life?

Reading: Matthew 16:21-28

²¹ From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.

²² Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. "Never, Lord!" he said. "This shall never happen to you!"

²³ Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns."

²⁴ Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ²⁵ For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. ²⁶ What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? ²⁷ For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what they have done."

²⁸ “Truly I tell you, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.”

12. What are some common reactions people have to someone else who is facing sickness, death or bereavement?

13. How did Peter react when Jesus revealed he would suffer and die?

14. What part of Jesus’ revelation of his future had Peter overlooked?

Like Peter, we can experience times of spiritual enlightenment, but then slip back in our understanding. We need to keep listening to all Jesus says by reading God’s word, and praying for the Holy Spirit’s guidance.

15. What was Jesus’ response to Peter, and why do you think Jesus reacted that way?

16. What warning does Jesus give about the cost of following him as his disciple? How does this happen today?

17. What is the result of making material prosperity and the things of this world our life’s aim?

18. Despite the difficulties along the way, what promise do Jesus’ followers have to look forward to?

19. What blessing do Jesus' followers experience?

Although we want others to become Christians and to grow in their faith and trust in Jesus, we often focus on their physical and material wellbeing, rather than their spiritual welfare. Material comfort and physical health can result in people feeling that they don't need God's help, they are doing quite nicely on their own. Jesus reminds us that the health of our souls is much more important than the state of our bodies because our souls exist for eternity.

Sometimes facing difficulties will make a person stop and think about their eternal future. We need to accept that God is concerned about our eternal welfare, not simply making our lives comfortable here on earth.

Do your prayers for others focus mostly on their spiritual health, or on their physical circumstances?

Summary: Study 2 – Who do you say I am?

Simon Peter's early relationship involved his family. It was Peter's brother, Andrew, who introduced him to Jesus, suggesting he might be the long awaited Messiah. Sometime after that Jesus went to Peter's home where he saw that Peter's mother-in-law was sick with a fever. Jesus simply touched her hand and she was healed and she got up and began to serve Jesus.

Jesus has spiritually healed each person who accepts him as their Lord and Saviour from the power sin has over them. What is your response to all Jesus has done for you? Will you use your time and talents to serve him?

After miraculously feeding over 5000 people with five loaves of bread and two small fish, Jesus sent the disciples across the lake in a boat while he went up the mountain alone to pray. Shortly before dawn he went to them, walking on the water and they were terrified, thinking he must be a ghost. He immediately reassured them, and impulsive Peter asked if he could walk across the water to Jesus. Jesus told Peter to come, and Peter started walking on the water, but then became afraid when he saw the wind and started to sink. He called out to Jesus who immediately reached out and caught him.

There can be times when, like Peter, we have an opportunity which allows us to step out in faith and we take it. But then we become afraid, and the situation threatens to overwhelm us and we ask if we made a mistake in the first place, did we get it wrong? When this happens we first need to go back to God's word and make sure our actions and plans really are in line with his will. Then we need to reconsider the reasons we felt God was calling us to step out this way in the first place. If the reasons still apply and there is a way to continue, we should take it until we either achieve our plans or God closes that path. Most importantly we need to keep our eyes on Jesus, and not be discouraged by the surrounding problems.

Jesus' teaching and miracles meant people were talking about him. In his limited time on earth he needed to train his disciples to be his witnesses when he returned to heaven, so he asked them who people said he was. After receiving various replies, he asked them who they said he was. In a flash of God-given inspiration, Peter replied that Jesus was 'the Messiah, the Son of the Living God'. Jesus accepted the title, but went on to describe to the disciples his coming suffering, death and resurrection. This was too much for Peter, he took Jesus aside and said that this would never happen. Jesus recognised the source of Peter's comments as Satan, trying to persuade him to avoid the cross and rebuked Peter accordingly.

Like Peter, we can experience times of spiritual enlightenment, but then slip back in our understanding. We need to keep listening to all Jesus says by reading God's word, and praying for the Holy Spirit's guidance. Our prayers for others need to focus more on their spiritual welfare and less on their material and physical comfort. It is often the difficulties that make a person stop and think about their eternal future. We need to accept that God is concerned about our eternal welfare, not simply making our lives comfortable here on earth. Being Jesus' follower carries a cost, but the heavenly reward far outweighs anything we go through on earth.

Study 3 – Failure and Forgiveness

When Jesus knew his time on earth would soon be ending, he drew his twelve Apostles to him and celebrated the Passover with them. He chose to spend the final hours before his arrest with people he knew would let him down, and with his Heavenly Father.

Reading: Matthew 26:20, 31-35

²⁰ When evening came, Jesus was reclining at the table with the Twelve. ²¹ And while they were eating, he said, “Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me.”

³¹ Then Jesus told them, “This very night you will all fall away on account of me, for it is written: “I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.”

³² But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee.”

³³ Peter replied, “Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will.”

³⁴ “Truly I tell you,” Jesus answered, “this very night, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times.”

³⁵ But Peter declared, “Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you.” And all the other disciples said the same.

1. What did Jesus know about the way the disciples would act during his arrest and crucifixion?

2. How did this affect the way he felt about them?

3. Jesus knows every sin we have committed and every sin we will commit in our lives, and yet he still loves us. How do we know that?

4. What claim did Peter make and how did Jesus respond?

5. Did Peter accept Jesus’ response? What did Peter then say and who backed him up?

Reading: Matthew 26:36-38, 45-50, 56b

³⁶ Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, “Sit here while I go over there and pray.” ³⁷ He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. ³⁸ Then he said to them, “My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me.”

⁴⁵ Then he returned to the disciples and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and resting? Look, the hour has come, and the Son of Man is delivered into the hands of sinners. ⁴⁶ Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!”

⁴⁷ While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived. With him was a large crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests and the elders of the people. ⁴⁸ Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them: “The one I kiss is the man; arrest him.” ⁴⁹ Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, “Greetings, Rabbi!” and kissed him.

⁵⁰ Jesus replied, “Do what you came for, friend.”

Then the men stepped forward, seized Jesus and arrested him ⁵⁶ Then all the disciples deserted him and fled.

6. Despite knowing their future reactions, who did Jesus take with him to Gethsemane?

7. How well did they support him in Gethsemane?

8. How did Jesus address Judas at the very point of betrayal? What does this indicate about Jesus’ feelings for Judas? What could Judas have still done at that point?

9. What does the way Jesus treated all of his fallible disciples say about the way he feels for and treats his followers today?

Reading: Matthew 26:57-58, 69-75

⁵⁷ Those who had arrested Jesus took him to Caiaphas, the high priest, where the teachers of the law and the elders had assembled. ⁵⁸ But Peter followed him at a distance, right up to the courtyard of the high priest. He entered and sat down with the guards to see the outcome.

⁶⁹ Now Peter was sitting out in the courtyard, and a servant girl came to him. “You also were with Jesus of Galilee,” she said.

⁷⁰ But he denied it before them all. “I don’t know what you’re talking about,” he said.

⁷¹ Then he went out to the gateway, where another servant girl saw him and said to the people there, “This fellow was with Jesus of Nazareth.”

⁷² He denied it again, with an oath: “I don’t know the man!”

⁷³ After a little while, those standing there went up to Peter and said, “Surely you are one of them; your accent gives you away.”

⁷⁴ Then he began to call down curses, and he swore to them, “I don’t know the man!”

Immediately a rooster crowed. ⁷⁵ Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken: “Before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times.” And he went outside and wept bitterly

10. Who was the first person to ask Peter if he was a follower of Jesus? How important was her position in their society?

11. How did Peter’s first lie escalate to more extreme responses? How could he have stopped this happening?

12. What stopped Peter denying Jesus a 4th time? How did he respond and why?

13. One lie almost always leads to more. What can we do to avoid an initial lie in situations where we don’t want to offend or upset someone?

14. What can we do if telling the truth might put us or someone else in danger?

Reading: John 21:1, 12-19

¹ Afterward Jesus appeared again to his disciples, by the Sea of Galilee.

¹² Jesus said to them, “Come and have breakfast.” None of the disciples dared ask him, “Who are you?” They knew it was the Lord. ¹³ Jesus came, took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. ¹⁴ This was now the third time Jesus appeared to his disciples after he was raised from the dead.

¹⁵ When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?”

“Yes, Lord,” he said, “you know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “Feed my lambs.”

¹⁶ Again Jesus said, “Simon son of John, do you love me?”

He answered, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “Take care of my sheep.”

¹⁷ The third time he said to him, “Simon son of John, do you love me?”

Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, “Do you love me?” He said, “Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “Feed my sheep. ¹⁸ Very truly I tell you, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go.” ¹⁹ Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, “Follow me!”

15. How did the disciples react to seeing the resurrected Jesus this time?

16. What question did Jesus ask Peter, and how did Peter respond?

17. Why do you think Jesus asked Peter this question three times?

18. What was Jesus’ call to Peter after questioning him? Why do you think Jesus said that at this particular time?

19. What is Jesus' call to us in situations when we have let him down? What do we need to do in response?

There will be times when we let Jesus down, either by being quiet when we should speak, or by speaking inappropriately or maybe even lying. We will act in ways that are out of line with God's will, but there is only one action we can take which is unforgivable by God. That is to continually refuse to turn to God and ask him to forgive our sins through the sacrifice that Jesus made for us.

Even Judas could have experienced Jesus' forgiveness if he had asked for it, but Judas continued to choose his own path and ended his life by hanging himself, again rejecting God's sovereignty over life and death. In contrast Peter turned to Jesus in genuine repentance, and was forgiven and recommissioned.

Which path are you following? Do you accept that Jesus will forgive everything you have done wrong, or do you think some things are too bad for his forgiveness? They are not. When you've accepted Jesus' forgiveness you can be assured there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. (**Romans 8:1**)

Summary: Study 3 – Failure and Forgiveness

Jesus deliberately spent his last hours on earth with a group of people who he knew would let him down. He arranged to celebrate the Passover with his twelve Apostles, one of whom betrayed him, and eleven others who deserted him and fled when he was arrested. Earlier that same night, during their Passover celebration, Jesus predicted that he would be betrayed, and Peter claimed he would lay down his life rather than disown Jesus. The other disciples had agreed with him.

Jesus knew what would happen, but it didn't decrease his love for them. It's the same with us; he knows every sin we've already committed, and every sin we will commit in our entire life, and he still loves us. He loves us so much he gave up his life so we can be reconciled with God and spend eternity with him in heaven.

Everything Jesus had said came true, he took the disciples to the Garden of Gethsemane and asked Peter, James, and John to watch with him while he prayed. They fell asleep. He greeted Judas as his friend, even as Judas betrayed him, and all the disciples fled when he was arrested. However Peter followed to the courtyard of the High Priest and waited to see what would happen. While he was there, a servant girl, someone who had very low status in the society of the time, recognised him and named him as one of Jesus' followers. Peter said he didn't know what she was talking about, but two others also called him a companion of Jesus. So Peter denied even knowing Jesus, with increasing intensity and only stopped when the rooster crowed, just as Jesus had said it would, and Peter went outside and wept.

Peter's denial of Jesus was complete, he could never again claim to be strong enough to stand for Jesus when others failed. However, the root of pride and self-confidence that caused his boastful assertion had also been removed, as Jesus knew it needed to be.

One lie always leads to more. We may try to diffuse a situation, or to get ourselves out of trouble by pretending not to understand what is being asked of us, but we will usually find that sooner or later we are confronted with the need to state where we stand. The longer we put it off, the harder it becomes and we can find ourselves moving from what we consider a 'half truth' (it sounds nicer than a 'half lie'!) to a full-blown lie.

From now on Peter would depend on the Holy Spirit and not on his own strength of character to enable him to stand for Jesus in situations even more dangerous than the High Priest's courtyard. Peter would never again deny Jesus, but before he faced others in Jesus' name, he had to face Jesus himself.

Jesus appeared to the disciples as they were fishing, and we note that Peter didn't show any reluctance to face the Lord he had denied, he jumped into the water to reach Jesus more quickly than the boat. Jesus didn't hold Peter's denial against him, but He knew that it needed to be faced and dealt with, before Peter could move on.

Jesus spoke to Peter by himself, and caused him to face the state of his relationship with Jesus as it was now, not as it had been when Peter let him down. "Do you love me?" Jesus asked Peter not once, but three times, once for each time Peter denied him. This is the question Jesus asks us as well. We may have failed Jesus in the past, but the vital point is do we love him now. If we can answer "Yes Lord, you know I love you", just as Peter did, then He will take us forward in his strength, not in our own.

Face past failures in the light of your present relationship with Jesus. Do you love him? If so, are you trying to use your own strength of character to work for him, or will you ask the Holy Spirit to turn your past weaknesses into a witness to his power?

Study 4 – Pentecost and Prison

Matthew 26:56 tells us that at the time of Jesus' arrest *all the disciples deserted him and fled*. In the book of Acts we see a very different side of Peter and the other Apostles.

Reading: Acts 2:1-4, 7-8, 12-16, 22-24, 32, 36-41

¹ When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. ² And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. ³ And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. ⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

⁷ Utterly amazed, they asked: "Aren't all these who are speaking Galileans?" ⁸ Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language?

¹² And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" ¹³ But others mocking said, "They are filled with new wine."

¹⁴ But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them: "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words. ¹⁵ For these people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. ¹⁶ But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel.

²² "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know—
²³ this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. ²⁴ God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it.

³² This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses.

³⁶ "Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah."

³⁷ Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" ³⁸ And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself." ⁴⁰ And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation." ⁴¹ So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.

1. What happened in Acts 2:1-4?

2. What was the immediate result of the Holy Spirit filling them?

3. How does a person come to receive the Holy Spirit today?

4. Why do you think we don't have the same physical manifestations when the Holy Spirit fills us today?

5. After receiving the Holy Spirit, what change was visible from Peter's behaviour?

6. What caused the people to be *cut to the heart*?

7. When we realise we have displeased God, how do we need to respond?

Reading: Acts 3:1-16

¹ One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer—at three in the afternoon. ² Now a man crippled from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going into the temple courts. ³ When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money. ⁴ Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said, “Look at us!” ⁵ So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them.

⁶ Then Peter said, “Silver or gold I do not have, but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.” ⁷ Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man’s feet and ankles became strong. ⁸ He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God. ⁹ When all the people saw him walking and praising God, ¹⁰ they recognized him as the same man who used to sit begging at the temple gate called Beautiful, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

¹¹ While the beggar held on to Peter and John, all the people were astonished and came running to them in the place called Solomon’s Colonnade. ¹² When Peter saw this, he said to them: “Men of Israel, why does this surprise you? Why do you stare at us as if by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? ¹³ The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus. You handed him over to be killed, and you disowned him before Pilate, though he had decided to let him go. ¹⁴ You disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked that a murderer be released to you. ¹⁵ You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead.

We are witnesses of this. ¹⁶ By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through him that has given this complete healing to him, as you can all see.

8. How was Peter able to heal the crippled man? Who received the praise for his action?

9. How did Peter use this one physical healing as an opportunity for spiritual healing for many?

10. What can we do to make sure God receives the glory for the times when we are able to help others?

Reading: Acts 4:1-22

¹ The priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees came up to Peter and John while they were speaking to the people. ² They were greatly disturbed because the apostles were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead. ³ They seized Peter and John, and because it was evening, they put them in jail until the next day. ⁴ But many who heard the message believed, and the number of men grew to about five thousand.

⁵ The next day the rulers, elders and teachers of the law met in Jerusalem. ⁶ Annas the high priest was there, and so were Caiaphas, John, Alexander and the other men of the high priest's family.

⁷ They had Peter and John brought before them and began to question them: "By what power or what name did you do this?"

⁸ Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: "Rulers and elders of the people! ⁹ If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a cripple and are asked how he was healed, ¹⁰ then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. ¹¹ He is "the stone you builders rejected, which has become the capstone. ¹² Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."

¹³ When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus. ¹⁴ But since they could see the man who had been healed standing there with them, there was nothing they could say.

¹⁵ So they ordered them to withdraw from the Sanhedrin and then conferred together. ¹⁶ "What are we going to do with these men?" they asked. "Everybody living in Jerusalem knows they have done an outstanding miracle, and we cannot deny it. ¹⁷ But to stop this thing from spreading any further among the people, we must warn these men to speak no longer to anyone in this name."

¹⁸ Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. ¹⁹ But Peter and John replied, "Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God. ²⁰ For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard."

²¹ After further threats they let them go. They could not decide how to punish them, because all the people were praising God for what had happened. ²² For the man who was miraculously healed was over forty years old.

Note: The Sadducees were a group within the Jewish faith who didn't believe in resurrection after death.

11. What was it about Peter's teaching that disturbed the Sadducees and the temple guard?

12. What happened to Peter and John? What was the result of Peter's teaching?

13. Peter had previously denied Jesus, in a courtyard, in front of servants. How does he respond when he is brought in front of the Sanhedrin, the Jewish ruling body, which condemned Jesus to death? What has made the difference?

14. Why were the Jewish rulers astonished at Peter's answers, and what did they take note of?

15. How does this encourage us in our witness for Jesus?

16. Although the Sanhedrin recognised that Peter and John had performed an outstanding miracle, what was their reaction? What did they command Peter and John?

17. How did Peter and John respond?

18. In what sort of situations do we need obey God's laws rather human laws?

When Jesus first met Peter, he looked at him with all his imperfections and called him a rock. When Jesus looks on each of us he sees us the way God has created us to be, the way we will be in heaven. After being filled with the Holy Spirit, Peter became the rock that Jesus had named him. Our belief in the resurrection depends on the witnesses who were changed from doubters to believers by their personal experience. Our confidence in the face of death is based on the first hand testimony of these men. Praise God.

Summary: Study 4 – Pentecost and Prison

Despite Jesus' preparation of his disciples, the events of his arrest and crucifixion overwhelmed them. They were confused and defeated. After Jesus' resurrection their behaviour changed, but it wasn't until after they were filled with the Holy Spirit that they had the courage, and the power, to speak out publically about the events they had witnessed.

When the Holy Spirit was given that first time, physical signs were given so that the disciples couldn't overlook them or decide they had just imagined it. There was the sound of a mighty wind, the sight of tongues of fire resting on the head of each of them, and they began to speak in foreign languages. Today we receive the Holy Spirit when we accept Jesus as our Lord and Saviour. We don't hear the wind or see the fire, and we can't suddenly speak a foreign language that we haven't learnt, but our experience of receiving the Holy Spirit is every bit as real as the experience of those first disciples. The power they received to witness in their day is the same power that we receive to witness in our own society today. Are you drawing on that power, or using your own strength?

After being filled with the Holy Spirit, Peter, the disciple who had denied Jesus three times in a courtyard of servants, stood up in a public place and addressed a Jewish crowd. Many of them would have been part of the crowd who called for Jesus' death, but Peter showed no fear. He told them that Jesus, the one they had crucified, had been raised from death and made Lord and Christ by God. Instead of turning on Peter, the crowd were cut to the heart, and asked Peter what they could do. Peter's answer was twofold: first they should repent, and secondly they needed to show that they had decided to change, by being baptised. When we realise we have displeased God, we also need to repent and put plans in place to avoid repeating that behaviour. For those committing their lives to Jesus for the first time, a public declaration of this is helpful, to themselves and as a witness to others.

One day, on the way to pray in the temple, Peter and John were asked for money by a crippled man begging at the temple gate. Peter healed the man in the name of Jesus of Nazareth and the man accompanied them to the temple courts walking and jumping and praising God. This attracted a crowd, and recognising an opportunity for spiritual healing, Peter told them that the man had been made strong through faith in Jesus, the one they had crucified and God had raised from death. It is important to make sure other people realise any help we can give them is because God makes it possible for us to help. We need to be signposts to God, not leaning posts for other people.

Although many more people believed in Jesus because of the healing and Peter's teaching, the Jewish authorities were alarmed by it, and imprisoned Peter and John overnight. The next day Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, had the opportunity to address the Sanhedrin, who were astonished at the courage of these unschooled, ordinary men and noted that they had been with Jesus. We are not eyewitnesses, like Peter and John were, but when we spend time with him, reading the Bible and praying, it makes a difference to us too.

Although the Sanhedrin accepted that an outstanding miracle had been performed, they had closed minds, and were only interested in stopping this new faith from spreading. To achieve this, they ordered Peter and John not to speak or teach in the name of Jesus. Peter and John replied that they could not help speaking about the things they had seen and heard, and were compelled to obey God, when his laws conflicted with human laws. Jesus teaches us that whenever possible we should obey the laws of the land we live in, but if they are contrary to God's will, revealed in his word, we have to be prepared to stand up for our faith.

When Jesus renamed Simon as Peter, no one else would have seen him as a rock of faith. After being filled with the Holy Spirit, Peter became the rock that Jesus had named him. The same Holy Spirit is in us, let us allow him to work in us making us the followers Jesus has called us to be.

Suggested Hymns

All hymn numbers quoted are from *Together in Song, Australian Hymn Book II*.

Theme: Jesus loves me this I know (229)

Study 1 – Called to Follow

Just as I am without one Plea (584)

Dear Father, Lord of Humankind (598)

O Jesus Saviour, grow in me (575)

Be Thou my vision (547)

Study 2 – Who do you say I am?

Fairest Lord Jesus (203)

Firmly I believe and truly (140)

The Servant King (256)

How sweet the name of Jesus sounds (223)

Study 3 – Failure and Forgiveness **Study 4 – Pentecost and Prison**

He walked on Earth showing glimpses of
heaven (260)

And now, O Father, mindful of the love (519)

I'm not ashamed to own my Lord (562)

Here, gracious Lord, we see you face to face
(516)

At the name of Jesus (231)

To God be the Glory (147)

Just as I am without one plea (584)

Breathe on me, breath of God (407)

Appendix

Presenting a Bible Study in the form of *1 to 1 in Action* at an MU Branch meeting

As an alternative to presenting all the Bible Studies as a series of questions, the *1 to 1 in Action* method can be used for one Study to allow you to share this very useful technique of Bible Study with your branch members. Once your members have experienced this method at a branch meeting they have a tool to use in other situations as well. So you are not just studying the Bible on one day but equipping them for the future as well.

I have provided an overall plan for a branch meeting which would last for approximately one and a half hours. However the suggested plan can be changed to suit your members' preferences and needs.

I have chosen two key passages for each Bible Study of the Peter series. *Passage A* is to be used first as a larger group (up to 8-10 people per group), so the members can practice and see how it works. Then *Passage B* is to be used in pairs by the branch members so they experience sharing with one other person. These two experiences are essential for the members to develop confidence in the method and in their ability to use it. Please don't try to just describe the process without having everyone try it themselves.

The page with the description of *1 to 1 in Action* is designed to be read out to describe what the program is about and how to use it. Alternatively you can use your own words if you are already familiar with the method.

The sheets with the Bible passages on them also have the key *1 to 1 in Action* symbols printed. This is to allow room for people to write down the ideas that they have as they read the passages ready for sharing. It is helpful if people write the verse numbers down next to their comments. This makes it easier to refer back to the passage during the sharing time.

I have also included a sheet of bookmarks, which can be printed off on light card, or on paper and laminated. These are for distribution to the participants, as a future reminder.

My prayer is that this method will be used by MU branches and that members will then use it with others so the blessing received will spread.

With my love and prayers,

Wendy Mayer

Suggested Branch Program

1. Welcome and Announcements (10 mins)
2. Service (if desired) and Wave of Prayer (15 mins)
3. Description of what *I to I in Action* is, why it is worthwhile and how to use it. (You can use the description provided on the next page) (5 mins)
4. **Large Group discussion time (30 minutes)**
 - Divide the members into groups of 8-10 if possible. It's probably best not to make the groups less than 6 so small branches may prefer to stay in one group for this part.
 - Make sure everyone has a pen and paper and a copy of the Bible Passage the group will be discussing. This is also a good time to hand out the bookmarks.
 - *Note:* Line up leaders of the large groups ahead of time and give them a copy of the *General Instructions to Group Leaders* (see below) for them to read through and prepare.
 - The Meeting Leader prays asking for God's guidance as the groups look at his word.
 - *Passage A* is read out by one person. Use a microphone if needed.
 - The Meeting Leader needs to act as a timekeeper so if possible it is best if she doesn't also lead a group. However if she needs to be a group leader she will have to also announce the changes in activities.
 - Allow up to 10 minutes for group members to write notes and questions from the passage. Encourage them to note the verse numbers so they can easily refer to the passage during discussion. If everyone seems to be finished early check with them and move onto the discussion.
 - Ask the groups to discuss the ideas that people came up with starting at the beginning of the passage and working through. Allow approximately 15 minutes for this activity.
 - Give the members another 5 minutes to think about and write down one thing they have learnt from the passage. Has God shown them a truth they hadn't understood before, or is God prompting them to take some action? Whatever that is, it is between them and God, so they don't need to share it with others.
 - The meeting leader closes this time with prayer.
5. **Pairs Discussion time (30 minutes)**
 - Help the members to form into pairs. If there is an odd number of people the Meeting Leader could sit out or one group of 3 could form.
 - Have *Passage B* read out by one person for the group.
 - Ask the pairs to spend 10 minutes writing their comments on the passage.
 - Allow them 10-15 minutes to discuss their comments and questions with their partner.
 - Give them 5 minutes to decide on their action from the passage.
6. Close the meeting in prayer from the front of the room.
 - You may want to hand out a copy of the printed MU Bible Study and Summary for them to take home with them. This is optional depending on whether you think your members would like a copy so they have a complete set.

1 to 1 in Action – Description

This section can be read out at the meeting.

The What of *1 to 1 in Action*

The first thing to explain is what do we mean by *1 to 1 in Action*?

1 to 1 in Action is a method of reading the Bible. As its name suggests it is aimed at reading the Bible with one other person, but it also works very well in a larger group or just for one person reading the Bible by themselves.

The Why of *1 to 1 in Action*

The next question is why should we read the Bible with another person?

We get answers to this from the Bible itself:

- It's a delight. Psalm 119 expresses this in a number of ways:
 - *I rejoice in following your statutes as one rejoices in great riches.* (v14)
 - *I delight in your decrees; I will not neglect your word.* (v16)
 - *The law from your mouth is more precious to me than thousands of pieces of silver and gold.* (v72)
- It supports me in difficult times. Psalm 119 again:
 - *If your law had not been my delight, I would have perished in my affliction.* (v92)
 - *I will never forget your precepts, for by them you have preserved my life.* (v93)
 - *I long for your salvation, LORD, and your law gives me delight.* (v174)
- God's word is powerful to achieve its purpose.

¹⁰ *As the rain and the snow
come down from heaven,
and do not return to it
without watering the earth
and making it bud and flourish,
so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater,*
¹¹ *so is my word that goes out from my mouth:
It will not return to me empty,
but will accomplish what I desire
and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.* (Isaiah 55:10,11)

Is this your experience when you read God's word? If so, don't you want to share that with others? If not, wouldn't you like to find a way to study the Bible so that it does become your experience?

Here are: ten practical reasons for using *1 to 1 in Action*:

1. Focussed on the Bible, *not on someone else's interpretation.*
2. Anybody can do it, *no theological training is necessary.*
3. It doesn't require a structure, you don't have special questions to answer, *just three little symbols to remember.*
4. It's flexible, *you can make it take whatever time you have available.*
5. The authority stays with the Bible, *not with another person's views.*
6. Models being a humble learner, *you aren't the leader, you're both doing this together which means you're:*
7. *Sharing lives with the other person.*
8. It's educationally superior because it *encourages discovering for ourselves*
9. It equips us for independent learning, *we can do it alone as well.*
10. *It's a joy!*

Once we know how to do it, who could we read with?

There are Many options!

Firstly, pray that God will lead you to someone. Then start by considering:

- Female to female, recommended, unless it’s your spouse or a family member
- A young Christian in your church
- An established Christian who can encourage you and be encouraged
- A non-Christian who wants to find out more about the Bible
- People who have done evangelistic courses
- A neighbour, who might be prepared to share over a cup of tea or coffee
- An individual in a Bible Study group
- A family member, husband, children, or grandchildren
- Sunday School teachers, Youth Group leaders, anyone in a church leadership position who would appreciate encouragement

Write down three names:

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

So let’s get started with 1 to 1 in Action

What do we do when we meet?

- Chat
- Pray
- Read
- Write
- Share
- Pray
- Chat

You can do it. Read the nominated passage then answer the following questions:



What stands out for you in the passage?



Do you have any questions?



What do I learn about God or is there anything I should be doing?

General Instructions for Group Leaders

- Read the passage before the day yourself so you are familiar with it.
- On the day, the members will be divided into groups, and then the Meeting Leader prays for all the groups and the passage should be read aloud by one person at the microphone, if needed.
- Everyone will then be given around 10 minutes to go through the passage and write down things that occurred to them as they read, as well as any questions they had. If they all seem to be finished in less time, move onto the next step.
- Just before the allotted time runs out the Meeting Leader, who is also the timekeeper, needs to announce a *time remaining* and then asks the groups to discuss the ideas that people came up with, starting at the beginning of the passage, and working through.
- Be prepared to start off the discussion in your group by talking about something from the first half of the passage that interested you, or made you think, or puzzled you. If the group is large, people might be reluctant to start talking at the beginning, but I've usually found discussion follows if you give an idea for others to comment on. But if someone else really wants to start off the discussion, let them!
- Again when time for this (about 10 minutes) runs out, the Meeting Leader asks the groups to finish discussions. It doesn't matter if the group hasn't finished the entire passage; this is a practice of techniques as well as a Bible Study.
- Then there will be another 5 minutes for people to decide and write down one thing they have learnt from the passage. Has God shown them a truth they hadn't understood before, or is God prompting them to take some action? Whatever that is, it is between them and God, so they don't need to share it with others.
- Finally, the group leaders will close in prayer for their groups.
- The Meeting Leader then asks everyone to get into pairs to repeat the exercise with the next passage. Please help the people in your group find a pair and make sure if anyone is unpaired, you find a partner for them from another group.
- The passage for the pairs to discuss is best read out by one person for the entire group, then the pairs are given 10 minutes to write down their ideas and questions. The Meeting Leader again needs to be the timekeeper and call out the times when changes need to be made.
- As there will be a number of pairs, it is best for the Meeting Leader to close the session in prayer, rather than asking each pair to pray.

Study 1 – Called to Follow (1 to 1 in Action version)

Passage A: John 1:35-42

³⁵ The next day John was there again with two of his disciples. ³⁶ When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, “Look, the Lamb of God!”

³⁷ When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. ³⁸ Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, “What do you want?”

They said, “Rabbi” (which means “Teacher”), “where are you staying?”

³⁹ “Come,” he replied, “and you will see.”

So they went and saw where he was staying, and they spent that day with him. It was about four in the afternoon.

⁴⁰ Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. ⁴¹ The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, “We have found the Messiah” (that is, the Christ). ⁴² And he brought him to Jesus.

Jesus looked at him and said, “You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas” (which, when translated, is Peter).^a

^a Cephas (Aramaic) and Peter (Greek) both mean rock.

Also read: Mark 1:14-20

¹⁴ After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. ¹⁵ “The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!”

¹⁶ As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. ¹⁷ “Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will send you out to fish for people.” ¹⁸ At once they left their nets and followed him.

¹⁹ When he had gone a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat, preparing their nets. ²⁰ Without delay he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him.



What stands out for you in the passage?

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Do you have any questions?



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What do I learn about God or is there anything I should be doing? *(Personal)*

Passage B: Luke 5:1-11

¹ One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret, the people were crowding around him and listening to the word of God. ² He saw at the water’s edge two boats, left there by the fishermen, who were washing their nets. ³ He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from shore. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat.

⁴ When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, “Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch.”

⁵ Simon answered, “Master, we’ve worked hard all night and haven’t caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets.”

⁶ When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break.

⁷ So they signalled their partners in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink.

⁸ When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus’ knees and said, “Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!” ⁹ For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken,

¹⁰ and so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon’s partners.

Then Jesus said to Simon, “Don’t be afraid; from now on you will fish for people.” ¹¹ So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him.

Also read: Luke 6:12-16

¹² One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God.

¹³ When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them, whom he also designated apostles: ¹⁴ Simon (whom he named Peter), his brother Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, ¹⁵ Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Simon who was called the Zealot,

¹⁶ Judas son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.



What stands out for you in the passage?

Do you have any questions?





What do I learn about God or is there anything I should be doing? (*Personal*)

Study 2 – Who do you say I am? (1 to 1 in Action version)

Passage A: Matthew 14:22-34

²² Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. ²³ After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. Later that night, he was there alone, ²⁴ and the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it.

²⁵ Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. ²⁶ When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. “It’s a ghost,” they said, and cried out in fear.

²⁷ But Jesus immediately said to them: “Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.”

²⁸ “Lord, if it’s you,” Peter replied, “tell me to come to you on the water.”

²⁹ “Come,” he said.

Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. ³⁰ But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, “Lord, save me!”

³¹ Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. “You of little faith,” he said, “why did you doubt?”

³² And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. ³³ Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.”

³⁴ When they had crossed over, they landed at Gennesaret.



What stands out for you in the passage?

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Do you have any questions?

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What do I learn about God or is there anything I should be doing? (Personal)

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Passage B: Matthew 16:13-17, 21-28

¹³ When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?”

¹⁴ They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”

¹⁵ “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?”

¹⁶ Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”

¹⁷ Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven.

²¹ From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.

²² Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. “Never, Lord!” he said. “This shall never happen to you!”

²³ Jesus turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.”

²⁴ Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ²⁵ For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. ²⁶ What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? ²⁷ For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father’s glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what they have done.

²⁸ “Truly I tell you, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.”



What stands out for you in the passage?

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Do you have any questions?

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What do I learn about God or is there anything I should be doing? (Personal)

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Study 3 – Failure and Forgiveness (1 to 1 in Action version)

Passage A: Matthew 26:31-46, 55-56

³¹ Then Jesus told them, “This very night you will all fall away on account of me, for it is written: “I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.”

³² But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee.”

³³ Peter replied, “Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will.”

³⁴ “Truly I tell you,” Jesus answered, “this very night, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times.”

³⁵ But Peter declared, “Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you.” And all the other disciples said the same.

³⁶ Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, “Sit here while I go over there and pray.” ³⁷ He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. ³⁸ Then he said to them, “My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me.”

³⁹ Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.”

⁴⁰ Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. “Couldn’t you men keep watch with me for one hour?” he asked Peter. ⁴¹ “Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

⁴² He went away a second time and prayed, “My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done.”

⁴³ When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. ⁴⁴ So he left them and went away once more and prayed the third time, saying the same thing.

⁴⁵ Then he returned to the disciples and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and resting? Look, the hour has come, and the Son of Man is delivered into the hands of sinners. ⁴⁶ Rise, let us go! Here comes my betrayer!”

⁵⁵ In that hour Jesus said to the crowd, “Am I leading a rebellion, that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture me? Every day I sat in the temple courts teaching, and you did not arrest me. ⁵⁶ But this has all taken place that the writings of the prophets might be fulfilled.” Then all the disciples deserted him and fled.



What stands out for you in the passage?

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Do you have any questions?



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What do I learn about God or is there anything I should be doing? *(Personal)*

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Passage B: Matthew 26:69-75

⁶⁹ Now Peter was sitting out in the courtyard, and a servant girl came to him. “You also were with Jesus of Galilee,” she said.

⁷⁰ But he denied it before them all. “I don’t know what you’re talking about,” he said.

⁷¹ Then he went out to the gateway, where another servant girl saw him and said to the people there, “This fellow was with Jesus of Nazareth.”

⁷² He denied it again, with an oath: “I don’t know the man!”

⁷³ After a little while, those standing there went up to Peter and said, “Surely you are one of them; your accent gives you away.”

⁷⁴ Then he began to call down curses, and he swore to them, “I don’t know the man!”

Immediately a rooster crowed. ⁷⁵ Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken: “Before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times.” And he went outside and wept bitterly

Also read: John 21:12-19

¹² Jesus said to them, “Come and have breakfast.” None of the disciples dared ask him, “Who are you?” They knew it was the Lord. ¹³ Jesus came, took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. ¹⁴ This was now the third time Jesus appeared to his disciples after he was raised from the dead.

¹⁵ When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?”

“Yes, Lord,” he said, “you know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “Feed my lambs.”

¹⁶ Again Jesus said, “Simon son of John, do you love me?”

He answered, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “Take care of my sheep.”

¹⁷ The third time he said to him, “Simon son of John, do you love me?”

Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, “Do you love me?” He said, “Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “Feed my sheep. ¹⁸ Very truly I tell you, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go.” ¹⁹ Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, “Follow me!”



What stands out for you in the passage?

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Do you have any questions?

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What do I learn about God or is there anything I should be doing? (*Personal*)

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Study 4 – Pentecost and Prison (1 to 1 in Action version)

Passage A: Acts 3:1-16

¹ One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer—at three in the afternoon. ² Now a man crippled from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going into the temple courts. ³ When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money. ⁴ Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said, “Look at us!” ⁵ So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them.

⁶ Then Peter said, “Silver or gold I do not have, but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.” ⁷ Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man’s feet and ankles became strong. ⁸ He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God. ⁹ When all the people saw him walking and praising God, ¹⁰ they recognized him as the same man who used to sit begging at the temple gate called Beautiful, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

¹¹ While the beggar held on to Peter and John, all the people were astonished and came running to them in the place called Solomon’s Colonnade. ¹² When Peter saw this, he said to them: “Men of Israel, why does this surprise you? Why do you stare at us as if by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? ¹³ The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus. You handed him over to be killed, and you disowned him before Pilate, though he had decided to let him go. ¹⁴ You disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked that a murderer be released to you. ¹⁵ You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead.

We are witnesses of this. ¹⁶ By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus’ name and the faith that comes through him that has given this complete healing to him, as you can all see.



What stands out for you in the passage?

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Do you have any questions?

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What do I learn about God or is there anything I should be doing? (Personal)

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Passage B: Acts 4:1-22

¹ The priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees came up to Peter and John while they were speaking to the people. ² They were greatly disturbed because the apostles were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead. ³ They seized Peter and John, and because it was evening, they put them in jail until the next day. ⁴ But many who heard the message believed, and the number of men grew to about five thousand.

⁵ The next day the rulers, elders and teachers of the law met in Jerusalem. ⁶ Annas the high priest was there, and so were Caiaphas, John, Alexander and the other men of the high priest’s family. ⁷ They had Peter and John brought before them and began to question them: “By what power or what name did you do this?”

⁸ Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: “Rulers and elders of the people! ⁹ If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a cripple and are asked how he was healed, ¹⁰ then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. ¹¹ He is “the stone you builders rejected, which has become the capstone. ¹² Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”

¹³ When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus. ¹⁴ But since they could see the man who had been healed standing there with them, there was nothing they could say.

¹⁵ So they ordered them to withdraw from the Sanhedrin and then conferred together. ¹⁶ “What are we going to do with these men?” they asked. “Everybody living in Jerusalem knows they have done an outstanding miracle, and we cannot deny it. ¹⁷ But to stop this thing from spreading any further among the people, we must warn these men to speak no longer to anyone in this name.”

¹⁸ Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. ¹⁹ But Peter and John replied, “Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God’s sight to obey you rather than God. ²⁰ For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.”

²¹ After further threats they let them go. They could not decide how to punish them, because all the people were praising God for what had happened. ²² For the man who was miraculously healed was over forty years old.

Note: The Sadducees were a group within the Jewish faith who didn’t believe in resurrection after death.



What stands out for you in the passage?

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Do you have any questions?



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What do I learn about God or is there anything I should be doing? (*Personal*)

**1 to 1
in Action**



“Let the word of
Christ dwell in you
richly as you teach
and admonish one
another with all
wisdom”

Colossians 3:16

**1 to 1
in Action**



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**1 to 1
in Action**



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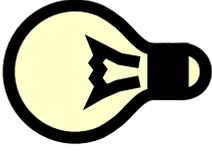
**1 to 1
in Action**



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**1 to 1
in Action**



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