**Live in Community**

 Small Group Study

**Volume Overview**

**Pursue Jesus**

“If you look for me wholeheartedly, you will find me.” ([Jeremiah 29:13](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Je29.13))

*Jesus’ offer is remarkably clear: If we look for Jesus, we’ll find Him. He’s not hiding from us, but closely connecting with Him does take us being intentional. We’re called to follow Him, to pursue Him. In this volume, we’ll look at how individuals pursued Jesus through the challenges of their circumstances. Pursuing Jesus is not only a mental exercise for personal growth, but it also means living out our faith in tangible ways: showing up, listening carefully, receiving grace, and trusting Him.*

**Session Overview**

**Trust Him**

**Biblical Encounter:** Peter Walks toward Jesus on the Water ([Matthew 14:22–33](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mt14.22-33))

**Outcome**: Don’t let fear keep you from trusting Jesus.

*In this session, we’ll see that fear sometimes causes us to question our faith in Jesus and His ability. When our focus is on what we fear, we lose sight of trusting in Him. We need to remember that fear is one of the greatest and most often used tactics of the enemy. In the biblical encounter, we’ll see how when Peter had faith, he experienced the miraculous. But when Peter let fear take over, he was limited to doing only what he could do by himself. Jesus wants us to walk in faith, but He is willing to step in when our life sinks back into fear.*

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| *First time leading* Live *for Adults? Check out the* [Facilitator Guide](https://0b769b0ed3569ef9d18b-f88d8272f61086866d50d048b43ef630.ssl.cf2.rackcdn.com/sites/biblengagementproject/Listen_Facilitator_Guide.pdf)*.* |

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**Engage**

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| **QUESTION**If you went to an amusement park, what kind of rides or activities would you go to first? |

Many people love to do things that bring a thrill, like riding a daring roller coaster or watching a suspenseful movie. But there’s a big difference between fearing things that give a rush of adrenaline and fearing things that keep us from moving forward in life. Life experiences can leave us with long-lasting fears or trauma. But walking with Jesus can bring so many changes to our life. Regardless of our circumstances or experiences, we can grow as we pursue Him and learn to trust Him.

**Watch**

As we watch this video, think about your answer to this question: When have you struggled to believe Jesus was with you during a difficult time?



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| **QUESTION**When have you struggled to believe Jesus was with you during a difficult time? |

**Consider What the Bible Says**

As Jesus’ ministry progressed, people increasingly either loved Him or hated Him. In [Matthew 14](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mt14), we read that His relative and faithful follower, John the Baptist, was beheaded by the wicked King Herod. Jesus tried to be alone after He heard the news, but He was followed by a large crowd of people as usual. His disciples wanted to send them away, but Jesus had compassion on them.

As the chapter continues, what happened next was a tremendous miracle. Jesus took one lunch and multiplied it to feed the entire crowd of thousands of people. Jesus’ disciples saw all of this and even helped pass out the food and collect the leftovers. This short span of time was packed with major events for Jesus and His closest followers before He sent them on ahead across the Sea of Galilee.

**Did You Know?**

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| Much of Jesus’ ministry took place in the area around the Sea of Galilee. This body of water is also noted elsewhere as the Sea of Tiberias, Lake of Gennesaret, and Lake Kinnereth. Located in northern Israel, this large lake takes about two hours to sail across. Because the sea is surrounded by hills, sailors can experience sudden violent storms1 with waves up to ten feet high.2 |

**The Disciples Obey Jesus**

Read [Matthew 14:22–24](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mt14.22-24).

The disciples all obeyed Jesus’ directions for them. They immediately got into the boat to go to the other side of the lake. They did what Jesus said and were right where Jesus wanted them to be. Even so, the wind and the waves began to pick up and fight against the boat. Sometimes it can feel disconcerting when circumstances end up being more difficult than we expect, especially when we know we have obeyed God. This encounter with Peter and the other disciples gives us an opportunity to think about how we might or might not trust Him in spite of our circumstances.

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| **QUESTION**After a long day of ministry, how do you think the disciples were feeling as they got into the boat to go to the other side? |

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| **QUESTION**How do you think the disciples reacted as the storm began to get stronger? |

**Peter Walks toward Jesus on the Water**

Read [Matthew 14:25–29](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mt14.25-29).

We know from other Bible accounts that some of the disciples, including Peter and his family, were fishermen. He was used to being on boats and on the water all the time. We also know that Peter had a strong personality and was not afraid to speak his mind. Still, we read that he and all the others were terrified and fearful when they saw something coming toward them across the water in the middle of the night with the storm making it even harder to see. The irrational fear immediately overcoming their mind led them to conclude that the strange sight might actually be a ghost. But Peter believed Jesus when He spoke to them. Peter put aside his fear to miraculously walk on the water toward Jesus.

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| **QUESTION**What do you think the conversation on the boat might have been like when the disciples saw something on the water? |

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| **QUESTION**What do you think was going through Peter’s mind as he walked toward Jesus? |

**Peter Takes His Eyes off Jesus**

Read [Matthew 14:30–33](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mt14.30-33).

Peter did something miraculous when he walked on the water toward Jesus. He believed in who Jesus was and what He said. As a result, Peter was filled with faith that overcame his fear at first. But as soon as Peter took his eyes off Jesus and put them on his difficult circumstances, he began to sink.

Jesus saved Peter when he cried out, but imagine what might have happened if Peter hadn’t been distracted by the waves and wind. He might not have sunk. Perhaps all the other disciples would have stepped out of the boat, too. We won’t know. But we do know that Peter did something bold that the other disciples chose not to—he didn’t let fear keep him in the boat. And from the Bible and church history, we learn the trend continued as Peter became a great leader in the Early Church.

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| **QUESTION**In what way might Peter’s faith in Jesus have changed that day? |

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| **QUESTION**What question would you like to ask Peter about his experiences? |

**Reflect**

**Don’t let fear keep you from trusting Jesus.**

In this passage about Peter, we can see how Jesus helped His disciples discover that life is not always easy, but that He is always good. Their obedience to Jesus led the disciples into rough waters. But in a short amount of time, the disciples saw Jesus miraculously override the laws of nature twice. Through it all, Peter and the other disciples learned that Jesus is faithful in spite of how circumstances appear. Their response was to worship Him.

As we follow Jesus, we can see His faithfulness to us, too. Are things from your past or current circumstances causing you to feel fear in moving forward? Keep your eyes on Jesus and trust His Word to you. Like Peter, let Jesus build your faith so that it overcomes your fear.

**Listen to God**

Let’s pause and listen to what God might want to say to us about what we have read and shared. Be silent for a few moments and reflect on the following questions. Respond to the one that most resonates with what God is saying to you now. Then complete the others during Day 1 of your devotion time this week.

**Personal Reflection Questions**

*Record your answers to the following questions in the space provided or in your personal journal.*

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| **QUESTION**If you had been in the boat that day, what would you have done? |

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| **QUESTION**How can you keep your eyes on Jesus when circumstances make it difficult? |

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| **QUESTION**What is an area in your own life that fills you with fear? What might it look like for you to “step out of the boat”? |

**Activate**

Peter had known Jesus for a while before he stepped out of the boat. But that day he knew Jesus in a different way. Peter’s faith in Jesus helped him overcome his fear, and he was able to do something great because he trusted Jesus.

**Challenge**

This week, step out in faith to try something you’ve been afraid to do. Maybe it will be to ask someone at work if you can pray for them. Or to share what God has done in your life with a family member. Perhaps it could be to give generously in a missions offering. Let God stretch and use your faith in Him to bless someone else.

**Prayer Requests**

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| Note any requests from the group and pray together. Also remember to pray for them during the week. |

Jesus helps us learn to trust Him as we walk with Him: not just in easy times, but in difficult circumstances, too. Let Jesus speak to your heart about trusting Him in everything. One way to listen to Him is through the Bible. Check out the personal devotions that have been provided as an extension of this discussion.

Endnotes

 Charles McCracken, “The Sea of Galilee, Part Two,” *Israel My Glory*, May/June 2014, accessed April 28, 2022, <https://israelmyglory.org/article/the-sea-of-galilee-part-two/>,.

2Lorence G. Collins, “Calming of the wind and waves by Jesus or the calming of frantic disciples by Jesus?” August 15, 2014, accessed April 28, 2022, <http://www.csun.edu/~vcgeo005/Calming.pdf>.

**Live on Your Own**

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| *Before you begin each devotion, pray and ask God to speak to you through His Word. Record your answers to the following questions in the space provided or in your personal journal.* |

**Day 1: Peter Walks toward Jesus on the Water**

Read [Matthew 14:22–33](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mt14.22-33).

Look back over Live in Community and complete your responses to the Personal Reflection Questions. Plan how to complete the Activate component if you haven’t already done so. If time permits, reread the Scripture too.

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| **QUESTION**What is God saying to you about letting faith in Him overcome your fear? |

**Live on Your Own**

**Day 2: Trusting God for Provision**

Read [2 Kings 4:1–7](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.2Ki4.1-7).

As we learn more about trusting God, it’s helpful to read about others who have done the same thing. In this Old Testament story, a woman who was all out of options asked the prophet of God what she should do. She didn’t have to ask anyone for help. She could have just suffered in silence and given in to her awful circumstances. But she trusted God with her situation.

Then, she fully obeyed everything she was instructed to do. If she had brought just one or two jars and stopped, that would have been all the oil she had. Instead, she and her sons had faith to find as many jars as they could find—and every single jar was filled! Her great faith and obedience led to a miracle in an impossible situation.

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| **QUESTION**If the woman in the story had asked your advice about her situation, what might you have told her to do? |

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| **QUESTION**How do you think her sons’ faith in God was impacted by this situation? |

**Live on Your Own**

**Day 3: Trusting God for Healing**

Read [Mark 5:25–34](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mk5.25-34).

In the time and culture when this story happened, it would have been unthinkable for a person who was bleeding to go out into a crowd where she might touch a lot of people. Having an issue of blood made a Jewish woman unclean, and touching anyone else made them unclean, too ([Leviticus 15:19–33](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Le15.19-33)).

But this woman had suffered long enough to make her desperate for Jesus’ help. She’d heard of the miracles and healings He had done wherever He went. She believed that He could help her even though no one else had been able to. Her fear of what everyone would think did not hold her back. And she was right! Just one touch of His robe made her whole. In the end, approaching Jesus made an incredible change in her life.

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| **QUESTION**What might other people have thought about this woman who touched Jesus? |

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| **QUESTION**If Jesus were coming to your town tomorrow, what need would you bring to Him? |

**Live on Your Own**

**Day 4: Trusting God for Others**

Read [Matthew 8:5–13](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mt8.5-13).

The centurion was someone with authority over others in the Roman world. It might have been seen as weakness by his fellow soldiers for him to talk to the religious teacher. Their job was just supposed to be keeping the peace. Not only that, but he wasn’t asking Jesus for himself. Instead he asked for help on behalf of his servant. So many things in this scenario could have kept the centurion from bothering Jesus with his request. But his faith overcame his fears, and Jesus commended him for it. Because the soldier trusted Jesus, his servant was healed, even from some distance away.

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| **QUESTION**What kind of conversations might have happened at the centurion’s house later that day? |

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| **QUESTION**Who in your own life could you bring to Jesus, like the centurion brought his servant? |

**Live on Your Own**

**Day 5: Trusting God Forever**

Read [Luke 23:26–43](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Lk23.26-43).

After some likely terrible choices, a man was facing his final moments on earth when he was being executed for his crimes. He could have remained bitter like the other criminal on a cross that day, scoffing at Jesus. He could have joined in with the soldiers and the crowd mocking Jesus. But in one of the most encouraging conversations of all time, the criminal seemed to recognize Jesus right at the very end.

Maybe he’d seen Jesus teaching or healing people at some point. He knew Jesus was more than just another person being rightfully executed. He humbly asked Jesus to remember him. With that small request, Jesus promised the man that he would be with Him that day in paradise. The criminal’s faith in Jesus overcame his regret.

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| **QUESTION**At what moment do you think the criminal actually had a change of heart? |

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| **QUESTION**How can you compare this man’s response to the others who were at Jesus’ cross that day? |