**Live in Community**

 Small Group Study

**Volume Overview**

**Get Going**

[Jesus] said, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you.” ([John 20:21](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Jn20.21))

*The gift of the Holy Spirit was sent so that we might have power—power to go and make disciples. Some go to the farthest corners of the globe. Some only cross the street in front of their house. Still, God’s people always go. They go to work, school, grocery stores, kids’ soccer games, and family reunions. And wherever they go, they take their witness of Jesus with them. True believers live going and carrying out His mission.*

**Session Overview**

**Let Go**

**Biblical Encounter:** The First Disciples Leave Everything ([Luke 5:1–11](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Lk5.1-11))

**Outcome:** Choose Jesus’ mission over your current situation.

*You may know Peter as one of Jesus’ disciples. You may have even heard him referred to as St. Peter. But Peter’s life before he met Jesus was quite different. When Jesus engaged with him, Peter’s life went in a completely different direction. This is the story for us as believers too. When we stop living for ourself and begin living for Christ, we learn to let go of former things and our purpose changes. We now serve at His pleasure. Our purpose requires intentional action and a focus on sharing the good news of Jesus with others.*

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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). |

To access session content and videos from a computer, visit: [BibleEngagementProject.com/downloads](https://bibleengagementproject.com/downloads)

**Engage**

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| **QUESTION**What’s the most extreme, positive change you’ve ever seen in someone’s life or circumstances?  |

Big life changes can be exciting, inspiring, and even entertaining, especially as we observe them in people we know. There’s always a story to discover as we watch a person’s circumstances, behavior, or health take a wild or unexpected turn. Sometimes in the Bible, we see a complete shift in a person on the heart level—someone who was going a completely different direction until God interrupted them. Peter’s story in [Luke 5](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Lk5) is one example of this.

**Watch**

As we watch this video, think about your answer to this question: What might you need to let go of to follow Jesus wholeheartedly?



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| **QUESTION**What might you need to let go of to follow Jesus wholeheartedly? |

**Consider What the Bible Says**

Today’s encounter happened early in Jesus’ ministry. He had been traveling around the region of Galilee, teaching and preaching. Word about Him was spreading across the land and crowds were beginning to gather. In [Luke 5:1](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Lk5.1), the crowds were pressing close to hear His words. No modern amplifiers or microphones existed in that day, so Jesus had to project His voice over a large area. One way to do this was to teach from a boat on the water so the crowds could both see and hear Him. It seems that using this specific boat had a greater purpose.

**Did You Know?**

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| Although not the norm for the ancient world, fishing in the Sea of Galilee was an incredibly prosperous industry. Both archaeology and documentation tell us that fish from the lake were brought to the city of Magdala (also known as Taricheae) where they were salted for preservation and shipped to Jews throughout the Roman world. The salt used was an incredibly valuable resource, at times even serving as a form of currency in the Roman Empire, The actions of some of Jesus’ followers to leave the lucrative fishing profession speaks highly of their desire to follow Him. |

**Peter Let Go**

Read [Luke 5:1–3](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Lk5.1-3).

We don’t know what Peter (also known as Simon) was thinking or feeling, but he must have been exhausted. He had been fishing all night. Maybe he was almost finished cleaning his nets and was eager to go home. In spite of the situation, something made Peter say yes to letting Jesus use his boat to teach the crowds from. Maybe Peter was one of the members of the crowd who was also having trouble hearing Jesus teach. Maybe he was honored to help Jesus’ ministry. We don’t know exactly what prompted Peter to yield to this simple request, but we do know that Peter let go of his resources and said yes to Jesus.

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| **QUESTION**How might Peter’s life have turned out differently if he had denied Jesus’ request to use his boat? |

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| **QUESTION**Do you think Peter said yes to Jesus willingly or do you think he hesitated? |

**Peter Took a Risk**

Read [Luke 5:4–7](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Lk5.4-7).

In first-century Israel, fishermen caught fish from their boats using large nets. They often worked at night so the nets weren’t as visible to the fish. We can only imagine how exhausted and defeated Peter and his partners were after catching nothing that night. Then they had to use more energy on the unpleasant task of cleaning their nets of debris instead of fish. They had hoped for a good catch to reward their hours of tough manual labor, but they had nothing to show for it. Since they were likely tired and disappointed, trusting the word of this nonfisherman Teacher must have seemed like a risk. Even though he doubted that he would catch any fish, Peter agreed to go back out and try again.

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| **QUESTION**How would you have responded to Jesus if He’d asked you to go back out and fish some more? |

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| **QUESTION**What do you think pushed Peter to say yes to Jesus’ command to go back out to fish? |

When Peter pushed his boat into the water to help Jesus, it’s likely that he didn’t expect anything in return. But catching fish wasn’t Jesus’ only purpose. Sure, Jesus wanted to meet a need in Peter’s life. But Jesus had so much more in mind for Peter. When Jesus tells us to give things up for Him, He often has something better for us in return. But first, we have to let go and take the risk to trust Him.

**Peter Was Awestruck**

Read [Luke 5:8–9](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Lk5.8-9).

After this miraculous catch of fish, Peter became painfully aware of his sinful nature. He knew he was in the presence of Someone so mighty and holy that He could cause such a turn of events. Peter was awestruck by what Jesus had done for him.

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| **QUESTION**If you were Peter, what would have been the most amazing thing to you about this turn of events? |

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| **QUESTION**Why do you think Peter responded to Jesus’ miracle with such a great realization of his sin? |

**Jesus Called Peter**

Read [Luke 5:10–11](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Lk5.10-11).

Peter must have been completely shocked by this revelation from Jesus. Peter had none of the typical qualifications of someone that a teacher like Jesus might invite to follow Him. Peter was a fisherman, not a scholar! But Jesus told Peter not to be afraid because He now had a new purpose for Peter’s life: to fish for people instead of fish! Amazingly, Peter immediately left everything behind and began to follow Jesus.

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| **QUESTION**Do you think Peter understood what Jesus meant by “fish for people”? Why or why not? |

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| **QUESTION**What do you think compelled Peter to leave things behind to follow Jesus? |

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| **QUESTION**What’s something Jesus has directed you to give up? Did you follow through quickly, slowly, or not at all? |

**Peter on Mission**

It’s striking that Peter was quick to leave the fishing trade he knew well to follow Jesus.

We don’t know for sure what motivated Peter. But he certainly had a new mission. He had to make some huge shifts in his life to fulfill the mission Jesus had for him. This required his time, energy, and resources to take on a new purpose.

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| **QUESTION**List some things you imagine Peter may have left behind in order to follow Jesus. |

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| **QUESTION**What do you think Peter’s friends and family thought of this major life-shift? |

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| **QUESTION**What shifts have you made in your life to fulfill God’s purposes for you? |

**Reflect**

**Choose Jesus’ mission over your current situation.**

Peter received a very specific call from Jesus: to be a fisher of people. This was a phrase Peter could relate to based on his life experience. Jesus wanted Peter to gather people to Him, so they would be able to hear about His love and forgiveness. But to fulfill this call, Peter had to go! He needed to learn what he could from Jesus, give his time and resources, and then take action.

Jesus’ call for us to follow Him can often feel extreme. He wants and deserves *all* of our life—not just bits and pieces or even just the biggest piece. Perhaps you, like Peter, have been awestruck by Jesus. Maybe He’s done something extreme or life altering for you. Maybe you’ve been awestruck by the power of His sacrifice on the Cross for your sins. But have you taken that next step? Like Peter, have you answered the call of Jesus to follow Him, to be on mission with Him to “fish for people?”

To love God is to obey Him ([1 John 5:3](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.1Jn5.3)). Peter had to let go of the familiar, the steady and reliable, and even cultural conventions in order to follow Jesus. Jesus’ call requires your action, intention, and purpose. It will require your time, energy, and resources. It may require you to leave some things behind. But what Jesus gives in return is so much more than we can ever give Him.

**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**What in Peter’s story do you relate to the most? |

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| **QUESTION**What in your life do you need to let go of to follow Jesus and His purpose for you? |

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| **QUESTION**How can you partner with Jesus in your daily life to connect people to Him? |

**Activate**

Understanding Jesus’ mission and purposes for our life is critical to helping us know how to live for Him. He wants all of us: our affections, our time, our resources, our giftings and abilities. He also wants us to be awestruck by Him and by what He is doing in and through our life. Does your heart fully belong to Him? Is there anything you need to give up in order to fully follow Him?

**Challenge**

If the Holy Spirit brought anything to mind that you need to change or give up in order to fully follow Jesus and His mission to reach people, write it down. Pray over it and offer it to Jesus. Trust Him to fill the gap and give you what you need. Allow Him to equip you with His resources to fulfill His purposes.

**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’ mission requires us to let go of our own agenda and offer our whole life to His purposes. We always want to listen to Him through His Word, both in community and individually. The personal devotions that follow have been provided to help you further explore what it means to let go and choose to follow Jesus.

**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: The First Disciples Leave Everything**

Read [Luke 5:1–11](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Lk5.1-11).

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 choosing Jesus’ mission over your current situation? |

**Live on Your Own**

**Day 2: Letting Go**

Read [Romans 12:1–5](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ro12.1-5).

Just as Peter had to let go of things to follow Jesus, so do we. Letting go of the parts of our life that do not please God is another way we worship Him. We let go of our selfish thoughts. We give up the idea that we can do it better or that we’re in control. Instead, God wants us to embrace who He is and remember all He has done for us. Then we can respond to Him in awe and live a life full of worship, offering our whole self as a sacrifice to Him.

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| **QUESTION**How have you been awestruck by God in your faith journey? How about in this past week? |

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| **QUESTION**What should our response be to what God has done for us? Does your life reflect that response to Him? |

**Live on Your Own**

**Day 3: Jesus Calls Us to Go**

Read [Matthew 28:16–20](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mt28.16-20).

The Great Commission in [Matthew 28](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mt28) is similar to Peter’s call to fish for men. Jesus gave instructions for all of us to make disciples of all nations and to teach them how to obey Him. We can’t just sit around and wait for that to happen. We must be intentional and actively go!

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| **QUESTION**How is God specifically calling you to go—to a neighbor, coworker, or a family member? Perhaps on a short-term missions trip? Something else? |

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| **QUESTION**God’s heart is for all the nations to know Him! How are you partnering with His heart for missions? |

**Live on Your Own**

**Day 4: Get Going on His Mission**

Read [Acts 1:1–8](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ac1.1-8).

Peter soaked in the teachings and life of Jesus in such a personal way. He heard the Great Commission straight from Jesus’ mouth. It’s exciting to read about all the ways God used Peter to fulfill His calling and purpose after Jesus returned to heaven. The Book of Acts highlights some of those events, including Peter’s preaching to crowds.

Peter couldn’t have fulfilled his mission without the power of the Holy Spirit. After Jesus went back to heaven, He gave the Holy Spirit in a new way. Jesus promised that we would receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon us in order to give us boldness in sharing Christ with others.

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| **QUESTION**How do you feel knowing that Jesus promised His Holy Spirit to help you be His witness? |

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| **QUESTION**How has the Holy Spirit helped you with boldness in past situations? |

**Live on Your Own**

**Day 5: Going with His Presence**

Read [John 14:23–27](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Jn14.23-27).

Along with Jesus’ call for us to go make disciples and the promise of the gift of the Holy Spirit, we’re given this powerful truth: Jesus’ presence is with us wherever we go! Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would teach us all we need to know and remind us of the things Jesus had said. In His presence, we can have peace of mind to help us not fear. As we go on mission with Him, we can be sure that He is with us. We can go with His presence!

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| **QUESTION**Describe what God’s presence feels like to you. |

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| **QUESTION**How does the knowledge of God’s presence help you to fulfill His purposes for your life? |