



All of us have a past and made bad choices. And though Jesus presently loves us and offers to cover our stains, our future is clear—we're still going to make mistakes. Though Jesus may wipe all of our stains away, the reality is that we still muck up our lives with sin-stains and bad choices. Can God still use us, even though we screw up and stain our lives again and again? Can God still use us in spite of our stains?

**BIG IDEA:** Jesus wants to use you with all your stains to impact others.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What has been the brightest moment in your life? What has been the darkest moment in your life?
2. Does God become bigger during brighter or darker moments in your life? How does your relationship with God change during certain/uncertain times?
3. *Read Mark 14:17-19, 27-31.* What were some of the different emotions that the disciples might have been experiencing while at dinner? How would you have responded to Jesus' statements if you were present?
4. *Read Mark 14:31.* "Even if I have to die with you," Peter insisted, "I will not deny you!" What scenario might Peter have had in mind when he told Jesus this (compare Luke 22:35-38; John 18:10)? What do you think was at the heart of his struggle?
5. Which is easier: fighting for Jesus or following Him into suffering? Why? Have you ever faced Peter's dilemma in your own life? How did it work out?
6. *Read Mark 14:66-72.* Can you describe a time when fear kept you from representing your faith in Jesus? Describe the situation and how you handled it. How did you feel?
7. How can times of adversity provide opportunities to tell about our faith in Jesus?
8. What are some ways we 'deny' Jesus in our daily lives?
9. *Read John 21:1-7.* What do you typically do when you are down, and things don't go the way you expected? Do you go to a specific place? Do a specific thing?
10. The disciples found themselves in this same kind of 'what do we do now?' spiritual limbo. What do you make of their decision to go fishing? What was their profession before meeting Jesus? Where did they meet Jesus? (*Read Matthew 4:18-20*)
11. *Read John 21:7.* Can Peter's response of impulsiveness—jumping in head first—ever square with mature Christianity? Why or why not? Under what conditions and situations do you find it called for?
12. What happens to those who lose (or never discover) their ability to cut loose with Jesus every now and then?
13. *Read John 21:8-17.* Fortunately, the denial wasn't the end of Peter's life or ministry. Why do you think Jesus asked Peter three times did he love Him? How does that correspond with Peter's denial?

### FOR FURTHER STUDY

14. Read these passages in Acts: *Acts 2:14-41, Acts 3, Acts 4:1-22.* Does this sound like the same Peter who denied Jesus? What has changed in Peter's circumstances? What do you think has changed inside Peter?
15. Read the following Bible verses:
  - Matthew 28:18-20
  - John 14:26-27
  - Acts 1:8
  - Romans 1:16-17
  - 1 Corinthians 2:3-5
  - 2 Corinthians 1:5-11
  - 2 Corinthians 4:7-10
  - Ephesians 6:10-13
16. How do these verses provide help in our struggle to remain faithful to Jesus? What resources has God provided to help us avoid 'falling away'?

### THINK ABOUT IT

Some of the brightest moments in our lives are the result of being stained and broken. When we can see that God is working through undesirable circumstances—even the ones we bring on ourselves—there is a sense of purpose and peace that emerges, because we know that God is still active during uncertain times and that God can still use us, in spite of our stains. Knowing this allows us to maintain hope and faith and keeps us from despair. We can know that God will never abandon us and that he can still use us.

### WHAT WILL YOU DO?

Are you carrying any guilt around with you? Is there anything that you need to come out and confess?

### CHANGING YOUR MIND

*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.* Acts 4:13