



PETER

SESSION 3

- **Main Passage:** Acts 1, Acts 2
 - **Purpose:** To examine the effects of a life led by and changed by the Holy Spirit.
 - **Session Snapshot:** From the moment of salvation, every Believer in Christ is indwelt with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit's presence in our lives should be evident to those around us and should lead us to a changed life marked by pointing others to Christ.
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GETTING STARTED

Kick-off your time together with a quick connection time or reviewing what you did in the last session.

FIRST, remind your group that this is week 3 of their video series on Peter and that it's part of a larger study looking at the real men of the Bible.

THEN, if you want to start with asking men for prayer requests, checking in on how their weeks have gone, or any other housekeeping tasks, do so.

FINALLY, if there are no questions or other input, transition into the *Digging In* section of your leader's guide.

DIGGING IN

Jump into the session by watching this week's video.

FIRST, play the video. You can access the video by logging into your Iron Hill Press account.

THEN, when the video is over, lead men in a short discussion based on what Rick covered. Feel free to come up with your own questions, or consider asking some similar to those below:

- **The Bible teaches that every believer is a new creation in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17); what are the things in your life that are new due to the Holy Spirit dwelling in you?**
- **Can you describe differences in your life before Christ versus after Christ has come into your life?**
- **After receiving the Holy Spirit, Peter's speech was bolder and pointed others to Christ; do you speak boldly for Jesus regularly? If not, what obstacles do you need to tear down to be a bold witness for Christ?**
- **Rick mentioned in the video that Peter was not trustworthy with the Gospel before being filled with the Holy Spirit. Can you share the Gospel effectively and concisely?**

- **Have you ever shared your faith with an unbeliever? What things can you improve on to clearly articulate the Gospel's truth when engaged in faith conversations with unbelievers?**
- **How can you be better equipped to clearly articulate and defend your faith?**
- **If your family or close friends were asked about your life, would they say that the Holy Spirit resides in you? If not, what areas of your life do you need to commit to Him completely?**

FINALLY, transition into the *Opening the Word* portion of your time together by saying something like the following:

- **The Holy Spirit is an equal part of the Triune God and resides in every believer in Christ. His presence in our lives should make a distinct change in our speech and behavior. Let's look at Acts 1 and 2 to further examine the differences the Holy Spirit made in the life of Peter.**

OPENING THE WORD

Spend time going deeper into a specific concept Rick introduced in the video.

FIRST, explain that you will take a more in-depth look at what it means to be changed by the Holy Spirit.

We must make sure your group has a good understanding of the context of the passage you'll be studying. Provide the context for the passage using the following bullet points:

- **Author:** Acts has long been held to be a letter from Luke, a Gentile physician, to a man named Theophilus, possibly a benefactor of some sort.
- **Time frame:** There is some debate over when Acts was written. The suggested dates are between 70 AD and 80 AD.
- **Purpose:** The Book of Acts is a second letter to Theophilus that tells the story of the early Church following Jesus' resurrection. The book begins with Jesus' ascension and His command of His followers to proclaim the Gospel in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. The rest of the book traces this journey as the early church leaders proclaim the Gospel and plant churches.

THEN, explain to the group that we are reading the account of the early church immediately after Jesus has died, resurrected, and then ascended to Heaven. To begin our study, we will look at Peter just before the Holy Spirit is given. Peter and the other remaining disciples are gathered together just after witnessing Jesus ascend to Heaven. Read or ask a volunteer to read Acts 1:14-16. Ask something like:

- **What were Peter and the other disciples and followers doing while gathered together?**
 - *Answer:* They were all praying.
- **What can we learn from their example?**
 - *Answer:* These Believers were certainly scared and uncertain as to what they should be doing. They had seen the resurrected Jesus for many days and then witnessed His ascension to Heaven. When they returned to Jerusalem and questioned what their next steps should be, they immediately started praying together. We learn from their example that prayer with other Believers should be a regular habit. They decided to pray first and foremost rather than, like we sometimes do, only praying as a last resort.
- **Who is the first to speak to the group, and what did he initially say? Why is this important?**
 - *Answer:* After several days of praying, Peter was the first to stand and address this gathering of Christ-followers. He starts his speech by saying that Scriptures had to be fulfilled, and he references the prophetic message of the Holy Spirit spoken over a thousand years earlier through King David.

Ask a volunteer to read the rest of Peter's speech in Acts 1:21-22, then ask:

- **What is Peter leading the group to do in this passage?**
 - *Answer:* Peter is looking for a replacement for Judas. He asks the group to consider someone who was a follower of Jesus during His earthly ministry to take Judas's place amongst the twelve apostles.
- **What is the overall tone and purpose of Peter's speech? What is surprisingly missing from this first speech to the group of Believers?**
 - *Answer:* Peter is accomplishing an important logistical task in his address to the early church. He is filling a leadership role that was vacated by the disciple who betrayed Jesus. Not to belittle this task, but it is important to see that Peter talks about the Holy Spirit and is not filled with the Holy Spirit. His speech is practical and matter-of-fact but is not passionate and does not motivate or challenge his audience. Surprisingly, Peter mentions virtually nothing about Jesus in his speech. Peter has just spent several days praying immediately after witnessing the ascension of Jesus. His first opportunity to preach to this small group of believers centers on Jesus and the Holy Spirit. Still, it is not a declaration about Jesus or the Holy Spirit's work amongst their group.

NEXT, explain that we will read from Acts 2 and look at Peter's speech to curious Jews who are witnessing the coming of the Holy Spirit on the followers of Jesus at Pentecost. Now, Peter and these disciples are indwelt with the Holy Spirit. Read or ask a volunteer to read Acts 2:14-17. Then, ask the group:

- **What similarities do you see in how Peter started his speech in Acts 2 compared to the speech we looked at in Acts 1?**
 - *Answer:* Peter quotes Old Testament Scripture in both of his speeches as forms of prophecy to explain the current circumstances.
- **According to the passage Peter quotes in Joel, what will be the effects of the pouring out of the Holy Spirit?**
 - *Answer:* As a result of the pouring out of the Holy Spirit, prophecy will be heard, and visions and dreams will be experienced.

Then, ask for someone in the group to read Acts 2:22-24. Ask the group:

- **What is the tone and purpose of this speech compared to the speech we looked at in Acts 1?**
 - *Answer:* This speech is clearly about Jesus. Peter addresses the events related to the coming of the Holy Spirit, but then he immediately starts preaching the name of Jesus to those in his audience.
- **What are the first points about Jesus that Peter points out in his speech? How are those points important for you in telling others about Jesus?**
 - *Answer:* Peter first points to the nature of Jesus. Then Peter mentions the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. Peter knew these events from first-hand knowledge of Jesus. He shared his experiential testimony of Jesus. When we are sharing our faith, we should likewise follow Peter's example. We should be able to articulate what Jesus has done in our lives and should be able to point others to Jesus through our personal stories. We should be able to demonstrate the attributes of Jesus in sharing our faith with others.

Continue the group's study of Peter's speech by reading or having a volunteer read Acts 2:33-36. Then, ask the group:

- **How did Peter explain the behavior of the Christians to the Jews who came and investigated?**
 - *Answer:* Peter explained that they were all seeing the results of the Holy Spirit being poured out on the group of Christians.
- **What is the final summation point Peter makes in his speech in verse 36?**

- *Answer:* Peter affirmingly and unswervingly declares Jesus as God and as the Messiah.
- **How does Peter's speech differ in Acts 2 when he is filled with the Holy Spirit compared to his speech in Acts 1?**
 - *Answer:* When Peter is filled with the Holy Spirit, his speech points directly to the God-nature of Jesus and His prophetically fulfilled role as Messiah. Peter describes his eyewitness account of Jesus in his second speech and directs others to see Jesus for Who He truly is.

FINALLY, we will conclude our study in Acts 2 by looking at the response of those who heard Peter's speech. Read Acts 2:37-38 and Acts 2:41 and ask the group:

- **What was the response to Peter's speech?**
 - *Answer:* Those who heard his speech were moved by the Holy Spirit to conviction. Peter's speech identified their need for a Savior, and they responded by asking Peter and the other Believers what they should do.
- **What challenge did Peter give those who heard his sermon?**
 - *Answer:* Peter challenged his audience to repent and to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of their sins. Peter called them to a life-changing encounter with Jesus. In doing so, they would also receive the Holy Spirit, as Peter and the other disciples had just received.
- **What were the results of Peter's speech?**
 - *Answer:* Acts 2:41 tells us that 3,000 new converts received Christ and were baptized. Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit and was used by the Holy Spirit to draw 3,000 new people to Jesus.

Ask if there are any questions. If there are none, transition into *Accepting the Challenge*.

ACCEPTING THE CHALLENGE

Focus your group's attention on one key takeaway from your time together.

FIRST, explain that you want to challenge the group to focus on the takeaways from this session. Consider starting this portion of your session by asking your group what they think are the main application points from your session. Allow discussion to go until there are no more suggestions.

Then, if necessary, supplement your discussion with the following application points. Say something like:

- **Am I a different man because of the Holy Spirit living inside of me?**
- **Can I share my personal story of faith in such a way that articulates Who Jesus is and points others to Him?**
- **Do I have the boldness to share unswervingly to others their need for a Savior and then show them how Jesus fulfills this need?**
 - Do I look for the opportunities God provides for me to share my faith, or do I run away from such conversations?

FINALLY, encourage men to process these questions in the week to come. Challenge them to take notice of Peter's example of living a life filled with the Holy Spirit. Show the group that even decades later, Peter still urged others to "always be prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect (1 Peter 3:15)."

If there are no more questions or input, close your time together in prayer.