



PETER

SESSION 4

- **Main Passage:** Acts 4:1-22
- **Purpose:** To challenge men to embrace the challenge of living a life empowered by the Holy Spirit that astonishes those we encounter.
- **Session Snapshot:** Peter and John, filled with the Holy Spirit, stood with power and authority for God and astonished the religious elite. Anytime we choose to stand firm in the Lord, we are given strength. God intends to reach all the world, and He will use His followers to be witnesses.

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 4 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:

- **Rick mentioned at the beginning of today's video that Peter and John were surrounded by people that were anti-Jesus. This seems increasingly true for us today. When you observe the world around you today, how can you relate to Peter and John?**
- **We heard the comparison between Peter pre-Pentecost and on this side of Pentecost. There was quite the difference. One was a guy who said many things and couldn't back them up, and the other spoke with astonishing authority and power. Jesus changed Peter's life. How has the Lord transformed you over time?**

- As you listened, you heard that education doesn't disqualify or qualify you to live an astonishing and fearless life powered by the Holy Spirit. Do you find yourself fearful or concerned you aren't qualified to share the Gospel? What are the voices you hear during those times?
- Live in a way that the world says, "What are we going to do with this guy?" When Rick asked this in the video, what were your thoughts concerning your own life?

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

- Today's study is critical to understand for our day-to-day lives. As men, we can live with boldness and a fearlessness that is empowered by being close to Jesus. Living our lives this way will astonish the world around us. Let's unpack this truth by looking deeper into our Scripture.

OPENING THE WORD

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

FIRST, explain that you're going to take a more in-depth look at Acts 4:1-22. We are going to spend time studying Peter's authority and boldness in our passage today. Peter and John stood in front of the religious elite and astonished them by their powerful speech. That same power is available to you.

We must make sure your people have 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, read or have a volunteer read Acts 4:7-12. When the volunteer has finished, lead the group in a brief discussion. Ask something like:

- **The Sadducees asked, "By what authority or by what name did you do this?" This is such an important question for us to consider for our lives. Where do you routinely find your authority in the actions of your life?**
 - Answers will vary based on individual experiences. The direction to point your group to is that true authority is found in being led by the Holy Spirit. Being filled by the Holy Spirit, because you have been come to saving faith in Jesus, will give a presence and an authority that would never be available through living in your own authority.
- **Have you ever faced opposition or been questioned when you have acted after being directed by the Holy Spirit? Does this cause you to pause or push in further?**
 - Answers will vary but spend time listening and encouraging those in your group to always follow and lean into the direction of the Lord.
- **In verse 8, we read, "Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit..." Why do you believe Peter was filled at that very moment?**

- **Answer:** The big picture response to this is because this moment was the moment God had pre-ordained to send His Spirit. But from Peter's perspective, he was ready to stand for and with God. Anytime we choose to stand firm in the Lord, we are given strength by Him. The Lord intends to reach all the world, and He will use His followers to be witnesses. When we stand, as Peter did, ready to share, we will be given strength.
- **Acts 1:8 tells us that we will receive power when the Holy Spirit fills us. This is an incredible promise in scripture for us. When Peter and John stood before the council in Acts 4, we see that Peter was “filled with the Spirit.” That same Spirit in Acts 1:8 and Acts 4:8 is residing within you. How does this truth encourage and challenge you?**
 - Answers will vary based on each member of your group.

Before transitioning to the next question, say something like:

- **Your proximity to Jesus in your walk is crucial to ensure that a deep Gospel authority and boldness mark your life. Because of their closeness to Jesus, Peter and John healed a man, astonished the religious leaders, and even prayed for more boldness. Men, as we draw close to Jesus, He will lead us and send us to those around us.**

NEXT, direct your group's attention to Acts 4:13-14 and ask a volunteer to read it. Then, ask:

- **When the Sadducees heard Peter and John speak, they were astonished. Why?**
 - **Answer:** They were astonished because these common men should not know and speak with such power and boldness about God. Peter and John were uneducated but spoke with a clarifying authority that only those close to the Lord could have.
- **At the end of verse 13, we read, “And they recognized that they had been with Jesus.” This is the answer for us to live a life that astonishes the world around us. How do you personally spend time with Jesus?**
 - Answers will vary based on each member of your group.

Direct your group's attention to Acts 4:16-20 and ask a volunteer to read it. Then, ask:

- **The Sadducees in verse 16 ask, “What shall we do with these men?” Then verses 17-18 tell of how the Sadducees warned them to speak no more about Jesus. In verses 19 and 20, we see the full boldness of Peter and John. They will not be silenced. What does it take to silence you? What needs to change within you to be willing to be bold and fearless in the Gospel?**
 - Answers will vary based on each member of your group.

FINALLY, say something like:

- **In Acts 4:29-31, we see Peter and John asking God to grant them boldness and for the Lord to move in miraculous ways. When they had finished praying, the Scripture says, “the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.” What an incredible passage that was true then and can be true through you today. Men, pray bold prayers, seek the Lord, embrace the power of the Holy Spirit and live a life that is astonishing in the Gospel.**

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:

- **What are the excuses you tend to fall back to when you are faced with the opportunity to speak with boldness for the Lord?**
 - Write them down somewhere and ask God to begin to remove those excuses from your mind and fill you with the Holy Spirit where they once resided.
- **Are you living your life in a way that people are astonished by Jesus in you?**
 - Spend time reflecting on your journey and your day-to-day life. What are three specific areas in which you are currently relying on your strength that you need to pray to ask God to empower you to live with His boldness?
- **Are you willing to pray for more boldness as Peter and John prayed for in Acts 4:29?**
 - This is a critical crossroads for you. You can choose to remain the same or ask God to give you boldness to live with His Holy Spirit leading and granting you the power to speak and live out the Gospel in your daily life.

Allow the group to consider where they find themselves on this spectrum of evaluation. If it feels appropriate, allow some discussion about the kind of evaluation they find themselves considering.

FINALLY, encourage men to process these questions in the week to come. Challenge them to listen to what God is trying to tell them and to respond accordingly. If there are no more questions or input, close your time together in prayer.