

# 1 SPIRITUALLY STALLED

John 21:1-17

## Introduction

My friend told me about the older, used car he once bought. He was pleased with his purchase. It was a great car and it ran well for him for several weeks. One day, he got into his car to start it as usual and nothing happened. The mechanic changed the battery ... nothing happened. He changed the spark plugs ... nothing happened. He changed the starter ... nothing happened. He was stuck. Several days later, his mechanic called and asked him suspiciously if he was the original owner of this car. He said, “No, but I do have a bill of sale.” The mechanic then told him that the original owner had installed a “kill switch” under the floor mat of the driver’s side of the car as a primitive anti-theft device. My friend had accidentally hit that switch with his foot getting into his car and didn’t even know that it was there. If my friend had known it was there, he could have just tapped it again with his foot and the car would have started right up.

Sometimes we stall out spiritually and nothing seems to get us restarted again. Is there a spiritual “kill switch” hidden under the floor mat of our life that we have yet to discover?

## I. The Doubts

### A. The Disciples

These disciples in John chapter 21 should have been the last ones to spiritually stall out. Jesus had appeared to them two other times already since his resurrection. But still Peter found himself ready to get back to everyday life and livelihood. Where was his passion to be with Jesus? Where was his purpose? Peter even discovered he couldn’t even catch fish anymore! Peter’s experience gives us an insight to the emotional barriers we all face.

### B. The Barriers – The disciples faced some of the emotional barriers to vibrant faith that we do.

1. Disillusioned – things were not going as the disciples imaged they would go
2. Disqualified – Peter’s denials, Thomas’ doubts, left them assuming they were no longer deserving of relationship with Jesus
3. Disengaged – Finding himself more at home fishing than seeking Jesus
4. Disconnected – becoming more comfortable in the fishing boat than the upper room.

## II. The Relationship

### A. Hearing his voice.

When did the Bible become just another book rather than a love letter, revealing the heart, character, and passion of the One who loves us? Have we received the Bible as an overwhelming “honey do” list that we avoid so we can go fishing? Could how we engage the Bible, God’s Word, be the “kill switch” that has left us spiritually stalled?

### B. Doing what we hear

Doing what God wants is not a test of our loyalty. It is a response to the trust we place in our relationship with the one who is speaking. Trust grows as we engage in the “hearing” and “doing”

## III. The Hunger

A. God hungers for a relationship with us, not based upon our perfect performance but grounded in His.

B. We hunger for a relationship with God that goes deeper than our feeble attempt to “pay him back” with our efforts. The Bible opens up to us a channel to the true voice and heart of God.

## Conclusion

Close the message by telling how Oxford scholar John Wesley moved away from rigid religion and discovered a dynamic relationship with Jesus. Wesley’s own heart was caught up in idolatry—even after identifying himself with Christ. Eventually, it was “strangely warmed” and revived.



(See pages 45-48 of *Unstuck*.)