

NYJW

NEW YEAR JACOB'S WELL

ENDING WELL

DAY 1

READ John 13:37-38, John 18:17, 25-27, & Matthew 27:57-62.

As events continued to unfold, we find that when Jesus was crucified, Peter rejoined the other disciples.

READ John 20:1-8 using the PICTURE IT Bible study method.

As Peter listened to Mary Magdalene's unbelievable words and as he ran to the tomb, his own thoughts must have been churning over and over his own words of betrayal.

If you were Peter, what would have been going through your mind?

Did the others know what you'd said and done?

Perhaps you minimized or justified the denial because you were *stressed out and scared for your own life*.

Or maybe you tried to put it out of your mind to forget what you did.

DAY 2 -- READ John 20:19-29.

Peter's there. Jesus is alive. He knows.

Even as they were overjoyed, the reality of Peter's betrayal must have been heavy on his heart and mind. A week went by and Jesus came to the disciples again. There was no mention of Peter confessing to Jesus; no mention of his asking forgiveness. Peter is uncharacteristically quiet.

If you hadn't read the Scriptures describing Peter's denial, you'd think everything was fine. But he wasn't specifically mentioned in these two accounts of Jesus' appearance to the disciples. And because of what we know about Peter's personality (*through the gospel accounts*), this may indicate that things were far from fine with Peter.

For Peter, it must have felt like he was pretending. He was part of the group, but who was he kidding? He wasn't one of them anymore, and there was no way Jesus could still love him after what he'd done.

Can you relate to the inner struggle Peter must have had?

If so, what would it be like? What kinds of things would you think about yourself? About God?

DAY 3 -- READ John 21:1-3.

Peter desired the familiar. He went to the place where things made sense to him. He wanted to go fishing. Notice he tells the others he's going, but doesn't invite them to join him.

Can you relate to Peter in this story? Whenever we mess up we're tempted to isolate ourselves and to push others away.

What do Peter's friends do? Tucked into the story of Peter's betrayal of Jesus and his journey to restoration is a beautiful picture of community. Peter's friends stand with him, perhaps offering words of encouragement. Maybe they listen to his confession and pray with him.

Maybe they sit quietly and simply offer their presence.

No fish were caught, but fishing wasn't the primary focus that night.

Have you ever experienced this kind of community?

Has someone walked alongside you in a time of brokenness?

If so, what did that mean to you at the time?

Have you ever been the one who walked alongside your friend?

Are you a part of a small group?

If not, make a commitment to find a group this year.

If you're in a small group, what steps can you take together toward more authentic community?

DAY 4 -- READ John 21:4-14.

This is the Peter we're familiar with (v. 7). *What do you think made the difference in Peter?* Peter has no idea how Jesus will receive him, but at this point it doesn't seem to matter. What matters is that something in Peter has changed. Perhaps the process he went through from the time of his denial to jumping out of the boat and running back to Jesus is best described as repentance - acknowledging his sin, turning away from it, and back to our Heavenly Father. **READ** Psalm 51 and **UNDERLINE** phrases which speak of the repentance process.

DAY 5 -- READ Luke 15:17-24 & John 21:15-19.

What similarities do you see in Peter's story and that of the prodigal son?

DESCRIBE how Peter, like the prodigal son, came to his senses.

Which do you think was on Peter's mind as he ran to Jesus?

- *Being restored to his place of leadership?*
- *Or the restoration of his relationship with Jesus?*

In the prodigal son story, how did the father respond to his son's return?

How did Jesus respond to Peter's RETURN?

Which part of Peter's journey do you relate to most right now?

How does God want you to respond to Him today?

What's your next step?