



**Intro:** This is another incredible and monumental scene in Luke 22. This passage presents the sharp contrast between the weakness of a disciple and the faithfulness of Jesus.

Peter collapses in fear and denies Jesus, but Jesus stands firm before His accusers and moves toward the cross with unwavering obedience. Peter's love for Jesus wavers. Jesus' love for Peter remains steadfast.

This passage exposes our frailty, reveals Christ's faithfulness, and helps us see how Jesus' faithfulness forms the foundation for our salvation, sanctification and glorification.

As a (theological) backdrop, this entire scene is a demonstration of

*Psalm 2:2 – The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against his Anointed...*

### **First: The Fall of a Disciple. 54-62**

*Then they seized him and led him away, bringing him into the high priest's house, and Peter was following at a distance. <sup>55</sup> And when they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter sat down among them. <sup>56</sup> Then a servant girl, seeing him as he sat in the light and looking closely at him, said, "This man also was with him." <sup>57</sup> But he denied it, saying, "Woman, I do not know him." <sup>58</sup> And a little later someone else saw him and said, "You also are one of them." But Peter said, "Man, I am not." <sup>59</sup> And after an interval of about an hour still another insisted, saying, "Certainly this man also was with him, for he too is a Galilean." <sup>60</sup> But Peter said, "Man, I do not know what you are talking about." And immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed. <sup>61</sup> And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the saying of the Lord, how he had said to him, "Before the rooster crows today, you will deny me three times." <sup>62</sup> And he went out and wept bitterly.*

#### **a) 54 - Peter follows at a distance**

Peter loves Jesus, but tries to stay close without being seen. Proximity without confession is always dangerous. Following at a distance always leads to compromise.

How can we remain close to the Lord? Here are eight disciplines our elders have decided comprise the life of a disciple at Heritage.

- 1 – Prayer
- 2 – Bible study
- 3 – Sunday morning corporate worship
- 4 – Community Groups
- 5 – Giving
- 6 – Service
- 7 - Mentoring
- 8 – Evangelism

Each of these disciplines spiritually forms us beyond just acceptance or acknowledgement. Each one is another step into the depth of Jesus until we are no longer walking but swimming in Christ.

b) 55-60 - Peter denies Jesus three times

Faith failures are rarely sudden. It is the end of a quiet slope. What we see as a collapse often began long before the moment we call “the fall.” Peter followed at a distance long before he denied Jesus at the fire.

The servant girl, another bystander, and then a group question him. Each denial becomes stronger, more public, as his faith lapses.

**Note:** In each denial Peter does not merely reject Jesus. He rejects who he is *because* of Jesus. He’s founding his identity in the momentary, passing approval of the girl, bystander and crowd instead of rooting it in Jesus (Colossians 2:6-7).

c) 61 - The Lord turns and looks at Peter

Luke gives a striking detail that the other Gospels omit.

At the moment of Peter’s third denial, Jesus looks at him. This is one of Luke’s most tender and devastating details. Please read this article – [Devastating Mercy](#) by John Bloom.

At the moment of Peter’s third denial, Jesus turns and looks at him. It is not a look of rage. It is the look of the Shepherd who knows His sheep, the Judge who exposes sin, and the Savior who still loves the sinner. His gaze convicts, reveals, and invites.

d) 62 - Peter goes out and weeps bitterly

Peter feels the grief of his failure. It is sharp and honest. He finally sees himself as Jesus as always seen him. Yet this sorrowful repentance will lead him back to Christ.

Luke is teaching that real repentance is painful but always turns us toward mercy.

**Transition:** Peter collapses under the pressure of one courtyard. Jesus now stands firm before an entire council. Where the disciple fails, the Master remains faithful. This moves us into the second scene.

### **Second: The Faithfulness of the Savior. 63-71**

*Now the men who were holding Jesus in custody were mocking him as they beat him. <sup>64</sup> They also blindfolded him and kept asking him, "Prophecy! Who is it that struck you?" <sup>65</sup> And they said many other things against him, blaspheming him. When day came, the assembly of the elders of the people gathered together, both chief priests and scribes. And they led him away to their council, and they said, <sup>67</sup> "If you are the Christ, tell us." But he said to them, "If I tell you, you will not believe, <sup>68</sup> and if I ask you, you will not answer. <sup>69</sup> But from now on the Son of Man shall be seated at the right hand of the power of God." <sup>70</sup> So they all said, "Are you the Son of God, then?" And he said to them, "You say that I am." <sup>71</sup> Then they said, "What further testimony do we need? We have heard it ourselves from his own lips."*

#### a) 63-65 - Jesus endures mockery and beating

The guards blindfold Him, strike Him, and demand that He prove His identity. Jesus refuses to defend Himself. His silence fulfills prophecy and shows His willingness to drink the cup for His people.

*Isaiah 53:7 - He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth.*

The One Peter denied is the One who will not deny the Father, or himself, in order to save Peter.

#### b) 66 - Jesus stands before the Sanhedrin

At daybreak the council gathers. They demand, "If you are the Christ, tell us." Jesus knows their hearts and responds with truth that will condemn Him but will ultimately save us.

#### c) 67-70 - Jesus declares His identity

He tells them that they will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of God. This is an unmistakable claim to divine authority. They understand Him perfectly. They accuse Him of blasphemy and condemn Him.

#### d) 71 - The Sanhedrin condemn him

**Transition:** At this point, we are invited to respond. The real question is not only how Peter failed, but how Christ succeeded. His faithfulness becomes the ground of our salvation.

### **Third: The Grace That Restores the Fallen** (Implicit in the narrative)

a) What Jesus has said (Oh no!)

*Matthew 10:32-33 - So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.*

Based on what is about to happen, we're left to think that Jesus means final denial, not momentary collapse. Peter denied Jesus out of fear. In Matthew, Jesus is talking about deliberate, hardened rejection; the choice that Jesus is not God.

God's rejection is not on account of weakness but unbelief.

b) Peter's failure is real, but not final

- Peter is like David who sinned and repented.
- Judas is like Saul who sinned but did not repent This is true even though...

*Mathew 27:3-5 - Then when Judas, his betrayer, saw that Jesus was condemned, he changed his mind and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders, saying, "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood." They said, "What is that to us? See to it yourself." And throwing down the pieces of silver into the temple, he departed, and he went and hanged himself.*

- One is failure.
- The other is apostasy.

c) How Jesus acknowledged Peter's failure and return

*Luke 22:28-30 - You are those who have stayed with me in my trials, <sup>29</sup> and I assign to you, as my Father assigned to me, a kingdom, <sup>30</sup> that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*

*Luke 22:32 - ... I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.*

So, Peter collapses, but Jesus has already prayed that his faith would not fail. Sufficient grace is already working even in Peter's betrayal, so much so that, after the resurrection -

*Mark 16:6-7 - ... Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here. See the place where they laid him. <sup>7</sup> But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.*



d) Jesus' faithfulness covers the faithlessness of His people

We saw this in Jesus' statement, "*Not my will, but yours be done*" in v 42.

So, Peter denies Christ, but Christ does not deny His mission to save Peter. The cross is the place where the faithful One redeems the unfaithful.

e) Repentance leads to restoration – v 62.

Peter's tears anticipate the restoration found in John 21.

T - **John 21:15-19** - *When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "Feed my lambs." <sup>16</sup> He said to him a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "Tend my sheep." <sup>17</sup> He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" and he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep*

As we contemplate these verses, remember Peter's 3 denials:

1 – Luke 22:57 – *But he denied it*

2 – Luke 22:58 – *Man, I am not*

3 – Luke 22:60 – *Man, I do not know what you are talking about*

Here, Jesus uses two words for 'love.'

a) ἀγαπάω (agapaō) = sacrificial, covenantal love.

b) φιλέω (phileō) = warmth, friendship, relational closeness.

1 - First question (21:15)

Jesus: "*Do you agapaō me?*"

Peter: "*You know that I phileō you.*"

2 - Second question (21:16)

Jesus: "*Do you agapaō me?*"

Peter: "*You know that I phileō you.*"

3 - Third question (21:17)

Jesus: "*Do you phileō me?*"

Peter is grieved and answers, "*You know that I phileō you.*"

**Note:** Jesus meets us at the level of love we have, not the level we wish we had. He takes our trembling affection, then grows it through grace.

This is why Jesus asks three times. Not to shame Peter but to match the three denials so that no trace of the past remains.

In Luke 22 Peter denied Jesus around a charcoal fire. In John 21 Jesus restores him around a charcoal fire. Same setting, but a reversed story. This is grace.

**Bottom Line:** Jesus gets Peter to admit that he only *phileo* loves Jesus. At the Last Supper, he boasted of a love he did not possess, now evidenced in his 3 denials.

He answers with *phileo* because he is humbled, becomes honest, and refuses to boast again.

God often grows our future ministry in the soil of present sorrow. A broken Peter will become a shepherd for broken people. If you read 1 & 2 Peter, you'll see that the best shepherds are the ones who remember their own tears.

**POINT:** You can *phileo* Jesus. He *agapao*'s you. Well glory!!!

In the end...in the person of Peter, John shows us that Jesus restores what sin breaks. It's a tale as old as Genesis 3:15. Christ builds His church with repentant sinners, not perfect performers. Now watch...

**John 21:18-19** - *Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you used to dress yourself and walk wherever you wanted, but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will dress you and carry you where you do not want to go.* <sup>19</sup> *(This he said to show by what kind of death he was to glorify God.) And after saying this he said to him, "Follow me."*

This is a real *grace* moment:

- 1 - Jesus is telling Peter that in the moment Peter needs to *agapao* Jesus, he will.
- 2 - For now, Jesus is going to *agapao*/die for Peter.
- 3 - One day, Peter will *agapao*/die for Jesus

**IMP:** Jesus knows our love. He loves us still. This is such a freeing truth.

### **Conclusion:**

1. Stop following Jesus at a distance. A distant, cautious, half-hidden discipleship will not survive pressure of the flesh, world or devil. Stay close to Christ in prayer. Stay close to Jesus in His Word. Stay close to His people.

2. Recognize how fear can silence your witness. Peter denied Christ because he feared people. People were big. God was small. We often do the same. Remember that the beginning of wisdom – how to live life well, is to fear God first and most (Proverbs 9:10).

3. Let God's look lead you to repentance, not despair. Jesus sees your failure and still invites you to return. Repentance is not God crushing you. It is God calling you home.

4. Rest in the faithfulness of Christ instead of your own strength. You are not held by the strength of your grip on Christ, but by the strength of His grip on you and that's eternal.

So, Luke ends this section with Jesus condemned and Peter broken. But the cross and the resurrection will reverse everything. Jesus will die for Peter as a faithfulness disciple and rise to restore him.

The disciple who denied Him will become preacher of His Gospel.

The Savior who was condemned will become the Judge of all.

The faithfulness of Christ is our hope, our calling, and our confidence.

Where we fall, He lifts us. Where we fail, He remains faithful.

This week's CG questions don't look at John 21, which is a large part of my application portion of the text. But please feel free to use John 21 as you see fit.



### **Observation – What does the text say?**

1. What details does Luke include about Peter's movements after Jesus is arrested (for example, verse 54: "Peter followed at a distance")?
2. What setting does Luke describe around the fire, and who first questions Peter?
3. How many times does Peter deny Jesus, and what variations do you notice in each denial?
4. What happens immediately after the third denial, and how does Peter respond?

### **Interpretation – What does the text mean?**

5. What does "following at a distance" reveal about Peter's internal state during this moment?
6. Why do you think each denial becomes increasingly strong? What pressures or fears are rising?
7. What is the significance of Jesus turning and looking at Peter? How might Luke be highlighting Jesus' compassion or sovereignty?
8. What does Peter's bitter weeping show about true repentance and the weight of sin?

### **Correlation – Where else in the Bible do I see this?**

9. Compare Peter's denial with Jesus' earlier prediction in Luke 22:31–34. What connections stand out?
10. How does this failure prepare the way for Peter's restoration in John 21:15–19?
11. Read 2 Corinthians 7:10. How does godly grief differ from worldly grief, and how does this help us interpret Peter's tears?
12. What examples from Scripture show God using deeply flawed people for His purposes (for example, Moses, David, Jonah)? How does this pattern help us understand Peter? How does it encourage us?

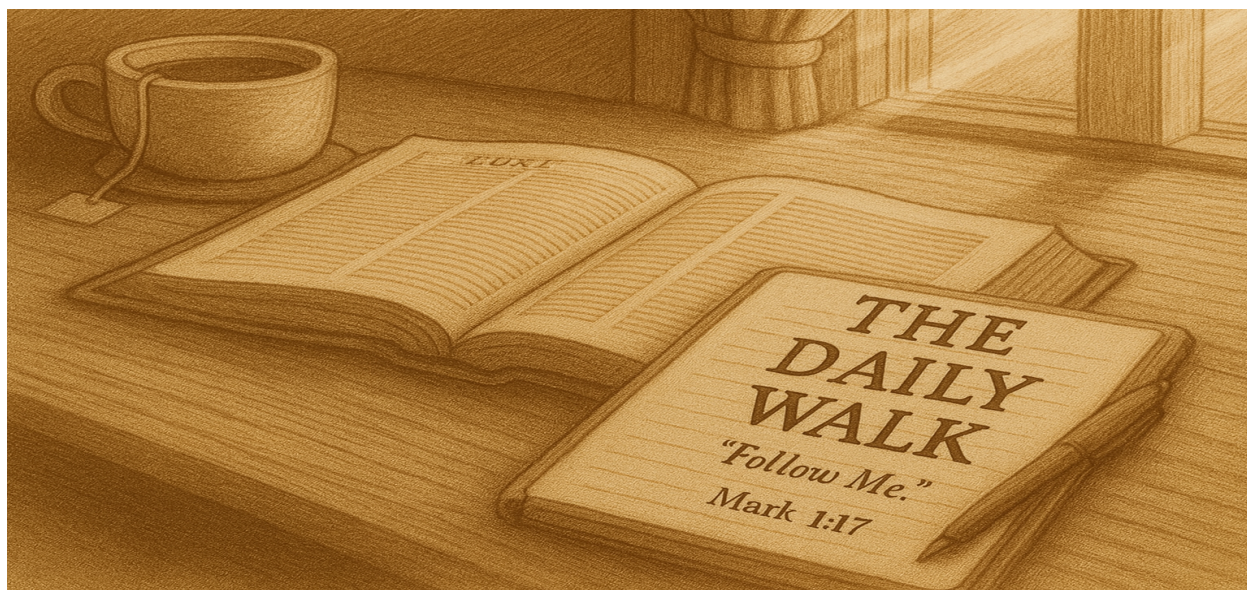
**Application – How can God use this in my life?**

13. Where are you tempted to “follow Jesus at a distance,” staying close enough to feel safe but far enough to avoid cost?
14. What pressures or fears tend to silence your witness to Christ at home, work, or school?
15. How does Jesus’ look toward Peter encourage you when you fail Him?
16. What would repentance look like for you this week in an area where your words or actions have denied Christ?
17. Who in your life needs restoration and how can you embody Jesus’ heart toward them?



Colossians 3:16 reminds us to let the word of Christ dwell richly within us. That's the point of the TRAP daily devotion. This week we walk with Peter in his denial of Jesus so that we can learn to have faith and be faithful in our temptations, and to be reminded of God's grace to us when we fall. It's really the most amazing story of Jesus' faithfulness in the midst of our fallenness. That's the real point! And that's the really good news of the Gospel! May the Lord TRAP these thoughts in your heart and mind.





**Monday, December 1<sup>st</sup>**  
**When Distance Feels Safer**  
**Luke 22:54**

**Think** - Luke says Peter “followed at a distance.” He wants to stay close to Jesus, but not close enough to be identified with Him. This is the first quiet step toward collapse. Distance feels safe, but it leaves the soul unguarded.

**Reflect** - Spiritual danger often begins with subtle distance: less prayer, less Scripture, less fellowship. It feels harmless, but it erodes our strength and courage. Following Christ “at a distance” always leads toward compromise.

**Apply** - Where are you keeping Jesus at arm’s length to avoid cost or discomfort? Name one area where devotion has become distance.

**Pray** - Lord, pull me close. Keep me from the illusion that distance is safe. Form my heart through Your Word, Your Spirit, and Your people.

**Tuesday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>**  
**The Comfortable Fire**  
**Luke 22:55–57**

**Think** - Peter sits down among those hostile to Jesus. The warmth of the fire soothes him, but the environment shapes him. His first denial comes in a moment of comfort.

**Reflect** - Comfort is not sinful, but it can crowd out conviction. The places we settle for ease often become the places where we compromise. Peter does not deny Jesus because he is wicked, but because he is comfortable.



**Apply** - What “fire” do you sit beside that weakens your boldness; social circles, online habits, quiet compromises? Bring it to God honestly.

**Pray** - Father, make me more committed to holiness than comfort. Awaken me when ease numbs my devotion.

**Wednesday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>**  
**The Weight of Repeated Failure**  
**Luke 22:58–60**

**Think** - The accusations grow stronger and so does Peter’s fear. His second and third denials rise from panic and pressure. His collapse is not sudden; it is the end of a long slope.

**Reflect** - Sin often gains momentum when we let fear guide us. Like Peter, we can move from silence to compromise to outright denial if fear, shame, or insecurity rule the heart.

**Apply** - What pattern of sin grows when you feel afraid or exposed? Ask the Lord to interrupt it with His truth today.

**Pray** - Jesus, steady me in moments of fear. Break the cycles that quietly pull me from You.

**Thursday, December 4<sup>th</sup>**  
**The Look That Changes Everything**  
**Luke 22:60–61**

**Think** - As Peter denies Jesus the third time, Jesus turns and looks at him. It is not rage. It is devastating mercy. His gaze exposes and invites at the same time.

**Reflect** - Jesus sees us fully and loves us wholly. His look confronts, reveals, and restores. Peter’s identity had been shaped by fear of people. Now it is reshaped by the compassion of Christ.

**Apply** - Where do you most need to experience Jesus’ compassionate gaze instead of your own self-condemnation?

**Pray**

Lord, let Your gaze lead me to repentance and return, not despair.

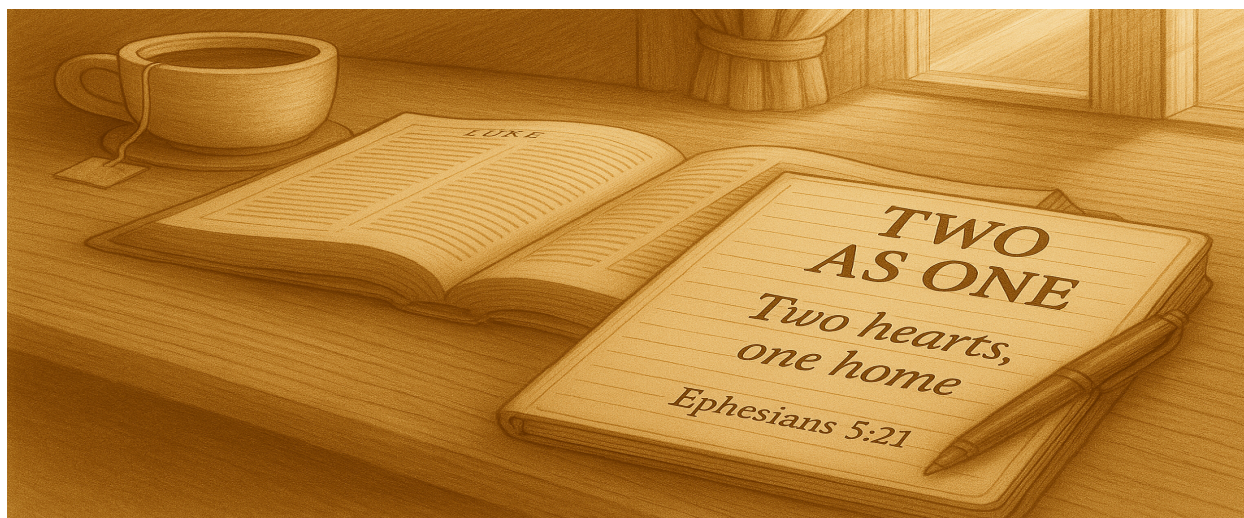
**Friday, December 5<sup>th</sup>**  
**Tears That Lead Us Home**  
**Luke 22:62**

**Think** - Peter goes out and weeps bitterly. His tears come from the collision of failure and grace. True repentance hurts, but it heals.

**Reflect** - Paul calls this “godly grief.” It turns us toward mercy. Peter’s tears anticipate the morning on the beach in John 21 where Jesus restores him. God often grows future ministry in the soil of present sorrow.

**Apply** - Where do you need to repent honestly? Let sorrow turn you toward Jesus, not away.

**Pray** - Father, give me a repentant heart. Restore joy where sin has stolen peace. Strengthen my faith by Your faithfulness.



**Monday, December 1<sup>st</sup>**  
**When We Follow at a Distance Together**  
**Luke 22:54**

**Think** - Peter follows Jesus “at a distance.” He stays near Jesus physically while drifting spiritually. Couples often do the same, present in the same home, yet spiritually distant from each other and Christ.

**Reflect** - Distance from Christ easily becomes distance from one another. Marriages cool slowly, not suddenly. When prayer together fades, confession quiets, and the Word grows thin, then spiritual intimacy weakens.

**Apply** - Ask each other: Where are *we* following Jesus at a distance? Choose one spiritual practice to do *together* this week: prayer, Scripture reading, or attending a CG.

**Pray** - Lord, draw us close to You and close to each other. Protect our marriage from drifting faith.

**Tuesday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>**  
**Fires That Shape Us as a Couple**  
**Luke 22:55–57**

**Think** - Peter seeks comfort in a place that shapes him away from Jesus. Couples also feel the pull of environments that weaken their unity or witness.

**Reflect** - Distractions, habits, and pressures, be they financial, relational, or digital can nudge both spouses toward complacency rather than courage. Comfort can quietly deform a marriage.

**Apply** - Discuss: What “fires” weaken our faith or intimacy? Screens? Stress? Exhaustion? Replace one unhelpful habit with a spiritually strengthening one.

**Pray** - Lord, guard our home from comforts that erode conviction. Fill our marriage with holy habits.

**Wednesday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>**  
**When Failure Repeats in the Home**  
**Luke 22:58–60**

**Think** - Peter's failures grow under pressure. Couples also face patterns that undermine your togetherness: arguments that repeat, sins that cycle, fears that trigger destructive words.

**Reflect** - Fear and insecurity often fuel repetitive conflict in marriage. But Jesus remains faithful, even when we are weak.

**Apply** - Talk gently tonight: What pattern keeps repeating between us? How can we respond with humility instead of fear?

**Pray** - Jesus, heal the patterns that wound our marriage. Make our home a place of grace.

**Thursday, December 4<sup>th</sup>**  
**The Look That Restores Marriages**  
**Luke 22:60–61**

**Think** - Jesus' look exposes Peter's sin but also welcomes him home. In marriage, couples need that same blend of truth and tenderness.

**Reflect** - Marriage requires seeing one another honestly, faults included, without turning away. Jesus shows us how to offer mercy that restores rather than wounds.

**Apply** - Share: Where do we need to extend Jesus-like mercy to one another? Practice gentle confession and gentle forgiveness tonight.

**Pray** - Lord, let Your compassionate gaze heal our marriage. Make us quick to forgive as You forgive us.

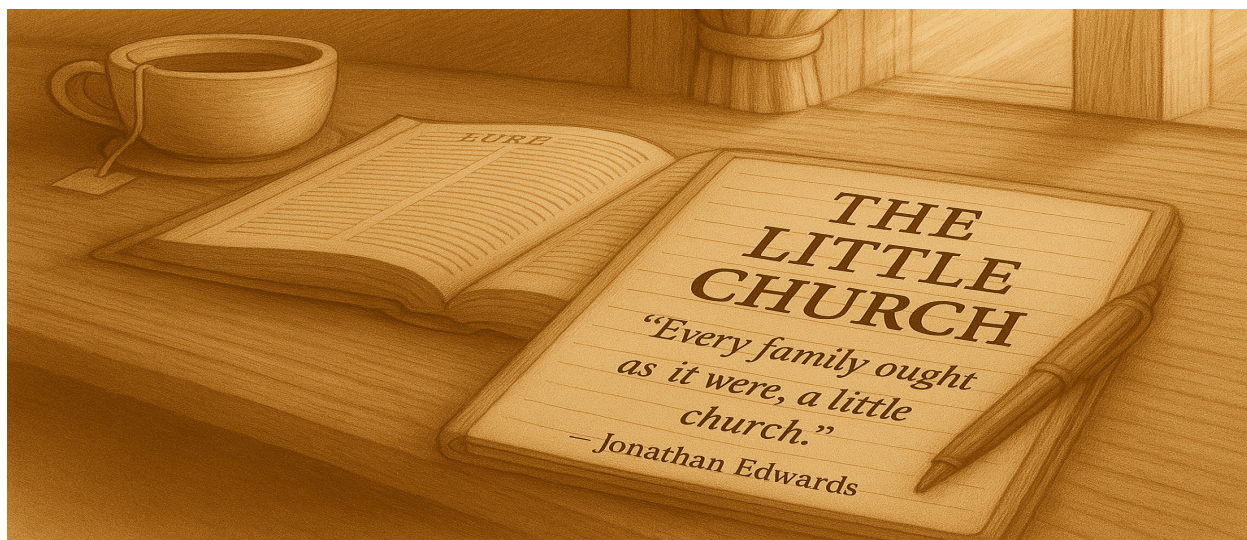
**Friday, December 5<sup>th</sup>**  
**Tears, Restoration, and Hope for Marriage**  
**Luke 22:62; John 21:15–19**

**Think** - Peter's tears prepare him for Jesus' restoration. Honest sorrow becomes the gateway to deeper love.

**Reflect** - Healthy marriages allow space for repentance. Jesus restored Peter around a charcoal fire, matching his three denials with three invitations. He meets us where our love is and grows it.

**Apply** - Ask: Where do I need to repent to my spouse? Where do we need to restore trust, hope, or tenderness?

**Pray** - Father, grow our marriage through humility and grace. Restore what is strained and make our home a picture of Your love.



**Monday, December 1<sup>st</sup>**  
**Staying Close to Jesus**  
**Luke 22:54**

**Think** - Peter followed Jesus “at a distance.” Talk with your children: how can we stay close to Jesus?

**Reflect** - Explain gently: When we stop praying or reading Scripture or stop coming to Sunday morning worship joyfully, we drift. Jesus wants us close because He loves us.

**Apply** - Ask your children: What helps you feel close to Jesus? Choose one simple practice to do as a family today or onight.

**Pray** - Jesus, help our family stay close to You every day.

**Tuesday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>**  
**The Wrong Fire to Sit Beside**  
**Luke 22:55–57**

**Think** - Peter sat by a fire with people who did not love Jesus. That made it harder to obey.

**Reflect** - Help your children see that friends, screens, and surroundings shape their choices. Some “fires” help us love Jesus; some make it harder.

**Apply** - Ask: What places, people or things make it harder to follow Jesus? How can our family choose better places, people and things?

**Pray** - Lord, guide us to friends and environments that help us follow You.

**Wednesday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>**  
**Messing Up More Than Once**  
**Luke 22:58–60**

**Think** - Peter denied Jesus three times. Children know what it feels like to mess up again and again.

**Reflect** - Tell them: Jesus still loved Peter. Our repeated failures do not make Jesus walk away. He wants us to tell Him the truth and come back.

**Apply** - Ask: When do you feel like you mess up a lot? Pray together for Jesus to help in those moments.

**Pray** - Jesus, help us turn to You when we fail. Thank You for loving us always.

**Thursday, December 4<sup>th</sup>**  
**The Look of Love**  
**Luke 22:60–61**

**Think** - Jesus looked at Peter, not angrily, but lovingly. His look reminded Peter that Jesus still cared.

**Reflect** - Children need to hear this clearly: Jesus sees everything, including our sin, and He still loves us.

**Apply** - Invite each child: When have you felt embarrassed or afraid? Remind them Jesus is gentle and compassionate in those moments.

**Pray** - Lord Jesus, help us feel Your loving eyes on us, even when we do wrong.

**Friday, December 5<sup>th</sup>.**  
**Tears That Bring Us Back to Jesus**  
**Luke 22:62; John 21:15-19**

**Think** - Peter cried because he was sorry. And later Jesus restored him with love.

**Reflect** - Explain: Tears of repentance are not bad. They help our hearts return to Jesus. Peter's tears led him to a beautiful breakfast with Jesus where he was restored.

**Apply**- Ask your children: Is there anything you need to tell Jesus or ask forgiveness for?

**Pray** – Invite the children to pray. Jesus, thank You for forgiving us. Help our family repent every day and follow You joyfully.