



From the Manger to the Cross, the Men in Christ's Life: Peter  
by Kris Swiatocho  
Editors note: This is a part of a series.

*My stepfather is only one example of a man who has impacted my life as a result of his relationship with Christ. Throughout this series, I want to share with you about some of the other men who have impacted my life solely because of their relationship with Jesus. I believe as I share that you, too, will connect with them and discover for yourself how God has always had a plan for you, is working it out in your life and will never leave you.*

Have you ever been compared to anyone in your life? Perhaps a parent, a grandparent, an aunt or uncle or maybe even a sibling?

It's okay if you happen to like who you are being compared to. I don't mind when people tell me I have long beautiful fingers like my Grandma Bell who I adored and miss or that I am creative like my mother (she is so talented). But when it's negative such as, "Your taste in things is so strange, Kris. You are just like your Polish grandmother Genny" (who no one cared for) or "You are so stubborn, just like your birth father" (who has been out of my life for over 30 years), well, then it hurts.

So why do we get compared to others? Is it to compliment us or to hurt us, to get us to change, to grow us or do people just want something to say and it means nothing? Well, no matter why people do it, it does have an effect on us.

Some actions that are being compared are simply personality traits and depending on whom you are being compared to, have little effect on you. The fact that my eccentric grandmother's taste may have had a negative effect on people does not in any way make me feel bad about myself as I like the fact that I don't have a house of furniture that looks like it all came from the same store where everyone else is shopping. But, when people (family) also compared my controlling behavior to hers, that is when I decided I needed to change. I saw what her sin had done to her and her family over the years, and I did not want to be compared to her anymore.

Peter, of the Bible has also been someone who I have been compared to. Not by others, but by myself. Sure, people have teased me over the years about Peter being known as the mouth and how similar we are in that area. My tongue has encouraged people and also hurt people. But I personally have compared myself to Peter, because I have experienced some of the same things he has. I relate to not only his zeal for drawing closer to Christ, the desire to serve him, the desire to make things right and to motivate people, but also to his desire to be an example to others. Those around Peter would see not only his successes, but also his failures. And through these experiences, they would in turn learn and grow. This is my heart, to allow others to see me draw closer to God, not to hurt them but to encourage them to do the same.

Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, but the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it. During the fourth watch of the night Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. "It's a ghost," they said, and cried out in fear. But Jesus immediately said to them: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid." "Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water." "Come," he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!" Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?" And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God" (Matthew 14:22-33).

What I Have Learned from Peter:



1. Jesus allowed Peter (and us) to get into situations that seemed hopeless.

Peter and the disciples were lost in the sea. Their boat was directionless, adrift and at the mercy of the storm. Sometimes God allows us to fall into situations that seem directionless. Situations that scare us. He does this because he wants us to choose him over our situation. To trust in him and not ourselves.

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2. Peter knew Jesus' voice brought safety.

Peter, like the other disciples, knew Jesus' voice because he spent time with him. In order to grow as a Christian, we have to hear, listen and know Jesus' voice. How are we ever going to grow or know God's direction if we don't recognize his voice?

At first Peter and the other disciples were afraid in the storm. On top of that they saw Jesus walking on the water and he appeared like a ghost. Wouldn't you think the same way? But when Jesus spoke, they became calm, trusting in who He is, trusting in their safety. Sometimes in the midst of the storm, we need to be calm enough to hear his voice. Only his presence will calm us.

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3. Peter followed Jesus, even when it led him into a storm.

Sometimes we have to make choices to do what God wants us to do even when we know it will be hard. Maybe we have to break up with someone, dissolve a friendship, move to a new city or change jobs. We might have to confront someone who has hurt us or face a life-threatening disease. No matter what it is that God has allowed to happen, he reminds us that he is with us in and through the storm. Going through a storm, trusting the Lord makes us stronger. It also helps our witness to others as they watch us go through it.

"Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water." "Come," he said (Matthew 14:28-29).

4. Peter used his assertiveness (mouth) for good.

I love Peter because I really do see myself being just like him. Hey, Jesus, I want to walk on water, too. I mean if Jesus can do it and I have His power in me, then I should be able to do it, too. Right? Yo, Jesus!

Being assertive can be used to bring glory to God because we are willing to step out of our comfort zone. We are willing to say something when no one else will. God gave some of us the gift of assertiveness to be used to bring others to Christ. Maybe God has called you to speak up for your rights as a citizen, or for protection of those you love, support of a cause or maybe what you believe as a Christian. Use your gift of gab for the right reasons.

May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer (Psalm 19:14).



5. Peter trusted and believed what Jesus said.

Now I know we have all heard a hundred sermons on Peter getting out of the boat. Of how at least he did get out when others didn't. But there is so much more here than Peter just getting out of the boat. Peter believed he would be safe because he trusted the Lord. You can't build trust in Jesus without spending time with him. Just like you can't trust people without spending time with them. Peter didn't have to doubt; he knew who Jesus was. Do you spend enough time with Jesus to totally trust him in all things? Can't you just see Peter, so excited? I would be like woo hoo; I get to walk on the water in this storm, just like Jesus.

"Come," he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus (Matthew 14:29).

6. Peter didn't bring the boat with him (no baggage or safety rope).

Peter stepped out of the boat alone, trusting in Jesus only. Peter didn't bring the boat with him. He jumped in the water, totally knowing he didn't need the boat. Well, this is where I am different than Peter. Sure, like Peter, I have jumped out of the boat, willing to get out of my comfort zone, but I have a tendency to bring the boat along for the walk. Just in case this doesn't work out the way I want it to, I have the boat with me. I can always go back to what is safe, what is secure and what I know.

God's Word says you can't be in-between; you can't ride the fence. There is no such thing as a lukewarm Christian. You either are for him or against him. You need to get out of the boat or stay in it. I am thankful for God's grace, as I continue to try to make the right decisions.

So, because you are lukewarm, neither hot nor cold, I am about to spit you out of my mouth (Revelation 3:16).

7. Peter took his eyes off of Jesus, just like I do.

Peter as we know, took his eyes off of Jesus, started to notice the storm around him and began to sink. The more he felt defeat, the more defeated he became. Don't we all do this? I mean to follow the Lord in all things but sometimes I just don't trust him enough. Or, I am afraid of what trusting him will look like. I mean, Jesus might take me to a place I have never been and that frightens me. Why can't we realize that any place with Jesus is better than any place without him?

But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!" (Matthew 14:30).

8. Peter knew what to do when we fall into sin.

Peter had taken his eyes off of Jesus. Peter allowed his circumstances to draw more attention than what Jesus offered. He allowed fear to creep in, hopelessness and despair. We can all be like Peter at one time or another. Our life situations can be so hard to deal with. Without a deep relationship with God, it's easy to give in to the power of our circumstances over the power of the Lord. Peter had learned from the Lord though. As soon as he realized he couldn't save himself (or in my case, I couldn't fix it myself; I wouldn't have time to swim back to the boat or ask my friends for help), Peter yelled out to God to save him. He had learned from the past, from spending time with Jesus that Jesus was the answer in all situations. He knew Jesus was the only one who could save him. Are you still looking around to others to save you when only Christ can save you? (Click here to read more about salvation.)

Look to the LORD and his strength; seek his face always (1 Chronicles 16:11).

9. Jesus reminded Peter, like he does with all of us, that we need not to doubt.



Jesus gives us clear direction: seek ME first. Keep your eyes on the Lord. This is the only way to know for sure that God is in control; otherwise, we are in control (well, we think we are). If God is in control and he wants the best for us, surely we should not fear, even in the middle of the storm. What is also great here is that Jesus did remind Peter. Jesus knows our weaknesses. He is ready to remind us daily as we seek him.

Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?" (Matthew 14:31).

10. Sometimes Jesus doesn't stop the storm. Just like with Peter, he is there to walk in it and through it with us.

Peter taught me just because Jesus is with me, doesn't mean the storm stops. Jesus would grab Peter and save him, and they would both walk back to the boat (during the storm). Isn't this cool! I mean, Jesus is telling us all that we HAVE to go through storms. Pain is part of this life—fear, frustration, the unknown—but the difference is HE IS WITH US. Just because we yell out to God doesn't mean the junk we are going through stops. It just means we aren't alone going through it. So know this. How should we handle life storms? How should we handle our stress, our frustration our aggravations our disappointments?

And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down (Matthew 14:32).

11. Peter was a witness to others.

Peter's friends (other disciples) and maybe even some on the shore saw what Peter did. They witnessed him speaking to Jesus, stepping out and falling. They also witnessed what he did next. Peter showed them that even when we fail, we can quickly ask for forgiveness by putting our focus back on the Lord and be right with God again.

Too many times in my life I have been Peter in the storm, but instead of going to God with all things I go to friends or family first. Don't get me wrong; we need our friends and family to help us. God does speak through them. My point is that I would go to them first versus God. If Peter had yelled out to his friends first, would they have been able to help him? Could they have thrown a rope fast enough? What if one of the guys jumped in to help Peter? With such a storm, they might have both drowned. Bottom line, Peter chose what God wants: us to choose him.

Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God" (Matthew 14:33).

Peter, may sometimes be referred to as the one with the mouth, the one who didn't trust the Lord (Matthew 26:34), the one who took his eyes off of Jesus. But he was also the one who has inspired millions of people to step out of their comfort zones, to speak up when others say nothing, to be willing to let others see his failure and to also see his success.

So who are you compared to? Who would you like to be compared to?

Jesus, I pray that each one who has reads this article would choose to be compared to you. That each day, as you mold us, that we would become more and more like you. Thank you Lord for you unconditional love. For your grace. For your sovereignty. Amen.

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Day Experiment, was co-authored with Dick Purnell of Single Life Resources.

TheSinglesNetwork.org Ministries helps churches, pastors and single adult leaders evaluate, develop and support their single adult ministries through high-energy speaking engagements, results-oriented consulting and training and leadership development conferences and seminars. Click here to request a FREE "How to Start a Single Adult Ministry" guide.

FromHisHands.com Ministries is Kris's speaking ministry. If you've ever heard her speak, you know that Kris is the kind of speaker who keeps the crowd captivated, shares great information and motivates people to make a difference in the lives of those around them! She speaks to all church audiences on everything from "first impression" ministry to women's topics to singles and young adults. She can speak on a Sunday morning, at a woman's retreat or for a single adults conference. Bring Kris to your church today!

Singles and Relationships by Kris Swiatocho and Dick Purnell

Many singles are Christians who wonder if God will ever bring a mate their way or if they should just stop focusing on a future with a marriage partner and live the single life to the fullest. Kris Swiatocho and Dick Purnell offer solid biblical answers for singles in this newest title in Dick's popular 31-Day Experiment Bible study.