

Journey Into Powerful Living

LESSON 1 . . . Requirements for Spiritual Power

Notes

Do you sometimes feel your spiritual life has little or no power? If so, this series is for you. This “journey” traces the life of an obscure, uneducated, hot-tempered fisherman named Peter. However, the Lord empowers Peter to become the most prominent of Jesus’ original twelve disciples and one of the most famous spiritual forces in church history. There are at least **three** requirements for spiritual power like that found in the life of Peter.

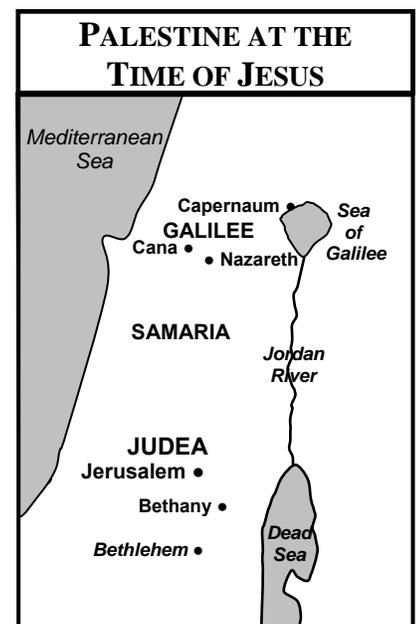
Requirement #1: Commit to Christ (John 1:28-44).

Peter’s given name is “Simon,” and in this lesson we will discover how he gets the name “Peter.” Simon and his brother Andrew grew up in Bethsaida (Jn 1:44), but after Simon is married (Mk 1:30) he lives in Capernaum (Mk 1:21, 29), on the northwestern shore of the Sea of Galilee. There he and Andrew are fishing partners, along with what other two men we will meet later (see Luke 5:10a)?

Simon is in Bethany the first time we meet him. He and Andrew are followers of John the Baptist and are in Bethabara (Bethany) because that is where John is baptizing (Jn 1:28). John the Baptist has already baptized Jesus and is preaching that Jesus is the Son of God (Jn 1:32-34). While in Bethany, Andrew and another disciple of John the Baptist see Jesus passing by. At this point, what does John the Baptist say about Jesus (see Jn 1:36)?

When Andrew and another unnamed disciple (probably John, who does not call himself by name in his gospel) hear this, they begin to follow Jesus. When Jesus sees them following Him, He turns around, and asks, *What seek ye?* Perhaps at a loss for words, they respond, *Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou?* Jesus responds, *Come and see* (Jn 1:38-39).

After spending the day with Jesus, Andrew is convinced of who Jesus is. The first thing he does is find his brother Simon to tell him he has *found* the Messiah (Jn 1:41). Andrew then takes Simon to meet Jesus. Jesus looks at Simon and says what to him (Jn 1:42b)?



The name *Cephas* is the Aramaic word for “stone” or “rock.” Peter is the Greek translation of *Cephas*. Peter’s new name indicates that at Jesus’ first encounter with Simon, He sees not only Peter’s flaws but also his God-given potential and power. Every time Jesus calls him by his new name, Simon is reminded the Lord expects him to become the “Rock of Gibraltar” of the Christian faith. When we come to Christ, we also get a new name, “Christian,” to remind us Jesus wants us to become His fully-developed followers.

After their first meeting with Jesus in Bethany, Simon Peter and Andrew return to their fishing business on the Sea of Galilee. Sometime later, Jesus is walking on the seashore and sees them fishing. What does He say to them, according to Matthew 4:19?

The word translated *make* (POIEO, poy-eh'-oh) refers to the ongoing, creative work of God that continues throughout our lives and is going on at this very moment. Therefore, becoming a fully-developed follower of Christ takes a lifetime. How does Philippians 1:6b express this truth?

Simon Peter and Andrew immediately leave *their nets* and follow Jesus (Mt 4:20). Peter’s life then begins to change because of his commitment to Christ. Differences among people are not dependent upon abilities or education. It is the object and degree of their commitment that determines their successes or failures in life. Until we commit our lives to Jesus Christ we will never receive the power to achieve our highest potential in life. As we shall see in the life of Peter, before God can do a work **through** us, He must do a work **in** us.

The process of Peter’s becoming a “rock” began the day he committed his life to Christ. Requirement #1 for spiritual power is **commit to Christ**.

Requirement #2: Omit doubt (Luke 5:1-7).

Do you like to fish? If so, you know how discouraging it is when you fish for hours and catch nothing. At our next encounter with Peter he has been fishing all night (Lk 5:5). Some scholars believe this passage is describing Peter’s call in Matthew 4 but in more detail. I think this is a totally different incident. I’ll ask Peter when I get to heaven.

Peter, Andrew, and their partners James and John have fished hard all night. As Jesus is teaching a very large crowd on the seashore, He sees two boats left by Peter and his associates as they wash their nets. Jesus climbs into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon Peter, and asks Simon to take it out a little way from shore. Jesus then sits down in the boat and continues teaching the people (Lk 5:1-3). When Jesus finishes teaching, He tells Peter to take the boat into deep water and let down his nets for a catch (Lk 5:4b). This was a demanding request because Simon hasn't slept all night and is exhausted.

Fishing is always much better at night near the shore where fish feed close to the surface. Daytime in deep water is the worst time and place to fish. Simon tells Jesus they have fished hard all night and haven't caught anything (5:5a). Then, what does Peter say? (5:5b)

Peter is a professional fisherman—He makes his living by fishing. Now, a carpenter is telling him how to fish. However, Peter, probably rubbing his eyes and yawning, does not doubt Jesus so he takes his boat into deep water and drops his nets into the water. There they catch such a large amount of fish the nets begin to tear (5:6).

To draw in all the fish, Peter and Andrew signal their partners, James and John, to bring the other boat and help them. They fill both boats so full they start to sink (5:7). When we **omit doubt** and do as the Lord says, we will experience what truth found in Psalm 126:3?

To experience **spiritual power**, we must **commit to Christ, omit doubt**, and . . .

Requirement #3: Outfit for evangelism (Luke 5:8-11).

Each boat was about eight feet wide and over 25 feet in length, so this is an unbelievable catch. When Peter sees this massive miracle, he realizes even the fish of the sea obey the wishes of Jesus. Therefore, Peter falls before Jesus. Then, what does he say to Jesus in Luke 5:8b?

When Peter sees the miraculous number of fish, a light comes on in his mind and he calls Jesus *Lord*. Up to this point he had called Him *Rabbi*. When Peter realizes Jesus is God in flesh and blood, he reacts like Isaiah

who, when he saw God in a vision, felt unclean, or sinful (Isa. 6:5). However, Peter does not see a vision; he is in the very presence of the Christ, God in flesh and blood. Peter is overwhelmed with an awareness of his own sinfulness and feels so unworthy to be in the Lord's presence that he asks Him to leave.

This is spiritual immaturity Peter will later outgrow. Let's move forward in Peter's life until after Jesus' resurrection (Jn 21). Peter is deeply convicted by his denial of the Lord and travels back to Galilee. There he and some other disciples fish all night. In the early morning they hear a voice from the shore saying, "*Children, have ye any meat?*" They answer, *No*. Then, the voice from shore says, *Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find*. When they do this, they catch such a large amount of fish they are unable to draw in the net (Jn 21:5-6). This incident brings back memories of the first time Peter and his partners went fishing with Jesus (Lk 5). Therefore, John says, *It is the Lord* (Jn 21:7a). What does Peter then do (see Jn 21:7b)?

Peter goes to Jesus as fast as he can because he now knows the truth about Jesus. Later, he writes: *Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness* (1 Pet. 2:24a-b). I love what Jesus says to Peter in Luke 5 when Peter tells Him to go away from him. What does Jesus say (Luke 5:10b)?

This is God's ultimate purpose for us as well. Whenever we stop trying to *catch* people for Christ, we stop following Jesus and experiencing spiritual power. That's why we should continually be outfitting ourselves for evangelism. To **outfit for evangelism** so we can become fishers of men and women, we must take advantage of every opportunity to learn how to share our faith. At the very least our "outfit" should include an explanation of the Roman Road to salvation (Rom. 3:23; 6:23, 5:8, and 10:9-10).

When the fishing party lands, they pull their boats onto shore and leave everything, including the fish, to follow Jesus (Lk 5:11). God's ultimate purpose for our lives is more than accepting Jesus as Savior; it also includes catching men and women for Christ. When we receive spiritual power, what does Jesus say we will do (Acts 1:8b)?

Three requirements for spiritual power are: commit to Christ, omit doubt, and outfit for evangelism.