

# Jesus Bible Study Series

Week #9 (Chapter Seventeen)  
*Encountering Jesus along Life's Road*

**HMR**  
Men's Bible Study

## Main Idea

Looking back through history it is easy to be critical of the two disciples who traveled on the road to Emmaus. How could someone who had spent time with Jesus honestly not know it was Him walking alongside the road with them; or most importantly, talking in a way that only Jesus could do. However, in our own lives how often are we unresponsive to the Lord's gentle hand? Are there areas in your life that you have not surrendered to Jesus and in this regard mimic what we observe in the blindness of those who traveled with Jesus to Emmaus?

## Deep Thoughts

From time to time when we study the Bible we come across individuals who could have made wiser choices. Like moviegoers before the big screen, we want to scream out to the victim when trouble awaits them around the next corner. Classical Biblical examples include Joseph who needed an encouraging word that things would get better, the nation of Israel that Samuel's warning about the dangers of a king should be heeded, and probably the Bible's all-time example: David and Bathsheba. It is often easy to see the dangers that lurk behind dark corners when viewed from the outside; however, the real challenge is seeing life from the inside out. The challenge for you and me is to see life from God's eyes and to make decisions on a daily basis that reflect His vantage point. This is true in the good times and the bad, the ends of the bell curve when we tend to be least responsive. **It is a rare quality in a man who can remain attentive to the whisper of God regardless of his circumstances, be they the highest of highs or the lowest of lows.** In this lesson we continue our focus on *abiding in Christ by understanding who He was, who He is, and who He calls us to be.*

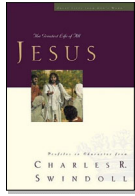
**Supporting Scriptures** James 2:2-12; and Luke 24:13-35.

## Questions for Consideration

1. Read the story on pages 246-247 about the president of the small Bible college with whom Dr. Swindoll interacted. Are there times in your life when you have faced discouragement to the point of despair? As a Christian how should we handle the blows given to us in life? Consider James 1:2-12 in your answer.
2. The Road to Emmaus interaction (Luke 24:13-35) that Jesus had with two of His disciples after the Resurrection is one of the greatest stories in the Bible. There are some very profound lessons for all of us outlined in this story. Consider the questions below:
  - a) It is easy to be critical of the two disciples; however, let's bring the story a little closer to home. When you and I are ignorant (either intentionally or unintentionally) of Jesus' work in our lives, what are the results?
  - b) On pages 249 – 253 Dr. Swindoll outlines three faulty perspectives listed below that "coated the eyes" of the disciples. How can these same faulty perspectives impact our lives as well?
    - Their viewpoint lacked a spiritual dimension, leaving them with a merely human understanding of the events.
    - Their own agenda determined their expectations.
    - They failed to acknowledge the resurrection.
3. The single-greatest application for you and me as Believers in the Road to Emmaus story is this: **Jesus offers a way home for the wayward saint.** At some point in every Believer's life they have gone through periods of discouragement, battled with a habitual sin (or sins), or not trusted the Lord to carry them through a trying time. Consider Dr. Swindoll's point on pages 254 – 255 in evaluating The Road Home for the times in our lives when all hope seems gone. Discuss how these points can help us get back on track.
  - Choose to view life through God's eyes.
  - Surrender your expectations.
  - Acknowledge the resurrection of Jesus Christ and stake your fortune upon it.

## Take-away Points

There is no doubt that the followers of Jesus experienced tremendous grief in watching His Death on the Cross, along with the preceding horrific beatings and emotion-filled trials. As Believers, we can be non-responsive to the Lord's hand when we are either going through trials and tribulations or when life is going great, and we become self-sufficient in our own mind. As Dr. Swindoll writes to us, **The pain of loss gives the inner eyes new lenses.**



# Jesus Bible Study Series

Week #9 (Chapter Eighteen)

*Listening to Jesus beside the Sea*

**HMR**  
Men's Bible Study

## Main Idea

Jesus was the ultimate visionary. Unlike many of today's hatchet-happy leaders, Jesus did not immediately remove men who failed Him. Instead, He was patient with His fallen troops and encouraged them to get back on the path they had once held so dear. If there is any lesson for us in studying the life of Peter, it is this fact: Jesus, like His Father, is the perfect leader who gives His followers a second chance if they have failed Him. Jesus wants us to be passionate in our pursuit of Him, but He loves us enough to understand that we may fall.

## Deep Thoughts

Have you ever had a time in your life when you really disappointed someone, especially a leader? The kind of disappointment that makes you hide your face in public, at least so the offended party cannot see you. These emotions can be crippling and are the kinds that have taken men and women completely out of the game. The common thread for those who have returned victorious from the *agony of defeat* is someone providing a profound word of encouragement. The greatest stories are told by those who have actually been encouraged by the one whom they disappointed. About 15 years ago I experienced one of the most discouraging times in my entire life. It involved my having lost a significant amount of money for my company. It was personally embarrassing, but even worse it was the result of my negligence and taking on more than I could handle. The worst part of it all was the fact that I had disappointed and let down the president of our company, a gentleman who had a profound impact on my life. What fueled my passion to get back in the game was the response of our president. Although I knew he was disappointed with me, he continued to believe in my abilities and never wavered in giving me his trust. I imagine to a much greater degree this is what Peter experienced. **Sometimes as leaders the only way for us to truly develop is to experience defeat and observe how others around us respond in providing encouragement to lift us up out of the pit.** The world has never known a better leader than Jesus. He compelled Peter to get back *in the game* as no other One could. In this lesson we continue our focus on *abiding in Christ by understanding who He was, who He is, and who He calls us to be.*

**Supporting Scriptures** John 21; and Luke 23:31-32.

## Questions for Consideration

4. Read John 21 that tells of the miraculous catch of fish in Galilee and Jesus' reinstatement of Peter. Consider the following questions.
  - a) Why do you think Peter, as well as other disciples (i.e. Thomas, Nathanael, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples), returned to their life of fishing in Galilee?
  - b) Are there times in your life when you have been without direction and went ahead to pursue a safe path, even though you knew the Lord had more challenging plans for you?
  - c) Review the "Keep Following Me" section of Dr. Swindoll's book on pages 267 – 270. Why do you think Peter never used the word for unconditional love, *agape*, but yet chose to use the less-committed version of *phileo* in responding to Jesus?
5. Luke 23:31 – 32 record for us Jesus' words: *Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you[a] as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.* If Peter were to have remembered these words after his denial of Jesus, what encouragement would he have found in these words (hint: look at the last words spoken by Jesus)?
6. On pages 271 – 272 Dr. Swindoll outlines three important lessons we learn from the call of Peter. How do these impact your thoughts regarding God's call on your life?
  - When the Lord offers an opportunity to transform futility into fruitfulness, be open to change.
  - When Jesus plans to move in a new and challenging direction, expect a period of deep soul-searching.
  - When the Lord makes it clear that you are to follow Him in this new direction, focus fully on Him and refuse to be distracted by comparisons with others.

## Take-away Points

Had Jesus not provided encouragement to Peter, it is unlikely that he would ever have gotten back in the game. We know this to be the case because Peter had already returned to the life he knew before Christ – fishing. Imagine a New Testament without Peter! It is a sobering reminder for us that we can have a tremendous impact on the world around us, especially on those who are in great despair.

**Next Meeting Time:** Tuesday, May 20. Read Chapters 19 and 20 in *Jesus, The Greatest Life of All*, in preparation. We'll then be done with our book and take a break for the summer to reconvene the first week in August.