

### **“Do You Truly Love Me?”**

**Drawing Near:** Heavenly Father, joyfully we welcome Your teaching words of truth. Help us to internalize them in such a way that it produces character in us likened to that of Jesus, “the Good Shepherd.” Grant us a deeper understanding of our Savior’s love, grace and purpose for His people. Amen.

According to Acts 1:3 Jesus revealed Himself to His chosen apostles over a period of forty days after His resurrection and spoke about the kingdom of God. Jesus’ appearance to His disciples in chapter 21 is considered the epilogue in John’s portrayal of Jesus and the believing community He is creating. This encounter with the disciples reassured them of a continuing relationship with Jesus beyond His resurrection and ascension into heaven. **Read John 21:1-25.**

1. The story begins at the Sea of Tiberius (also called the Sea of Galilee) where several of Jesus’ disciples had gone along fishing with Simon Peter. Which disciples are mentioned as being with Simon Peter?

After a night of unsuccessful fishing Jesus reveals Himself again to His disciples. In John 21:1 and John 21:14 the word “manifested” (NASB) or “appeared” (NIV) is used to describe the effect of this event. (You may wish to mark or highlight these words in your Bible.) We find the same word used in both John 1:31 and John 2:11.

2. Holding on to these thoughts **read John 21:1-14** again. Look for the various ways in which Jesus reveals His resurrection glory to the disciples in each of these scenes. Share your findings below.

3. How would you characterize Peter’s response to Jesus in verses 7-11?



God's love runs deep and knows no boundaries. Jesus exhibited love in its fullness to Peter that morning on the banks of the Sea of Galilee. And from that foundational expression of love, Peter's life took on a whole new meaning and focus.

9. How was Jesus asking Peter to live out His love for Him in the future? (Also recall John 13:15, 35 and 15:12.)

**Personal Reflection:** It is easy to identify with Peter, isn't it? Along life's journey we are often full of good intentions in our desire to love and follow Jesus but so often we fall short. Jesus charged Peter (as He does us) to extend loving care to those who have been strategically placed into our sphere of influence. Ask God to refresh and renew your heart in the same way He did Peter's.

10. What is learned about the character of God from the fact that the disciple who failed Jesus so dramatically was called to care for and nurture the church?

*Come and behold the graciousness of our Lord through the words of David, the psalmist.  
**Read and meditate on Psalm 103:11-14.***

11. How might this story serve as an inspiration when dealing with failures in your own life?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
12. Can you share an occasion when you experienced God's forgiveness in a mighty way?

As Jesus conversed with Peter He also prophesied about Peter's future. **Reread John 21:18-23.** Notice the solemn words with which this section is introduced.

13. a. Explain your understanding of Jesus' prophecy regarding Peter.

- b. What does Jesus say to Peter right after informing him of the price he would pay for tending His sheep? (Compare with John 10:11, 15.)

**To Ponder:** Are you willing to endure the sufferings and hardships that coincide with following Christ? Are you prepared to possibly die for Him?

Upon hearing of his own destiny Peter also wanted to know about John's future (verses 20-21).

14. What is your interpretation of Jesus' response to Peter in 21:22?

Note: From verse 23 we find that misinterpretations arose from Jesus' statement and spread like a rumor among the brethren. Remember that John's gospel was the last of the gospels to be written. It appears that John utilized the opportunity to dispel past misconceptions.

*Throughout this gospel John has presented an amazing "behind the scenes" view of Jesus Christ. Now at the close he wants us to accept the reliability and truth of his testimony (John 21:24).*

In the final verse we come back to the broad perspective with which this gospel began in the prologue (1:1-18). The prologue shows that the infinitely eternal Word came to us by humbling Himself and entering the world by means of the incarnation or taking on human flesh. John 21:25 presents the world as unable to contain all the *revelation* that the Word asserted while here on earth. What John wrote and what everyone else could write would still only *reveal* a small portion of what could be written about our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

15. As you reflect on this final thought about Jesus, write out your response to Him in the form of a prayer.

*The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the One and Only who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. John 1:14.*