

# PURE PASSION

AN ATHLETE STUDY

## EATING CROW

“One who puts on his battle gear should not boast like one who is taking it off” (1 Kings 20:11) This quote provides a great reminder that an ounce of humility before a game, is better than a pound of eating crow after it doesn’t go as planned. YouTube has many “*Instant Karma*” videos from athletes and professional fighters talking a big game then getting humiliated.

All of us can be confident before we get tested. Such bravado doesn’t always stand up to the challenges we might face. We might think we’re honest, until our honesty costs us something. We might think we’re brave, until standing out or standing alone comes at a high price. You might consider yourself a person of a certain character or ability, but ask yourself, have you been adequately tested?

As Jesus and the disciples continued Passover in the Upper Room, they had done and seen a lot since they first arrived to Jerusalem. They very likely felt that Jesus, as God’s Messiah, was about to establish his throne from which he’d judge the nations. What they didn’t realize is that if Jesus had brought judgment before the Cross, humanity would have perished in their sin.

This misunderstanding helps us understand the confusion the disciples may have had. It also helps us understand their overconfidence.

Unfortunately for the Apostle Peter, today we’re looking at one of his most famous foot-in-mouth moments. Jesus tried to warn him, but he famously talked a big game. In today’s passage, Jesus put him in his place knowing that he was on the verge of the greatest test of his life—and he wouldn’t pass.

MATTHEW

26:31–34

MARK

14:27–30

LUKE

22:31–34

JOHN

13:37–38

LUKE 22:31–34

<sup>31</sup> “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, <sup>32</sup> but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.”

<sup>33</sup> Peter said to him, “Lord, I am ready to go with you both to prison and to death.” <sup>34</sup> Jesus said, “I tell you, Peter, the rooster will not crow this day, until you deny three times that you know me.”

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Many people know of the persecution and martyrdom of early Christians under Roman rule. However, around the world, Christian persecution is as high as it has ever been.

Scan the QR for a brief video from Open Doors a couple years ago celebrating the 30th anniversary of their “World Watch List.” This list encourages believers to pray for the persecuted Church; brothers and sisters in Christ.



## DISCUSSION

Describe a time you thought you would be good at something that it turned out you weren’t.

ICEBREAKER

1. ID 2 competing spiritual forces vying to dominate Peter. (31-32a)

2. Why did Jesus want Peter’s faith to remain strong? (32b)

OBSERVATION

3. What final reality check did Jesus offer Peter? (34)

4. Why do you think it was important for Jesus to both encourage and provide a reality check for Peter?

INTERPRETATION

5. What test of faith do you think challenge people’s allegiance to Jesus?

6. What promises can you cling to as you face those same tests?

APPLICATION

Jesus said before following him that we would have to count the cost. Is it worth it? You bet! If you have questions, talk to your coach as soon as possible.

# PURE PASSION

WEEK 4

AN ATHLETE STUDY

## STUDY NOTES

### PASSOVER CONTINUED

Last week we joined Jesus in the Upper Room for Passover and the squabble among the disciples about who will be the greatest. The disciples were human just like us. Each desired to be the greatest—the team captain. Sports psychologists, Larry Lauer and Kevin Blue identified *The 3 C's of Being a Captain*. A team captain should embody three leadership attributes—Care, Courage, and Consistency. Unfortunately, most of us want the title without fulfilling these attributes.

Over the course of Jesus' 3-year ministry, one disciple seemed to rise above the rest as the team captain. Many times, the Apostle Peter exemplified the C's of caring and courageousness. However, his problem was always consistency. When Peter opened his mouth, you never knew if he was about to stick his foot in it. Today, Peter got his foot stuck with gusto.

### GODLY PASSION SPEAKS BOLDLY

As the disciples sat around the Passover table with Jesus, Judas had already betrayed him (John 13:21–30). Judas, however, wasn't Satan's only target. He also wanted **Simon**, whom Christ renamed "Peter" (meaning "Rock," Mark 3:16).

Peter's passion for Jesus had no rival. Matthew specifically called him "*first*" in the list of the disciples (Matthew 10:2). Peter alone cried out to Jesus during the storm, stepping out of the boat and onto the water (Matthew 14:29). Peter was the first to identify Jesus as the Christ (Matthew 16:16). Finally, when Jesus invited his disciples to follow those who rejected him, Peter spoke up pleading, "*Lord, to whom would we go? You have the words to eternal life.*" (John. 6:68).

Peter's passion, under God's control, strengthened his ministry. However, under his flesh, his passion became his greatest weakness. As Jesus continued his teaching about the coming kingdom during the Passover meal, we don't know if he saw something in Peter's face (or heart); but whatever the reason, Jesus knew he needed to speak boldly. And he did.

Jesus said, "**Simon Simon,**" repeating the name like a coach grabbing a player's face-mask to get the message across. And although Jesus spoke to Peter, his warning was intended for the entire team.

He warned, "**Satan demanded to have you...**" The "you" here is plural ("y'all"), perhaps referring to Judas and Peter but, more likely, Peter and **all** the other disciples (i.e. "all y'all"). What does **Satan** want with them? Jesus continued, "**He**

**wants to sift you** (plural, "y'all") **like wheat.**" Satan wanted to break them apart and it wouldn't take years, months, or even days...but mere hours. **Jesus** knew what the morning would hold, but **they** didn't have a clue. They had recently come into Jerusalem to the cheers of crowds. The shame of the cross was unimaginable.

Knowing Peter as he did, Jesus offered two encouragements. First, Jesus **prayed for** him personally (this "**you**" is singular). He **prayed** that his **faith** would **not fail**. Second, and it's more subtle, he expressed ultimate confidence in Peter's role. Jesus said "**When**" (not "if") Peter turned back after fleeing, he should **strengthen** his **brothers**.

### GODLY PASSION PROVIDES REALITY CHECKS

Jesus warned Peter that he *will* fail, but with this warning came assurance that he *will* turn back. Because Peter had such leadership potential, Jesus commanded him to step-up—to **strengthen** his **brothers**.

However, he'd not been adequately tested to fulfill the role quite yet, "**Lord, I am ready to go with you both to prison and to death!**" Peter's boasts were completely sincere, passionate...and wrong.

It seems that Peter heard what Christ said without actually listening. Jesus gave Peter a reality check. **Jesus said, "The rooster will not crow this day, until you deny three times that you know me."** What a shock this must have been to the team captain—or at least, how confusing it must have been. After seeing the Triumphal Entry, after seeing Jesus clear the temple, after all that Jesus had taught and done, what could possibly happen that Peter would deny Jesus?

Actually, that's a great question for all of us. After everything revealed about Jesus in the pages of Scripture, after seeing and tasting salvation for those of us who have received Christ, what could possibly happen that you would deny Jesus? Be very careful before you answer, "nothing." Christian history is filled with examples of some pretty terrible things Christians have had to endure because they stood strong in their commitment to Christ.

Maybe you'll face a choice between Jesus or your life, Jesus or your family, or Jesus or your career. Certainly, we all face the challenges of staying strong in our commitment to Christ in light of our own personal sin. As Christian martyr Jim Elliot said, "*He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.*" But be warned, keep your battle armor on before you relax like you're taking it off.