CORNERSTONECONNECTIONS
DECEMBER2025

Scripture Story: Luke 24:33-48; John 20:19-29; 21:1-22.
Commentary: *The Desire of Ages* (or *Humble Hero*), chapters 84; 85.

making things right



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flashlight

"Another lesson Christ had to give, relating especially to Peter. Peter's denial of his Lord had been in shameful contrast to his former professions of loyalty. He had dishonored Christ, and had incurred the distrust of his brethren. They thought he would not be allowed to take his former position among them, and he himself felt that he had forfeited his trust. . . . The Saviour gave him opportunity to regain the confidence of his brethren, and, so far as possible, to remove the reproach he had brought upon the gospel" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 811).

keytext

"When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?'

" 'Yes, Lord,' he said, 'you know that I love you.'

Jesus said, 'Feed my lambs.' "

(John 21:15, NIV)

what do you think?

Answer the following questions, giving your most honest answer:

1. Where do you feel the most loved and accepted?
2. What makes you feel loved and accepted? What can a person do to show that they care for you in a way that is meaningful to you?
3. Is it possible to love others without first loving yourself?
4. Is it possible to love someone if you are holding a grudge?
5. Is it possible to love yourself if you haven't forgiven yourself for your shortcomings?
6. What is your strongest defense reflex when you are feeling insecure or unaccepted?
7. At what times do you find yourself using those words or actions?

did you know?

According to a study done by the American Psychiatric Nurses Association, the lack of a sense of belonging has been associated with loneliness, emotional distress, psychological disturbance, and mental illness. They wanted to discover if a sense of belonging could actually work as a buffer against clinical depression in people who were at high risk for depression based on their family history, etc. The result? Yes! A sense of belonging makes a huge difference!

INTO THE STORY

"'I'm going out to fish,' Simon Peter told them, and they said, 'We'll go with you.' So they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

"Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus.

"He called out to them, 'Friends, haven't you any fish?'

"'No,' they answered.

"He said, 'Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some.' When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish.

"Then the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, 'It is the Lord!' As soon as Simon Peter heard him say, 'It is the Lord,' he wrapped his outer garment around him (for he had taken it off) and jumped into the water. The other disciples followed in the boat, towing the net full of fish, for they were not far from shore, about a hundred yards. . . .

"When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?'

"'Yes, Lord,' he said, 'you know that I love you.'

"Jesus said, 'Feed my lambs.'

"Again Jesus said, 'Simon son of John, do you love me?'

"He answered, 'Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.'

"Jesus said, 'Take care of my sheep.'

"The third time he said to him, 'Simon son of John, do you love me?'

"Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, 'Do you love me?' He said, 'Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.'

"Jesus said, 'Feed my sheep. Very truly I tell you, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go.' Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, 'Follow me!'

"Peter turned and saw that the disciple whom Jesus loved was following them. (This was the one who had leaned back against Jesus at the supper and had said, 'Lord, who is going to betray you?') When Peter saw him, he asked, 'Lord, what about him?'

"Jesus answered, 'If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? You must follow me.'"

(John 21:3-8, 15-22, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY

What was Jesus trying to do when He questioned Peter about his love for Him?

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How did Peter seem to feel about this questioning?

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What would Peter's public insistence of his love for Jesus do for those who were listening, especially after Peter denied Jesus three times when He was arrested?

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Was Jesus' forgiveness of Peter enough to allow Peter to go on with the work Jesus had given them to preach the gospel? What more was needed, both from Peter and from the other disciples?

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Have we really accepted God's forgiveness if we refuse to forgive ourselves?

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punch lines

"Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up. Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken" **(Ecclesiastes 4:9-12, NIV).**

"'Come now, let us settle the matter,' says the LORD. 'Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool'" **(Isaiah 1:18, NIV).**

"Jesus said to the woman, 'Your faith has saved you; go in peace'" **(Luke 7:50, NIV).**

"Whoever watches the wind will not plant; whoever looks at the clouds will not reap" **(Ecclesiastes 11:4, NIV).**

"Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow" **(Psalm 51:7, NIV).**

further insight

"The reproach of the disciple's sin is cast upon Christ. It causes Satan to triumph, and wavering souls to stumble. By giving proof of repentance, the disciple, so far as lies in his power, is to remove this reproach."

—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 811

Sabbath

Read John 20:19-29.

Answer the *What Do You Think?* questions. Thomas chose not to believe in Jesus' resurrection. But even though he put up a strong defense against believing, Jesus gave Thomas the proof he had been insisting he have before choosing to believe with the other disciples. Instead of judging Thomas' stubbornness, look at what he might have been feeling to cause him to pull away from the group and separate himself beliefwise. How do we do the same thing, and why?

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Sunday

Read Isaiah 1:18.

Answer the *Out of the Story* questions. Peter had fallen in the eyes of the other disciples and the other believers. He had been the loudest talker, but when the test came, Peter had denied Jesus three times in His time of need. Jesus used His questioning of Peter to give him a chance to publicly declare his love for his Master, and to help build a bridge for Peter to become fully accepted by the other 11 once more. Why was it Jesus' deliberate intention that Peter be united with the group again? What could unity do for both Peter and the others?

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Monday

Read John 21:15.

Jesus tells Peter what he must do—"Feed My lambs." This was not only his direction for the ministry—to nurture the new believers who needed gentle care and guidance—but also instructions about how to become united with the believers once more. Peter would be united when he worked side by side with his brothers. By working together, they would be united in their goal, and there would be ample opportunity to build trust once more. The same advice holds for us. How can you contribute to the call to feed the lambs?

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Tuesday

Read Psalm 51:7.

Ellen White tells us that Jesus was giving Peter a chance to make up for his past mistakes. Jesus had forgiven Peter, but Peter still needed to be reinstated with the other disciples. We make our own share of mistakes too. Life is a learning experience, and we aren't always going to get it right on the first try. Is Jesus' forgiveness always enough, or do we sometimes have to take an extra step (with Jesus' help) to make up with the people we have let down? In what ways might we be able to regain trust in broken relationships? What opportunities do you see to mend fences with people you might have hurt in the past?

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Wednesday

In this week's *Punch Lines* we can learn that God is willing to forgive us and make us clean. All we have to do is come to Him in faith and ask for forgiveness.

Ecclesiastes 11:4 tells us that if we are focused on things that might scare us or make us anxious, we won't get anything useful done. This is also true about our past mistakes. If we can't forgive ourselves, we will never be able to move forward and be the people God intends us to be. Refusing to forgive ourselves also affects our relationships. Relationships matter, and it is God's will that we have happy, functional relationships to fulfill our lives. "Two are better than one" and "a cord of three strands is not quickly broken."

For what do you need to forgive yourself? How can receiving this forgiveness allow you to move forward?

Thursday

Read Ecclesiastes 4:9-12.

People are the true treasures of life, and we should not take them for granted. How can you become more closely united with your family, friends, and church? How can you contribute to these relationships in such a way that you can make them happier for having known you? If unity is this important to God, how important should it be to us?

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Friday

Read Proverbs 12:26.

The most frustrating and challenging aspect of life is the maintenance of relationships. Books abound, exploring how to build and maintain relationships with everyone from your family members to your coworkers to random people you meet who might be important to you later. It's not always easy! Relationships, however, are also the most satisfying part of life. It isn't possible to have solid, strong relationships if you haven't taken care of things inside yourself.

How can God help you to be complete within so that you can have satisfying relationships with other people?

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this week's reading*

The Desire of Ages or (*Humble Hero*), chapters 84; 85.

*A special adaptation of *The Desire of Ages*, entitled *Humble Hero*, has been created just for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press® Publishing Association. Get more info about it at: www.cornerstoneconnections.net. By following this plan you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages series each year.