

According to the Gospel records, Peter and his brother Andrew were the first disciples of Jesus. Their fishing partners, James and John, were also among the first to be called by Jesus and all four may have been disciples of John the Baptist before becoming disciples of Jesus. Throughout the events in the Gospels, not many of the disciples are mentioned by name except for Peter, James, and John.

Peter, of the twelve named disciples, appears to be the most outspoken and many times received a rebuke from Jesus for things he said and did. It is interesting to go through the Gospel records and notice how many times Peter is mentioned:

It was Peter who, when he saw Jesus walking on the water, at Jesus' command to "come", started to walk on the water and then floundered in his faith. (Matthew 14:22-32)

It was Peter who asked for an explanation to a parable but was rebuked by Jesus "Are you still so dull?" (Matthew 15:1-20)

It was Peter who, one moment was declaring that "You are the Christ, The Son of the Living God" and was blessed by Jesus, and then, not much later argued with Jesus about his impending death and was quickly rebuked with the words "Get behind me,

Satan. You are a stumbling block to me." (Matthew 16)

It was Peter who asked the question "how many times should I forgive my brother?" (Matthew 18:21)

It was Peter who wanted to put up three booths when Jesus was transfigured with Moses and Elijah. (Matthew 17:4)

It was Peter who asked the question "We have left everything to follow you. What will there be for us?" (Matthew 19:27)

It was Peter who said to Jesus "you shall never wash my feet" and then was rebuked again by Jesus. (John 13:6-8)

It was Peter and John that Jesus sent to make preparations for the last supper. (Luke 22:8)

These are just a few instances that Peter is mentioned by name in the Gospel records. We all remember that it was Peter who denied Jesus at the trial and later went out and wept bitterly. It was also Peter that cut off the ear of the High Priest's servant when Jesus was taken prisoner (John 18:10) and rebuked again by Jesus as he miraculously replaced the ear. Finally, it was Peter who went running to the tomb to find the strips of linen lying unused and Peter, who when he saw Jesus on the shore, jumped in the

water and went swimming to him.

When we look at these recorded instances of Peter's words and actions, we can't help but wonder why he didn't learn to think before speaking or acting! But notice, that it was also Peter who was one of the three taken up the mountain with Jesus to see his glory, it was Peter who was given the task with John to prepare the Passover supper, and it was Peter, James, and John whom Jesus took with him apart to pray before his trial and crucifixion. Finally, It was Peter who was tasked with "feeding his sheep" as Jesus asked him if he loved him.

Even though Peter was impulsive and outspoken, his passion and love for his Lord is evident in the Gospel records. Even though he was rebuked countless times, he received the rebukes with humility and obedience. His outspokenness made plain what was in his heart. Jesus was able to teach and guide him because he listened and learned. In Peter, one of the first disciples, we can see the attributes of childlike humility and teachableness so necessary in a true disciple of Jesus. How different he was from the Pharisees and teachers of the law who were so arrogant in their

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Free Book Offer

We would like to send you a very helpful book entitled Understanding the Bible by Dr. A. D. Norris. This book briefly looks at the history and structure of the Bible and covers a number of important Bible teachings such as God's coming kingdom here on earth, the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, sin and its consequences, death and resurrection and many more key Bible subjects.

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Simon Peter, A Servant and Apostle

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knowledge, self-righteousness, and pride that they would not listen to Jesus.

After Jesus ascended to heaven, Peter became one of the leaders of the church in Jerusalem. He preached to the multitude on the Day of Pentecost, teaching and proving that Jesus is the Messiah. Through the power of Jesus he healed the sick and raised the dead. Through instruction from Jesus he learned that the good news of salvation in Jesus was to be shared with Gentiles and supported Paul in his missionary work to foreign lands.

He, who at one time had denied his Lord, had gone on through the next 40 years to suffer many things for him. Finally, at the end of his life, he wrote two letters to the many believers in all parts of the world encouraging them to endure suffering and to persevere for the name of Jesus.

In these current days we, too, need Peter's encouraging words:

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him

and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls. 1 Peter 1:3-9 NIV

The end of all things is near. Therefore be clear minded and self-controlled so that you can pray. Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen. 1 Peter 4:7-11 NIV

Bible Principles

Do You Believe in Jesus?

You may answer this immediately by thinking: "of course, I believe in Jesus". So let's ask the question again: Do you believe with all your heart, do you believe "unto righteousness"? Has your belief in Jesus changed your life? Have you become his disciple?

When Jesus called Peter from his fishing nets, Peter left all and followed him. Peter's belief that Jesus was the Messiah changed his life forever. In the three years that followed we see Peter growing in his life as a disciple. He was rebuked by Jesus many times but Peter continued in his belief that Jesus was "the Christ, the

Son of the living God." Peter's belief was truly tested when he saw Jesus arrested and condemned and we know that he denied knowing Jesus, not once, but three times. Peter's faith and belief in Jesus was not yet complete.

Contrast the Peter who denied knowing Jesus three times with the Peter who just a few weeks later on the Day of Pentecost stood up among the crowds of Jerusalem and declared:

"Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs,

which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him." (Acts 2)

Peter was a changed man. Jesus was alive—raised from the dead. Not only that. Jesus had forgiven him his denials and charged him

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Do You Believe in Jesus?

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with caring for his sheep. In the years that followed Peter spent his life in service to his Lord and suffered many persecutions and finally death because of his belief in Jesus.

Simply agreeing that Jesus died for your sins is not “belief”. Simply being sorry for your sins is not “repentance”. True repentance and belief in Jesus changes the heart of a person. A believer is a disciple. He no longer lives his life for himself. Read carefully these things that Jesus said concerning his disciples:

Matt 10:37-39 "Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and anyone who does not

take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it."

Matt 7:21 "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven."

Matt 7:12-16 "So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets. Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it. Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their fruit

you will recognize them."

Mark 16:16 "Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned."

John 13:34-35 "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

Matt 28:18-20 "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Book Review

George Muller, Man of Faith and Miracles by Basil Miller

During the 1830's Charles Dickens wrote a book entitled Oliver Twist. It is a novel that calls attention to and exposes the horrendous treatment of orphans who lived on the streets of London. One of the outcomes of the Industrial Revolution in England was the astounding number of orphans that roamed the streets of not just London, but many other major cities in England.

This biography of George Muller as told by Basil Miller is the astonishing true story of one man's journey of faith and how through this faith, God provided for thou-

sands of these orphans. In 1834 George Muller was touched by the plight of the street urchins and gathered a few together each day for breakfast and instruction in the Bible. In short order there were 40 children gathering each day. By the end of 1835 he believed that God was leading him to open an orphanage. He was not a man of wealth but contributions of money, supplies, and help started to pour in—even though he never asked anyone for help. He only prayed to God for the necessities for caring for the children. In the next 25 years 5 new orphanages

were built that housed thousands of orphans. Each day was a day of faith that God would supply what was needed to care for the children.

Through daily prayer and Bible reading and studying, George was guided each day in this work. When asked how he knew what God's will for him was, this was his answer as found on pages 50-51:

"1. I seek at the beginning to get my heart into such a state

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Tuesday evening Bible Study Group

We would like to invite you to a Bible study group which meets every Tuesday at the Hampton Inn and Suites, 12251 Jefferson Ave, across the street from the Patrick Henry Mall. The class starts at 7:00 PM and ends at 8:30 PM. We are currently reading and studying from Paul's letters in the first half of the class and in the second half we are looking at a number of passages from both the Old and New Testament that have to do with the Gospel of Peace. (Rom 10:15). What is that "gospel of peace" and what are the "glad tidings of good things" that Paul talks about in Romans? Please join us.

With the start of the new year, the Daily Bible Readings start in Genesis, the first book of the Old Testament, and the Gospel of Matthew, the first book of the New Testament. The book of Genesis, is as its name implies, a book of beginnings. The principles and promises set forth in the book of Genesis are continued and repeated throughout the rest of the Bible. Consider an example of these basic principles that we find in the first few chapters of Genesis and their echoes in the rest of the Bible:

The Principle	Found in Genesis	Found in the New Testament
God is the Creator of all	Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.	Rev 4:11 "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being."
Man was created in God's image.	Genesis 1:27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.	Colossians 3:8-10 Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.
God instituted marriage as the union of one man and one woman.	Genesis 2:18-24 The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." ...So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man." For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.	Mark 10:5-9 Jesus replied. "But at the beginning of creation God 'made them male and female.' 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.' So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate."
Sin results in death	Genesis 3:17-19 To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat of it,' By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return."	Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death
The heart of man is wicked.	Genesis 6:5 The LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time.	Matthew 15:17-20 But the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and these make a man 'unclean.' For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. These are what make a man 'unclean';

Thoughts on the Daily Readings (*Continued*)

The Principle	Found in Genesis	Found in the New Testament
God promised that sin would be conquered.	Genesis 3:15 And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."	Romans 5:18-21 Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men. For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.
Abraham, in faith, received eternal promises from God.	Genesis 15:4-6 Then the word of the LORD came to him: "This man will not be your heir, but a son coming from your own body will be your heir." He took him outside and said, "Look up at the heavens and count the stars — if indeed you can count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be." Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.	Galatians 3:6-9 Consider Abraham: "He believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." Understand, then, that those who believe are children of Abraham. The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: "All nations will be blessed through you." So those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

The first few chapters of Genesis lay the foundations for the principles, promises, and teachings found in the rest of the Bible. The very fundamental teachings concerning God as the creator of all, the sinful nature of mankind, and the Gospel message of God's provision for salvation are all found in Genesis, the book of beginnings.

Book Review George Muller

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that it has no will of his own in regard to a given matter....

"2. Having done this, I do not leave the result to feeling or simple impressions. If so, I make myself liable to great delusions.

"3. I seek the will of the Spirit of God through or in connection with the Word of God. The Spirit and the Word must be combined. If I look to the Spirit alone without the Word, I lay my-

self open to great delusions also.

"4. Next I take into account providential circumstances. These plainly indicate God's will in connection with His Word and Spirit.

"5. I ask God in prayer to reveal His will to me aright.

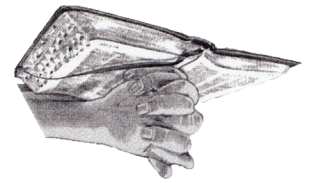
"6. Thus through prayer to God, the study of the Word and reflection, I come to a deliberate judgment according to the best of my ability and knowledge, and if my

mind is thus at peace, and continues so after two or three more petitions, I proceed accordingly..."

Reading the story of the life of George Muller is a faith building experience that teaches the necessity of daily Bible reading and meditation and constant prayer and communion with the Almighty God who supplies all our needs each and every day.

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"Understanding the Bible"**

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Daily Bible Readings for January, February and March

Read the Entire Bible in One Year

Day	JANUARY		FEBRUARY		MARCH	
	Old Test	New Test/Psa	Old Test	New Test/Psa	Old Test	New Test/Psa
1	Gen 1,2	Matt 1	Exo 11,12	Matt 28	Lev 23, 24	Acts 24
2	Gen 3,4	Matt 2	Exo 13,14	Psalm 9, 10	Lev 25, 26	Acts 25
3	Gen 5,6	Matt 3	Exo 15,16	Psalm 11,12	Lev 27, Provb 7	Acts 26
4	Gen 7,8	Matt 4	Exo 17,18	Acts 1	Provb 8-10	Acts 27
5	Gen 9,10	Matt 5	Exo 19,20	Acts 2	Num 1,2	Acts 28
6	Gen 11,12	Matt 6	Exo 21,22	Acts 3	Num 3,4	Psalm 19,20
7	Gen 13,14	Matt 7	Exo 23,24	Acts 4	Num 5,6	Romans 1
8	Gen 15, 16	Psalm 1,2	Exo 25,26	Acts 5	Num 7,8	Romans 2
9	Gen 17,18	Matt 8	Exo 27,28	Acts 6	Num 9,10	Romans 3
10	Gen 19,20	Matt 9	Exo 29,30	Acts 7	Num 11,12	Romans 4
11	Gen 21, 22	Matt 10	Exo 31,32	Psalm 13, 14	Num 13,14	Romans 5
12	Gen 23,24	Matt 11	Exo 33,34	Acts 8	Num 15,16	Romans 6
13	Gen 25,26	Matt 12	Exo 35,36	Acts 9	Num 17,18	Romans 7
14	Gen 27,28	Matt 13	Exo 37,38	Acts 10	Num 19,20	Romans 8
15	Gen 29,30	Psalm 3,4	Exo 39,40	Acts 11,12	Num 21,22	Romans 9
16	Gen 31,32	Matt 14	Provb 3,4	Acts 13	Num 23,24	Romans 10
17	Gen 33,34	Matt 15	Provb 5,6	Psalm 15,16	Num 25,26	Romans 11
18	Gen 35,36	Matt 16	Lev 1,2	Acts 14	Num 27,28	Romans 12
19	Gen 37,38	Matt 17	Lev 3,4	Acts 15	Num 29,30	Romans 13
20	Gen 39,40	Matt 18	Lev 5,6	Acts 16	Num 31,32	Romans 14
21	Gen 41, 42	Matt 19	Lev 7,8	Acts 17	Num 33,34	Romans 15,16
22	Gen 43, 44	Psalm 5,6	Lev 9,10	Acts 18	Num 35,36	Psalm 21,22
23	Gen 45, 46	Matt 20	Lev 11,12	Psalm 17,18	Provb 11,12	Psalm 23-25
24	Gen 47, 48	Matt 21	Lev 13,14	Acts 19	Provb 13,14	Psalm 26-28
25	Gen 49, 50	Matt 22	Lev 15,16	Acts 20	Provb 15,16	Psalm 29,30
26	Provb 1,2	Matt 23	Lev 17,18	Acts 21	Deut 1,2	Mark 1
27	Exo 1,2	Matt 24	Lev 19,20	Acts 22	Deut 3,4	Mark 2
28	Exo 3,4	Matt 25	Lev 21,22	Acts 23	Deut 5,6	Mark 3
29	Exo 5,6	Psalm 7, 8			Deut 7,8	Mark 4
30	Exo 7, 8	Matt 26			Deut 9,10	Psalm 31,32
31	Exo 9,10	Matt 27			Deut 11,12	Mark 5

See page 4 for some thoughts on the daily readings.
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