

UNEXPECTED LEADERS Reading Plans

Week 1: June 3, 2018

PETER

Day 1-

READ (in the order given): **Matthew 4:18-20, 14:22-31; Mark 8:27-33, 9:2-9; Matthew 18:21-22; Mark 14:27-31; Matthew 26:69-75; John 21:15-19**

REFLECT: After reading these various passages about Peter, one of the disciples of Jesus, what are your impressions of this man? How would you describe him?

PRACTICE: Tell someone something you learned about Peter. Ask someone you trust how they would describe you.

TAKE IT FURTHER!

PRACTICE: To do an in-depth study of Peter, check out this Biographical Study method: <http://www.eachnewday.com/HowToStudyTheBible/BibleStudyMethods.html#Method5>. Be sure to download the PDF worksheet. If you don't have Bible study tools on your bookshelf, www.biblehub.com is a great resource!

Day 2-

READ: **Matthew 16:13-17, 21-23** and **2 Peter 1:1-9**

REFLECT: Peter declares Jesus is Christ and Jesus commends him. Shortly thereafter, Peter interrupts as Jesus is predicting His death, and Jesus rebukes Peter. In what ways was Peter spot on in his thinking and in what ways did he still have a lot to learn?

PRACTICE: Consider your journey with Jesus. In what ways can you look back and see that you have grown in your understanding of who He is? Thank Him for that understanding! Ask Him for more wisdom to understand, and continue to find your chair and meet with Him in His Word.

TAKE IT FURTHER!

READ: ["Jesus Chooses and Uses Failures"](#) from DesiringGod.org

Day 3-

READ: **Luke 22:54-62** and **John 21:15-19** and **1 Peter 1:3-4**

REFLECT: What words describe Peter's relationship with Jesus- before the crucifixion? After the resurrection? In the years of the early church? How did Peter grow and mature as a follower and friend of Jesus?

PRACTICE: How would you describe your relationship with Jesus today? How do you want to describe it? Imagine Jesus using you in unexpected ways to lead others to Him- this is His plan for you! Ask Him to restore you as He did Peter. Ask Him to fill you with love for Him and for people, just as He filled Peter.

TAKE IT FURTHER!

READ: ["The Look of Love"](#) from TheGospelCoalition.org

Day 4-

READ: **Matthew 14:13-33** (also **Luke 6:1-21**)

REFLECT: Close your eyes and imagine the scene set by these verses. If you had been on that boat, what would your eyes have seen, your ears have heard? How do you think your mind and heart would have responded? What is astonishing about Peter's response?

PRACTICE: What are your circumstances today? Calm or stormy seas? Clear view of the shore or a cloudy and uncertain way ahead? What does it look like today for you to keep your eyes fixed on Jesus?

TAKE IT FURTHER!

READ: ["Peter: When the Rock Sunk Slowly"](#) from DesiringGod.org

Day 5-

READ: **Acts 2:1-47**

REFLECT: Peter's first sermon is remarkable in its power (from the Holy Spirit), authority and presentation of the gospel. How does the story of Peter's life lead to this moment, when the Spirit fills him to step up as a leader of Christ's church?

PRACTICE: Make a list of experiences in your life- good, bad, ugly, joyful, sad, etc. How has the story of your life led you to today? What is the Spirit empowering you to step into, not for your own glory, but for His glory?

TAKE IT FURTHER!

READ Peter's epistles: **1 Peter 1-5** and **2 Peter 1-3**

Week 2: June 10, 2018

ESTHER

Day 1-

READ: Esther 2:5-12; Esther 2:15-17 & 20 Esther 4:4 & 10-17; Esther 5:2-4; Esther 7:2-6; Esther 8:3-6; Esther 9:29-32

REFLECT: After reading these various passages about Esther what are your impressions of this young woman? How would you describe her?

PRACTICE: Tell someone something you learned about Esther. What quality of Esther would you like to see God develop in your life?

TAKE IT FURTHER!

WATCH: This video overview of the book of Esther from Right Now Media --
<https://www.rightnowmedia.org/Content/VideoElement/204178> (If you don't yet have a RNM account, email sarah@whoisgrace.com to get started.)

Day 2-

READ: Esther 1:12; Esther 2:7-9; Esther 2:17; Esther 2:22

REFLECT: In her study on Esther, Beth Moore writes, "Coincidences are miracles in which God prefers to remain anonymous." She says of the book of Esther, "God's name might not be in it but it is ON it." What are some of the ways these verses show our sovereign God was working in Esther's story?

PRACTICE: Take a few minutes to reflect on your life and thank God for the ways He has orchestrated your circumstances to bless you and to bless others through you.

TAKE IT FURTHER!

REFLECT: What are some of the reversals and twists in Esther's story?

PRACTICE: Pray and ask God to help you believe he is in control of your life.

Day 3-

READ: Esther 3:8-10; Esther 4:1-17

REFLECT: What events in Esther's life support Mordecai's comment in vs. 14 "who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" Why was Esther an unlikely choice for this mission? Why was she the perfect choice?

PRACTICE: Ask someone you trust to tell you what they think God is calling you to "for such a time as this?" (this may not mean saving a whole nation, but saving or enriching the lives of those near you)

TAKE IT FURTHER!

LISTEN: To "For Such A Time As This" at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LXcJUIAJNWO> or, for a more contemporary sound try Jesus Culture's "Anthem" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xzmFSBmrd1Y>

REFLECT: Why did God put you in this time and place? Who is He calling you to serve?

PRACTICE: Decide to encourage, pray for, or serve someone TODAY and ask God to help you do it.

Day 4-

READ: **Esther 2:10,11; Esther 2:21,22; Esther 4:1-5; Esther 4:12-16**

REFLECT: How did Esther seek wise advice? Why did she ask all the Jews to fast for three days and nights before she went to the king?

PRACTICE: Plan to fast for part or all of a day (from food or from entertainment) and spend extra time in prayer asking God for His wisdom.

TAKE IT FURTHER!

READ: "[For Such a Time As This](#)" from thegospelcoalition.org.

PRACTICE: Spend some time asking God to give you boldness to share your faith story with those around you.

Day 5-

READ: **Esther 8:1-8; Esther 9:1-5; Esther 9:29-32**

REFLECT: Esther undoubtedly risked her life to save her people, but what if she'd chosen NOT to take the risk? She would most likely have been killed along with her people. So, which was the greater risk?

PRACTICE: What risk is God calling you to take? If God is calling you to follow Him, would it be a greater risk to obey or to refuse? Ask God to give you courage to do His will today.

TAKE IT FURTHER!

WATCH: ["Freedom is Risky"](#) by Christine Caine on YouTube.

REFLECT: "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose." –Jim Elliot (missionary martyred at age 28 while taking the gospel to the Auca tribe in Ecuador)

Week 3, June 17, 2018

STEPHEN

Day 1-

READ: **Acts 6:1-5**

REFLECT: Ways to identify talents in others by Bruce Kasanoff: (1) Really pay attention to others (2) Magnify the quietest voices (3) Mix things up by putting different people together (4) Look past your own biases

PRACTICE: Ask God to reveal to you one person who you can identify as gifted by God and encourage them to use those gifts for Him.

TAKE IT FURTHER!

READ: **1 Samuel 16: 1-13**

REFLECT: Most people do not know what they are naturally good at...Awakening people to their inherent strengths can be an eye-opener for many people. Eric Garner

PRACTICE: Ask people some of the following questions to help identify their hidden gifts: (1) What do you love doing? (2) What things do you look forward to doing? (3) What things do others say you do well? (4) What tasks have you done that had a positive affect?

Day 2-

READ: **2 Timothy 1:6-7**

REFLECT: Chuck Yeagar said, "You don't concentrate on risks. You concentrate on results. No risk it too great to prevent the necessary job from getting done." This statement comes from a test pilot. What meaning would it have for a follower of Jesus?

PRACTICE: Consider what fear is holding you back from taking on great things for God. In prayer tell your heavenly Father that you want him to fill you with power.

TAKE IT FURTHER!

READ: **Judges 6: 11-27**

REFLECT: "Expect great things from God; attempt great things for God." William Carey

PRACTICE: What area of your life do you need to attempt something great for God.

Day 3-

READ: Luke 12:11-22

REFLECT: "The eagle has no fear of adversity. We need to be like the eagle and have a fearless spirit of a conqueror." Joyce Meyer.

PRACTICE: Confess your need for God to give you the courage to share the gospel and the words to speak.

TAKE IT FURTHER!

READ: **Acts 17:22-33**

REFLECT: "Boldness doesn't mean rude, obnoxious, loud, or disrespectful. Being bold is being firm, sure, confident, fearless, daring, strong, resilient, and not easily intimidated. It means you're willing to go where you've never been, willing to try what you've never tried, and willing to trust what you've never trusted. Boldness is quiet, not noisy." Mike Yoconelli.

PRACTICE: Paul shared the gospel in the Areopagus which was the center of learning and philosophy. Even the apostle Paul had many people make fun of him but some listened. Ask God to prepare your heart for both responses.

Day 4-

READ: **Matthew 28:18-20**

REFLECT: Jesus has personally sent you to share Christ with those around you and he promises to be with you.

PRACTICE: Look for an opportunity today to share with one person in your life how God has worked in you.

TAKE IT FURTHER!

READ: **Acts 5:17-42**

REFLECT: "Courage is contagious. When a brave man takes a stand the spines of others are often stiffened." Billy Graham

PRACTICE: Consider the faithful witness that you have seen in others. Thank your heavenly Father for those who shared Christ with you. Ask God to help you to share the gospel faithfully.

Day 5-

READ: **1 Peter 4:12-13**

REFLECT: "If we have faith, the believer cannot be restrained. He betrays himself. He breaks out. He confesses and teaches the gospel to people at the risk of life itself." Martin Luther

PRACTICE: Think about how marvelous it will be when you leave this life and are in Jesus presence knowing that you gave everything to follow Him.

TAKE IT FURTHER!

READ: **Hebrews 12:1-4**

REFLECT: "Withhold no part of the precious truth, but speak what you know and declare what you have seen. Do not allow the toil or darkness or possible unbelief of your friends to dissuade you. Let us rise and March to the place of duty, and there declare what great things God has shown to our soul." Josh McDonald

PRACTICE: Hebrews 12:4 says that we should think about all Jesus suffered for us. Take some time to really meditate on what your salvation cost Him.

Week 4: June24, 2018
MOSES

Day 1-

READ: **Exodus 3:1-6**

REFLECT: While we may not ever come face to face with our Lord in a burning bush, the Bible promises, and Christians experience God's presence in many other ways. Reflect on those times when you are confident that God had made himself known to you. If you have not yet had this experience, take a moment to write down the actions that you can take to become more open to the Spirit.

PRAY: Lord, soften our hearts and provide us the good sense and the faith that we need to recognize your callings, directions and interventions in our day to day lives. We praise you, we love you and we know that you are with us. Help us to be open to your Spirit.

TAKE IT FURTHER!

WATCH: [The Read Scripture Series](#) by The Bible Project has summary videos on Right Now Media for all the books of the Bible. Watch Exodus part 1 through Deuteronomy to get a good overall picture of the life of Moses. (If you do not yet have an account for RNM, email sarah@whoisgrace.com to get set up)

Day 2-

READ: **Exodus 7-10**

REFLECT: How does this passage demonstrate God's inexhaustible love and concern for our wellbeing? What does God promise us in Jesus?

PRAY: Father, remind us that you are always in control and in full knowledge of our needs, both large and small. Forgive us when we insist upon deliverance from our pain and troubles on our time schedule. We confess that we are often blind to your plans for us; help us to trust you, even in our struggles.

TAKE IT FURTHER!

WATCH: [The Life of Moses](#) from Right Now Media with your young children and then have a conversation with them about who Moses was and what God did in and through his life. Encourage their hearts- God has a big plan for their lives too!

Day 3

READ: **Exodus 11-13**

REFLECT: Consider Moses' character:

- What do we know about Moses's life up to this point?
- How quickly did Moses embrace God's plan for him?
- Consider the vast transformation we see in the life of this Godly man

PRAY: Father God, you are our creator and King. Make us to be more like you every day. Show us opportunities to serve you, especially make plain your plans for us to lead and influence others in their quest to follow Jesus.

TAKE IT FURTHER!

READ: "[Don't Feel Qualified For Your Calling?](#)" from [desiringgod.org](#).

Day 4

READ: **Exodus 4:1-9**

REFLECT: What signs did God provide Moses to convince Pharaoh that God had sent him? Rethink your strengths and consider what gifts, and even signs, has God given to you to do his will?

PRAY: God we thank you for the many blessings you've given us. Help us to be always aware that our gifts and strengths are God given, not of our own doing. Help us to seek ways to put these gifts to work in our lives. Help us to lead others via the gifts you've given us.

TAKE IT FURTHER!

READ: "[The Humble Leader](#)", an article from [thegospelcoalition.org](#). For a woman's perspective read "[If He Calls You, He Will Equip You](#)".

Day 5

READ: **Exodus 4:10-17**

REFLECT: Moses stirs up God's wrath as he attempts to decline God's plan for him. However, God is full of grace and offers Aaron as a solution to Moses stated weakness. Has God placed any individuals in

your life that provide needed support to you as you work to serve Him? As in yesterday's reflection, thank the Lord for these people and try to remain aware that God placed these people in your life so that you are better able to serve Him.

PRAY: Lord, keep me conscious of my blessings, especially the family, friends and coworkers that you have provided to me that keep me on the path to Jesus. Let the kindness and consideration of these persons be a constant reminder to me of your kindness, grace and love.

TAKE IT FURTHER!

READ: **Joshua 1:1-18.**

REFLECT: Joshua was Moses' protégé. How had learning and leading under Moses prepared him to lead the people of Israel?