

POT HOLES

Introduction

Welcome to the real world in the Christian life: the world of super highs and super lows ... and rainy days ... and balmy, boring days. Days when your prayers go no higher than the ceiling ... and you feel as low as a duck's instep. In this Bible study, you are going to see one of those days in action. The Bible story is about Peter during his down time. At the "Last Supper" when Jesus explained that he would be arrested that night, Peter said, "Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death." Jesus replied, "I tell you, Peter, before the rooster crows today, you will deny three times that you know me." We pick up the story a few hours later when Jesus has been arrested and brought to the palace of the high priest for a pretrial interrogation. Peter followed the police officers and is in the nearby courtyard. Listen to the story. Then, move into groups of 4 and discuss the questionnaire.

PETER DISOWNS JESUS

Now Peter was sitting out in the courtyard, and a servant girl came to him. "You also were with Jesus of Galilee," she said.

But he denied it before them all. "I don't know what you're talking about," he said.

Then he went out to the gateway, where another girl saw him and said to the people there, "This fellow was with Jesus of Nazareth." He denied it again, with an oath: "I don't know the man!" After a little while, those standing there went up to Peter and said, "Surely you are one of them, for your accent gives you away." Then he began to call down curses on himself and he swore to them, "I don't know the man!" Immediately a rooster crowed. Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken: "Before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times." And he went outside and wept bitterly. Matthew 26:69-75

1. Imagine that you were a reporter for the Jerusalem Journal, and you were assigned to interview Peter after these events. What would be the first question you would ask him?

0 "So, Peter, how does it feel to be a traitor?"

0 "Didn't you ever think about Jesus' prediction?" 0 "How could you have done such a thing?"

0 "How has this changed the way you see yourself?" 0 "What do you plan to do now to make up for this?"

2. If you were in Peter's sandals, how would you have reacted in this situation? D kept my mouth shut

D gone home

D done the same thing he did

D stood up for Jesus and argued his case

D other:

3. What chance would you have given Peter after this event to make a comeback and go on to become a great leader?

4. How do you usually react when you fail? D kick myself for days D try to make up for it D hide my feelings

D talk to someone about it

D pray about it

D shrug it off

D admit it and move on

D I refuse to accept failure in anything I do! D other:

5. What have you found helpful in dealing with failure, and how would you like to react differently?

6. How has failure changed you?

D I'm more caring and understanding. D I'm more determined. D I'm more humble. D I'm more realistic.

D I don't want to try again.

D I look out for myself more.

D I'm emotionally fragile.

D other:

7. What failure in your life comes closest to hitting you like Peter's failure hit him?

0 when I strayed from God 0 when I deceived my parents 0 when I went through a divorce

0 when I "fell off the wagon" 0 when I messed up at work or school 0 when I handled a relationship poorly

0 when I went through financial problems 0 when I failed to stand up for what's right

0 when I failed my family

0 other:

8. Have you ever felt that your failures made it impossible for you to serve Christ again? How did you overcome those feelings?

9. Would you give yourself a "plus" or "minus" for each of the following? (Mark one or the other in the blanks.)

- bouncing back after you blow it

- forgiving those who fail you

- standing up for Christ

- spiritual desire

- spiritual consistency

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10. How can this group remember you in prayer this week?