

# EXALTING CHRIST . . . THE LAMB OF GOD

## Coming to Terms with Your Calling

John 21:1–17

# SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

STUDY



### LET'S BEGIN HERE

There is peaceful quietness to any scene by the sea. The story before us is no exception. Jesus had died. His body was placed in a tomb, but mysteriously He left the grave. He is alive! In fact, He appeared to His disciples and made Himself known. Yet He found them back to their old way of life by the shores of the Sea of Galilee.

What a beautiful setting . . . can you imagine it? Put yourself there for a few moments. Breathe in some sea air, feel the cool offshore breeze, smell the waft of seawater and fish, and listen to the seabirds cheeping morning tunes. Enter Jesus, now “standing on the beach.” He went to where the disciples were busy with living, perhaps disillusioned at the seeming sudden loss of their call to ministry.

Can you pause a moment before launching this study and write a prayer thanking Jesus for meeting you where you are today? Thank Him for pursuing you. Worship Him for accepting you and drawing you to Himself.



### YOUR TURN IN THE SCRIPTURES

Read John 20:1–17 in its entirety. As you read, underline in your Bible details about the setting that help you put yourself in the context. This would be a great time to locate a Bible dictionary and look up a couple of terms and phrases John used to refer to the Sea of Galilee and fishing in New Testament

## Quotable

*John, the writer of this great gospel, takes us into one of the most tender, moving scenes in all the New Testament as Jesus Himself proposes this very notion to Peter, asking him, “Do you love Me?”*

— Charles R. Swindoll



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times. You might also locate Galilee on a Bible map. In the back of your Bible, turn to the map titled *Topography of Palestine* or something similar. Find the Sea of Galilee. In the space provided, make notes about what you discover.



### Observation: Jesus' Encounter with the Disciples by the Sea

Observation, the process of looking closely at the details of a passage of Scripture, helps you understand the setting and key ideas. John opened this section with a description of the scene where Jesus reappeared to His disciples, not in Jerusalem but in Galilee.

Who among Jesus' disciples did John place at the scene (John 21:1–2)?

What were the disciples doing when the scene opens (21:3)?

What do you think they were thinking about Jesus at this point?

How long, according to John, had the disciples been out on the water fishing (21:3)?



How did Jesus begin His conversation with the disciples (John 21:5)?

What happened when they followed Jesus' instruction to throw their nets on the other side of the boat (21:6)?

Who first identified the mystery man on the beach as Jesus (21:7)?

What did Peter do when he realized it was Jesus standing on the beach (21:7)?

How does Peter's response compare to other ways in which Peter responded to Jesus in the past? What examples of Peter's impulsive actions can you remember?

Being in the Lord's presence must have brought back to the disciples' minds and hearts His original calling on their lives—to be fishers of men (Mark 1:16–18). How gracious of Jesus to reenter Peter's world, especially since Peter had experienced such a colossal failure in his faith. What followed next reveals the meaning behind John's purpose in including this poignant story.





### Interpretation: Jesus Restores Peter to Ministry—John 21:15–17

Through tender dialogue (often the seedbed of interpretation!) and gentle questioning, Jesus led Peter down a path to rediscovering not only the purpose of His calling but the motivation behind it: love for His Master.

Read John 21:15–17 and pay close attention to the progression of the conversation. Following breakfast, Jesus turned His line of questioning to Peter directly.

Three times Jesus asked Peter the same question—one question for each time Peter denied Jesus (John 21:15–27). Interestingly, Jesus referred to His faltering disciple as Simon, not Peter, perhaps intentionally bringing Peter back to the day he first followed Jesus (1:40–42).

What was His initial question, and how might it have made Peter feel?

What do you think Jesus meant by the word *these* in verse 15? (HINT: This would be a good time to consult a reliable Bible commentary on John and read about the various possibilities for what Jesus was referring to with *these*. For an online resource, consult Thomas Constable’s study notes for John 21:15 at [www.planobiblechapel.org/soniclight](http://www.planobiblechapel.org/soniclight).) Write down what you discover in the space provided.

The first time Jesus asked Peter, “Do you *love* Me . . .” (21:15) He used the Greek word *agapaō* which is the highest form of love. When Peter responded, however, he used the Greek word *phileō* which was the term for “friendship.”

Peter emphasized his fondness for Jesus while Jesus led the conversation, emphasizing the more intimate expression of love.

Why do you think that’s significant? How would you explain the difference in the two Greek words?



The final time Jesus asked Peter if he loved Him, He used the word Peter first responded with—*phileō*. Jesus then followed Peter's final response with a command: "Feed my sheep" (John 21:17). Jesus seemed to accept Peter's unwillingness to express the deepest level of devotion to Him. Nevertheless, Peter's response was enough to warrant a restoration to His calling: to tend the Savior's sheep.

What does Jesus' response reveal about Peter's level of devotion at that point?

What does Jesus' willingness to restore Peter reveal of His grace and mercy?

Long after the breakfast with Jesus on the shores of Galilee, Peter rose during Pentecost in Jerusalem to preach a powerful message of Christ's offer of salvation. Peter became a pillar of the early church, and he later wrote two letters to believers facing persecution and who were scattered throughout Asia Minor because of their faith. His words reflect a lifelong devotion to Jesus and a commitment to follow Christ's command to care for His sheep.



### Correlation: How Does It Relate?

Correlation is the step in the *Searching the Scriptures* process that uses related passages of Scripture to support your interpretation. Peter's words in his letter to suffering Christians highlight that once Peter came to terms with his calling, he remained steadfast even to the end:

*So be truly glad. There is wonderful joy ahead, even though you have to endure many trials for a little while. These trials will show that your faith is genuine. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold—though your faith is far more precious than mere gold. So when your faith remains strong through many trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world. (1 Peter 1:6–7)*





### Application: Coming to Terms with *Your* Calling

Chuck closed his message from John 21 with three applications worth considering:

1. *Coming to terms with your calling means coming to a realistic admission regarding your work.* In what ways can you express your devotion to Jesus through your vocation or what you do each day?
2. *Coming to terms with your calling includes an honest evaluation of your priorities.* How can the way you spend your time reflect your priority to follow Jesus? In what ways do you think your priorities may not reflect your desire to follow Christ?
3. *Coming to terms with your calling doesn't require absolute perfection in your life.* In what areas of your life do you feel you are being too hard on yourself? How does your tendency toward perfectionism hinder your ability to experience joy and freedom in Christ?



### A FINAL PRAYER

*Thank You, Father, for the grace and mercy You show me in Jesus. Show me how to be patient with myself as I strive to express my devotion to Your Son, Jesus Christ. And show me ways to extend to others who need encouragement the same mercy and patience You've shown me. In Jesus' name, amen!*



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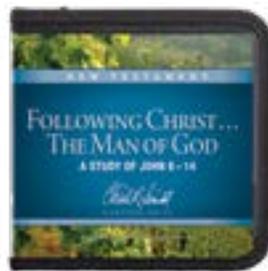
STUDY



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For the 2018 broadcast, this *Searching the Scriptures* study was developed by Mark Tobey in collaboration with Bryce Klabunde, executive vice president of *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and sermon transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages.



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