

## #DISTRACTED

*“Peter, turning around saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them; the one who also had learned back in His bosom at the supper and said,*

*“Lord, who is the one who betrays You?”*

*John 21:20 NASB*

### What does it say?

Peter turned around and saw John, the disciple Jesus loved, following them.

### What does it mean?

None of us are ever #distracted- *are we?* We sit down to do our devotions to spend time in the presence of the Lord and we would never get distracted by checking our Twitter feed, Instagram or Facebook- *would we?* What is distracting our minds and hearts from fully embracing the very presence of God?

#### *Let's get real.*

Most of us have seen the Pixar movie *Up*. We are just as distracted as Doug the dog in that movie. You know the one who loses all present focus on the matter at hand when he sees a squirrel and then the squirrel receives all of the attention! What squirrels distract your focus? In John 21:20, Peter has just been recommissioned by Jesus! Peter had denied Jesus three times the night of His crucifixion and wept bitterly. Peter, who possibly thought that he would never be restored to the Rabbi he loved, was reinstated. Their friendship was mended by Jesus. Peter may have been tempted to think that Jesus' call on his life was over because of his unspeakable failure. But now, Jesus tells Peter the next time he will not scatter. Peter will stand strong in the face of adversity (John 21:18-19).

This moment is HUGE. **Jesus** restores Peter. Peter is thrilled to be back in the presence of Jesus; but, in one moment, Peter is instantly distracted. At this incredible moment, what could possibly be worthy of distracting Peter? The distraction is not a “what”- it's a **who**. People can all too often distract us, especially the people who seem to have it all together. These people are not failures like us, right? John seems to be the “*perfect*” disciple. John did not deny Jesus. Not only do we compare ourselves to others, we compete with them. We want to know what God will do through their lives. Will God use John in a better way or an easier way? Will John be called to die for the faith, too? We cannot know the thoughts flooding Peter's mind, but we can know the distracting thoughts that flood our minds.

Putting our thoughts on people distracts us! We are tempted to compare and compete. We take our eyes off of Jesus, who is seeking us out to heal our broken relationship and put us into right standing with God. What would Jesus say to us? Jesus redirected Peter by calling him to “Follow Me” and not worry about John, who was following them.

What else distracts us and steals our focus away from Jesus? Just like Peter, you and I struggle with fear. We are afraid that Jesus will expose **that** failure (you know- the BIG one) for everyone to see. Jesus restores Peter in front of his best friends. The last time Peter smelled charcoal was in the courtyard of the High Priest on the night he impulsively betrayed Jesus. Now, Jesus is restoring their relationship with the smell of charcoal in the air and Peter may have feared exposure. Fear of exposing who we really are, and that we may have no right to our bold calling for Jesus, can keep us distracted from His presence. We must remember that Jesus was exposed on the cross to *cover* our exposure. Jesus took my exposure upon Himself. Jesus is

redefining the smell of charcoal for Peter. From that point on, the smell of a fire would remind Peter of how Jesus graciously redeemed him and brought him back into the presence of his beloved Rabbi.

Tradition can also distract us. Rabbinic tradition demanded that Peter's betrayal should forever sever the relationship between him and his Rabbi, Jesus. We also have traditions. Our traditions can prevent us from following Jesus into all the places He is leading us. We build fences to protect us from failure. If we are really honest, we must admit that we often hold tradition closer than the Gospel and defend that tradition with more passion than we proclaim what Jesus has done for us.

This passage reveals God's desire to walk with His handmade creatures. Just like God sought Adam and Eve in the garden, Jesus, God with skin on (John 1:14), sought after Peter. Jesus came to reinstate the broken relationship between Creator and creation. All people were created by and for God so that each woman and man could know Him and walk with Him. Because we were created with a need for God, He came for us. This same redemptive story is told over and over again in both the Old and New Testament. You are so loved by God that he will stop at nothing to prevent reinstating you into His presence. His presence changes everything. Think of a time when you enjoyed the presence of Jesus in your life. Have you remained steadfast in His presence over time? Has some distraction stole your focus or has a tradition pulled you away from Him? Please know that Jesus might be building a charcoal fire for the two of you to gather around. He may be waiting for you to sit in His presence because He wants to restore you from a moment of failure. Jesus redefined the smell of charcoal for Peter and he can redefine a moment of failure burned into your mind and reinstate your calling. Jesus loves you so much that He died in order to walk with you and offer His presence in your life. Will you and I fight every distraction and commit our focus to Jesus and follow Him despite our failures?

### What does it mean to me?

What distracts you from following Jesus? Does your fear of failure or exposure keep you at a distance? What habits or traditions keep you from focusing on your relationship with Jesus? Are there social expectations or cultural norms that cause you to say, "Jesus cannot possibly be calling me to go there or do that?" Who distracts you from following Jesus?

### Live it Out!

Jesus wants #REKINDLED time with me daily. Jesus wants #REKINDLED focus on Him.

**Recommended Reading:** *Spiritual Profiling* by Tom Hovestall available at

<https://rover.ebay.com/rover/0/0/0?mpre=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.ebay.com%2Fulk%2Fitm%2F362872772871>

**Recommended Spiritual Profiling Assessment:** [www.spiritualprofiling.com](http://www.spiritualprofiling.com)

**Recommended Study Bible:** [The Complete Jewish Study Bible](https://www.amazon.com/dp/1619708671/ref=cm_sw_em_r_mt_dp_U_3G0hEb5Q25WX9)

[https://www.amazon.com/dp/1619708671/ref=cm\\_sw\\_em\\_r\\_mt\\_dp\\_U\\_3G0hEb5Q25WX9](https://www.amazon.com/dp/1619708671/ref=cm_sw_em_r_mt_dp_U_3G0hEb5Q25WX9)

Join me in praying and fasting this winter season as we live out the book of Acts, together.