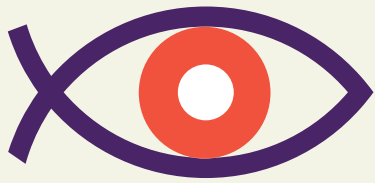


**SEEING  
THROUGH  
THE EYES OF  
JESUS**

**YOUTH  
CURRICULUM  
SESSION 6**

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# SEEING THROUGH THE EYES OF JESUS

Calling us back to  
the central focus of  
our Christian faith:  
**The Risen and  
Living Jesus!**

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## SESSION 6: SEEING JESUS; CLAIMING JESUS' MISSION

### SCRIPTURE:

Matthew 14:22-33  
Matthew 28:16-20  
Luke 4:26-30

### MAIN POINT:

Seeing our world through the eyes of Jesus will—over time—transform our daily habits so that our lives align more and more with Jesus' ongoing mission of healing the broken and befriending the stranger.



### INTRODUCTION:

In September of 2011, I became a father for the first time. I had planned for this monumental occasion with my wife. We read books and articles about becoming parents. I had spoken with other fathers. I had consulted with friends who were already on their parenting journey. I brought so much love, angst and fervor into this experience. I thought I was ready. But nothing had prepared me for that moment when the doctor placed my newborn son into my arms for the first time. Wow! That was holy ground. Awe, joy and love surged out of me and into the world. Something in my soul broke wide open that day, and it changed my life forever. I was a father. In some mysterious way, I felt like I was now seeing the world in a totally different way. I was now seeing the world through my “dad-eyes.” My life and my way of seeing the world had profoundly changed.

Two days after my son was born, I escorted this tiny human to his new home. I noticed on my way out the door of the hospital that none of the staff had handed me an instruction

and maintenance manual for raising a human. This was my son now; he was my responsibility to be shared with my wife. I thought to myself: “How can this be legal? How can we be entrusted with this little baby’s life? We don’t have any certificates or qualifications for this!” I was overwhelmed with excitement and simultaneously humbled with worry.

I drove home that day gripping the steering wheel, pretending that I knew what I was doing. But I was headed towards an unknown future. My life had forever changed. And my love for my son and wife was guiding my every step.

Many of those first days and weeks are only a blur to me now. Late nights, early mornings, diaper changes, sleep deprivation, decision fatigue. The world of parenting was (and still is) a busy, dizzying frenzy of activity.

I learned so much by doing things the wrong way. You could say that I “grew” into this new role. Rather suddenly

and yet over time, my habits changed. My daily rhythms changed. The way that I saw the world changed. I slowly developed what I would call “parenting instincts” that helped me navigate the complex demands of my life. It was as if there were a different person hidden inside me. Who was this hidden person? It was that part of me that had answered the call of “dad.” Over time and challenge after challenge, this “dad” part of me began to emerge and develop its identity. I became someone who could be trusted with the immensity of this role. Technically, I became a dad in September of 2011. But it would take me a long time before I fully lived into this role.

Now I have three children. I have cooked, cleaned, bandaged, cried, laughed, sung, danced and marveled my way into a life unlike anything I could have ever imagined. I’m a seasoned pro at this now. And I love it. I treasure the parenting partnership that I share with my very capable wife. And somehow, over time and through all of the crazy ups and downs of this parenting journey, I have grown to become someone who is capable of answering the call of “dad.”

Now, to be honest, I’m still learning how to be a dad. This reminds me of how Thomas Merton described prayer for Christians. Merton once wrote: “We do not want to be beginners [at prayer] but let us be convinced of the fact that we will never be anything but beginners, all our life!”

I’ve come a long way since September 2011. My whole life is wrapped up in this beautiful mess of parenthood. And I see

the world differently because of it. I see my world as a dad to three growing, learning, thriving children. It’s not easy; it’s not always joyful. But being a dad has so shaped my world that I can’t even go to the grocery store without thinking: “What cereal would my kids like for me to bring home? What fruit would my kids savor for their snacks?”

I take my “dad-eyes” with me everywhere. And I take my care and concern for my children with me everywhere I go. I pray that as long as I’m a dad and a husband, I will always put my family’s needs first.

For me, this is my best path to following Jesus. My family is teaching me everything I need to know to become a more faithful disciple. In some real and mysterious way, being a husband to my wife and a father to my children has given me a life far beyond anything I thought was possible. I am grateful to God for these blessings. Through living my wife and my children, God has a grip on me that will never, ever let me go. I have answered the calling in my life to become a dad.

This reminds me of another important call upon my life. In fact, it’s the most important call of all. Before I’m a “dad” to my kids or a “husband” to my wife, I’m called to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. That’s my life’s greatest and most important calling. That’s the most important calling that any of us can answer. How have you answered this call in your life? How has this calling shaped the way you see the world? Let’s turn to the pages of scripture to read how Peter answered the call to become a disciple of Jesus.



## SCRIPTURE INTERPRETATION:

In the 14th chapter of Matthew's Gospel, Peter is recorded as boldly going where no other disciple would go. He steps out of a boat in the middle of a lake during a dangerous storm... at night! What was he thinking? He could have drowned. He could have injured himself or others. What was it that welled up inside of Peter that night, giving him the boldness to follow Jesus out onto the wavy sea? You could say that Peter was a man possessed by something. I wonder, "Was Peter trying to risk his life that night so that he could show off his faith in front of the other disciples? Or was he simply doing what came most naturally to him: following Jesus?" I bet it's the latter. I think Peter was so devoted to Jesus that he stepped out of that boat—not knowing what would happen but trusting that this was the right next move. For Peter, following Jesus was always the right next move.

We know how this story goes. Peter took his eyes off Jesus and began to sink. Many Baptist preachers have used this story as a metaphor for the Christian life. It works well in most evangelical sermons. When we take our eyes off Jesus, bad things can and will happen. But there is more to this story.

When Peter began to sink and panic, he still turned to Jesus for solace. Jesus was there to rescue Peter when he called out for help in the storm. Following Jesus had become the central purpose in Peter's life and ministry. In Jesus, Peter had found his life's deepest calling. Peter had seen Jesus and had claimed Jesus' mission in the world. To Peter, to see Jesus was to see where he wanted to go next, even if it meant stepping out of that boat. Peter had so aligned his life with Jesus' mission that when he recognized Jesus out on the water, he took the next logical step—even if it was illogical. Where Jesus was—that's where Peter wanted to be.

Imagine if we modern Christians could muster this kind of devotion. I wonder how our lives would change. I wonder how our congregations would change. Imagine if we were so focused on Jesus that we followed Jesus' mission of love and grace in our daily lives.

In reading in Acts, we see that Peter, "the rock," was growing in his relationship with Jesus. His love for Jesus filled him with curiosity, purpose and motivation. Over time, Peter devotes more and more of himself to Jesus' mission in the world. Like Jesus, Peter begins to preach with power, authority and conviction. Like Jesus, Peter heals the sick. Like Jesus, Peter challenges the religious authorities of his time. It's no surprise that Peter dies in a similar manner as Jesus: on a cross, yet upside down.

While the Bible doesn't actually provide an account of Peter's death on a cross, throughout the ages, the church has traditionally passed down an interpretation of John 21:18-19 as Jesus' prophecy of Peter's death. The early church was so gripped by this prophecy that it commonly taught that Peter's buried body was situated directly under the main altar of Saint Peter's Basilica in Vatican City/Rome.

On a trip to Italy one summer, I actually stood over the exact place where Peter is supposedly buried. This spot is known as the "rock upon which Christ built his church." For me and countless Christian pilgrims, this is truly hallowed ground.

Like the other disciples, Peter made mistakes in his life. He denied Jesus. He attacked one of the men who arrested Jesus. Like all of us, Peter goofed up a few situations. But Peter emerges from the biblical stories as a real hero of the faith. He was deeply committed to the Great Commission of Jesus found in Matthew 28. Jesus told his disciples to "go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything that I've commanded you."

Time and time again, Peter answered this call, claiming this instruction from Jesus as his life's greatest mission. And as long as Peter kept his focus on Jesus, he accomplished much for God's kingdom. The same is true for us. When we keep our focus on Jesus, when we claim Jesus' mission as our mission, we too can accomplish much for God's greater kingdom.

What would happen if we modeled our lives after Peter's life? What would happen in our homes, our churches, our schools, our neighborhoods if we saw Jesus and focused on where Jesus is and followed Jesus' mission? There is no doubt that Peter answered the call to become a faithful disciple of Jesus. Will we answer that call in our time?

Our world is broken and hurting. How will we respond to Jesus' Great Commission? May we—like Peter—step out in faith, trusting that wherever Jesus is, that's where we belong together on mission.



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What are the roles you embody in your daily life? (Examples: son, daughter, student, athlete, etc.). Now, rank your roles? Which matter most to you? Which roles are most central to your identity?
2. Have you ever found yourself living a role that you didn't like? If so, why didn't you like it? Who assigned or labeled you in that role? What did you do about it?
3. When you think about your life's calling, what is most true about you and whom you're called to be? When have you felt this calling most strongly? When did you feel this calling being most strongly challenging?
4. How have you experienced a calling to follow Jesus in your life? Would you label this calling to be strong and clear or subtle and wavering at times?
5. How is Jesus calling you now to follow Him in this season of life that you're currently in? How are you being invited to share in Jesus' mission today? Where do you see signs of hope that Jesus is alive and nearby in your daily life?
6. How are you being called to serve in the role of "disciple-of-Jesus?" What does this role look like in your daily life? Who has mentored you for this role?



## ACTIVITY:

Habits are powerful. What are your habits? Think of your daily routine: waking up, eating breakfast, doing stuff before lunch then—eating lunch. What do you do after lunch? How do you settle in for the night? What are your bedtime routines?

For one day this week, change one of these daily habits. Think of a way to do something totally new, totally different than you usually do. Do you eat supper in front of a TV screen? If so, consider eating outside at a picnic table or on

your front porch. Do you stare at your phone at bedtime? If so, read a book or write a friend a letter instead. How did it feel to change one daily habit? When we bring our love and intentionality to our daily rhythms, powerful change is possible. Over time, we can change our habits to become more healthy, vibrant, peace-making actions in our daily lives. Here's one final suggestion: do you say a blessing before every meal? If not, try it for one day and see what a difference it makes. Share your experience with a friend or family member.



## SENDING FORTH:

This week, be on the lookout for invitations to follow Jesus into mission in your daily life. Where will you see Jesus' mission most clearly this week? Look for ways to bring hope and healing to those who are hurting. Look for ways to nurture life and vitality within God's creation. Look for ways

to deepen friendships and nourish peace among the people whom God entrusts to your care and influence.

May the love, grace and joy of Christ guide you, guard you and keep you this week as you see your world through the eyes of Jesus.