

When You're Tempted to Stop Believing, Heed This Lesson From the Apostle Peter

Maybe you've been believing for something for a long time and haven't seen an answer. My best advice is this: Don't stop now!

Anytime you hear someone say, "Well, I asked God for that but He didn't answer," or, "I tried believing for that but it didn't work," you're listening to someone who has *stopped believing* at some point. God's promise didn't change; the person did.

Don't let that be you!

The apostle Peter knows all about what happens when you stop believing. Matthew 14 tells the story about him walking on water.

Not long after the miraculous feeding of 5,000 people, Peter and the other disciples were on a boat when Jesus came along, walking on the water. The other disciples were freaked out (I have to admit that I would have been too) and they cried out, "It's a ghost!" (Matt. 14:26b, NIV).

For reasons that defy comprehension, when Jesus said, "Be of good cheer. It is I: do not be afraid" (Matt. 14:27, MEV), Peter hollered, "Lord, if it is You, bid me come to You on the water" (Matt. 14:28).

Now, really? Is that first thing *you* would think of? Notice the other guys in the boat didn't say a word. I can't wait to talk with Peter about this when I get to heaven. What in the world possessed him to say that?

You know what happened next. Jesus said, "Come" (Matt.

14:29a), and based on that word from the Lord, Peter got out of the boat *and he walked on the water*. He really did it!

That's amazing! I've never seen anyone walk on water. Have you? Obviously, Peter had more faith than anyone else on that boat. He believed the word of the Lord, and he walked on water.

But just as Peter took his first steps, trouble came. (Isn't that just like real life?)

It was windy, and the waves were crashing. Peter took his eyes off Jesus and began to look at the tempest around him. In other words, he stopped holding fast to the word of the Lord ("Come"), and he looked at the rather daunting circumstances. As a result, he began to sink.

Double-Minded

When Peter cried out to the Lord to save him, of course Jesus did. But Jesus didn't say, "Congratulations, Peter, you got out of the boat when no one else would, and you walked on water!" No, Jesus said, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" (Matt. 14:31b).

The word "doubt" has the same root as the word "double." To doubt is to be double-minded, or to believe two ways—first one way, and then the other. At first, Peter believed the word of the Lord ("come") and faith rose up in his heart. But then, because of the circumstances, he doubted.

In essence, Jesus was saying, "Peter, why did you change? Why did you doubt? Why were you double-minded? You stopped believing me and started believing the wind and waves."

When Jesus told Peter, "Oh you of little faith," I don't believe He was talking about the size of Peter's faith. It takes a big faith to walk on water. Rather, I believe Jesus was talking about the *duration* of Peter's faith. The apostle

had a *short burst* of faith.

Peter started out strong. He had big faith to get down out of that boat. He just couldn't sustain it long enough.

Eyes on the Word

That happens to us today too. Some of us have started out strong in our faith. But then something happens in our circumstances, and we stumble. We start believing what we see (or sometimes what we *don't* see) and we stop believing the Word of the Lord, the Bible.

So here's the deal: You need to keep your eyes on the Word. If Peter had kept his eyes on Jesus, and ignored the wind and the waves, I'm fully convinced he would have made it safely to Jesus' side and possibly even walked to shore with Him.

The wind and waves had nothing to do with walking on water. Think about it. Is water-walking possible? No. Even under the best conditions, if water is as smooth as glass, you can't walk on it—you need supernatural help.

Likewise, it will take supernatural help for you to walk through this life or walk out of the valley of shadow. So keep your eyes on Jesus, and keep believing!

Take Action

Think about an area of your life where you believed for a while but then stopped believing. Purpose in your heart to pick that up again! Find Scripture that meets your need and keep it before your eyes instead of focusing on the wind and waves. Keep declaring what the Bible says about you! {eoa}

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This article originally appeared at .