

Peter's Temptation, Self-Image Issues, And Heart Disturbances (Spiral page 61; PB page 112)

At one point during His own struggle in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus cautioned Peter not to sleep, but to pray in order not to fall to temptation. If you recall, earlier in the evening all of the Disciples struggled with the idea of accepting that the Father's will was for Jesus to leave them. Why would Jesus single out Peter later in the Garden (Matthew 26:40-41; Mark 14:37-38)? As we work to answer this question, keep an eye out for the importance of the heart disturbance, and how Satan's attack hits Peter's sense of identity.

Why Did Jesus Single Out Peter In The Garden Of Gethsemane?

Perhaps Jesus singles out Peter because He recognizes that Peter is still not actively working to transform his heart. Perhaps Jesus recognizes that Peter is not at peace and accepting of Jesus' pending departure. Perhaps it is because Jesus knows that in a few hours Satan will attack Peter at Jesus' arrest. Perhaps Jesus knows that when Satan does attack, Peter is going to be tempted to think he is less than "who he is in Christ," if he simply permits Jesus to be arrested without a fight. Perhaps it is because Peter might not quickly recognize how Satan baits him with the "good" idea of protecting Jesus. This, then, would cause Peter to attempt to defend Jesus during His arrest. Jesus, however, realizes that the Father's will is for Jesus to submit to the arrest peacefully. Perhaps Jesus singles out Peter because He can see Peter's vulnerability to act from a place of sinful passion, and that if Peter does, he will sin and hurt someone else in the process (he will lop off the ear of the servant of the high priest - Mark 14:47).

Seeing The Principles Of Self-Image Thoughts And Heart Disturbances In Peter's Trial

When we put ourselves in Peter's shoes, we begin to see how Satan's attack influences Peter's mind and heart. Consciously, Peter loves Jesus. Peter doesn't want anything to happen to Him (Mark 14:29, 31). Even when Jesus told Peter he'd deny Him, Peter could not consciously fathom that. Peter could not see how Satan could possibly tempt him to do such a thing (Mark 14:31). Peter was quite certain he KNEW exactly what was in his heart. Of course we know the rest of the story. So, what does this show us? It simply reaffirms everything we talked about in *Feelings 101*, Chapters 3 and 4. It demonstrates that though we have good desires and intentions to serve the Lord, when we are attacked in a trial, we HAVE to change something in us to overcome Satan's attack. We can prepare in advance for trials by studying the Scripture, obeying the Lord, and praying and loving the Lord, but that does not take the place of changing to transform the heart and renew the mind in Christ in a trial. Fulfilling these responsibilities, in submission to God and His guidance during trials, are our part in living according to the principles God designed to apply to spiritual battles.

Just because Peter thought something consciously and with deep and sincere conviction, this did not make him impervious to Satan's attack. We have to be careful not to assume we are impervious or that Satan cannot deceive us in our trials. Peter's belief in his love for the Lord was not sufficient to enable him to hear, or discern, the Lord's counsel with his heart. Satan was able to deceive Peter in to acting sinfully at the arrest by using Peter's good desire against him. We see that Peter's self-image thoughts were involved in the attack. Again, Peter would have felt "less than" had he done nothing at the arrest. We can see that Peter's self-image thought was attacked by Satan, because we know that in Christ, Peter would not have been "less than" were

he to have trusted Jesus and let him be arrested peacefully. But, that course of action was contrary to Peter's desire for Jesus to be protected and to remain with the Disciples. In Peter's desire we see the heart disturbance. Peter's heart disturbance signaled Satan's attack, but Peter was not prepared and did not catch it prior to falling into temptation.

Jesus singled out Peter in the Garden because Peter's heart was not transformed to accept that doing God's will in the upcoming arrest would mean "losing" according to the world's perspective. For Peter to have discovered his own need to transform his heart, he would have had to first recognize that his own heart was disturbed, and that he was using sleep as a crutch. While Peter heard all the facts from Jesus Himself, he was not honest with himself that he did not like the plans of the Father! Peter had other desires (heart disturbance). As a result, Satan had an easier time ensnaring Peter during Jesus' arrest, as well as later during the three trials when Peter denied Jesus.

Our Christian Knowledge And Desires Do Not Make Us Invulnerable To Satan's Deceptions
Peter KNEW the facts with great conviction, but he did not own the disturbances of his heart in the moments they arose. Peter made the mistake of thinking that he felt the way he did because he was righteous. That is emotional thinking; not what we should do as believers. It did not matter that Jesus Himself warned and counseled Peter! The same thing can happen to us if we do not catch and transform our heart disturbances in Christ! Satan's influence on Peter prevented him from hearing Jesus because he did not do his part in transforming his heart. If you asked Peter, he would have said he wanted to do God's will. But, that all changes in trials because of Satan's craftiness. Peter behaved as if he could catch the temptation and resist it on his own, without changing something in himself. If this could happen to Peter **with Jesus being present in person**, how much easier can it happen to us when we have to discern God's invisible Spirit and Jesus' invisible presence? There is much we can learn from Peter's failure to pay attention to his loss of peace within; it was the clue that serious introspection was needed.