**LESSON 13 SABBATH, SEPTEMBER 27, 2025**

**Simon Peter**

 ***MEMORY VERSE: “And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren” (Luke 22:31, 32).***

 “It was through self-sufficiency that Peter fell; and it was through repentance and humiliation that his feet were again established.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons,* p. 155.

**Suggested Reading: Testimonies for the Church, vol. 5, pp. 331–336. (At the bottom of this page)**

 ***1. THE CHARACTER OF PETER Sun, Sep 21***

**a. When Simon first came to Jesus, what did the Master say to him? John 1:42. What do we know of Peter’s character prior to his conversion?**

**John 1:42**

And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone.

 “The eye of Christ rested upon [Peter], reading his character and his life history. His impulsive nature, his loving, sympathetic heart, his ambition and self-confidence, the history of his fall, his repentance, his labors, and his martyr death—the Saviour read it all”—*The Desire of Ages,* p. 139.

 “It was on the point where he thought himself strong that Peter was weak; and not until he discerned his weakness could he realize his need of dependence upon Christ.”—*Ibid.,* p. 382.

**b. Despite his defects, what invitation did Jesus offer Peter? Matthew 4:18, 19.**

**Matthew 4:18, 19**

And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. **19** And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.

 “It was after Isaiah had beheld the holiness of God and his own unworthiness that he was entrusted with the divine message. It was after Peter had been led to self-renunciation and dependence upon divine power that he received the call to his work for Christ.”—*Ibid.,* p. 246.

 ***2. THE FALLIBILITY OF PETER Mon, Sep 22***

**a. What fact reveals that Peter was fallible like any other human, even after the baptism of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost? Galatians 2:11–14.**

**Galatians 2:11–14**

But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. **12** For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. **13** And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. **14** But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?

 “[Peter] won the confidence of many by his prudent conduct toward the Gentile converts. For a time he acted in accordance with the light given from heaven. He so far overcame his natural prejudice as to sit at table with the Gentile converts. But when certain Jews who were zealous for the ceremonial law, came from Jerusalem, Peter injudiciously changed his deportment toward the converts from paganism. A number of the Jews ‘dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation.’ This revelation of weakness on the part of those who had been respected and loved as leaders, left a most painful impression on the minds of the Gentile believers. The church was threatened with division.”—*The Acts of the Apostles,* p. 198.

**b. What lesson can we learn from the mistakes and the rehabilitation of Peter? Psalm 145:14.**

**Psalm 145:14**

The LORD upholdeth all that fall, and raiseth up all those that be bowed down.

 “Peter saw the error into which he had fallen, and immediately set about repairing the evil that had been wrought, so far as was in his power. God, who knows the end from the beginning, permitted Peter to reveal this weakness of character in order that the tried apostle might see that there was nothing in himself whereof he might boast. Even the best of men, if left to themselves, will err in judgment. God also saw that in time to come some would be so deluded as to claim for Peter and his pretended successors the exalted prerogatives that belong to God alone. And this record of the apostle’s weakness was to remain as a proof of his fallibility and of the fact that he stood in no way above the level of the other apostles.

 “The history of this departure from right principles stands as a solemn warning to men in positions of trust in the cause of God, that they may not fail in integrity, but firmly adhere to principle. The greater the responsibilities placed upon the human agent, and the larger his opportunities to dictate and control, the more harm he is sure to do if he does not carefully follow the way of the Lord and labor in harmony with the decisions arrived at by the general body of believers in united council.”—*Ibid.,* pp. 198, 199.

 *3. PETER NOT THE FOUNDATION OF THE CHURCH Tue, Sep 23*

**a. What does Jesus say about the foundation of the church? Matthew 16:16–19.**

**Matthew 16:16–19**

And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. **17** And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. **18** And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. **19** And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

 “The truth which Peter had confessed is the foundation of the believer’s faith. It is that which Christ Himself has declared to be eternal life. But the possession of this knowledge was no ground for self-glorification. Through no wisdom or goodness of his own had it been revealed to Peter. Never can humanity, of itself, attain to a knowledge of the divine. . . .”

 “The word Peter signifies a stone—a rolling stone. Peter was not the rock upon which the church was founded. The gates of hell did prevail against him when he denied his Lord with cursing and swearing. The church was built upon One against whom the gates of hell could not prevail.”—*The Desire of Ages,* pp. 412, 413.

**b. Like Peter, what did other prophets and apostles declare concerning the true foundation of the church? Isaiah 28:16; 1 Corinthians 3:11; 1 Peter 2:3–6.**

**Isaiah 28:16**

Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.

**1 Corinthians 3:11**

For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

**1 Peter 2:3–6**

If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious. **4** ¶ To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, **5** Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. **6** Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.

 “In the presence of God, and all the heavenly intelligences, in the presence of the unseen army of hell, Christ founded His church upon the living Rock. That Rock is Himself—His own body, for us broken and bruised. Against the church built upon this foundation, the gates of hell shall not prevail. . . .

 “For six thousand years, faith has builded upon Christ. For six thousand years the floods and tempests of satanic wrath have beaten upon the Rock of our salvation; but it stands unmoved.

 “Peter had expressed the truth which is the foundation of the church’s faith, and Jesus now honored him as the representative of the whole body of believers. He said, ‘I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.’

 “ ‘The keys of the kingdom of heaven’ are the words of Christ. All the words of Holy Scripture are His, and are here included. These words have power to open and to shut heaven.”—*The Desire of Ages,* p. 413.

 ***4. THE FALL AND REHABILITATION OF PETER Wed, Sep 24***

**a. Explain Peter’s greatest defect of character. Mark 14:27–29.**

**Mark 14:27–29**

And Jesus saith unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered. **28** But after that I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee. **29** But Peter said unto him, Although all shall be offended, yet will not I.

 “For each of the classes represented by the Pharisee and the publican there is a lesson in the history of the apostle Peter. In his early discipleship Peter thought himself strong. Like the Pharisee, in his own estimation he was ‘not as other men are.’ . . . Peter did not know his own danger. Self-confidence misled him. He thought himself able to withstand temptation; but in a few short hours the test came, and with cursing and swearing he denied his Lord.”— *Christ’s Object Lessons,* p. 152.

**b. How did Jesus deal with this presumptuous disciple? Luke 22:31, 32.**

**Luke 22:31, 32**

And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: **32** But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.

 “When the crowing of the cock reminded him of the words of Christ, surprised and shocked at what he had just done he turned and looked at his Master. At that moment Christ looked at Peter, and beneath that grieved look, in which compassion and love for him were blended, Peter understood himself. He went out and wept bitterly. That look of Christ’s broke his heart. Peter had come to the turning point, and bitterly did he repent his sin. He was like the publican in his contrition and repentance, and like the publican he found mercy. The look of Christ assured him of pardon.

 “Now his self-confidence was gone. Never again were the old boastful assertions repeated.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons,* pp. 152–154.

**c. After His resurrection, what did Jesus ask Peter? John 21:15–17. Why did Jesus repeat this three times—and how did Peter answer? Luke 22:31, 32.**

**John 21:15–17**

So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. **16** He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. **17** He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

**Luke 22:31, 32**

And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: **32** But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.

 “[Peter] had dishonored Christ, and had incurred the distrust of his brethren. They thought he would not be allowed to take his former position among them, and he himself felt that he had forfeited his trust. Before being called to take up again his apostolic work, he must before them all give evidence of his repentance. Without this, his sin, though repented of, might have destroyed his influence as a minister of Christ. The Saviour gave him opportunity to regain the confidence of his brethren, and, so far as possible, to remove the reproach he had brought upon the gospel.”—*The Desire of Ages,* p. 811.

 ***5. CONFIRMED IN THE MINISTRY Thur, Sep 25***

**a. Name some key characteristics of discipleship. Colossians 1:10, 11; 3:12–14. What can we learn from the way Christ dealt with Peter?**

**Colossians 1:10, 11**

That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; **11** Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness;

**Colossians 3:12–14**

Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; **13** Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. **14** And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.

 “The gospel makes no compromise with evil. It cannot excuse sin. Secret sins are to be confessed in secret to God; but, for open sin, open confession is required. The reproach of the disciple’s sin is cast upon Christ. It causes Satan to triumph, and wavering souls to stumble. By giving proof of repentance, the disciple, so far as lies in his power, is to remove this reproach.”—*The Desire of Ages,* p. 811.

 “The Saviour’s manner of dealing with Peter had a lesson for him and for his brethren. It taught them to meet the transgressor with patience, sympathy, and forgiving love. Although Peter had denied his Lord, the love which Jesus bore him never faltered. Just such love should the undershepherd feel for the sheep and lambs committed to his care. Remembering his own weakness and failure, Peter was to deal with his flock as tenderly as Christ had dealt with him.

 “The question that Christ had put to Peter was significant. He mentioned only one condition of discipleship and service. ‘Lovest thou Me?’ He said. This is the essential qualification. Though Peter might possess every other, yet without the love of Christ he could not be a faithful shepherd over the Lord’s flock. Knowledge, benevolence, eloquence, gratitude, and zeal are all aids in the good work; but without the love of Jesus in the heart, the work of the Christian minister is a failure.”—*Ibid.,* p. 815.

 ***PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS Fri, Sep 26***

**1. How might I, like Peter, be misjudging my own character?**

**2. How can I avoid the defect of character manifested by Peter?**

**3. What lessons can I learn from Peter’s fall and rehabilitation?**

**4. After Christ’s resurrection, why did Christ need to ask Peter a pointed question in front of his brethren—and what should we learn from this?**

**5. Explain the foundation on which Christ built His church, and identify the keys of the kingdom of heaven.**

***Suggested Reading: Testimonies for the Church, vol. 5, pp. 331–336.***

Dear Brother and Sister H **(5T 331)**

In regard to your present relations with the church I would advise that you do all that can be done on your part to come into harmony with your brethren. Cultivate a kind, conciliatory spirit, and let no feeling of retaliation come into your minds and hearts. We have but a little time in this world, and let us work for time and for eternity. Be diligent to make your calling and election sure. See that you make no mistake in regard to your title to a home in Christ’s kingdom. If your name is registered in the Lamb’s book of life, then all will be well with you. Be ready and anxious to confess your faults and forsake them, that your mistakes and sins may go beforehand to judgment and be blotted out. **(5T 331.3)**

I believe that you are making improvement; but let the work be deeper, more thorough, more earnest. Leave nothing undone that you can do. Walk humbly with God, set your heart in order, overcome self, and watch to avoid every device of Satan. When the heart is in harmony with Jesus, when in words, in spirit, and in deportment, you copy the Pattern, the manners will be refined and elevated, convincing all that there has been in you a radical change. You will then be numbered among the virtuous, God-fearing followers of Jesus. **(5T 331.4)**

My brother, you have a very spotted record. God and your own soul know this. But no one will be more rejoiced than I to see you setting your feet in the way that Christ has walked, and to meet you in the kingdom of God. It is difficult for us to understand ourselves, to have a correct knowledge of our own characters. The word of God is plain, but often there is an error in applying it to one’s self. There is liability to self-deception and to think its warnings and reproofs do not mean me. “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?” [Jeremiah 17:9](https://www.3ams.com/Bible/BCViewData1/jer%2017%3A9%C2%A62). Self-flattery may be construed into Christian emotion and zeal. Self-love and confidence may give us assurance that we are right when we are far from meeting the requirements of God’s word. **(5T 332.1)**

The Bible is full, clear, and explicit; the character of the true disciple of Christ is marked out with exactness. We must search the Scriptures with humble hearts, trembling at the word of the Lord, if we would not be in any way deceived in regard to our true character. There must be persevering effort to overcome selfishness and self-confidence. Self-examination must be thorough, that there be no danger of self-deception. A little catechizing of self on special occasions is not sufficient. Daily examine the foundation of your hope, and see whether you are indeed in the love of Christ. Deal truly with your own hearts, for you cannot afford to run any risk here. Count the cost of being a wholehearted Christian, and then gird on the armor. Study the Pattern; look to Jesus, and be like Him. Your peace of mind, your hope of eternal salvation, depend on faithfulness in this work. As Christians we are less thorough in self-examination than in anything else; it is no wonder, then, that we make such slow advancement in understanding self. **(5T 332.2)**

I am writing these things to you because I want you to be saved. I do not want to discourage you, but to urge you to more earnest, vigorous effort. Self-love will prompt you to make a superficial work of self-examination; but let no vain confidence cheat you out of eternal life. Do not build yourself up on the mistakes and errors of others, but between God and your own soul settle the important question upon which hangs your eternal destiny. **(5T 333.1)**

“Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart,”([1 Samuel 16:7](https://www.3ams.com/Bible/BCViewData1/1sa%2016%3A7%C2%A62))—the human heart, with its conflicting emotions of joy and sorrow,—the wandering, wayward heart, which is the abode of so much impurity and deceit. He knows its motives, its very intents and purposes. Go to Him with your soul all stained as it is. Like the psalmist, throw its chambers open to the all-seeing Eye, exclaiming: “Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” [Psalm 139:23, 24](https://www.3ams.com/Bible/BCViewData1/psa%20139%3A23%2C%2024%C2%A62). Submit your heart to be refined and purified; then you will become a partaker of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. Then you will “be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.” [1 Peter 3:15](https://www.3ams.com/Bible/BCViewData1/1pe%203%3A15%C2%A62). The peace of Christ will be yours. Your name will stand registered in the book of life; your title to the heavenly inheritance will bear the royal signet, which none on earth dare question. No one can bar your way to the portals of the city of God, but you will have free access to the royal presence and to the temple of God on high.  **(5T 333.2)**

A few words more press upon my mind. I want you to be united with the church, not because I regard all the church members perfect nor because I regard you perfect. God has precious ones in His church; there are also men and women who are as tares among the wheat. But the Lord does not give you or anyone else the office of saying who are tares and who are wheat. We may see and condemn the faults of others, while we have greater faults which we have never realized, but which are distinctly seen by others. God requires you to give to the world and the church a good example, a life that represents Jesus. There are duties to be performed and responsibilities to be borne. The world has not enough true Christians; the church has need of them; society cannot spare them. Christ’s prayer for His disciples was: “I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil.” [John 17:15](https://www.3ams.com/Bible/BCViewData1/jhn%2017%3A15%C2%A62). Jesus knows we are in the world, exposed to its temptations, but He loves us and will give us grace to triumph over its corrupting influences. He would have us perfect in character, that our waywardness may not occasion moral deformity in others. **(5T 333.3)**

You see that your brethren do not come up to the Bible standard, that there are defects in them; and you dwell upon these defects. You feed upon them instead of feeding upon Christ, and by beholding you become changed into the same image. But criticize no one; do not contrast your own exact course with the deficiencies of others. You may be in danger of wanting to correct others and make them feel their wrongs. Do not do this. This is not the work God has given you to do. He has not made you a church tinker. There are many things which you view in the light of the Bible. But though you may be in the right on some points, do not get the impression that your positions are always correct; for on many points your ideas are distorted and will not bear criticism. **(5T 334.1)**

Do not seek to exalt self, but learn in the school of Christ meekness and lowliness of heart. You know what Peter’s character was, how strikingly his peculiar traits were developed. Before his great fall he was always forward and dictatorial, speaking unadvisedly from the impulse of the moment. He was always ready to correct others and to express his mind before he had a clear comprehension of himself or of what he had to say. But Peter was converted, and the converted Peter was very different from the rash, impetuous Peter. While he retained his former fervor, the grace of Christ regulated his zeal. Instead of being impetuous, self-confident, and self-exalted, he was calm, self-possessed, and teachable. He could then feed the lambs as well as the sheep of Christ’s flock. **(5T 334.2)**

You, my brother, have a great work to do for yourself day by day. You must make constant effort to curb bad tempers and evil propensities. These have grown with your growth, and Jesus alone can strengthen you to fully overcome them. You should regard yourself as a servant of Christ and seek to be like Him in character. Try to make yourself agreeable to others. Even in your business relations, be courteous, kind, and forbearing, showing the meekness of Jesus and that His spirit is ruling you. You are related to humanity, and you must be patient, kind, and pitiful. You need to cherish thoughtfulness and subdue selfishness. Let your inquiry be: “What can I do to bless others?” If your heart is yearning to do them good, even at inconvenience to yourself, you will have the blessing of God. Love, lifted out of the realm of passion and impulse, becomes spiritualized and is revealed in words and acts. A Christian must have a sanctified tenderness and love, in which there is no impatience or fretfulness; the rude, harsh manners must be softened by the grace of Christ. **(5T 335.1)**

O my brother, my sister, educate yourselves in the school of Christ. Let the spirit of controversy cease at home and in the church. Let your hearts be drawn out in love for the people of God. Hearts that are filled with the love of Christ can never get very far apart. Religion is love, and a Christian home is one where love reigns and finds expression in words and acts of thoughtful kindness and gentle courtesy. Let no harsh words be spoken. Let the family worship be made pleasant and interesting. Be a Christian gentleman, my brother; for the very same principles that characterize the home life will be carried into the church. A lack of courtesy, a moment of petulance, a single rough, thoughtless word, will mar your reputation and may close the door to hearts so that you can never reach them. **(5T 335.2)**

Now I have set before you your dangers, and I tell you there are precious victories that you may gain. We can never see the kingdom of heaven unless we have the mind and spirit of Christ. Then copy the pattern at home, at your work, and in the church. Do not try to teach others nor to see how widely you can differ from your brethren, but try to see how near you can come to them, how fully you can be in harmony with them. While doing all that you can on your part to perfect Christian character, give your heart to God for Him to mold according to His pleasure. He will help you; I know He will. May God bless you and your dear children; and may I meet you all around the great white throne, is my prayer. **(5T 336.1)**