

Failure analysis: the paralysis of analysis vs. conviction through forgiveness...

1. Study John 13:36-38 and Mark 14:72. Examine Peter's failure. Why is Peter weeping?

In John 13:36-37, Peter, after being told he cannot go where Jesus is going, is so sure of himself and his love for Christ that he boldly declares that he would lay his life down for Him. In John 13:38, Jesus predicts that Peter will disown Him three times, and in Mark 14:72, Jesus' prediction comes true; Peter denies Him three times within two hours. Peter failed miserably in the expectations he had in himself; his convictions were more of bravado than faith. Peter realized that Christ knew him better than he knew himself; Jesus was truly God. Peter saw Jesus looking at him; he failed Jesus. Peter was very remorseful.

2. How is Peter restored? Study in particular John 21:15-19. What do you observe? What is the significance of verse 15? What type of "love" is Christ talking about? Is there a difference in the verb "know" used by Peter in verses 15, 16, and 17? Why is Peter hurt or grieving in verse 17?

In verse 15, Peter is addressed in his full and formal name. This only occurs when matters are very serious. The question "do you love me" is in a very specific manner regarding a clearly defined attitude toward the Lord. It is not a question of sentiment, emotion, or intellect.

The word "love" that Christ used was *agapao* (v. 15 and 16) and *phileo* (v. 17). Peter answered using *phileo* in all his responses, which indicates his unfamiliarity with *agapao*. These two Greek words are not interchangeable as they reflect different aspects of love.

Agapeo, often understood as a reverent love, a love esteeming the one loved, is a much more complex concept than that. It can be seen collectively as the love of the Father who desires that His children are with Him forever, the love of the Son who knows He's the only means that others will know of His Father's love for them, and the love of God's children who know that everyone can be adopted by the Father who accepts them as they are. For further study, see the article: "God is Love."

Phileo can be understood as brotherly love, the type of love between two close friends.

Peter grieves at the third repeated question from Christ because he knows that Christ knows him better than himself. Peter is hurt that Christ still doubts him. "You know that I love you." In verses 15 and 16, the word "know" that Peter used was *eido*, which implies to know or to be aware of. But he understands Christ's question, and despite the pain of perceived doubt, answers differently in verse 17 which is the key to Peter's restoration to Christ. In verse 17, the word "know", used twice, is *ginosko*, which means to know in an absolute sense. Peter, knowing that he's been forgiven, is resolute in his commitment to Christ, and knows that he cannot do this on his own power. Without any doubt, Peter acknowledges that Christ "knows", not in a superficial sense *eido*, but in a very deep, personal, and absolute sense *ginosko*.

After failing to keep his word and denying Jesus, his Lord, Peter had deep remorse and was repentant. After being lied to and rejected, the Lord still asks "do you love me?" Jesus knew Peter's heart and His forgiveness renewed Peter's faith. In comparison, Judas Iscariot's remorse did not include true repentance; he did not believe that Jesus was the Savior, the true Redeemer of sin.

"[Beware] of substituting superficial obedience for substantive life-change. We apply biblical truth to areas where we're already applying it, not to new areas where we're not applying it. Result: no noticeable change in our lives." Howard and William Hendricks.

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