

Post-Trip Devotions - Spiritual Grit

Hello!

Thank you for investing yourself in a Group Mission Trip experience! Every person on the GMT team is grateful for your participation. We're hopeful that you discovered that Jesus was present during your trip, and he continues to walk with you during every minute of your life. "His love never fails, and never gives up, it never runs out on you..."*

During your recent Group Mission Trip experience, you spent a lot of time kicking around how Peter grew Spiritual Grit throughout his life with Jesus. Throughout their friendship, Jesus was always nearby to mentor him and redirect him to a different solution when facing problems. Peter was bold – sometimes that boldness got him into tough situations. What an amazing ride for him! But what happened to Peter after Jesus physically left? Peter didn't go back to his job as a fisherman, even though that may have seemed the route with the most safety. Rather, he boldly strode into the crucial work of gathering followers of Jesus into what we know as the church.

The following devotions are written with the desire that you'll find encouragement and hope as you continue to walk with Jesus, your companion and mentor. There's no deadline for you to "finish" these devotional thoughts. In fact, it may work best for you to take your time to read and think – and let Jesus connect your heart to what is true and good.

Don't ever forget that Jesus is for you. He is your biggest fan and most passionate guide – and will never stop pursuing opportunities to surprise you with his personal vision for you. He's all about growing your spiritual GRIT!

With each passing day, I hope you come to know and embrace the astonishing grace of Jesus more and more, and that you experience his peaceful love at the right time - and just the way you need it!

With joy,

Brent Bromstrup

Group Mission Trips

*Thanks to the group Jesus Culture for these truly inspiring, slightly paraphrased lyrics from the song "One Thing Remains".



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Post Trip Devotion #1: Peter's writes a GRITTY letter.

I Peter 1:1-9

When Peter met Jesus, he was a fisherman with no formal education. He lived large. He was full of passion, quick to make decisions, and willing to own his mistakes. When Jesus invited him to be in close friendship with him, Peter jumped at the chance to experience the adventure. Even after a few meteoric years growing **GRIT** with Jesus, no doubt Peter was still wired to make emotional decisions (including mistakes in judgement). But his cooperation with Jesus had built character in him that deepened his faith and gave him a new perspective.

Peter wasn't known as a scholar, and those who knew him probably wouldn't say they thought he'd turn out to be a published author, but he had a lot to say about the strength Jesus had crafted in him. He wrote at least two letters to the emerging church of Christ followers that formed after Jesus physically left. Those letters are included in the New Testament and are simply named First and Second Peter. He wrote with the same passion and deep faith with which he lived his life with Jesus. Let's dive in and discover how spiritual GRIT continued to grow in Peter's life, and how his first letter reflect his deeper faith.

Try these suggestions to begin your time with this devotion:

- Find a quiet place where you can slow down and think without distractions.
- Pray, recognizing that Jesus is with you and is eager to interact with you.
- Read the following verses from the introduction to Peter's first letter: (All readings are from the New Living Translation.)

I Peter 1:1-9 - Trial and Salvation

Greetings from Peter

1 This letter is from Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ. I am writing to God's chosen people who are living as foreigners in the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. 2 God the Father knew you and chose you long ago, and his Spirit has made you holy. As a result, you have obeyed him and have been cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ. May God give you more and more grace and peace.

The Hope of Eternal Life

3 All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is by his great mercy that we have been born again, because God raised Jesus Christ from the dead. Now we live with great expectation, 4 and we have a priceless inheritance—an inheritance that is kept in heaven for you, pure and undefiled, beyond the reach of change and decay. 5 And through your faith, God is protecting you by his power until you receive this salvation, which is ready to be revealed on the last day for all to see. 6 So be truly glad. There is wonderful joy ahead, even though you must endure many trials for a little while. 7 These trials will show that your faith is genuine. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold—though your faith is far more precious than mere gold. So when your faith remains strong through many trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world. (con't next page)



Post Trip Devotion #1 cont.

8 You love him even though you have never seen him. Though you do not see him now, you trust him; and you rejoice with a glorious, inexpressible joy. 9 The reward for trusting him will be the salvation of your souls.

Think through the following questions and write down your thoughts in the space provided.

- ▶ What do you think was going on for the Christians who received Peter's letter? What are all the possible "trials" they may have been facing?

- ▶ According to Peter, why can Christians live with great expectation and hope?

- ▶ Right now, what might it look like for you to live with the hopeful expectation Peter described? Why is that possible?

How has your spiritual **GRIT** grown because of your mission trip, or hasn't it? (Be specific.)

- Pray, asking Jesus to guide you and give you the resources you need as you walk with him.



Post Trip Devotion #2: Peter's Call to Spiritual GRIT

I Peter 1:13-25

Begin your devotion....

- Find a quiet place where you can slow down and think without distractions.
- Pray, recognizing that Jesus is with you and is eager to interact with you.
- Read the following verses from Peter's first letter:

To Peter, connecting with Jesus was more than simply hanging out with him. Because of Jesus, Peter's life was transformed in every way – his perspective was changed, his hopes and dreams were re-set, and he became more purposeful. As you read the next portion of First Peter, you may be surprised at his thoughtful intensity.

I Peter 1:13-25 - A Call to Holy Living

13 So prepare your minds for action and exercise self-control. Put all your hope in the gracious salvation that will come to you when Jesus Christ is revealed to the world. 14 So you must live as God's obedient children. Don't slip back into your old ways of living to satisfy your own desires. You didn't know any better then. 15 But now you must be holy in everything you do, just as God who chose you is holy. 16 For the Scriptures say, "You must be holy because I am holy."

17 And remember that the heavenly Father to whom you pray has no favorites. He will judge or reward you according to what you do. So you must live in reverent fear of him during your time here as "temporary residents." 18 For you know that God paid a ransom to save you from the empty life you inherited from your ancestors. And it was not paid with mere gold or silver, which lose their value. 19 It was the precious blood of Christ, the sinless, spotless Lamb of God. 20 God chose him as your ransom long before the world began, but now in these last days he has been revealed for your sake.

21 Through Christ you have come to trust in God. And you have placed your faith and hope in God because he raised Christ from the dead and gave him great glory. 22 You were cleansed from your sins when you obeyed the truth, so now you must show sincere love to each other as brothers and sisters. Love each other deeply with all your heart. 23 For you have been born again, but not to a life that will quickly end. Your new life will last forever because it comes from the eternal, living word of God. 24 As the Scriptures say, "People are like grass; their beauty is like a flower in the field. The grass withers and the flower fades. 25 But the word of the Lord remains forever." And that word is the Good News that was preached to you."

- Why does Peter begin this call to **GRIT** with a challenge to prepare your minds for action? Is spiritual **GRIT** more about one's mind or one's heart? Why do you think that?



Post-Trip Devotion #3: Suffering for Doing Good

I Peter 3:8-16

Begin your devotion....

- Find a quiet place where you can slow down and think without distractions.
- Pray, recognizing that Jesus is with you and is eager to interact with you.
- Read the following verses from Peter's first letter:

Peter's letters to Christians were written during a time the new church was controversial and under attack from both religious leaders and the Roman Government. The church and the people of faith who were part of it were in constant danger. Christianity was declared to be illegal and Christians could lose their property or even their lives. The following portion of Peter's letter encourages Christ followers to live with deep trust in Jesus, even when it seemed the world was against them.

I Peter 3:8-16 - To All Christians

"8 Finally, all of you should be of one mind. Sympathize with each other. Love each other as brothers and sisters. Be tenderhearted, and keep a humble attitude. 9 Don't repay evil for evil. Don't retaliate with insults when people insult you. Instead, pay them back with a blessing. That is what God has called you to do, and he will grant you his blessing. 10 For the Scriptures say,

"If you want to enjoy life and see many happy days, keep your tongue from speaking evil and your lips from telling lies. 11 Turn away from evil and do good. Search for peace, and work to maintain it. 12 The eyes of the Lord watch over those who do right, and his ears are open to their prayers. But the Lord turns his face against those who do evil."

Suffering for Doing Good

13 Now, who will want to harm you if you are eager to do good? 14 But even if you suffer for doing what is right, God will reward you for it. So don't worry or be afraid of their threats. 15 Instead, you must worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if someone asks about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain it. 16 But do this in a gentle and respectful way. Keep your conscience clear. Then if people speak against you, they will be ashamed when they see what a good life you live because you belong to Christ."

Peter is concerned that the opposition people in the church faced would turn individual Christians against one another. In dangerous times, people can become focused on survival – with each person looking to protect themselves.

- ▶ What fears do you think the early Christians may have felt when facing the opposition of religious leaders and the Roman government?

- ▶ What fears are you facing in your life right now?



Post-Trip Devotion #3: cont.

- ▶ How do Peter's words in these paragraphs counteract the fears the church faced? The fears you face?

- ▶ Why the call to being tenderhearted and humble? How do those characteristics counteract fear, or don't they?

- ▶ Why does Peter write about the importance of worshipping Jesus and following him as Lord? In your experience how has worship and following Jesus had an impact on your life?

- ▶ Peter writes "if someone asks about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain it.... But do this in a gentle and respectful way." What does he mean? Why is it important to be gentle and respectful when talking about hope?

- ▶ How does faith in Jesus build hope? How might hope change the way you live?

- Pray, asking Jesus to guide you and give you the resources you need as you walk with him.



Post-Trip Devotion #4: cont.

While on your Group Mission Trip experience and now through these devotions, you've spent a lot of time hearing (and hopefully thinking) about spiritual **GRIT**. Here's a challenge for you – over the next few weeks, take a realistic look at your life and how you walk with Jesus. What do you see? How is he working right now to grow your **GRIT**? How might you cooperate with him?

- Pray, asking Jesus to guide your life and to give you the resources you need as you walk with him.

Thanks for taking the time to read the excerpts from Peter's letter to Christians. I hope your personal vision for life and faith grew through your interaction with them. More importantly, I hope you discovered that Jesus is focused on and committed to you and your life. His intentions for you are loving and wise. He's always present, never discouraged, always full of hope for who you are becoming. Keep trusting him, even when you're tired, confused, or on the top of your game!

As you finish these devotional thoughts, keep these words in your heart and mind:

“Now all glory to God, who is able to keep you from falling away and will bring you with great joy into his glorious presence without a single fault. All glory to him who alone is God, our Savior through Jesus Christ our Lord. All glory, majesty, power, and authority are his before all time, and in the present, and beyond all time! Amen.”

Jude verses 24-25

