

## ***Unshakeable Faith Week Three***

Many of us have had experience with “strong-willed” children. Doesn’t it seem ridiculous that a four-year-old – or a teenager for that matter – will stand up to an adult and stubbornly insist on their own way? They really think they know better than their wiser, more-experienced parents!

Yet, I sometimes do the same thing with God. In fact, at one time or another, each of us has been that strong-willed child who refuses to submit to the Father’s authority. Sometimes we act out of rebellion. Sometimes, we simply think we know best.

Peter had the same problem, but even this hard-headed Apostle eventually learned that God deserved his yielded obedience.

### **Unshakeable Faith Trait Three:**

#### **Submitted to the One Who Knows the Future and Has a Plan**

More than once, Peter thought his way was better than Jesus’. In fact, he even tried to impose his will on Jesus. We would never do that, right?

***Read Matthew 16:21-23. (This happened shortly after Peter acknowledged Christ as the Messiah in Matthew 16:16). Describe the Father’s plan for Jesus as He details in verse 21.***

The Father had revealed His plan to the Son. Then the Son revealed the Father’s plan to His disciples. God’s plan of salvation for the whole world was unfolded to 12 ordinary men. They should have humbly responded with worship and thanksgiving!

***But how did Peter react? How would you have responded?***

Although Peter calls Jesus “Lord” in verse 22, the nature of his correction shows Peter was not really yielding to His lordship in that moment. D.A. Carson remarks on Peter’s response in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* on the book of Matthew:

*Peter's strong will and warm heart linked to his ignorance produce a shocking bit of arrogance. He confesses that Jesus is the Messiah and then speaks in a way implying that he knows more of God's will than the Messiah himself.*

In Matthew 16:23, Jesus identifies the core issue of Peter's misguided intentions. "You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men."

Many of us have the same problem Peter had. We see things with our limited, selfish, human perspective instead of God's eternal, all-knowing perspective. Intellectually, I accept that God knows best and His way is perfect. However, I still want to do things my way, even while knowing from experience that I usually get it wrong.

We know from Scripture that Peter matured. He learned to focus more and more on the "things of God" and less and less on the "things of men."

For instance, in the 4<sup>th</sup> chapter of Acts, Peter and John were arrested for teaching about the resurrection of Jesus after they healed a crippled man in Jesus' name. They were commanded not to speak about Jesus again, threatened, and released. However Peter and John declared they had to obey God even if it meant arrest (Acts 4:19).

Did you notice the change in Peter? Instead of thinking in human terms or considering his own comfort, he kept God's will and Kingdom priorities first. In turn, he taught others what he learned.

***Read 1 Peter 4:1-2. Peter taught that one of two things will determine the direction of our life. What are those two choices?***

1.

2.

Just think, if I am not living for the will of God, by default I am living for my sinful, fleshly desires. Either God's will or mine.

Peter stated that those who live for the will of God are "done with sin." That doesn't mean we won't ever sin, but it does mean our lives won't be ruled by our sinful desires and passions. Choosing our will over God's will be the exception rather than the rule.

***Read Romans 8:12-14. Paul says we have an obligation to God because He has given us eternal life through the presence and power of the Spirit of Christ within us. What is this obligation?***

If you are a believer, you are not your own. You have been bought and paid for with the blood of Christ. Not only is God worthy of your obedience, He also knows what is absolutely best for you. ***Will you submit your will and way to Him today?***