

“A Man Called Peter” starring Richard Todd, Jean Peters, Marjorie Rambeau, 1955, NR, 119 minutes

Major themes:

- Friendship with God
- God’s All-Encompassing Love
- Trust
- Fun
- Life and Death
- God’s sovereignty
- Integrity
- Surrender

Major characters:

- Rev. Peter Marshall
- Catherine
- Senator Willis K. Harvey
- Peter John Marshall
- Mrs. Findlay
- Miss Laura Fowler
- Mr. & Mrs. Peyton

Movie Nights for Thinkers and Seekers

Background info:



- Dr. Peter Marshall was born in May, 1902 in Scotland. He was strongly influenced in his impressionable years by Eric Liddell, not only for his great athletic ability, but also because of his modesty, his charm, and the great strength of his Christian witness (see movie guide for "*Chariots of Fire*"). When he moved to the U.S., he lived initially in the Atlanta area – he attended Columbia Theological Seminary, and then pastored First Presbyterian Church in Covington and Westminster Presbyterian Church in Atlanta. He later became pastor of the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church in Washington D.C. (known as the "*Church of the Presidents*").
- Peter Marshall served as the 57th Chaplain of the United States Senate, appointed by the members of the Senate to perform ceremonial, symbolic, and pastoral duties. One of the responsibilities this position entails is opening Senate sessions with prayer, which is one of the Senate's most enduring traditions. The Chaplain visits senators when they go to the hospital, represents the Senate in appearances before church groups across the nation, and hosts visiting religious figures at the Capitol. The Chaplain also provides pastoral care for the Senators, their staffs, and their families, and provides or oversees religious programs such as Bible study, reflection groups, and the weekly Senate Prayer Breakfast. The Chaplain also often presides over religious ceremonies such as funerals and memorial services for current or past members and delivers the invocation or benediction at many official U.S. ceremonies, including White House events. Along with the House Chaplain, the Senate Chaplain is responsible for overseeing the Capitol Prayer Room, located near the Capitol Rotunda. Dedicated in 1955,

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it is a place for members "*who want to be alone with their God.*" The current (62nd) U.S. Senate Chaplain is Barry C. Black.

- Catherine attended Agnes Scott College here in Decatur, GA. Her book, "*A Man Called Peter,*" stayed on the *New York Times* bestseller list for fifty consecutive weeks. This movie became 20th Century Fox's biggest box-office hit of 1955. Men entered the ministry because of the film that changed the lives of a generation of teenagers drawn to Peter Marshall's charismatic preaching. Catherine eventually wrote over 20 books, including many editions of Peter Marshall's sermons, several inspirational books, and the best-selling novel *Christy*. Books written or edited by her have sold over eighteen million copies in thirty-five languages.
- I wanted to share some of Peter Marshall's legacy with you before watching this movie. Peter's son, Peter John Marshall (1940 – 2010), who also became a Presbyterian minister, authored many books and founded "*Peter Marshall Ministries.*" By tracing God's hand in American history, his vision was to educate Americans about God's role in the unfolding of our nation's destiny. He was concerned about the future of America and returning the nation to the original vision of the Founding Fathers. He also published his parents' works and developed many educational materials. This ministry has continued under the guidance of Peter John's daughter Mary, who has a passion for personal restoration and global revival. She believes that God longs for intimate relationship with His people and that the believer's greatest privilege is to represent the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. Her ministry focuses on meeting God both in our personal lives and in the world around us by gaining a Scriptural understanding of His character and our identities in relation to Him. It is her desire to empower both herself and others to appropriate and walk in the abundant life referenced in John 15.
- After Peter Marshall's death, Catherine had a dream that she was allowed to visit him briefly, to see him in his new setting. She found him working in a rose garden, surrounded by those perfect hybrid tea roses he always wanted to grow. After a while, he said playfully, "*I know perfectly well what you've been doing, Catherine. You're writing a book . . . It's all right, Kate. Go ahead and write it. Tell it all, if it will prove to people that a man can love the Lord and not be a sissy . . .*"

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Scriptures:

Romans 12:1 – 2 (NLT) – *“And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him. Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God’s will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.”*

James 4:13 – 16 (NLT) – *“Look here, you who say, ‘Today or tomorrow we are going to a certain town and will stay there a year. We will do business there and make a profit.’ How do you know what your life will be like tomorrow? Your life is like the morning fog—it’s here a little while, then it’s gone. What you ought to say is, ‘If the Lord wants us to, we will live and do this or that.’ Otherwise you are boasting about your own plans, and all such boasting is evil.”*

John 3:16 (NLT) – *“For God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.”*

Revelation 21:1 – 7 (NLT) – *“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the old heaven and the old earth had disappeared. And the sea was also gone. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven like a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. I heard a loud shout from the throne, saying, ‘Look, God’s home is now among his people! He will live with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them. He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever.’ And the one sitting on the throne said, ‘Look, I am making everything new!’ And then he said to me, ‘Write this down, for what I tell you is trustworthy and true.’ And he also said, ‘It is finished! I am the Alpha and the Omega—the Beginning and the End. To all who are thirsty I will give freely from the springs of the water of life. All who are victorious will inherit all these blessings, and I will be their God, and they will be my children.’”*

Romans 8:28 (NIV) – *“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”*

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Discussion points:

1. It was said that this is the story of a man and his close friendship with God. In what ways can our lives reflect that kind of intimacy with God?
2. Peter said in one of his early sermons, *“The great things by which we really live are not proven by logic but by life . . . as that is true of love and beauty, so it is true of finding God and learning how close He stands to us.”* Discuss.
3. *“It isn’t the church or religion that I’m trying to present, but Christ. Not the pale, anemic, namby-pamby, Jesus, the gentle Jesus meek and mild, but the Christ of the gospels.”* Compare and contrast who Jesus really is with how He is portrayed in the media, the Church, in popular culture.
4. Peter extended an open invitation to everyone to attend the church. In what ways can we as the Church become more welcoming and inviting (as Jesus was), and less like an exclusive club for a privileged few?
5. How does receiving the assurance that the Lord Jesus loves us dispel the fear of death? What has helped you face death with faith and trust?
6. What can we learn from the prayer lives of Peter and Catherine?
7. Peter Marshall’s last prayer read in the Senate: *“Oh God, open our eyes and let us see how simple a man’s life can be. Where we cannot convince, let us be willing to persuade. For small deeds done are better than great deeds planned. Amen.”* Discuss.

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Mairzy Doats (Milton Drake, Al Hoffman & Jerry Livingston)

I know a ditty nutty as a fruitcake
Goofy as a goon and silly as a loon
Some call it pretty, others call it crazy
But they all sing this tune:

Mairzy doats and dozy doats and liddle lamzy divey
A kiddley divey too, wouldn't you?
Yes! Mairzy doats and dozy doats and liddle lamzy divey
A kiddley divey too, wouldn't you?

If the words sound queer and funny to your ear, a little bit jumbled and jivey
Sing "Mares eat oats and does eat oats and little lambs eat ivy"

Oh! Mairzy doats and dozy doats and liddle lamzy divey
A kiddley divey too, wouldn't you-oo?
A kiddley divey too, wouldn't you?

God Give Us Men (J. B. Holland)

God give us men. The time demands
Strong minds, great hearts, true faith and willing hand;
Men whom the lust office does not kill;
Men whom the spoils of office cannot buy;
Men who possess opinions and a will;
Men who have honor; men who will not lie;
Men who can stand before a demagogue
Condemn his treacherous flatteries without winking;
In public duty and in private thinking!
For while the rabble with their thumb-worn creeds,
Their large professions and their little deeds
Mingle in selfish strife; lo! Freedom weeps!
Wrong rules the land, and waiting Justice sleeps

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Christianity Today's "The Top 50 Books that have Shaped Evangelicals":

1. Prayer: Conversing With God, Rosalind Rinker
2. Understanding Church Growth, Donald Anderson McGavran
3. Mere Christianity, C. S. Lewis
4. The God Who Is There, Francis A. Schaeffer
5. Knowing God, J. I. Packer
6. The Living Bible, Kenneth N. Taylor
7. Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger, Ronald J. Sider
8. Managing Your Time, Ted W. Engstrom
9. Through Gates of Splendor, Elisabeth Elliot
10. Evangelism Explosion, D. James Kennedy
11. Celebration of Discipline, Richard J. Foster
12. Power Evangelism, John Wimber with Kevin Springer
13. Evidence That Demands a Verdict, Josh McDowell
14. Let Justice Roll Down, John M. Perkins
15. The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism, F. H. Henry
16. Basic Christianity, John Stott
17. What's So Amazing About Grace?, Philip Yancey
18. The Divine Conspiracy, Dallas Willard
19. The Cost of Discipleship, Dietrich Bonhoeffer
20. A Wrinkle In Time, Madeleine L'Engle
21. The Master Plan of Evangelism, Robert Emerson Coleman
22. The Genesis Flood, Henry M. Morris and John C. Whitcomb
23. All We're Meant to Be, Letha Dawson Scanzoni and Nancy A. Hardesty
24. The Meaning of Persons, Paul Tournier
25. Boundaries, Henry Cloud and John Townsend
26. Know Why You Believe, Paul E. Little
27. Christy, Catherine Marshall
28. The Act of Marriage, Tim and Beverly LaHaye
29. Dare to Discipline, James Dobson
30. Roaring Lambs, Robert Briner
31. The Next Christendom, Philip Jenkins
32. The Cross and the Switchblade, David Wilkerson with John and Elizabeth Sherrill
33. The Late Great Planet Earth, Hal Lindsey with C. C. Carlson
34. This Present Darkness, Frank E. Peretti
35. The Stork Is Dead, Charlie W. Shedd
36. Left Behind, Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins
37. God's Smuggler, Brother Andrew with John and Elizabeth Sherrill
38. The Gospel in a Pluralist Society, Lesslie Newbigin
39. Desiring God, John Piper
40. Darwin on Trial, Phillip E. Johnson
41. Born Again, Charles W. Colson
42. The Purpose-Driven Life, Rick Warren
43. Operation World, Patrick Johnstone
44. The Gospel of the Kingdom, George Eldon Ladd
45. The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind, Mark A. Noll
46. Out of the Saltshaker and into the World, Rebecca Manley Pippert
47. The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?, F. F. Bruce
48. The Hiding Place, Corrie ten Boom with John and Elizabeth Sherrill
49. Knowledge of the Holy, A. W. Tozer

50. Revivalism and Social Reform, Timothy L. Smith

A Selection of Peter Marshall's Prayers

Cleanse Me, O God

Father, over and over again I have fallen into the same temptations. It does seem as if I am slow to learn Thy ways and Thy laws. I blush to recall my vows to Thee: never again to do what I have just come from doing, not again to stain myself in the same mudholes. Yet, O Lord, stained as I am, and conscious of my own weakness, I have no choice but to pick myself up again, to ask Thee to forgive me once more and make me clean again. I thank Thee, O Lord Jesus, for the glory of the Gospel of the Second Chance. I would claim from Thee that chance to begin all over again. Thou hast heard my prayer of confession. Now I claim Thy promise to forgive me and to cleanse me. From this moment I accept that forgiveness and that cleansing by faith, because I believe that Thy promise is the "word of a Gentleman of the most strict and sacred honor." And now I ask for Thy spirit to come into me like cool fresh air to revitalize me, to shock me into a new discipleship, to invigorate me for a new life in Christ Jesus, my Lord. Amen.

For Humility on the Mountaintop of Life

Lord, forgive me that when life's circumstances lift me to the crest of the wave, I tend to forget Thee. Yet, like an errant child, I have blamed Thee with my every failure, even as I credit myself with every success. When my fears evaporate like the morning mist, then vainly I imagine that I am sufficient unto myself, that material resources and human resources are enough. I need Thee when the sun shines, lest I forget the storm and the dark. I need Thee when I am popular, when my friends and those who work beside me approve and compliment me. I need Thee more than, lest my head begin to swell. O God, forgive me for my stupidity, my blindness in success, my lack of trust in Thee. Be Thou now my Saviour in success. Save me from conceit. Save me from pettiness. Save me from myself! And take this success, I pray, and use it for Thy glory. In Thy strength, I pray. Amen.

The Quietness of Prayer

Father, I ask Thee to take from me now all that does harass and annoy, all that has laid upon my heart burdens of anxiety and care. I thank Thee for the stillness of this time of prayer – this oasis in my busy day when I can relax before Thee, lay my burdens down, and hand over to Thee all my anxieties. At this moment, I open my heart to receive Thy blessing, knowing that in Thy presence the furrows are being smoothed from my brow, the lines from my face, the load from my heart, the doubts from my mind, the fears from my soul, that I am at peace. And now, I thank Thee, not only for quietness without, but for Thy quietness at the heart of the universe and for quietness within. In Thy peace, I pray. Amen.

For More Love

Father, as I draw near to Thee in prayer, I am aware of the poverty of my love for Thee. I have often given my heart to unworthy causes. I have loved money and sought my security in it. I have loved comfort and ease. I have loved power and influence over others. How strange it is that of all the things we humans love, our Lord, who is love and goodness and grace, should Himself receive so little love. Yet I cannot manufacture the love I should bear Thee, even as I have not manufactured the love I feel for others. Thou art the giver of love. Except thou bestow it, I cannot have it. And so, my Father, wilt Thou give me the gift of love? Then I shall love Thee, and loving Thee, shall love other men – and compassion shall rise within me, warm and sweet. But I ask not merely to love those easy to love. Help me to love those who are hard to live with. Give me a concern for the needs of others, not on the basis of barter or exchange – not love given for love received – but love given to the unlovely for Christ's sake. Then shall my love partake of Thine, who dares to own me still. In the name of Him who is the King of Love. Amen.

To Change the Spiritual Climate of the World

Our Father, I think of all the pain and heartache, the tears and sorrow, the greed and cruelty unloosed around the world. Help me to be an instrument of Thine to alleviate the pain, by this day: returning good for evil, returning soft answers for sharp criticisms, being polite when I receive rudeness, being understanding when I am confronted by ignorance and stupidity. So may I, in gentleness and love, check the hasty answer, choke back the unkind retort, and thus short-circuit some of the bitterness and unkindness that has overflowed Thy world. I ask this in the name of Jesus, who alone can give me the grace so to act. Amen.

Evening Prayer

Lord Jesus, we come to Thee for an evening blessing, to seal within our hearts the inspirations and memories of this day. We ask Thee for the blessing of quietness for every troubled heart, rest for every weary soul, new faith and courage for all who have faced exhausting tasks this day. We would rest now in Thee and find in this evening hour Thy stillness and Thy peace to bring us into quiet harmony with Thy will. We give Thee thanks for every challenge that this day has brought, every new vision of God that winged its way across our skies, every whisper of God that we have sensed in the beauty of Thy world, every thought of God that came in quiet moments, every need of Thee that brought us back again to Thee in prayer. And now, our Father, grant us Thy benediction. Watch over us through the hours of darkness. Refresh us in spirit as well as in body as we sleep. Help us to face the tasks of tomorrow with steady faith and without fear, conscious of Thy presence and Thy guidance, knowing that we are Thine, as we have placed all our trust in Thee. We know that Thou art still able to keep that which we have committed to Thee. And now may the love of God the Father, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit rest upon us all and abide with us now and forevermore. Amen.

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For the President of the United States

We pray, Lord Jesus, for our President. We are deeply concerned that he may know the will of God, and that he may have the spiritual courage and grace to follow it. Deliver him, we pray, from all selfish considerations. Lift him above the claims of politics. Fill him with the Spirit of God that shall make him fearless to seek, to know, to do the right. Save him from friends who, in the name of politics or even friendship, would persuade him from that holy path. Strengthen and empower his advisers. Bring them, too, to their knees in prayer. May their example and their influence spread, that we, in these United States, may yet have a government of men who know Thee, the Almighty God, as their Friend, and who place Thy will first in their lives as well as in their prayers. Hear and answer, we pray Thee, forgiving us all our unworthiness, cleansing us from every ignoble thought and unworthy ambition that we may be renewed in spirit and mind and heart, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Before a National Election

Lord Jesus, we ask Thee to guide the people of this nation as they exercise their dearly bought privilege of franchise. May it neither be ignored unthinkingly nor undertaken lightly. As citizens all over this land go to the ballot boxes, give to them a sense of high privilege and joyous responsibility. Help those who are about to be elected to public office to come to understand the real source of their mandate – a mandate given by no party machine, received at no polling booth, but given by God; a mandate to govern wisely and well; a mandate to represent God and truth at the heart of the nation; a mandate to do good in the name of Him under whom this Republic was established. We ask Thee to lead America in the paths where Thou wouldst have her walk, to do the tasks which Thou hast laid before her. So may we together seek happiness for all our citizens in the name of Him who created us all equal in His sight, and therefore brothers. Amen.

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For a Renaissance of Faith

Our Father, remove from us the sophistication of our age and the skepticism that has come, like frost, to blight our faith and to make it weak. Bring us back to a faith that makes men great and strong, a faith that enables us to love and to live, the faith by which we are triumphant, the faith by which alone we can walk with Thee. We pray for a return of that simple faith, that old-fashioned trust in God, that made strong and great the homes of our ancestors who built this good land and who in building left us our heritage. In the strong name of Jesus, our Lord, we make this prayer. Amen.

Monday, June 9th, 1947

Forgive us, O God, that we are so anxious in all we say and do, to have the approval of men, forgetting that it is Thy approval that brings us peace of mind and clear conscience. Make us aware of the record Thou art writing – the record that one day will be read by the Judge of all the universe. We need to remember that there is no party in integrity, no politics in goodness. We pray for Thy grace and Thy help to do better and to be better. Through Jesus Christ. Amen.

Wednesday, June 9th, 1948

O God, the light of those who seek Thee, grant to our minds that illumination without which we walk in darkness and know not whither we go. Remember those who feel no need of Thee, who seem content with a careless unexamined life, whose hearts are unvisited by desires of better things. Leave them not to themselves, lest they go down to destruction. Remember us, O Lord, who do not always remember Thee, and help us to accomplish our tasks without tension or strain, that we may do good work and merit Thy blessing. For Jesus' sake. Amen.