

Small Group Guide TWO SIMPLE WORDS

The Church at Brook Hills

Dr. David Platt

January 22, 2012

Matthew 4:12–25

This guide is a tool to help you lead your group into spiritual transformation. Use it as a resource to train your group into potential disciple-makers and lead your group in discovering, owning, and applying the truths of God's Word. There may be aspects you do not want to use and there may be instances where you just want to focus on a particular point or truth. Some questions may bring out emotions and cause people to dwell on an aspect of their relationship with God. Your role is to help facilitate this encounter with God in His Word with His Body, not just to complete the guide. Use this as a flexible teaching tool not a rigid group task list.

Relate . . .

Begin your group time by engaging in relational conversations and prayer that may include the following elements:

Welcome—a simple, brief time to greet one another (especially new friends), enjoy refreshments, and make announcements.

Review—a time to review the truths discussed last week and report on how members have had success or frustrations in applying those truths during the week. (The leader will want to provide encouragement and shepherding during this time.) Periodically, the leader will also want to review the gospel and allow members to share reports about opportunities they've had to share the gospel. Occasionally, the leader will want to review the vision for the group and discuss ways to accomplish that vision better.

Prayer—a time of general prayer with the whole group praying for struggles regarding the application of truths, for those with whom the group is sharing the gospel, and for understanding of today's truths.

Reflect . . .

Use the following summary and questions to review this week's message and reflect on its implications for our lives. (As a training tool, leaders might want to have various members summarize the teachings in their own words each week sharing how they think the Scripture applied to the original hearers and how the principles apply to us today.)

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ME...

- Matthew 1:
 - Jesus is the Savior, the Messiah, the son of David, and the son of Abraham.
 - He is fully human and fully divine.
- Matthew 2:
 - Jesus is the Sovereign over the wise and the Shepherd of the weak.
 - He inaugurates the new exodus, ends the mournful exile, and loves His fiercest enemies.
- Matthew 3:
 - He is the Savior King and the Righteous Judge.
 - He is filled with the Spirit and loved by the Father.
- Matthew 4:
 - He is the new Adam and the true Israel.

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- He is the light of the world and the hope for all people.
- Conclusion:
 - Jesus is worthy of far more than church attendance and casual association.
 - He is worthy of total abandonment and supreme adoration.

FOLLOW...

- To live with radical abandonment for His glory.
 - We leave behind all things...
 - Our comfort.
 - Our careers.
 - Our possessions.
 - Our position.
 - Our families.
 - Our friends.
 - Our safety.
 - Our sin.
 - Ourselves.
 - We live for one thing...
 - To honor the King.
- To live with joyful dependence on His grace.
 - He takes the initiative to choose us.
 - He provides the power to use us.
 - He gets the glory through us.
- To live with faithful adherence to His person.
 - We are not casual listeners.
 - We are not convinced listeners.
 - We are committed learners and followers.
- To live with total trust in His authority.
 - He is the Master of every domain in our lives.
 - He is the Lord of every detail in our lives.
- To live with urgent obedience to His mission.
 - Every follower of Jesus is a fisher of men.
 - Every disciple is a disciple-maker.
 - This is an unconventional plan that demands a universal response.

WILL YOU FOLLOW JESUS?

- Consider the cost of discipleship.
- Consider the cost of non-discipleship.
 - For our lives.
 - For our community.
 - For the world.

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Message Summary

Dr. Platt began by reviewing the first four chapters of the Gospel of Matthew. In these chapters, Matthew paints a portrait of who Jesus is. This is central to Jesus' call in Matthew 4:19: "Follow me." We need to know the Me who is doing the calling. Jesus is Messiah, Immanuel (God/man), Sovereign, Shepherd, Savior, Judge, the new Adam, the true Israel, the Light of the world, and the hope for all people (and more).

In light of Jesus' identity, we are called to follow Him with radical abandonment. He is worth more to us than all else. We renounce self and live for one thing: to honor the King. We live by joyful dependence on His grace and with faithful adherence to His person. Our lives are characterized by total trust in His authority and urgent obedience to His mission, which is making disciples together with our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Will you follow Jesus? Will you count the cost of discipleship? Non-discipleship?

Group Discussion

Use the following questions to help review the application of God's Word to our Head (What does God want me to know?), to our Heart (What does God want me to desire/value?), and to our Hands (What does God want me to do?).

- Review the Gospel of Matthew, chapters 1–4. What have we learned about Jesus so far? Who is He? If we have met Jesus, why is mere attendance at corporate worship or casual association not an option to be called a Christ-follower?
- Read Matthew 4:12–16 and Isaiah 9:1–2. How has Jesus brought light to your darkness? How can you join Jesus in bringing that light to others?
- Read Matthew 4:18–22 and Luke 5:1–11. How did the disciples react to Jesus' call? What did they leave behind? How long did their response take? What was Peter's reaction when he realized Jesus' identity? Why do you think these four men reacted the way they did?
- Read Matthew 4:17 and 19. What does it mean to follow Jesus? How are abandonment and repentance related? What do followers of Jesus turn from? And where do they turn to?
- Do you think the process of leaving behind all things for Christ is immediate or gradual or both? What are the ramifications for you as a disciple and for those you are discipling?
- The Bible is clear that we must forsake our sin, for instance. But what does discipleship mean for our possessions, families, and careers? Are all disciples called to give away everything, leave their families, and become career ministers? How can we know how to handle those things/relationships we retain? How does Christ change our attitude, outlook, priorities, and goals?
- What do you think is the most difficult thing to lay down in order to follow Christ? What is ours now and in eternity when we live for the King's honor? Will our gain be greater than any loss? How can this truth radically alter our lives?
- Who took the initiative in calling Peter, Andrew, James, and John? Does this match the Old Testament pattern of God's dealing with Israel? Why is this truth important?
- Read John 15:16 and Ephesians 1:3–6. Who calls and empowers us for kingdom service? How can that truth encourage us and eliminate worry about our qualifications to disciple others? What is God's goal in calling and equipping us? Who gets the glory?
- What are the differences between being a casual listener, a convinced listener, and a committed follower? What can change a nominal Christian into a true disciple?
- Read Matthew 4:22–25. What is the mission of God? What are some different aspects to that mission? Why is it urgent? What is every disciple's role in that mission? Do you think it is significant that Jesus' first and last interactions with His disciples in Matthew focus on disciple-making? Why?
- What are the costs of discipleship? What are the benefits? What are the costs of non-discipleship?
- Is there an area of your life in which you are not following Jesus? How is this affecting you, your community, and the world? How can you be following Jesus in this area this week?
- The disciples followed Jesus into the world as He made disciples and made them into disciple-makers. How can your small group do likewise?

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Respond . . .

Encourage your group to break out into smaller, same-gender groups where they will respond to the truths of today's study. These groups will share with one another based on the following questions and then close in prayer:

- What are some of the main truths that God wants you to know from this study?
- How do your thoughts need to adjust to align with these truths?
- According to the truths from this study, what does God want you to desire/value?
- How do your values need to change to align with His values?
- What actions does God want you to take according to the truths of this study?
- What is an action that you can start to implement today or tomorrow?
- What is going to be the most difficult aspect of this study to personally apply?

Close this time by praying for each other, specifically for strength to apply these truths, for personal needs, for the lost people with whom you are seeking to share the gospel, and for our weekly prayer focus as a church.

Weekly Prayer Focus ...

- **Lives and Church:** *This Sunday we will dive into the beginning of Jesus' ministry in Galilee. The central message behind Jesus' ministry is revealed: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Then we see the central method behind which Jesus planned to spread this message to all nations. That method is disclosed when Jesus begins to call the first disciples with two simple but dynamic words, "Follow me." Here we have the first indication from Jesus as to how to make disciples. We close this section with a summary account of Jesus' powerful ministry and His growing popularity. Pray that God would call more people from among us to truly follow Jesus. Pray that God would not allow our church to have any central message apart from "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Pray that God would open our eyes to behold the wonder of Christ in the Gospel of Matthew.*
- **Local:** *This week we are praying for racial reconciliation and unity in the body of Christ in Birmingham for the sake of the advancement of the gospel. We are also praying for Brook Hills Hispanic Church, Eduardo Torres, pastor.*
- **Global:** *This week we are praying for our short-term teams serving in the Middle East and Southeast Asia. We are also praying for Brook Hill's partner, Global Frontier Mission, serving among unreached peoples in Atlanta, Georgia, and Houston, Texas.*