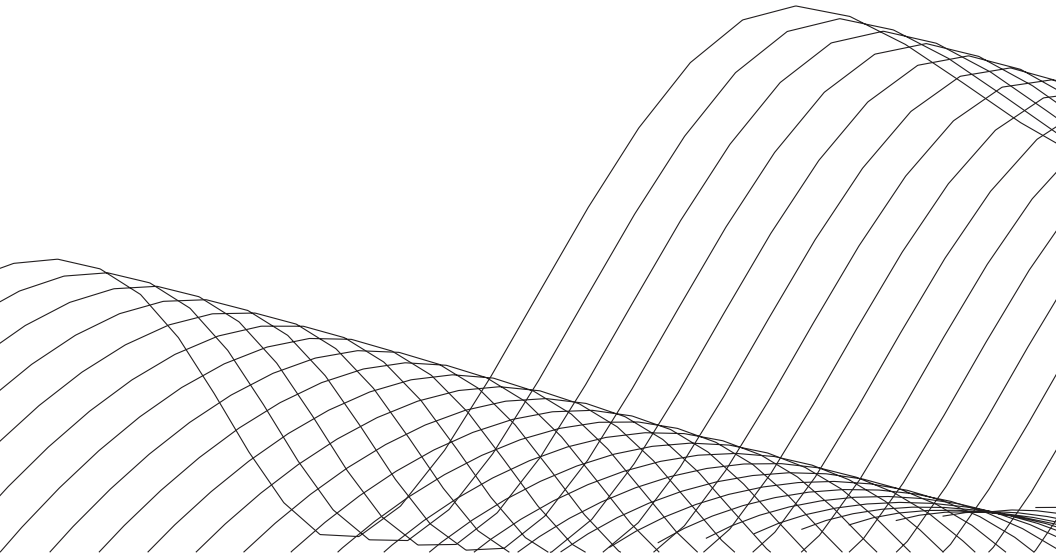


7 WEEKS

# M O D G N I K K I N G D O M



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# MORE IS LESS

# MORE IS LESS

## SMALL GROUP STUDY

### Kicking it off:

What's something you wish you had more of?

### Big Idea:

In the Kingdom of God, more is less, and less is more.

### Key Scriptures:

#### Luke 12:13-34

*"Someone in the crowd said to him, 'Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.' Jesus replied, 'Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?' Then he said to them, 'Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions.' And he told them this parable: 'The ground of a certain rich man yielded an abundant harvest. He thought to himself, 'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.' Then he said, 'This is*

*what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store my surplus grain. And I'll say to myself, 'You have plenty of grain laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.'"*  
*"But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?' "This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich toward God."*  
*Then Jesus said to his disciples: "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear. For life is more than food, and the body more than clothes. Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds! Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life? Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the*

rest? Consider how the wild flowers grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you—you of little faith! And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it. For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them. But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well. Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will never fail, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

### **Matthew 6:10,33**

"...Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all of these things will be given to you as well."

### **Luke 12:29-34**

"And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it. For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them. But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well." "Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will never fail, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

### **Discussion:**

Our current culture advocates that more is more, but Jesus consistently taught and modeled that less is more. He taught that the way to become full is to empty yourself, lay down your pride, give up your rights, and your desire to control the outcomes. God doesn't want you to be dependent upon something temporary because His Kingdom is forever.

1. Read Luke 12:13-24. It's been said that money



makes you more of what you already are. If you're greedy without money, you will be greedier with money. If you are generous without money, you'll be more generous with money. And being generous is the most effective way for the world to see the marked difference Jesus has made in your life. The man in Jesus' parable invested much in his life on earth, but failed to invest in eternity. He had little time for the kingdom of God. Are there ways that you invest more in this life than you do for eternity? If so, how?

2. In what ways have you placed your identity in what the world has defined as "success?" When you achieve it, then what?
3. How does worrying impact your life and relationships? What would you need to do to stop trying to control your circumstances and hand them over to God completely?
4. Read Matthew 6:10,33 and Luke 12:29-34. God knows what you need in your life and promises to provide what you need. While the temporary things we pursue on earth come and go,

God's kingdom is forever and will not fade away. What kinds of temporary needs are on your heart? Technology, money, clothes or something else?

5. Jesus never invited us to be Christians; He invited us to be part of His Kingdom and to pursue it above all else. What would it look like to pursue God's kingdom more in your life?
6. If you're following Jesus, you're a citizen of the Kingdom of God, an ambassador in the world. So, how could you be "transformed" instead of "conformed" to this world?
7. Is there anything you're trying too hard to control?
8. Where do you want your heart to be?

### **Wrapping It Up:**

What is God saying to you through His Word? How and when will you respond?

### **Memory Verse:**

*"But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well." Matthew 6:33*

# OTHERS FIRST

## SMALL GROUP STUDY

### Kicking it off:

Describe a time when you were asked to do a demeaning or dirty job. How did you react?

### Big Idea:

In God's Kingdom, others come first.

### Key Scriptures:

#### John 13: 1-17

*"It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his*

*outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand." "No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me." "Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!" Jesus answered, "Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you." For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean. When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you*

*understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them."*

### **Discussion:**

On the night before His crucifixion, Jesus demonstrates a lesson in servitude. He shows us the heart He expects in those who follow Him: put others first. When we find our identity in Jesus—when we know we are His children and part of His family—we can serve others in any capacity. Greatness in Christ's eyes does not come from having many servants, but from being the servant of many. He gives us His Spirit to be able to go, serve and love.

1. Read John 13:1-9.

According to verses 1-3, Jesus knows He's going

to die soon. In light of that knowledge, what is remarkable about what He does next in vs. 4-5?

2. What task do you do now that is most like washing feet?
3. How and why do you think Peter reacts the way he does in vs. 6-8?
4. What spiritual truth do you think Jesus is trying to get across in vs. 8?
5. When do you have a hard time letting others do for you?
6. Where might pride be keeping you from acknowledging your need for Him?
7. Read John 13:10-17. Jesus wants His actions to sink in with the disciples. What action steps does He give them? What are the barriers that are keeping you from taking those same action steps (busyness, your title, waiting for the perfect opportunity)?
8. The job changes when you know who you're doing it for. How does your position as a child of God change your attitude toward serving?
9. Twice in these verses Jesus tells us to "do." What do



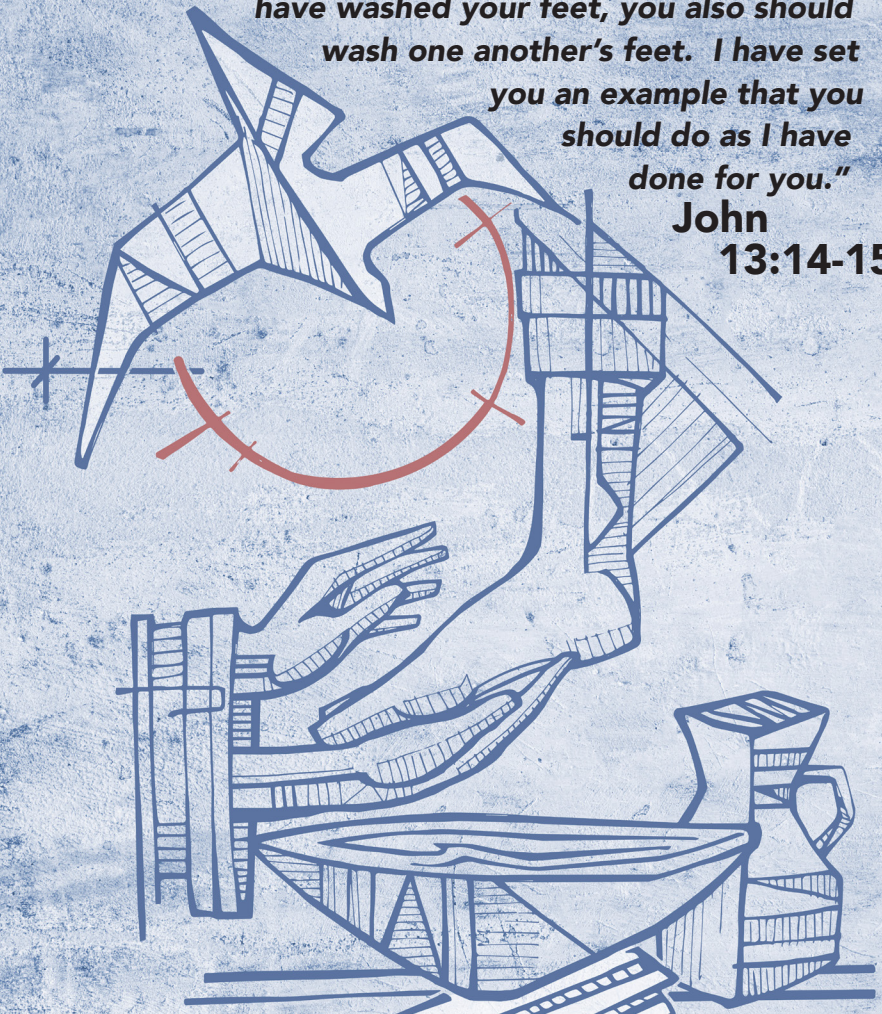
you think God is asking you to DO to die to yourself each day and follow the example He left us to serve and love others well?

### **Wrapping It Up:**

Each day this week pray, "Lord, how can I serve you today?" Then, watch for situations to present themselves. Share with the group next week what happens.

**MEMORY VERSE:** *"Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you."*

**John  
13:14-15**



# DESCEND INTO GREATNESS

## SMALL GROUP STUDY

### Kicking it off:

When you were a kid, what dreams of greatness did you have for your life?

### Big Idea:

God's idea of greatness is nothing like the world's idea of greatness.

### Key Scriptures:

#### John 1:29-30

*"The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! This is the one I meant when I said, 'A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.'"*

#### Matthew 11:2-6

*"When John, who was in prison, heard about the deeds of the Messiah, he sent his disciples to ask him, "Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone*

*else?" Jesus replied, "Go back and report to John what you hear and see: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor. Blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me."*

#### Matthew 11:7-11

*"As John's disciples were leaving, Jesus began to speak to the crowd about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed swayed by the wind? If not, what did you go out to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? No, those who wear fine clothes are in kings' palaces. Then what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is the one about whom it is written: "I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.' Truly I tell you, among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than*

*John the Baptist; yet whoever is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.*

### **John 3:30**

*"He must become greater; I must become less."*

#### **Discussion:**

God wants more for your life than you could ever imagine. His plan for you is greatness, but His idea of greatness is nothing like the world's. John the Baptist, the greatest to ever live according to Jesus, left us a perfect example of what it means to descend into greatness. His life had maximum impact, but it also came with maximum sacrifice.

1. Read John 1:29-30, and Matthew 11:2-6. John the Baptist spent his life following what he thought was God's plan for him. Yet Matthew 11:3 finds him doubting. What does John do with his doubts?
2. Describe a time when you questioned your purpose in life and it caused you to doubt. What did you do with your questions and doubts?
3. What do you think is significant about how Jesus responds to John's question

in Matthew 11:4-6?

4. Jesus quotes scriptures that John would have known were about predictions of the coming Messiah. This response gives John all the peace he needs. How can you let God's voice into your own life more?
5. Read Matthew 11:7-11. John's life didn't look like the world's definition of greatness and success (see Matt. 3:1-6 for a picture of him). On a scale of 1-10, how afraid are you of looking different from the world?
6. Where do you continue to strive upwardly when Jesus says greatness is achieved by descending?
7. Share some areas God may be calling you to stop buying into the world's views of greatness, success, or beauty.
8. Read John 3:30. John's life required maximum sacrifice, yet had maximum impact for the kingdom of God. Jesus even called him the greatest. How does that encourage you through your struggle, sacrifice, or an area you feel like you're 'losing'?
9. Where may you be trying to get by with as little sacrifice

as possible, yet still follow Jesus?

### **Wrapping It Up:**

Identify a way that you can intentionally “become less” this week.

### **Memory Verse:**

*“He must become greater; I must become less.”* John 3:30

# JOHN THE BAPTIST

John the Baptist was unique. His main objective was obedience. He knew he had a role to play in the world - to announce the coming of the Savior - and he put all his energies into this task.

## Vital statistics:

- Where: Judea
- Occupations: Prophet

## Strengths & accomplishments:

- The God-appointed messenger to announce the arrival of Jesus
- A preacher whose theme was repentance
- A fearless confronter who spoke with irresistible authority
- Known for his remarkable lifestyle
- Uncompromising

## Lessons from his life:

- God does not guarantee an easy or safe life to those who serve him.
- Doing what God desires is the greatest possible life investment
- Standing for the truth is more important than life itself



# GENEROSITY FLOWS

## SMALL GROUP STUDY

### Kicking it off:

Describe a time when you were on the receiving end of a very generous gift. Talk about your reaction or the impact that gift had on you.

### Big Idea:

In God's kingdom, generosity stands out.

### Key Scriptures:

#### 2 Corinthians 9:6-11

*"Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good*

*work. As it is written: "They have freely scattered their gifts to the poor; their righteousness endures forever." Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God."*

#### Psalm 24:1

*"The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it..."*

#### 1 Chronicles 29:14

*"But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand."*

#### Ecclesiastes 5:10-11

*"Whoever loves money never has enough; whoever loves*



*wealth is never satisfied with their income. This too is meaningless. As goods increase, so do those who consume them. And what benefit are they to the owners except to feast their eyes on them?"*

## **Malachi 3:8-10**

*"Will a mere mortal rob God? Yet you rob me." But you ask, 'How are we robbing you?' "In tithes and offerings. You are under a curse—your whole nation—because you are robbing me. Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the Lord Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it."*

### **Discussion:**

God wants us to be people in whom and through whom generosity flows like a river. In the earthly kingdom, stockpiling and security are the norm. But in God's kingdom, generosity stands out.

1. Read 2 Corinthians 9:6-11. Looking at verse 7, describe the type of giver God wants us to be. Why do you

think God cares about our attitude or the heart behind our giving?

2. How do you need to connect the grace you've experienced in your life to your heart's attitude in your giving?
3. According to verse 8, what are the personal benefits of giving?
4. What promise do we see in verses 10-11? How have you experienced God's faithfulness in your own life in this way, whether it be materially or spiritually?
5. Read Psalm 24:1 and 1 Chronicles 29:14. Twice in these verses, we see that everything belongs to God. Recount together about all the resources God has given you (money, people, our bodies, possessions).
6. Where might you be buying into the myth that these things are yours, instead of God's?
7. Read Ecclesiastes 5:10-11 and Malachi 3:8-10. Are you depending on money to make you happy or to bring meaning to your life?
8. In the Malachi verses, God tells His people they've been robbing (cheating) Him in tithes and offerings. Then

He issues a test in verse 10, the only time in the Bible God tells us to test Him. How might you respond to this invitation?

### **Wrapping It Up:**

This week, how can you begin to transition your thinking and start being a better manager of God's gifts to you?

### **Memory Verse:**

"The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it,  
the world, and all who live in it,"  
Psalm 24:1



# NOT TO US

# 2U OT TOM

## SMALL GROUP STUDY

### Kicking it off:

What "important" job would you like to have for a day?

### Big Idea:

Great people give their lives away.

### Key Scriptures:

#### 1 Samuel 18:5-9

*"Whatever mission Saul sent him on, David was so successful that Saul gave him a high rank in the army. This pleased all the troops, and Saul's officers as well. When the men were returning home after David had killed the Philistine, the women came out from all the towns of Israel to meet King Saul with singing and dancing, with joyful songs and with timbrels and lyres. As they danced, they sang: "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands." Saul was very angry; this refrain*

*displeased him greatly. "They have credited David with tens of thousands," he thought, "but me with only thousands. What more can he get but the kingdom?" And from that time on Saul kept a close eye on David."*

#### Mark 9:33-35

*"They came to Capernaum. When he was in the house, he asked them, "What were you arguing about on the road?" But they kept quiet because on the way they had argued about who was the greatest. Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, "Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last, and the servant of all."*

#### Mark 10:41-45

*"Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to him. "Teacher," they said, "we want you to do for us whatever we ask." "What do you want me to do for you?" he asked. They replied, "Let one of us sit at your right and the other*

at your left in your glory.”  
“You don’t know what you are asking,” Jesus said. “Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?” “We can,” they answered. Jesus said to them, “You will drink the cup I drink and be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with, but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared. When the ten heard about this, they became indignant with James and John. Jesus called them together and said, “You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

### **Psalm 115:1**

“Not to us, Lord, not to us but to your name be the glory, because of your love and faithfulness.”

### **Discussion:**

Great people give their lives away. The world clamors and claws for power, recognition, position, and title. Jesus says, “Not so with you.” You are to live with a different set of kingdom values. When we do this, we all get healthier; a healthier marriage, healthier kids, healthier work environment, a healthier team, a healthier church.

1. Read I Samuel 18:5-9  
Describe the mood or atmosphere of Israel after David kills Goliath in verses 5-7. Saul, however, is not celebrating. What reason does Saul give for his anger in verse 8?
2. In what ways do you identify with either David or Saul?
3. Read Mark 9:33-35 and 10:35-45. What similarities do you see in these two stories? How does Jesus flip the script of the world’s values ?
4. Do you ever find yourself in a similar place the disciples are in, constantly seeking to build your own platform instead of God’s kingdom?
5. In what ways are you making too much about yourself?
6. How can you celebrate

others even when they have what you want? How can you love God and love people this week?

7. Read Psalm 115:1 as a final tie-up and challenge for this week's message. In this verse, the psalmist, twice says "not to us, O Lord." When you receive applause or praise for something you excel in, is your main hope that you to receive glory or for God to receive glory? Ask for His help in this.

### **Wrapping It Up:**

This week, make a list of all the things you'll do and write out how you can reflect the image of God in those things, bringing glory to His name and not your own.

### **Memory Verse:**

*"Not to us,  
Lord, not  
to us but to  
your name  
be the glory,  
because  
of your  
love and  
faithfulness."*

Psalm

115:1



# INCLUSIVE

# INCLUSIVE

## SMALL GROUP STUDY

### Kicking it off:

Describe a time in your life when you weren't invited to something and the feelings you experienced as a result.

### Big Idea:

The kingdom of God is inclusive of everyone.

### Key Scriptures:

#### Matthew 9:9-13

"As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector's booth. "Follow me," he told him, and Matthew got up and followed him. While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house, many tax collectors and sinners came and ate with him and his disciples. When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" On hearing this, Jesus said, "It is not the healthy

who need a doctor, but the sick. But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

#### Matthew 6:10

"Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."

#### John 3:17

"For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him."

#### Ephesians 2:8-9

"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast."

#### Galatians 3:26-28

"So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

*There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."*

### **Discussion:**

There aren't degrees of sin. There's just sin. There aren't categories of people. There are just people. Jesus loves people and He is the only one who has the power to free us from our sin. The good news is that Jesus says, "Come as you are." The even better news is that Jesus refuses to leave us that way.

1. Read Matthew 9:9-13  
Describe the scene in verse 9 and what is significant about Jesus' calling of Matthew.
2. Compare Matthew's first step as a new disciple of Jesus (verse 10) with your own first step. Are there any people you abandoned or excluded based upon their lifestyle or reputation?
3. What strikes you about Jesus's heart of inclusion in these two verses?
4. What's so tragic about the question the Pharisees ask in verse 11?
5. Even though you may never

verbalize it, where might you be communicating through your actions, or even just thinking in your mind, that someone is not acceptable? How might you be categorizing people?

6. Jesus doesn't even give the disciples a chance to answer the Pharisees. He jumps in himself and answers them in verses 12-13. What about his response stands out to you?
7. Read Matthew 6:10, John 3:17, Ephesians 2:8-9, and Galatians 3:26-28. Jesus' invitation is for everyone. Have you accepted the invitation?
8. If so, how can you start extending it to others, inviting people in your life to meet Jesus?
9. We earn the right to speak any sort of truth into someone's life by leading with love. How can you better share the message of Jesus' love with others?

### **Wrapping It Up:**

How do you need to change your heart to lead with love and not judgment?

## Memory Verse:

*"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast."* Ephesians 2:8-9

# MATTHEW

More than any other disciple, Matthew had a clear idea of how much it would cost to follow Jesus, yet he did not hesitate a moment. When he left his tax collecting booth, he guaranteed himself unemployment. For several other disciples, there was always fishing to return to, but for Matthew, there was no turning back.

## Vital Statistics

- Where: Capernaum
- Occupations: Tax Collector, disciple of Jesus

## Strengths & accomplishments:

- Was one of Jesus' 12 disciples
- Responded immediately to Jesus' call
- Invited many friends to his home to meet Jesus
- Compiled the Gospel of Matthew
- Clarified for his Jewish audience Jesus' fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies

## Lessons from his life:

- Jesus consistently accepted people from every level of society
- Matthew was given a new life, and his God-given skills of record-keeping and attention to detail were given new purpose
- Having been accepted by Jesus, Matthew immediately tried to bring others into contact with Jesus.

# KING ON A CROSS

## SMALL GROUP STUDY

### Kicking it off:

What's the biggest sacrifice you've made on someone else's behalf?

### Big Idea:

Jesus was willing to be a suffering King; a King on a cross.

### Key Scriptures:

#### John 12:32-33

*"And when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw everyone to myself." He said this to indicate how he was going to die.*

#### Psalms 22:1, 7-8, 16-18

*"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, so far from my cries of anguish?... All who see me mock me; they hurl insults, shaking their heads.*

*"He trusts in the LORD," they say, "let the LORD rescue him... Dogs surround me, a pack*

*of villains encircles me; they pierce my hands and my feet. All my bones are on display; people stare and gloat over me. They divide my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment."*

#### Matthew 16:21-23

*"From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life. Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. "Never, Lord!" he said. "This shall never happen to you!" Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns."*

#### Luke 9:51

*"As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven,*

Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem.”

## John 10:18

*“No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father.”*

## Isaiah 53:5-6

*“But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.*

## 1 John 3:16

*“This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters.”*

### **Discussion:**

The people of Jesus’ day were looking for the Kingdom of God to come. They were expectantly looking for a powerful king to free them from their oppression. They were longing for a political messiah,

a strong military conqueror who would come to squash Rome — but instead in this kingdom, we find a king on a cross.

Jesus announced to a group of hopeful followers who had those expectations: “And when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw everyone to myself.” He said this to indicate how he was going to die.” (John 12:32-33 NLT)

He was talking about a cross. He was talking about laying down His life, taking the punishment for the sins of the world. What kind of king does that? Our King.

1. Reflect on John 12:32-33. What is upside down here? What do you understand, and what doesn’t make sense?
2. Read Psalm 22:1, 7-8, 16-18. David wrote about Jesus’ crucifixion centuries before it occurred. In the Bible, there are over 300 detailed prophecies about the messiah, and Jesus fulfilled all of them. Think about if you were in Jesus’ shoes and you knew that you would experience rejection, torture, and death. In what ways would you be



tempted to choose another path?

3. Read Matthew 16:21-23. We aren't facing death, but many of us will face opposition or ridicule for our faith in Jesus. We will meet challenges from family and friends when we seek to follow Him by serving, tithing or attempting to use our gifts and talents for Him. Share a time you felt challenged or opposed regarding your walk of faith. How did you respond? What do you learn from how Jesus acted in the face of opposition?
4. Read Luke 9:51 and John 10:18 Jesus chose to move ahead and move toward Golgotha, a hill outside Jerusalem. Sometimes people will ask who murdered Jesus, or who was really responsible for this unjust act of violence. Or, how could something this unfair happen to a man this incredibly good? What do these passages reveal to you about the truth of the matter?
5. Read Isaiah 53:5-6. Discuss the juxtaposition of how Jesus' act of humility and sacrifice ultimately brought

us a King, a Kingdom, and freedom beyond what we can imagine.

6. Share one of the things you have found freedom in, as a follower of Jesus, that continues to amaze you every day.
7. Read 1 John 3:16. How might you follow Jesus' example of laying down your life for others?

### **Wrapping It Up:**

Jesus is a King like no other and we belong to a Kingdom like no other. Pray for one another to be able to follow and live out Jesus' upside down Kingdom.

### **Memory Verse:**

*"For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him."* John 3:17

# THE LORD'S PRAYER

This, then, is how you should pray:

“Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,

on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

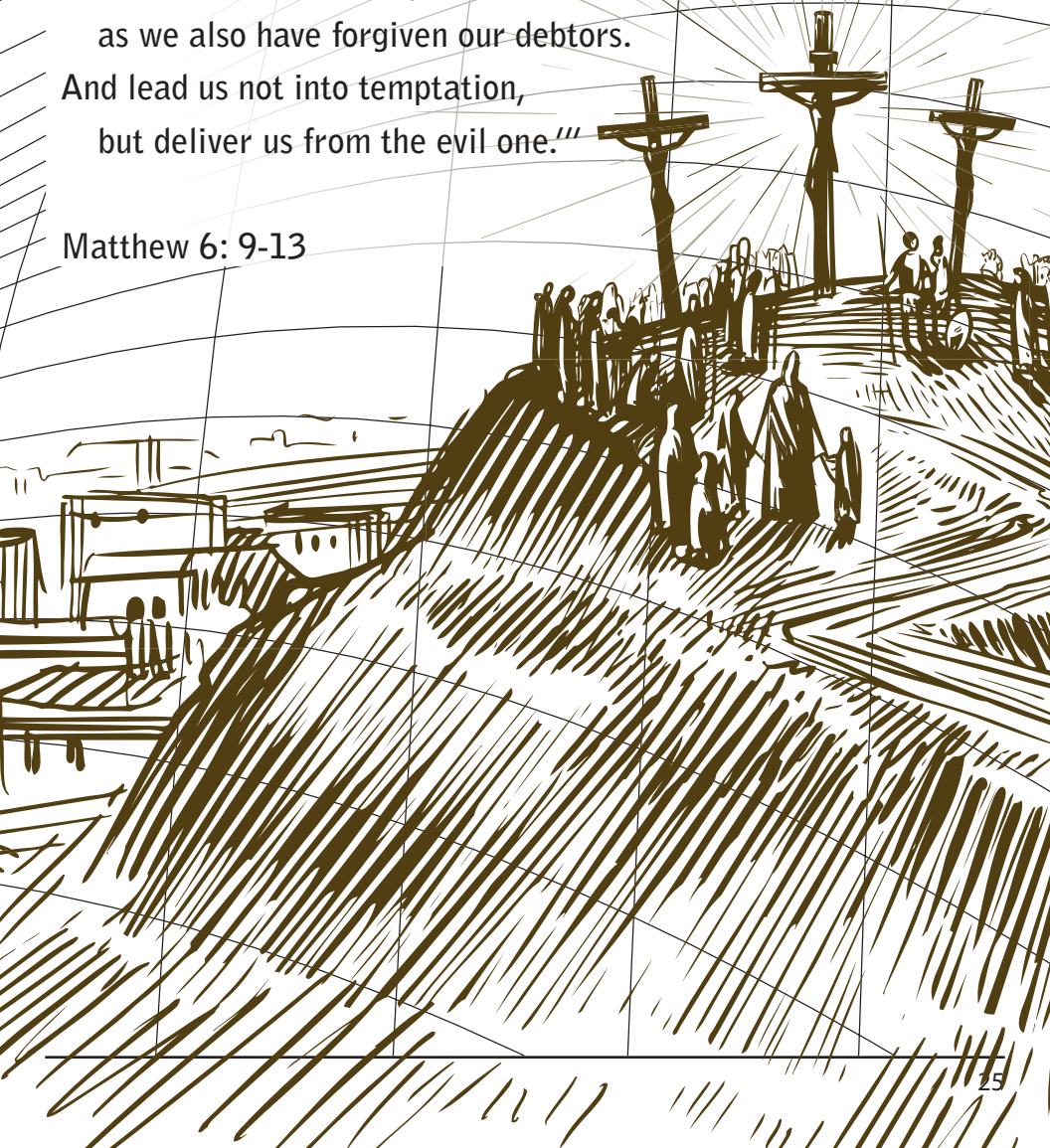
And forgive us our debts,

as we also have forgiven our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from the evil one.”

Matthew 6: 9-13



# Top 10 Tips for Leading a Small Group

1. Establish a welcoming, accepting, and safe environment.
  - Take time to prepare.
  - Make sure to give a warm enthusiastic greeting to each person.
  - Verbally communicate the environment that you hope to create.
  - Ephesians 4:1-3
2. On the opening night of your group you need to have some intentional discussions centered around these questions:
  - What is the purpose of our group?
  - What is the vision for our group?
  - What are your expectations?
  - What do you hope to gain from this group experience?
  - What are some things we value as a group?
  - What are some healthy guidelines we need to have in place?Review and sign a group agreement.
3. Be authentic. Spend time sharing your life stories in order to get to know each other on a deeper level.
4. Find a good balance between:
  - Truth and grace/Bible study and life
  - Encouraging and challenging one another
  - Giving and receiving feedback from each other
5. Ask good questions to stimulate good discussion. Use open ended questions and follow up questions.
6. Hang out together, do things socially, eat together and have fun together!
7. Develop a missional lifestyle, find a service project to do together in the community.
8. Raise up new leadership by rotating facilitation of the group.
9. Share the responsibilities in order to increase individual commitment and ownership of the group.
10. Pray for your group and for each other!

Find ways to celebrate what God is doing in your group! Who else could you invite to join you in order that their life may be impacted by what God is doing in your group?

# Group Agreement

## OUR PURPOSE

To transform our spiritual lives by cultivating our spiritual health in a healthy small group community. In addition, we: \_\_\_\_\_

## OUR VALUES

Group Attendance: To give priority to the group meeting. We will call or email if we will be late or absent.

Safe Environment: To help create a safe place where people can be heard and feel loved. (Please, no quick answers, snap judgments, or simple fixes.)

Respect Differences: To be gentle and gracious to people with different spiritual maturity, personal opinions, temperaments, or imperfections. We are all works in progress.

Confidentiality: To keep anything that is shared strictly confidential and within the group, and to avoid sharing improper information about those outside the group.

Encouragement for Growth: To be not just takers but givers of life. We want to spiritually multiply our life by serving others with our God-given gifts.

Welcome for Newcomers: To keep an open chair and share Jesus' dream of finding a shepherd for every sheep.

Shared Ownership: To remember that every member is a minister and to ensure that each attender will share a small team role or responsibility over time.

Rotating Hosts/Leaders and Homes: To encourage different people to host the group in their homes, and to rotate the responsibility of facilitating each meeting.

## OUR EXPECTATIONS

- Refreshments/mealtimes \_\_\_\_\_
- Childcare \_\_\_\_\_
- When we will meet (day of week) \_\_\_\_\_
- Where we will meet (place) \_\_\_\_\_
- We will begin at (time) \_\_\_\_\_ and end at \_\_\_\_\_
- We will do our best to have some or all of us attend a worship service together.
- Our primary worship service time will be \_\_\_\_\_
- Date of this agreement \_\_\_\_\_
- Date we will review this agreement again \_\_\_\_\_
- Who (other than the leader) will review this agreement at the end of this study \_\_\_\_\_

M

"Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need." Matthew 6:33 NLT

O

"Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you."

John 13:14-15

D

"He must become greater; I must become less."

John 3:30

G

"The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it..." Psalm 24:1

N

"Not to us, Lord, not to us but to your name be the glory, because of your love and faithfulness."

Psalm 115:1

I

"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast." Ephesians 2:8-9

K

"For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him." John 3:17



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