



MEMORY VERSE

So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

ROMANS 10:17

SESSION 1

INTRODUCTION



What does it mean to be great? What does it mean to accomplish great things? The answers to these questions depend on your definition of great. If you were great in the eyes of the world, then you would be great in terms of money, power, possessions, and accomplishments. But, being great in God's eyes is a different thing. The path to greatness in God's Kingdom is found in the Great Commission to "go and make disciples." Let's be great as God sees things.



SHARE
YOUR
STORY



Each of us has a story. The events of our life—good, bad, wonderful or challenging— have shaped who we are. God knows your story, and He intends to redeem it—to use every struggle and every joy to ultimately bring you to Himself. When we share our stories with others, we give them the opportunity to see God at work.

When we share our stories, we also realize we are not alone—that we have common experiences and thoughts, and that others can understand what we are going through. Your story can encourage someone else, and telling it can lead to a path of freedom for you and for those you share it with.

Open your group with prayer. This should be a brief, simple prayer, in which you invite God to give you insight as you study. You can pray for specific requests at the end of the meeting, or stop momentarily to pray if a particular situation comes up during your discussion.

Before you start this first meeting, get contact information for every participant. Take time to pass around a copy of the Small Group Roster on page 119, a sheet of paper, or pass around your Study Guide, opened to the **Small Group Roster**. Ask someone to make copies or type up a list with everyone’s information, and email it to the group during the week.

Then, begin your time together by using the following questions and activities to get people talking.

- **Finish this sentence:** I spend most of my time _____.
- **Finish this sentence:** I spend most of my money on _____.

- Whether your group is new or ongoing, it's always important to reflect on and review your values together. On page 104 is a Small Group Agreement with the values we've found most useful in sustaining healthy, balanced groups. We recommend that you choose one or two values—ones you haven't previously focused on or have room to grow in—to emphasize during this study. Choose ones that will take your group to the next stage of intimacy and spiritual health.
- If your group is new, welcome newcomers. Introduce everyone—you may even want to have name tags for your first meeting.
- We recommend you rotate host homes on a regular basis and let the hosts lead the meeting. Studies show that healthy groups rotate leadership. This helps to develop every member's ability to shepherd a few people in a safe environment. Even Jesus gave others the opportunity to serve alongside Him (Mark 6:30-44). Look at the FAQs in the Appendices for additional information about hosting or leading the group.
- The Small Group Calendar on page 106 is a tool for planning who will host and lead each meeting. Take a few minutes to plan hosts and leaders for your remaining meetings. Don't skip this important step! It will revolutionize your group. If anyone is hesitant, simply tell them to think about it, and you'll get back to them.




HEAR GOD'S STORY

READ MATTHEW 9:35-38.

And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction. ³⁶ When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. ³⁷ Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; ³⁸ therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.”

- Why did Jesus have compassion on the crowd?
- What did Jesus mean by “the harvest is plentiful?”
- How does the lack of laborers affect the harvest?
- Describe the “harvest field” around you in your neighborhood or workplace?



STUDY NOTES

harassed and helpless, verse 36,

Also translated “confused and aimless”

proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction, verse 35, Jesus’ approach to winning people to His Kingdom was through meeting their practical needs and showing compassion not by condemning them.

The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few, verse 37.

Jesus saw the great need and the great potential of turning people who were far from God toward God. The only thing missing were believers who were willing to do His work and share His gospel.

CREATE
**A NEW
STORY**



God wants you to be part of His kingdom—to weave your story into His. That will mean change—to go His way rather than your own. This won't happen overnight, but it should happen steadily. By starting with small, simple choices, we begin to change our direction. The Holy Spirit helps us along the way—giving us gifts to serve the body, offering us insights into scripture, and challenging us to love not only those around us but those far from God.

In this section, talk about how you will apply the wisdom you've learned from the teaching and Bible study. Then think about practical steps you can take in the coming week to live out what you've learned.

- What are non-Christians' attitudes toward the church and the gospel?
- Does anything intimidate you about sharing the gospel with others? Why or why not?
- In the video, Roger said, "Jesus saw in them what they didn't see in themselves or in one another. And I believe Jesus sees in you those very same qualities and gifts." What do you believe Jesus sees in you?
- In the video, Roger asked, "Do you count yourself as numbered as a worker into the harvest field?" What is your response? Why or why not?

CIRCLES OF LIFE

Take a look at the Circles of Life diagram below and write the names of two or three people you know who need to know Christ. Commit to praying for God's guidance and an opportunity to share with each of them. Perhaps they would be open to joining the group? Share your lists with the group so you can all be praying for the people you've identified.

FAMILY
IMMEDIATE OR EXTENDED

FAMILIAR
NEIGHBORS, KIDS' SPORTS
TEAMS, SCHOOL, ETC.

FRIENDS

FUN
GYM, HOBBIES, HANGOUTS

FIRM
WORK

- Also consider someone—in this group or outside it—that you can begin going deeper with in an intentional way. This might be your mom or dad, a cousin, an aunt or uncle, a roommate, a college buddy, or a neighbor. Choose someone who might be open to “doing life” with you at a deeper level and pray about that opportunity.
- This week, how will you interact with the Bible? Can you commit to spending time in daily prayer or study of God’s Word (use the Daily Devotions section to guide you)? Tell the group how you plan to follow Jesus this week, and then, at your next meeting, talk about your progress and challenges.
- Commit together to taking a risk and going deeper in your group and in your relationships with each other.
- Ask, “How can we pray for you this week?” Invite everyone to share, but don’t force the issue. Be sure to write prayer requests on your Prayer and Praise Report on page 119.

Close your meeting with prayer.





FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY ▶▶▶

If you feel God nudging you to go deeper, take some time before the next meeting to dig into His Word. Explore the Bible passages related to this session's theme on your own and jot your reflections in a journal or in this study guide. A great way to gain insight on a passage is to read it in several different translations. You may want to use a Bible app or website to compare translations.

▶ **READ REVELATION 20:11-15.**

- What will people be judged by according to this passage?
- When you think about people you know, how do you think they'll fair on this judgment day in Revelation 20?
- What concern do you have regarding the Day of Judgment?

▶ **READ ROMANS 3:23, 6:23, 5:8, 6:5, 10:9-10.**

- How would you explain to someone the consequences of sin?
- How would you share the hope they can find in Christ? How is the hope in Christ better than what they are currently experiencing?
- If someone was ready to receive Christ, how would you guide them?



DAILY DEVOTIONS

DAY 1

READ JOHN 3:17.

For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

Respond: Who do you think negatively about? How could your thoughts toward them affect your ability to win them to Christ?

DAY 2

READ ROMANS 3:23.

for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

Respond: How have you fallen short? What do you need to repent?

DAY 3

READ ROMANS 5:8.

but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Respond: Take a moment to reflect on God's love for you.

DAY 4

READ ROMANS 6:5.

For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.

Respond: How does the thought of resurrection impact how you live?

DAY 5

READ ROMANS 10:17.

So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

Respond: Who do you know who needs to hear the gospel? Take a moment to pray for them right now.

DAY 6

Reflect on the verses from this past week, and use the following space to write any thoughts God has put in your heart and mind about the things we have looked at in this session and during your Daily Devotions time this week.