



Sermon-Based Study Guide

May 15, 2016
"GATHER"

CONNECT

1. As you continue in your life together as a group and in the building of connections with one another, begin your group time by telling something about your life story; answering one of the following questions:

- ~When was the first time you became aware of God's desire to connect with you?
- ~Tell a little about the time you decided to follow Christ. What motivated you to make the decision?

ENGAGE

Every small group is made up of persons who are less than perfect. Not one of us has it all together. Our lives have been punctuated by things we're not proud of - disappointments, bad attitudes, and imperfections that sometimes make us feel unworthy of God's love. However, Jesus invites us to join together in connecting with him, even with all of our imperfections. In fact, the more aware we are of who we really are, the more Jesus is able to connect with us. He's out to bring lasting change in our lives - to remove the sin and to offer us forgiveness and grace. But we need to draw close.

Take Matthew, for example. He was a Jew, but his own people despised him. As a tax collector for the Romans, he had sold out to the Jew's enemies and was making money at his countrymen's expense. Matthew knew he wasn't good enough for Jesus. "Religious people" would have been appalled to even see Jesus with someone like him. Yet Jesus came to him and said, "Follow me." That day Matthew's life changed forever.

Read Luke 15:1-2

Read Matthew 9:9-13

1. How would Matthew's life have changed when he decided to follow Jesus?
2. The passage doesn't say why Matthew jumped at the chance to be with Jesus. What reason might Matthew have had?
3. Like Matthew, how did you feel when Jesus invited you to be connected with him?
4. What might it have been about Jesus that caused Matthew to invite his "sinner" friends to meet this man?
5. What did Jesus mean when he said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick"?

6. Often we believe that Jesus accepts us because of our "sacrifices" (the things we offer him, such as doing good deeds or going to church). But what does Jesus say about sacrifices? What does he really desire and why?

APPLY

1. Matthew was so excited about Jesus that he invited his friends to meet him. You probably know someone who would benefit greatly by being invited to join Redeemer or your journey group. Pull an 'Empty Chair' into the circle of your group. Who could you invite to come to your group or to come to church? Who could that person be? Take a moment now to prayerfully list one or two names, and then then share the names with your group.

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