**Live in Community**

 Small Group Study

**Volume Overview**

**Get Going**

[Jesus] said, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you.” ([John 20:21](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Jn20.21))

*The gift of the Holy Spirit was sent so that we might have power—power to go and make disciples. Some go to the farthest corners of the globe. Some only cross the street in front of their house. Still, God’s people always go. They go to work, school, grocery stores, kids’ soccer games, and family reunions. And wherever they go, they take their witness of Jesus with them. True believers live going and carrying out His mission.*

**Session Overview**

**Share the News**

**Biblical Encounter:** Matthew Follows Jesus ([Matthew 9:9–13](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mt9.9-13))

**Outcome:** Serve Jesus’ mission by sharing His good news with those who need to hear.

*In this session, we will look at how Matthew the tax collector immediately followed Jesus when Jesus called him. This calling resulted in Matthew inviting his friends to meet Jesus. This should always the case: Following Jesus must result in sharing Jesus. We must get going by inviting the people we know to meet the Jesus we know!*

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| *First time leading* Live *for Adults? Check out the* [Facilitator Guide](https://0b769b0ed3569ef9d18b-f88d8272f61086866d50d048b43ef630.ssl.cf2.rackcdn.com/sites/biblengagementproject/Listen_Facilitator_Guide.pdf). |

To access session content and videos from a computer, visit: [BibleEngagementProject.com/downloads](https://bibleengagementproject.com/downloads)

**Engage**

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| **QUESTION**What is something great you’ve experienced that you were excited to tell others about? |

We share what is rare. We share what is powerful. We share what is beautiful. For example, many of us drive around in cars every single day. But do you ever blurt out excitedly, “Wow! Look at that old junker. What a great car!” Probably not. Instead, people sing praises and turn heads to look at valuable and rarely seen cars like a Tesla, Mercedes, or Lamborghini, to name a few. Similarly we talk willingly about football scores. We share joyfully about movies that made us laugh or cry. In all these instances, we’re like evangelists, sharing good news about something we love and appreciate.

The preface to sharing news of any kind is for something—or Someone—to capture our attention and our heart. That seems to be what happened to Matthew, one of Jesus’ disciples. Matthew experienced the gift of Jesus’ willingness to connect with people the rest of the religious world would avoid or cast aside. This inspired Matthew to tell people what he knew about the Jesus he had met. He wanted to see Jesus change their lives too.

**Watch**

As we watch this video, think about your answer to these questions: What’s a simple way you can share the good news of Jesus? Who is someone in your life who needs to hear it?



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**Consider What the Bible Says**

Matthew was a Jew, but his job was to gather taxes for the Roman government. This meant that Matthew took money from his own people in Israel, then gave it to another nation who ruled them. In those days, many tax collectors took even more money than the government required, so they could keep extra for themselves.

With a job like that, many viewed him as a sellout and a cheat. While Matthew’s wallet might have grown, his standing in the town would have shrunk. Matthew was not accepted by many in his own country. He gained worldly success with his job, but he lost something important. That is until he met Jesus.

**Did You Know?**

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| In New Testament-era Israel, a person who taught disciples was called a *rabbi*. Having disciples was considered no small feat due to the sacrifice disciples were required to make. Ancient Jewish literature tells us that rabbis would often only work half a day in order to spend the remainder of the day pouring into their followers. This often resulted in a life of poverty due to their love of teaching God’s Word to others. Their disciples often followed this same pattern of foregoing a significant portion of their potential wages in order to study under their teacher. |

**Matthew Responds to Jesus**

Read [Matthew 9:9](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mt9.9).

Jesus’ shocking invitation is matched by Matthew’s shocking reaction. He immediately left his job to follow Jesus! It makes one wonder, *why?* It’s possible that Matthew had heard about Jesus before this moment. While that’s uncertain, we know from the passage that Jesus took a step in Matthew’s direction. He literally showed up at Matthew’s work during a time where people were more likely to avoid tax collectors than approach them. This reveals the great length Jesus would go to reach people. This idea will come up again by the end of today’s Bible passage.

The Matthew in this story is also the author of the Gospel bearing his name. He could have cleaned up his story if he wanted. Matthew could have omitted his profession, or the less-than-reputable friends he mentioned later. But he didn’t. One has to wonder if Jesus’ acceptance of Matthew in spite of his situation inspired Matthew to lay bare his honest story as a testimony of the character of Jesus.

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| **QUESTION**Why do you think Matthew responded to Jesus so quickly? |

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| **QUESTION**If you had been Matthew’s friend, what would you have thought about what Matthew did that day? |

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| **QUESTION**Are you more likely to candidly share or censor your testimony? Why? |

**Matthew Invites His Friends to Meet Jesus**

Read [Matthew 9:10](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mt9.10).

Matthew didn’t waste any time sharing about Jesus. Matthew invited Jesus and His disciples over for dinner so Jesus could meet his friends. Matthew knew Jesus was different from his usual crowd. Some of his friends were tax collectors, and some were likely greedy. Jesus was unselfish. Other friends were sinners. Jesus was holy.

We tend to split our life into the parts we will give to Jesus and the parts we won’t. But Matthew blended the two by having Jesus meet his nonspiritual friends. Matthew was not ashamed to introduce his friends to Jesus. When you love someone, you include them in your entire life, not just part of it. You share what you’ve been given, what’s important to you. This means inviting the people you know to meet the Jesus you know!

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| **QUESTION**How have you separated your life into spiritual and nonspiritual parts? What can you do to let Jesus be included in all the parts of your life? |

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| **QUESTION**What about Matthew’s experience with Jesus challenges you to change something in your life? |

**Jesus Points Out His Priorities**

Read [Matthew 9:11–12](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mt9.11-12).

The Pharisees were offended that Jesus had dinner with Matthew, other tax collectors, and sinners. But Jesus rebuked the religious leaders by saying sick people need doctors. Could this be why Matthew quickly followed Jesus? Did he know his life was troubled and Jesus was the solution? Jesus could make him and others whole. Matthew likely knew his friends’ lives were broken too and wanted Jesus to make them whole. Before we share the news of Jesus, it’s helpful to be confident that Jesus can make broken lives whole again.

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| **QUESTION**How would you explain the meaning of Jesus’ quote of the Scripture, “I want you to show mercy, not offer sacrifices”? |

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| **QUESTION**What is something in your life that Jesus has or can make whole? |

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| **QUESTION**What do your friends face that only Jesus can heal? |

**Reflect**

**Serve Jesus’ mission by sharing His good news with those who need to hear.**

Before Matthew shared about Jesus with his friends, he met Jesus himself. Maybe he followed Jesus because Jesus healed. Maybe he followed Jesus because Jesus is holy. We don’t know for sure what caused Matthew to walk away from everything to follow Jesus. We do know he saw Jesus for himself, and then he shared about Jesus with others. This happened to others in the Bible. Isaiah saw God’s holiness, which made him see his own sinfulness ([Isaiah 6:1–5](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Is6.1-5)). Paul saw the truth about Jesus, which made him see the lies he had believed ([Acts 9:3](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ac9.3)).

How do you need to see Jesus, so you can share the good news of Jesus with others? Do you need to see Him as a friend to introduce Him to your friends? Do you need to see Him as loving to share His unconditional love? Do you need to see Him as King to share His unshakable kingdom? Do you need to see Him as Savior to share the good news that He has come to save people from their sins?

**Listen to God**

Let’s pause and listen to what God might want to say to us about what we have read and shared. Be silent for a few moments and reflect on the following questions. Respond to the one that most resonates with what God is saying to you now. Then complete the others during Day 1 of your devotion time this week.

**Personal Reflection Questions**

*Record your answers to the following questions in the space provided or in your personal journal.*

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| **QUESTION**On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being not at all obedient and 10 being fully and immediately obedient, how would you rate yourself at obeying Jesus? |

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| **QUESTION**Reflect on what Jesus means to you. What characteristics of Jesus can you see in your own life? How can you share that with others? |

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| **QUESTION**How can you invite the people you know to meet the Jesus you know? |

**Activate**

Many people in our life, in our home, in our neighborhood, and in our workplace need to hear about Jesus. How can we better see Jesus to tell others about Him?

**Challenge**

Start by spending time each day with Jesus. Do the personal devotions provided with this session. Spend time praying, worshipping, reading books about Christian faith, or perhaps all of the above. Then, turn that time with Jesus into one conversation about Jesus each week with someone you know. The goal is to increase our time with Jesus, so we will increase our conversations about Him.

**Prayer Requests**

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| Note any requests from the group and pray together. Also remember to pray for them during the week. |

If we truly see Him, we will share about Jesus like Matthew did. May we see Him and may we immediately obey Him. May we invite the people we know to meet the Jesus we know. We have learned in community about Him today. So let’s not neglect our time alone with Him, which influences how and what we share with others. You can use the daily devotions as an extension of this discussion.

**Live on Your Own**

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| *Before you begin each devotion, pray and ask God to speak to you through His Word. Record your answers to the following questions in the space provided or in your personal journal.* |

**Day 1: Matthew Follows Jesus**

Read [Matthew 9:9–12](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mt9.9-12).

Look back over Live in Community and complete your responses to the Personal Reflection Questions. Plan how to complete the Activate component if you haven’t already done so. If time permits, reread the Scripture too.

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| **QUESTION**What is Jesus saying to you about inviting the people you know to meet Him? |

**Live on Your Own**

**Day 2: The Cost of Following Jesus**

Read [Matthew 8:18–22](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mt8.18-22).

When Jesus said, “Follow Me,” Matthew immediately responded. A quick response, though, did not always happen. In today’s Scripture reading, two people learned that following Jesus comes with a cost. In only a couple of responses, Jesus made a powerful statement on the nature of being His disciple.

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| **QUESTION**What are areas of your life where you, like Matthew, immediately followed Jesus? |

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| **QUESTION**What are the reasons why you are more like a would-be follower who does not respond quickly to Jesus? |

**Live on Your Own**

**Day 3: Elisha Burns His Plan B**

Read [1 Kings 19:19–21](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.1Ki19.19-21).

Matthew left his profession to follow Jesus. Elisha, a farmer, did the same to follow God’s call, but he took it a step further. He immediately burned his backup plan. He slaughtered his oxen, then burned the wood of his plow to cook the meat as a feast for his family and friends. Elisha burned the tools of his earthly job before following God’s call.

If obeying Jesus doesn’t work out, we may be tempted to want something to fall back on, a safety net, a plan B. But Elisha burned his plan B, so to speak. This doesn’t mean if God calls us to be a missionary, we should go and set our house or office on fire. But saying yes to God means eliminating things in our life that might keep us from God’s call. Matthew left his tax collecting business behind. Many missionaries have left family and the comforts of home to go far away to serve Jesus.

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| **QUESTION**What in your life is God asking you to stop or start doing for Him? |

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| **QUESTION**What is the plan B in your life that you need to burn to say yes to Jesus? |

**Live on Your Own**

**Day 4: Andrew Invites His Brother to Meet Jesus**

Read [John 1:40–42](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Jn1.40-42).

When Matthew became Jesus’ disciple, he joined the group of disciples including a disciple named Andrew. From the very beginning, Andrew seemed to understand the value of bringing people to Jesus. Sharing our faith in Jesus can be incredibly tricky when it comes to family. Yet after meeting Jesus, Andrew introduced his brother Peter to Jesus.

And Peter said yes to being Jesus’ disciple too. Peter would go on to write two books of the Bible, preach the first sermon on the Day of Pentecost, and serve as one of the most important leaders in the Early Church. We have no idea what Jesus will do with those who follow Him. But inviting them to meet Jesus is the first step to finding out.

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| **QUESTION**Who introduced you to Jesus? How did you express your gratitude to them? |

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| **QUESTION**What kind of life change do you want to see Jesus complete in someone you love? |

**Live on Your Own**

**Day 5: To See Jesus Is to Share Jesus**

Read [Isaiah 6:1–8](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Is6.1-8).

In a vision, Isaiah saw God’s awesomeness and terrifying winged creatures declaring God’s holiness. Isaiah then called himself a sinful man with unclean lips. But he had also seen God! So, when he heard God ask who His messenger would be, Isaiah immediately said he would go. This revelation of God created a personal revelation for Isaiah.

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| **QUESTION**Write out a description of a life-changing encounter you’ve had with God. |

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| **QUESTION**God is still asking who will give His message to His people. What can you do in your life to become the answer to God’s question? |