



DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR SMALL GROUPS

5 & 6 FEBRUARY 2022

“WHY DID I FOLLOW JESUS?”

LUKE 5.1-11

The main study guide material for this sermon series is to be purchased at <https://spckpublishing.co.uk/for-everyone-bible-study-guide-215>.

It is recommended that the e-book be purchased. Nevertheless, individuals or Connect Groups that wish to purchase hardcopies may do so from physical Christian bookstores, or online stores (Amazon, Bookdepository, Blackwells, etc)

The material in this document is intentionally brief. It is intended as a supplement only.

- **Begin by reading the Scripture passage together.**
- **Review the video of the sermon if needed (see <http://www.brmc.org.sg/category/resources/sermons>).**
- **Refer to the [main study guide](#) Chapter 6 as well as this supplementary material.**
- **Feel free to discuss as few or as many questions as best fits your group’s current context and present stage in life.**
- **Remember to allocate some time (15-20 min) to pray with and for one another, before ending your group session.**

Info Sidebox

Bible Reading Toolkit:

Am I to identify with this character? Am I to follow this character's specific act?

In Luke 5, Jesus has come to do a new thing: After calling disciples to be fishers of men, he surprised everyone by forgiving the paralytic of his sins (before healing his paralysis) because he came on earth not to “call the righteous but sinners to repentance.”

Luke 5 shows two possible responses to Jesus and his new ministry:

- The Disciples, including the Tax Collector Levi: left everything and followed Jesus
- The Pharisees: questioned, grumbled and tried to find fault with Jesus and his disciples. In response, Jesus taught them in parables that their old mindset and his new ministry are incompatible, and there will be disastrous consequences if they do not change their appetite for “old wine”.

One powerful tool for application is to ask the questions: ***Am I to identify with this character? Am I to follow this character's specific act?***

From this narrative passage in Luke 5, we can ask ourselves: Do we have the willing obedience like the disciples to leave everything behind to follow Jesus? Or do we question and grumble about parts of Jesus's teachings that are incompatible with how we would like our own lives to be?

However, when asking these questions, be careful not to jump to conclusions too quickly! After all, narratives describe occurrences and events. They are not written as answers for theological questions nor always as exemplars for us to follow. There are a few important principles to keep in mind when applying narratives to our lives:

Dos and Don'ts:

- 1. Do identify the underlying principle in the narrative, when the passage itself states this principle.***

Luke 5.29-32 describes Jesus eating with tax collectors, and the Pharisees complaining about this fact. The principle is: Jesus welcomes even sinners, and calls them to repent. God does not merely seek those who are already pure and holy. We recognise this principle because the Bible text itself states so, in verse 31.

- 2. Don't simply assume that we are to follow every specific action of the biblical characters. Do check whether the narrative is reinforcing principles or doctrines from elsewhere in the Bible.***

Always first check whether the actions are consistent with the bible's teachings elsewhere. Luke 5.12 describes a leper who fell on his face, asking Jesus for healing. Does this mean we should always physically bow with our faces touching the ground when seeking divine healing? No. Luke 5.19 describes the paralytic's friends taking the publicly visible action of busting through a roof to bring the man to Jesus. Does this mean we should always take dramatic actions when praying for our friends? No. In both cases, we answer 'No', because we know the Bible does not elsewhere command these acts, nor does Scripture describe these acts as absolutely necessary or normative.

Luke 5 describes several instances of Jesus healing the sick. Should we conclude that as Jesus' disciples, we can pray for others to be healed? Yes, since elsewhere in Scripture, Jesus authorised his disciples to heal (Luke chs.9 & 10), and 1 Corinthians 12 also speaks of gifts of healing.

3. *Don't jump to identifying with the biblical character!*

Sometimes a passage is meant to tell us more about God rather than tell us what we ought to do. Again, bear in mind that the primary role of narratives is to describe occurrences and events. When reading a story about Moses, David, Jesus, or others, it can be tempting to jump to applying the passage directly to ourselves: For example, relating to David vs Goliath (1 Sam 17), who are the Goliaths in my life that God will help me defeat? However, unlike David, none of us are God's king, anointed to defeat God's enemies. While we should follow David's example of faith, we should not jump too quickly to thinking that "I am David", or to go around picking fights because "God will help me defeat all my enemies."

Response, Application, Prayer

1. In what situations would you find it hard to let go of everything and follow Jesus? What about these situations makes it hard to do so? Share with one another if there are situations in the past where you did let go of things to follow Jesus. Pray for one another, that you would follow the example of the disciples in wholeheartedly pursuing Jesus, and let go of anything that would hold you back from doing so.

2. When was the last time you intentionally "fished for men" as part of your discipleship? Share your experience and/or struggle in this area.

3. The "old mindset" of the Pharisees was incompatible with the "new work" that Jesus was doing. What are examples of mindsets and worldviews in our world today that are incompatible with Jesus's teaching and ministry? How should we break out of these incompatible mindsets and worldviews?

4. Thank God that Jesus came on earth not to call the righteous, but to call sinners to repentance. Pray that God would lead us to repentance for the ways in which we try to force Jesus into our own ideas of what we want our lives to look like.