

Growth Group Leader Guide

This “growth group leader guide” is meant to be just that, a guide. Please feel free as the leader of your group to add questions or comments, as you feel necessary, to fit your group’s dynamics.

Also, don’t feel pressured to cover every question.

I Will Follow... but First (September 3, 2026)

- What insight, principle, or observation from this weekend’s message did you find to be most helpful, eye-opening, or troubling? Explain.

Questions

- **Read and discuss** Matthew 8:14-17
- Matthew groups together three healings of cultural outcasts—a leper, a Gentile slave, and a Jewish woman. Why is it significant that Jesus moved toward people whom first-century culture often marginalized?
- In verse 17, Matthew quotes Isaiah 53 (“He took our illnesses and bore our diseases”) to explain Jesus’ healing ministry. How do Jesus’ physical miracles point to His ultimate mission on the cross to heal our spiritual sickness and forgive sin?
- **Read and discuss** Matthew 8:18-22
- The scribe approaches Jesus offering to follow Him anywhere but calls Him “Teacher” rather than “Lord” and leads with “I will” rather than submitting to Christ’s will. How does Jesus’ response about having “nowhere to lay his head” expose the difference between worldly enthusiasm and true, humble discipleship?
- In verse 20, Jesus uses the title “Son of Man”—referencing the glorious, divine ruler from Daniel 7—yet points out that He has no place to lay His head. How does the humility of the cosmic King challenge our desire for worldly status, comfort, and security?
- What are some subtle ways we might be tempted to treat Jesus merely as a good teacher or an addition to our lives, rather than as absolute Lord?

- The second man asks to first go and bury his father—an idiom representing waiting until his worldly duties and inheritance were secure before following Christ. Why does Jesus respond so sharply with, "Follow me, and leave the dead to bury their own dead"?
- In Matthew 10:37–38, Jesus states that anyone who loves family more than Him is not worthy of Him. Why is supreme loyalty to Jesus necessary for a true disciple, and how does this challenge our modern priorities?
- For many believers around the world, following Jesus means being disowned by family or losing their livelihood. While we may not face the exact same persecution here, how can the desire for human approval or family peace become a subtle idol that competes with our devotion to Christ?
- Where in your life are you most tempted to insert a "but first..." when it comes to obeying Jesus—whether it's comfort, pride, career, or human approval?
- Jesus calls His followers to take up their cross (Matthew 10:38). In your current season, what does "dying to self" practically look like in your daily routine, relationships, or career decisions?