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.

The Call of a Sinner – Nov. 8, 2026

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

3 Points

- **The Call of a Sinner**
- **The Actions of a Sinner**
- **The Heart of a Sinner**

I. The Call of a Sinner

- Read Matthew 9:9 out loud together. What stands out to you most in this single verse? Why do you think Matthew (the author) chose to tell his own story so briefly?

- Matthew’s entire testimony in one sentence is essentially: “Jesus said ‘Follow me,’ and I did.” If you had to summarize your own story with Jesus in a similar short, Christ-centered way, what would it sound like?

- Looking back at Matthew 8, what kinds of people were already following or seeking Jesus (crowds, leper, centurion, sick, demon-oppressed, even a scribe)? How does that make Matthew’s situation in verse 9 stand out?

- The sermon described tax collectors as the lowest of the low in Jewish society—traitors, thieves, and considered essentially unforgivable. Why is it significant that Jesus is the one who initiates the conversation and simply says, “Follow me”?

- Luke 5:28 adds that Matthew “left everything” and followed. Why do you think Matthew himself doesn’t mention what he left behind in his own Gospel account? What does that silence communicate about how he viewed the trade-off?

II. The Actions of a Sinner

- Compare Matthew's response with the two men in Matthew 8:18–22 (the scribe who volunteered and the disciple who wanted to bury his father first). What is the difference between being interested in Jesus and actually following Him?

- Jesus says in Matthew 10:37–39 that anyone who loves family or life more than Him is not worthy of Him, and that we must lose our life to find it. How does Matthew's story illustrate what that actually looks like in real life?

III. The Heart of a Sinner

- The sermon connected Matthew's call to the healing of the paralytic just before it (Matthew 9:1–8), where Jesus publicly claimed authority to forgive sins. Why would that claim have been especially powerful for a tax collector like Matthew? What does it reveal about what every sinner most needs?

- The church is not a place for "good people," but for sinners saved by grace (1 Timothy 1:15). Where do you most struggle to believe that this is still true—either for yourself or for people you tend to write off as "too far gone"?

- Matthew left a lucrative, secure (though hated) life with no realistic way of returning to it. Is there anything in your life right now that Jesus is asking you to leave behind—or hold more loosely—so that you can follow Him more fully? What makes that difficult?

- Matthew knew he was a sinner in desperate need of forgiveness. Is there an area in your life where past guilt or shame makes you feel "unforgivable" or hesitate to draw near to Jesus? How does Matthew's story speak to that?

- Jesus intentionally sought out Matthew at his tax booth rather than waiting for Matthew to come to Him. Who in your sphere of influence (coworkers, neighbors, family) might feel like an outcast or "too far gone" for grace? How can you actively pursue them this week?

Announcements

Celebration of Life: Anita Dearing

11/14 | 10am | Worship Center

Please join us in celebrating the life of beloved COBC member Anita Dearing. Following the service, we will have a potluck-style lunch.

Last names: A-L: bring a side salad or dessert; M- Z: bring a main dish.