



Week 5 (August 30 - September 5): Lesson Guide

Open In Prayer

Welcome/Introductions

Ask the group to recall the guidelines for discussion that we use to create a safe environment.

Ask someone on your team to read the Hook Question - Ask, "Can you think of a time that you had a great opportunity to help someone in need? What did you do? Did you help or let the opportunity slip by?"

Ask someone to retell last week's story from Matthew 25:14-30 (the parable of the talents).

Ask someone from your team to read or tell the following background for the story:

Today's story is the climactic conclusion of Jesus' answer to the disciples when they asked Him, "What will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?" To this point, Jesus had taught His disciples about the end times through prophecy, analogies, and parables (the story of the ten virgins, the story of the talents, and more). Now, Jesus concludes His two chapter long answer with one final prophecy about His second coming.

As you hear today's story, consider this concept: In Scripture, salvation is never earned by works, but the evidence of salvation is works. Listen to that again: Salvation is never earned by works, but the evidence of your salvation is your works. Jesus said, "The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks." Therefore, the fruit of your works reveals the condition of your heart.

With this background information, you are ready to hear and discuss this week's story...

Tell the story from Matthew 25:31-46

Rebuild the story – (Group members tell the story based on what they remember)

Read Matthew 25:31-46– (Ask the group to read these scriptures)

Watch (optional): Keith Green (The Goats and the Sheep) - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6A2ksYm8KDQ>

Discuss these questions:

- What is God's Spirit speaking to you right now through this story? (after following the steps above for telling, rebuilding, and reading the story and watching the video, this may be the only question you need this week)
- What does this story teach us about people?
- What does this story teach us about God? (remember, Jesus is God)
- Who do you relate to in this story? Why?
- How do you need to change based on this story?

Ask for a volunteer to retell the story one last time.

Ask for a volunteer to tell the story next week.

Prayer Requests (ask someone in the group to take notes so you can email the requests to the group)

Pray (don't feel the need to mention every request in prayer again, just pray for the group and send the email)



Week 5: Leadership Coaching Guide

Leading [learn to facilitate your group more effectively]

- This week, let's consider the principles behind the ground rule of "cross-talking".
- As you know, the purpose of our ground rules is to create a safe environment where people can share transparently for the purpose of growing as a disciple of Jesus.
- One of the ways we accomplish this in our groups is by showing people how much we care about them. Nothing says, "I don't care about you" quite like striking up your own conversation while someone else is sharing something from their heart. Sadly, this is something that people often do to each other in our culture. When we think of something to say to our neighbor, we lean over and whisper it whenever we want, even if it is at the expense of other people. This idea is known in group as "cross-talking".
- Cross-talking is a sure fire way to show group members that what they say is not valuable. When this happens, people do not feel safe and, as a result, they do not share transparently.
- In order to effectively create a safe environment, your team must be willing to practice this ground rule. Failure to do so will create an environment where people do not feel comfortable sharing.

Shepherding [know the sheep, feed the sheep, lead the sheep, protect the sheep]

- In one-to-one discipleship meetings, the applications of silence may vary, but the principle is no less powerful...
 - When you are meeting for discipleship with someone one-to-one, you would think that cross-talking could not be an issue. However, in today's world, we carry little devices that can have the very same effect as cross-talking – our cell phones.
 - One of my favorite phrases is "discipleship is caught, not taught." When you are meeting with someone one-to-one, you are teaching them far more about discipleship by what you do than by what you say. When you check your cell phone often during your meeting, you are saying that the things happening outside your relationship with the person you are meeting with are more important. This will kill transparency in your relationship.
 - Take every step you can to silence the outside world before you go in to meet with the person you are discipling. *Show them* how to make disciples by the way you care for them.

Developing [grow as a disciple yourself]

- Do you cross-talk in your quiet time with the Lord?
- I have to admit, this is an area I struggle with in my time with Jesus. Too often I allow a distraction to interrupt time that I have set aside to listen to the Lord. This can happen when I am using my phone as a Bible and I follow a new notification that pops up, drifting in my thoughts towards things I need to do, or not choosing a quiet enough place and becoming distracted by outside noise. Whatever the reason, I fail to demonstrate that I value uninterrupted time with the Lord.
- Jesus modeled this type of quiet time: "Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and there he prayed" (Luke 5:16).
- Quiet time with the Father was an important aspect of Jesus' ministry. His disciples saw Him live that way, and it impacted their lives enough to write about it in the gospels! I am grateful the Spirit led them to record this habit of Jesus, because it offers us an example of how we should live.
- How do you need to avoid "cross-talk" in your quiet time with the Lord? Another discipleship saying is, "we can't give something away that we do not have." If you are not being filled up with God's Spirit, how can you expect to lead others to be filled up with His Spirit?
- Stop right now. Do whatever it takes to make plans to get alone with Jesus on a daily basis. When do you need to get up? Go to bed? Take a break? Fast a meal? Making time with Jesus a priority in your life is absolutely essential for effectively making disciples of Jesus.