

*growing
together*

GROUP GUIDE

WALK IN GRACE: MATTHEW 8-20
FOR WELL-WATERED WOMEN

“IF THERE IS SO MUCH *blessing* AND JOY EVEN IN A SINGLE ENCOUNTER
OF BROTHER WITH BROTHER, HOW *inexhaustible* ARE THE RICHES THAT
OPEN UP FOR THOSE WHO *by God's will* ARE PRIVILEGED TO LIVE IN THE
DAILY FELLOWSHIP OF LIFE WITH *other Christians!*”

—DIETRICH BONHOEFFER, *LIFE TOGETHER*

Last Spring I felt the ache for something *more*. I peered around the recesses of my heart and sought out idols—usually when I have a constant longing for more, it means that I’ve elevated my love or need of something above my need for God. But what I found wasn’t an idol; it was an ache. I was lonely, but it wasn’t simply friendship I missed. It was fellowship with other women digging deeply into the Word of God together.

Of course, in today’s circumstances, this was not an easy ache to fill. But instead of ignoring it, I got creative. What if I could study God’s Word not through a church-sponsored Bible study, but with a couple of other women meeting in the home of a friend? I asked around, and as restrictions eased, we were able to meet together weekly, early one morning before any of our kids woke up. What a difference it made! Instead of complaining about how everything was different, we gathered around the one thing that always remains the same—God and his Word. On the firm foundation of his unchangeability, we found a sure footing for friendship in a difficult season.

God made us to live in fellowship with each other. The local church plays an essential role in that fellowship, but as a body of believers, we are the living church. If your church isn’t large enough for women’s programming or is not open in this season, you can still walk in community with women in your local context.

This guide aims to help you root yourself deeply in God’s Word by studying alongside another woman. All you will each need to know exactly how your meetings will work is a copy of the Walk In Grace Matthew 8–20 Journal and this document. I know it can feel awkward—the fear of her “no” may keep you from reaching out—but God has created us for fellowship. We are not meant to do this alone. If you can muster up the bravery to simply ask one other woman, that’s all that is required.

Once you’ve found one (or five or ten!) other women who want to study God’s Word with you, encourage each woman to print out this guide for your time together. You don’t have to be the leader—no one does. The guide will lay out what questions to discuss during your time together and also prompt you in prayer for one another. If you want to take it a step further each week and have a time of specific prayer requests, feel free to do so. Each meeting can be completed in 30–45 minutes depending on how many women are meeting together, creating the opportunity for moms with kids to meet while their kids play or for working women to meet during lunch.

If you’ve felt lonely or adrift without the usual experience of church this past year, it’s time to do something about it. Take a moment and pray—who does God want you to ask to study his Word together?

I’m so excited for you. I know that every time I open up God’s Word with another woman, our friendship grows as we grow closer to God.

always growing. Maggie

ideas for meeting together

1. MEET ON FRIDAY AFTERNOONS AT A COFFEE SHOP WHEN MANY PEOPLE FINISH WORK EARLY

2. MEET ON YOUR OWN TIME USING A MESSAGING APP SO EVERYONE DOESN'T HAVE TO BE TOGETHER AT THE SAME TIME

3. MEET IN THE MORNING AT A FRIEND'S HOUSE

4. MEET AT A LOCAL PARK AND LET YOUR KIDS PLAY TOGETHER AS YOU OPEN GOD'S WORD

5. MEET ONLINE

6. MEET ON SATURDAYS OR SUNDAYS WHEN WORK ISN'T A HINDRANCE OR HUSBANDS ARE AVAILABLE TO WATCH KIDS

week one

PRAYER

Have one woman open in prayer, asking God to prepare your hearts and minds to learn from his Word.

DISCUSS

Day 1: Share any initial observations or questions you had about these chapters with the group.

Day 2: Review what you learned about the context of Matthew in your study of chapters 1–7. How has knowing more about the author and context changed the way you read this book?

Day 3: What repeated words or themes did you circle in Matthew 8–20?

Day 4: Have each person in the group share what theme(s) she has recognized this week in her repetitive reading of Matthew 8–20. How do these relate to the themes of Matthew 1–7?

Day 5: Share your outline of these 13 chapters with each other. (Remember, there are no wrong answers!)

Before you wrap up for the week, share your summaries as well as something new you learned about God or the gospel this week. Then share how you can apply that truth to your daily life.

PRAY PSALM 119:27 FOR EACH OTHER:

Lord, help us to understand the truth found in Matthew 8–20 over the next several weeks.

Give us the grace to meditate on your wondrous works found in these chapters. Amen.

week two

PRAYER

Have one woman open in prayer using the prayer she wrote in the Be Still and Know section on week 2, day 3.

DISCUSS

Day 1: Why is it significant that Jesus touched the leper to make him “clean” in this passage? What lessons can we learn from Jesus’ response to the centurion?

Day 2: How do we see Christ fulfilling Old Testament prophecies in this passage? What hard truths can we learn about Christian discipleship from Jesus’ words today?

Day 3: What do we know about Jesus’ authority based on this passage? What do these verses communicate about the impact of Jesus’ presence?

Day 4: What is the paralytic’s greatest need in this story? What does it mean that Jesus is the bridegroom?

Day 5: How does Jesus respond with compassion to individual needs in this passage? Do you view Jesus’ response to your needs as compassionate?

Before you wrap up for the week, share your summaries as well as something new you learned about God or the gospel this week. Then share how you can apply that truth to your daily life.

PRAY FOR EACH OTHER:

Lord, we come to you asking for clean hearts. Purify our hearts and minds for your glory. Let us have faith like the centurion, trusting you with our lives. We wait for you like a bride waits for her bridegroom. We long for your presence, God! Teach us more about your compassion this week and make us more like you. Amen.

week three

PRAYER

Have one woman open in prayer using the prayer she wrote in the Be Still and Know section on week 3, day 3.

DISCUSS

Day 1: What kinds of persecution does Jesus warn his followers about in this passage?

Day 2: According to today's passage, what is the cost of following Jesus? In contrast, what is the cost of denying him?

Day 3: What seems to be the cause of doubt from John the baptist and Jesus' disciples? What does Jesus communicate about his kingdom in verse 11?

Day 4: What is the definition of "woe"? What is Jesus' primary judgment against the cities in this passage?

Day 5: What does this passage teach us about Jesus' purpose on earth? How does the Sabbath point to something greater?

Before you wrap up for the week, share your summaries as well as something new you learned about God or the gospel this week. Then share how you can apply that truth to your daily life.

PRAY MATTHEW 10:39 TOGETHER:

Lord, may we find our lives by laying them down for your sake. Teach us what it truly means to live for you and not for ourselves. Amen.

week four

PRAYER

Have one woman open in prayer using the prayer she wrote in the Be Still and Know section on week 4, day 4.

DISCUSS

Day 1: How does Jesus distinguish between work and merciful acts on the Sabbath? What is revealed about the Pharisees' heart motives in this passage?

Day 2: Based on the truth offered in 1 John 1:9, why would a person be unable to receive God's forgiveness if they reject the Holy Spirit? How does this relate to Matthew 12:32?

Day 3: Why does Jesus rebuke the religious leaders for asking for a "sign"? What is Jesus teaching about the earthly family and the family of God in this passage?

Day 4: According to Jesus, why does he often teach in parables? How would you summarize the parable of the sowers and what is Jesus communicating through this parable?

Day 5: What is Jesus communicating about his kingdom through the examples of the mustard seed and leaven?

Before you wrap up for the week, share your summaries as well as something new you learned about God or the gospel this week. Then share how you can apply that truth to your daily life.

PRAY MATTHEW 11:28 – 30 OVER ONE ANOTHER:

Lord, we come to you heavy laden today, and we ask for rest. We take your yoke, for it is easy, and we praise you because your burden is light. Let us learn from you being gentle and lowly in heart. Bless us with rest for our souls. Amen.

week five

PRAYER

Have one woman open in prayer using the prayer she wrote in the Be Still and Know section on week 5, day 2.

DISCUSS

Day 1: Compare and contrast the parables in this passage together. To what aspects of the kingdom is Jesus drawing our attention?

Day 2: How does Jesus' hometown respond to his teaching and why? How do their beliefs about Jesus shape their response?

Day 3: How does Jesus' provision in this passage demonstrate Matthew's theme of fulfillment?

Day 4: Why does Jesus immediately send his disciples away and withdraw after feeding the multitude? Where does he go after dispersing the crowd and what can we learn from this?

Day 5: What is Jesus teaching about human nature and sin in this passage? What hope do we have of being made pure based on these verses?

Before you wrap up for the week, share your summaries as well as something new you learned about God or the gospel this week. Then share how you can apply that truth to your daily life.

PRAY FOR EACH OTHER:

Lord, help us to view the kingdom of heaven as a great treasure. Allow us to find our hope and joy in you alone, Father. Amen.

week six

PRAYER

Have one woman open in prayer using the prayer she wrote in the Be Still and Know section on week 6, day 4.

DISCUSS

Day 1: How does Jesus use the interactions in this passage to illustrate for his disciples the expanding kingdom of God?

Day 2: What specific kinds of needs does Jesus meet in today's passage? What does Jesus' ministry in this primarily gentile region communicate to his disciples and the crowds?

Day 3: What is the difference between the sign the religious leaders ask for in this passage and the "sign of Jonah" Jesus references? (See Jonah 1:17; 3:1–10)

Day 4: What is remarkable about Peter's declaration in this passage? How does Peter know this truth according to Jesus?

Day 5: What shift do you observe in this passage compared to the previous chapters? How does Jesus characterize discipleship in today's reading?

Before you wrap up for the week, share your summaries as well as something new you learned about God or the gospel this week. Then share how you can apply that truth to your daily life.

PRAY MATTHEW 16:24–26 TOGETHER:

Lord, we want to follow you. Give us the grace to deny ourselves, take up our crosses daily, and follow you without hindrance. Let us find our lives by laying them down for your sake. Thank you for saving our souls and giving us life. Amen.

week seven

PRAYER

Have one woman open in prayer using the prayer she wrote in the Be Still and Know section on week 7, day 4.

DISCUSS

Day 1: Share your definitions of “transfigured” or “transformed” with one another. What is the significance of Jesus’ transformation?

Day 2: What does Jesus teach the disciples about faith in this passage? How do the disciples respond? What is your personal response?

Day 3: How does Jesus honor and dignify children in this passage? What does it mean to humble oneself like a child? What does it mean to be a child of God?

Day 4: What are the steps Jesus lays out for dealing with conflict among brothers and sisters in the church? What hope does Jesus promise in the midst of conflict in the church?

Day 5: Why is forgiveness difficult? On what basis are disciples of Christ to extend forgiveness?

Before you wrap up for the week, share your summaries as well as something new you learned about God or the gospel this week. Then share how you can apply that truth to your daily life.

PRAY MATTHEW 18:3 – 4 TOGETHER:

Lord, give us the humility of a child that we may please you as children of your kingdom. Thank you for being our loving Father, always watching over us and protecting us. Amen.

week eight

PRAYER

Have one woman open in prayer using the prayer she wrote in the Be Still and Know section on week 8, day 1.

DISCUSS

Day 1: What does Jesus' teaching in this passage reveal about God's goodness and human sinfulness?

Day 2: How are Jesus' responses to the children and to the rich man in this passage different than what the disciples expect? What deeper issues of the heart is Jesus addressing in this interaction?

Day 3: How can wealth be an obstacle to the gospel in a person's life? How do Jesus' words in verse 26 cut to the heart of this passage (as well as the previous passage?) How does the context of verse 26 clarify how we should apply it in our lives?

Day 4: What principles about God's kingdom does Jesus illustrate with this parable?

Day 5: In this passage, how does Jesus build upon the kingdom principle of the first/last? How is this perfectly fulfilled in Jesus himself (v. 28), through his birth, ministry, and eventually his ultimate sacrifice and victory?

Before you wrap up for the week, share your summaries as well as something new you learned about God or the gospel this week. Then share how you can apply that truth to your daily life.

PRAY MATTHEW 19:25-26 TOGETHER:

Lord, we praise you because all things are possible with you! Only in your name can we find the salvation we desperately need. Thank you for the beautiful gift of eternal life. Give us the grace to seek you daily. Amen.