

**Focusing On Jesus
In A Distracted World**



**Jesus
Centered**

**Small Group
Discussion Guide**

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How To Use This Guide

With the introduction and fourteen chapters in *Jesus Centered*, there are 15 small group discussions outlined in this guide. You can do each discussion separately or combine some based on the time available to your group.

Each discussion is set in this basic framework:

Starter Question

A starter question is a fairly general open-ended question that helps the group to reconnect and begin to focus. Share the question and then give 30 seconds of quiet reflection time to allow people to process and be ready to share. Invite everyone to respond. If people are able to share early in a discussion they are more likely to keep sharing in the discussion.

Feel free to add a pre-starter question like: What's a word or phrase to describe your world since we last met? This kind of question can help the group catch up with one another and be a community that celebrates and cares for one another. This kind of question also helps you gauge where people are at as you enter the study and discussion.

Depending on your group, you can also add an unrelated and fun pre-starter question like: What's the wallpaper for your cellphone? What's the weirdest food you've ever eaten? If you could travel anywhere, where would you go and why? What's something on your "bucket list?" Google "icebreaker questions" for more ideas.

Chapter Summary

This short recap can be read out loud to make sure everyone has a working knowledge of the key themes in the chapter. This helps remind those who read it but may have forgotten. This also helps people who are new to the group or who weren't able to read the chapter to take part in the discussion.

Chapter Reflections

This section uses an adapted version of the Swedish Bible Study method. Ask your group to reflect on the three areas below as they read the chapter ahead of time. When you meet together, you can go through each of the three areas and ask for reflections and input.



Light Bulb: What stands out or shines from the chapter? A new thought? An illustration? A quote?



Question Mark: What was hard to understand? What's a question you would like to explore?



An Arrow: What do you need to apply to your life?

Discussion with Questions

This section provides some additional discussion questions. These questions may be identical to the questions at the end of the chapter. Feel free to skip, modify or add questions.

Prayer Ideas

This section provides some ideas for prayer. Choose what fits and what's comfortable. Feel free to go in other directions based on the needs of the group - i.e. are there some specific needs for people in the group?

What's Next?

Before your group breaks, this section is a reminder to determine...

- When and where will we meet next time?
- What is our homework?
- Who is on to help?

Simple Best Practices for Leading Small Group Discussion

Set-Up

Make sure you have seating for everyone you expect and extra seats readily available. Everyone should be able to see one another. Good lighting is important and some soft background music can help set the tone as people arrive.

Snacks

Food and drinks are always appreciated and they help build community. Choose when you will enjoy snacks—before you get started, during a break in the midst of discussion or at the end of the session. Remember to be sensitive to allergies and to have healthy options available.

Share the Load

Try not to do everything. Get others involved. Ask people ahead of time if they could: bring a snack, host, help with room set-up, be ready to pray at the start, read aloud something for the group, etc.

Pray

Ahead of meeting, ask God to guide you and the group. Pray that the group would be a safe space to connect and encourage one another. Pray for each group member.

Remind

Send a reminder text or email two days ahead of time. Include when and where you are meeting, any homework and who is on to help in some way.

Warm Welcome

Be sure to personally and warmly welcome each person as they arrive. Help introduce people to one another as needed. Let people know where the restroom is located if the location is new for anyone.

Give Processing Space

Some people in your group will need more time to process their thoughts before they are willing to answer out loud. A simple way to help them is to say, "In a moment, I'd like to go around the circle and ask for your input on this question _____. But, before we do, let's take 30 seconds of quiet to get our thoughts together."

Help Excessive Talkers

Some people in your group may be external processors or begin to dominate discussion. One way to help them is to say, "NAME, thanks for being so ready and open to sharing, let's take a moment to hear what others are thinking."

Chapter 1 - Follow Him

(pp. 3-14)

Starter Question

What's the best way to wake you up from a deep sleep?

OR

How do you usually respond to disruptions to your plans?

Chapter Summary

- Jesus' invitation to Peter to "come follow me" was the first of many God-initiated disruptions Peter faced. God can disrupt us too.
- Responding by choosing to follow Jesus is the starting point for becoming Jesus centered. We are followers first.
- It's important to discern that it is Jesus who is inviting us to follow. Listening for Jesus, alignment with Scripture, wise counsel and the Holy Spirit are key means of discernment.
- Peter stepping out of the boat and onto the water seemed dangerous and scary, but Jesus' presence with him changed everything.
- Similarly, if we know Jesus is with us, it should change our perspective about danger. The promise of heaven should also reframe how we think about the cost of following Jesus.
- Following Jesus is an invitation that can have a cost. But in God's upside-down economy, when we lose our life for Jesus, we actually save our life (Mark 8:35).

Chapter Reflections



Light Bulb:

What stands out or shines from the chapter?
A new thought? An illustration? A quote?



Question Mark:

What was hard to understand?
What's a question you would like to explore?



An Arrow:

What do you need to apply to your life?

Discussion with Questions

1. Can you think of a time when you sensed Jesus disrupting your life and asking you to follow Him? Was it an easy or hard decision? How did you respond? How did God respond?
2. Read Luke 9:23-24. What challenges you or encourages you about these verses?
3. What fears stir in you when you consider following Jesus? In the grand scheme of things, why might these fears be unfounded?
4. Like Peter in the boat, what might you be holding onto other than Jesus for security right now? Why? What might the act of holding on to something other than Him be costing you?
5. How does the idea that you are “called to live radically and faithfully with God for God’s purposes” inspire or challenge you?

Prayer Ideas

Take a few moments to declare why Jesus is trustworthy to follow. List some specific reasons from Scripture or from your experience. Thank Him for His faithfulness and for who He is.

Give some space for the group to reflect on anything they might be holding onto for security right now other than Jesus. Then invite the group to fill in this prayer: “Lord, I release my hold of _____.”

Pray the prayer from page 14 together.

What's Next?

Determine...

- When and where will we meet next time?
- What is our homework?
- Who is on to help?

Chapter 2 - Abide in Him

(pp. 15-20)

Starter Question

Have you ever been in a car that ran out of gas? Briefly tell the story.

OR

What's your favorite fruit? Why?

Chapter Summary

- In John 15:5, Jesus says, "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." He is our source for an abundant and fruitful life.
- We can try to follow Jesus in our own strength, but we will always come up short. As Jesus said, "Apart from me you can do nothing."
- To be Jesus centered, we must abide in Jesus and rely on Him all day, every day.
- Not only is God's power available to us when we abide, there's also a special intimacy and freedom available.
- Prayer, listening, journaling, Scripture and seeking to be filled with the Holy Spirit are all practical ways to abide in Christ.

Chapter Reflections



Light Bulb:

What stands out or shines from the chapter?
A new thought? An illustration? A quote?



Question Mark:

What was hard to understand?
What's a question you would like to explore?



An Arrow:

What do you need to apply to your life?

Discussion with Questions

1. Is it easy or hard for you to abide in Christ? Why?
2. How does the truth that the same power required for your salvation is also available every day change your perspective?
3. What benefits are available when you abide in Christ?
4. What are some practical ways you currently seek to abide in Christ? What are some ideas from this chapter that you can apply?

Prayer Ideas

Read John 15:1-8 and respond in prayer.

Pray the prayer from page 20 together.

What's Next?

Determine...

- When and where will we meet next time?
- What is our homework?
- Who is on to help?

Chapter 3 - Loved by Him

(pp. 21-30)

Starter Question

Is there a painting, picture or piece of art that you really like? Briefly describe it and share why.

OR

How can somebody know when they are loved?

Chapter Summary

- It's common to serve God out of a desire to prove ourselves worthy of God's love.
- Serving and loving others when we aren't confident of God's love for us is inauthentic and impossible in the long run.
- The basis for the Great Commandment to love God is that God first loved us. If we can get our head and heart around the magnitude of Christ's love for us, it will radically change us.
- Our experience with our earthly father can impact how we see God and His love.
- Jesus knew His Father's love before He had achieved anything.
- Centering our lives around God's love requires daily reminders—music, art, symbols, rhythms and Sabbath are a few reminders.

Chapter Reflections



Light Bulb:

What stands out or shines from the chapter?
A new thought? An illustration? A quote?



Question Mark:

What was hard to understand?
What's a question you would like to explore?



An Arrow:

What do you need to apply to your life?

Discussion with Questions

1. If someone's life is centered on God's love, how might that change them? What differences can it make?
2. Is it easy or hard for you to "be loved" by God? Why or why not?
3. Has your relationship with your earthly father positively or negatively influenced your relationship with God? How?
4. What are some practical steps you have taken, or could take, to embrace being the "beloved"? What ideas from this chapter could be helpful to you?

Prayer Ideas

Read and pray Ephesians 3:17-19.

Listen to Sarah Groves' song "You Cannot Lose My Love" and respond in prayer.

Pray the prayer from page 30 together.

What's Next?

Determine...

- When and where will we meet next time?
- What is our homework?
- Who is on to help?

Chapter 4 - Grounded in Him

(pp. 31-43)

Starter Question

When was the last time you worked on a jigsaw puzzle? What was the picture? What was your strategy?

OR

If you could be anybody else for just one day, who would you be? Why?

Chapter Summary

- How you define who you are—your identity—matters.
- Grounding your identity in God's truth gives you confidence and contentment in a world where so many voices try to undermine your identity and worth.
- Jesus knew what it was like to hear voices undermining His identity. His life was defined by rejection, yet He stayed true to His identity and mission, even with the weight of the sins of the world on His shoulders; even though He was deserted by His friends and followers; and even though He faced a brutal death on the cross.
- Jesus' true identity was about whose He was: God's Son. His true value was grounded in the Father's love, and His significance was rooted in the Father's delight and expressed in the Father's affirming encouragement.
- We can begin to fill and focus our minds with corrosive self-talk like, "I'm not _____ enough." With enough of this self-talk, we can feel inadequate or even disqualified.
- We need to get our eyes off of ourselves or others and get our eyes focused on God, His character and His presence with us.
- When you take time to reflect on what Christ was done for us, every Jesus follower is a spiritual billionaire. We can't add to what God has done. What God has done and what He says about us is the truest thing about us.

Chapter Reflections



Light Bulb:

What stands out or shines from the chapter?
A new thought? An illustration? A quote?



Question Mark:

What was hard to understand?
What's a question you would like to explore?



An Arrow:

What do you need to apply to your life?

Discussion with Questions

1. Go back over the list of what God says about you from Ephesians 1:3-14. What difference do those statements make for you?
2. What “box tops” are you tempted to use for your identity puzzle?
3. How did you fill out the “I’m not _____ enough” blank? When does that thinking manifest itself? What are the costs?
4. If God is with you, as He was with Moses, does that change your outlook or confidence? How?
5. Go back over the list of what God says about you from Ephesians. What difference do those statements make for you?
6. Are you being weighed down by the expectations of others? Has pleasing others begun to overtake you? How does what God says about you change things?
7. Are you trying to fill somebody else’s shoes? Are you trying to wear somebody else’s armor? How can you embrace your own shoes and armor?

Prayer Ideas

Read, accept and declare the truths of Ephesians 1:3-14.

Pray the prayer on page 43 together.

What's Next?

Determine...

- When and where will we meet next time?
- What is our homework?
- Who is on to help?

Chapter 5 - Think Like Him

(pp. 47-58)

Starter Question

Who is a brilliant person, from any point in history, that you'd like to have coffee with? Why?

OR

When you process information or problems, are you more of a thinker or a feeler?

Chapter Summary

- To live and lead like Jesus, we need to align our thoughts with His thoughts. We need to have the same mindset as Christ.
- How our “mind is set” impacts how we live and lead. Thinking well helps the cause of Christ and not thinking well harms the cause of Christ.
- Our minds are really important. Scripture says we are to love God with our mind, be transformed by the renewing of our mind, set our minds on things above and the list goes on.
- Jesus was, and is, the greatest thinker in history.
- His mindset revolved around humility and service as well as glorifying and obeying the Father. To adopt the mindset of Christ, we need to
 1. Grow our vision of God;
 2. Feed our mind well;
 3. Filter what goes into our mind; and
 4. Focus our mind on soundtracks that speak of God's truth and life.

Chapter Reflections



Light Bulb:

What stands out or shines from the chapter?
A new thought? An illustration? A quote?



Question Mark:

What was hard to understand?
What's a question you would like to explore?



An Arrow:

What do you need to apply to your life?

Discussion with Questions

1. What words or phrase would you use to describe your mind's current diet?
2. How can you practically cultivate a bigger, fuller and clearer vision of God? What would happen if you did?
3. Do you have a place, a plan and a time for engaging God's Word? If not, what could this look like for you?
4. How do you filter what goes into your mind?
5. Is there a soundtrack that keeps playing in your mind? What is it? Does it need to be taken captive and made obedient to Christ?

Prayer Ideas

Read and pray through Philippians 2:5-11; identify characteristics of Jesus' mindset that stand out to you and pray these back with praise for Him.

Pray the prayer on page 57 together.

What's Next?

Determine...

- When and where will we meet next time?
- What is our homework?
- Who is on to help?

Chapter 6 - Serve Like Him

(pp. 59-69)

Starter Question

Describe the last time someone served you in an amazing way.

OR

Have you ever received help from a Good Samaritan who was passing by (or been a Good Samaritan)? What was that like?

Chapter Summary

- You would think God's entrance into the world through Jesus would have more grandeur than a Marvel movie premiere. Yet in every way, the opposite was true. Humility was the hallmark not only of Jesus' entrance to this world but His entire life.
- Jesus was the smartest, holiest and most powerful person in every room He ever entered. Yet by choosing humility, Jesus chose to live and serve in a very different way.
- God is a champion of humility and an opponent of pride. Pride places self at the center, rather than Jesus.
- We can begin to emulate Jesus' humility and serve as He served by:
 1. Lifting up or exalting God above ourselves;
 2. Taking a posture of serving someone or something beyond our own direct benefit;
 3. Asking others to help us; and
 4. Extending help to others.

Chapter Reflections



Light Bulb:

What stands out or shines from the chapter?
A new thought? An illustration? A quote?



Question Mark:

What was hard to understand?
What's a question you would like to explore?



An Arrow:

What do you need to apply to your life?

Discussion with Questions

1. Does Jesus' level of humility surprise you? If so, how?
2. How would you view Jesus differently, if He were not humble?
3. On a scale of one to ten (ten being *wow!!*), what is your level of awe with who God is and what He has done? How do you think this relates to your level of humility?
4. When and where does pride most often manifest itself in you? Why?
5. What strengths can you leverage for serving God and others?
6. Is it easy for you to ask for help? What blessings come from asking for help?
7. What helps and hinders you to act like the Good Samaritan?

Prayer Ideas

Reflect on the list below and lift up Jesus in prayer with awe.

Jesus is...

- ...the Word (John 1:1)
- ...God incarnate (John 1:14)
- ...the Lamb of God (John 1:29)
- ...the bread of life (John 6:35)
- ...the light of the world (John 8:12)
- ...the gate (John 10:9)
- ...the good shepherd (John 10:11)
- ...the resurrection and the life (John 11:25)
- ...the true vine (John 15:1)
- ...the Holy One of God (Mark 1:24)
- ...the King of kings (Revelation 7:14)
- ...the Son of the living God (Matthew 16:13-17)
- ...the head of the church (Ephesians 5:23)
- ...the Lord of lords (Revelation 19:16)
- ...the Prince of peace (Isaiah 9:6)
- ...the one who serves (Luke 22:27)
- ...a friend to sinners (Luke 7:34)
- ...Immanuel, God with us (Matthew 1:23)
- ...our Savior (Luke 2:11)
- ...our advocate (1 John 2:1)
- ...our healer (James 5:15)
- ...our righteousness, holiness and redemption (1 Corinthians 1:30)
- ...our redeemer (Matthew 1:21)
- ...our model (Philippians 2:5-6)
- ...the Alpha and Omega (Revelation 22:13)

Pray the prayer on page 69 together.

What's Next?

Determine...

- When and where will we meet next time?
- What is our homework?
- Who is on to help?

Chapter 7 - Respond Like Him

(pp. 71-81)

Starter Question

Describe a time when you were really afraid.

OR

What is one instance you have needed (or need) courage?

Chapter Summary

- The Bible is full of examples where people find themselves at a crossroads, forced to choose between a path of caution and fear or a path of boldness and courage.
- Jesus faced incredible resistance, endless and needy crowds, cleverly laid traps, loneliness, abandonment, separation from His heavenly Father and a painful and humiliating death, yet He always chose to respond with courage.
- Living with Jesus at the center of your life requires a courageous response. Spiritual courage is choosing to follow Jesus even when your knees are knocking.
- To respond with courage, we can:
 1. Remember God's faithfulness to fuel our faith going forward;
 2. Fix our eyes on Jesus;
 3. Lean into community; and
 4. Choose to care for ourselves.
- Ultimately, you need to choose to entrust every challenge to God knowing that Jesus is with you and leading you while depending on the Holy Spirit to fill you with courage.

Chapter Reflections



Light Bulb:

What stands out or shines from the chapter?
A new thought? An illustration? A quote?



Question Mark:

What was hard to understand?
What's a question you would like to explore?



An Arrow:

What do you need to apply to your life?

Discussion with Questions

1. If Jesus faced significant challenges, does that reframe your perspective on your challenges? How?
2. What gifts or blessings have you received in difficult times? What gifts or blessings are possible to receive in the midst of difficult times?
3. What can you do today to fix your eyes more on Jesus? Do any of the choices listed apply to you today? The choices are:
Choose to walk toward the light;
Choose to fix your eyes on Jesus;
Choose to lean into community; and
Choose to care for yourself.
4. Navigating alone is dangerous, so whom can, or do, you lean into for support?
5. What do you need to entrust to God? Pray, “God, I choose to entrust You with _____.”
6. In what way do you need to respond with courage today? This week? This year? Ask God for the courage you need.
7. Whom could you give courage to today? Reach out. Pray. Write a note. Make a phone call. Come alongside. There are people all around you who need the encouragement.

Prayer Ideas

Identify people in your lives who may need courage today. Pray for them.

Pray the prayer on page 81 together.

What's Next?

Determine...

- When and where will we meet next time?
- What is our homework?
- Who is on to help?

Chapter 8 - Pursue Holiness Like Him (pp. 83-91)

Starter Question

What's been a fun or important pursuit in your life? (i.e., sports, school, job, a person, etc.)

OR

What do you think or feel when you hear the word “holiness”?

Chapter Summary

- Pursuing holiness can sound old fashioned in a world where the norm is to do whatever we want, when we want, with whom we want.
- Pursuing holiness can also sound impossible when so many feel trapped and defeated by sin. Plus, since everyone messes up and the cross of Christ covers it all anyway, why should we get uptight?
- Holiness matters—it is core to God's character. It's been part of God's intention since creation. It allows us to walk in freedom, bring joy to God and be fully engaged in God's work.
- The pursuit of holiness isn't optional for Jesus followers. This pursuit is hard. There's a battle raging within us, and our adversary is seeking to tempt and trap us.
- Jesus was tempted, but He didn't give in. He was without sin.
- The cross isn't a free pass to keep on sinning. Sin isn't private, and sin often leads to collateral damage.
- We need to abide in Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit in our pursuit.

Chapter Reflections



Light Bulb:

What stands out or shines from the chapter?
A new thought? An illustration? A quote?



Question Mark:

What was hard to understand?
What's a question you would like to explore?



An Arrow:

What do you need to apply to your life?

Discussion with Questions

1. Why does holiness matter? See if you can list at least five good reasons.
2. Are you more likely not to see the evil one where he's working or to think you see him working when he's not? How do you seek to be alert but not give him too much credit?
3. Can you think of any examples in your life where you seek to meet legitimate needs in illegitimate ways? If so, does this work?
4. Materialism, sex outside of marriage and power are three common temptations. How are you tempted in these areas? How do you seek to pursue holiness and guard from sin in these areas?
5. What is your best advice for resisting temptation and pursuing holiness instead? Why?

Prayer Ideas

Read Psalm 139:23-24 and give some time for people to listen to God's response and search their hearts. Encourage people to respond to God in confession either privately or out loud. To end this time, read 1 John 1:9 and Romans 8:1 as reminders of God's forgiveness.

Pray the prayer on page 92 together.

What's Next?

Determine...

- When and where will we meet next time?
- What is our homework?
- Who is on to help?

Chapter 9 - Find Rhythms Like Him (pp. 95-110)

Starter Question

What's one regular rhythm or practice you do that brings you life?

OR

What's a good or bad habit you have formed or a habit you want to form?

Chapter Summary

- Too many people feel frazzled, frenetic, frayed, fatigued or foggy because of nonstop demands, constant changes, complex decisions and distractions.
- Many people point to “perfect life balance” as the solution, but it doesn't work and isn't biblical.
- Instead of pursuing “perfect life balance,” Jesus lived out a rhythm of being fully engaged and then withdrawing to rest and restore. This helped Jesus have great clarity, surprising focus and deep confidence.
- Developing spiritual, physical, mental and work rhythms can bring us life, focus and peace.
- Just like New Yorkers have Central Park for their restoration, we need to cultivate space to slow down, listen to God, hear what's going on in our soul, have fun, deepen relationships and create memories.

Chapter Reflections



Light Bulb:

What stands out or shines from the chapter?
A new thought? An illustration? A quote?



Question Mark:

What was hard to understand?
What's a question you would like to explore?



An Arrow:

What do you need to apply to your life?

Discussion with Questions

1. Can you relate to feeling frazzled, frenetic, frayed, fatigued or in a mental fog? How rare or regular are these feelings for you?
2. What's your reaction to moving from seeking "perfect life balance" to seeking Jesus-centered sustainable rhythms?
3. What specific rhythms do you already incorporate spiritually, physically, mentally and during work? What is helping? What isn't helping?
4. What are some new ideas or next steps for further developing your spiritual, physical, mental and work rhythms?
5. How does the Central Park metaphor of creating and guarding rhythms and space for restoration speak to you? How could this help you be more centered on Jesus and bless your life?
6. What, if anything, is holding you back from developing restorative rhythms?

Prayer Ideas

Read Matthew 11:28-30 and invite a time of response that focuses on repenting from our own drivenness and embracing Jesus' invitation to rest in Him.

Pray the prayer on page 109 together.

What's Next?

Determine...

- When and where will we meet next time?
- What is our homework?
- Who is on to help?

Chapter 10 - Develop Like Him

(pp. 111-124)

Starter Question

Who is someone God has used to help you grow and develop? Share a bit about this person and what they did to make a difference in your life.

OR

What's one area you want to develop more in your own life?

Chapter Summary

- The chapter starts with the story of a birthday party for a 100-year-old man named Evon. Dozens of people shared about how Evon developed them and made an impact on their lives.
- Developing people was central to Jesus' life, and the call to make disciples was core to His mission.
- You don't need a formal role or to be perfect in order to develop others.
- To help identify whom to invest in, you can pray, look for who is already in your proximity, identify people with priority needs and with potential.
- Jesus lived out seven principles in how he developed his disciples:
 1. Love people
 2. Pray regularly
 3. Be an example
 4. Provide perspective
 5. Encourage lavishly
 6. Teach
 7. Empower

Chapter Reflections



Light Bulb:

What stands out or shines from the chapter?
A new thought? An illustration? A quote?



Question Mark:

What was hard to understand?
What's a question you would like to explore?



An Arrow:

What do you need to apply to your life?

Discussion with Questions

1. What do you think Evon was thinking and feeling as he listened to his mentees at his one hundredth birthday party?
2. Whom are you currently investing in? Whom could you help develop? Work through the four Ps if you need help figuring out whom to invest in.
3. Reflect on the seven principles Jesus, Paul and Evon lived out. Which ones would you say you are living out? Which one or two could you take to the next level? Here's the list again: (1) Love People, (2) Pray Regularly, (3) Be an Example, (4) Provide Perspective, (5) Encourage Lavishly, (6) Teach and (7) Empower.
4. What are two to three next steps for you to be more intentional in developing others? Are there any ideas from the practical idea list that you want to implement?
5. Who has helped to develop you? Create a list and consider writing a thank you note. Share the difference they have made and give some specific examples or stories. These notes can be deeply meaningful, and they often arrive at a much-needed moment. (If the person has already passed from this life, consider writing the note to the person's family, e.g., "I want to thank you for sharing your mom with me.")

Prayer Ideas

Take some time to pray with thanksgiving for the people who have been developers for the group. Pray God's blessing and protection.

Pray the prayer on page 123 together.

What's Next?

Determine...

- When and where will we meet next time?
- What is our homework?
- Who is on to help?

Chapter 11 - Seek His Kingdom

(pp. 127-136)

Starter Question

What's a dream you have for your city, your country or the world?

OR

What are some of the pieces that make up Jesus' vision for the world?

Chapter Summary

- Jesus calls us to seek and build His Kingdom in the here and now.
- The starting point is recognizing and submitting to Him as the King of kings.
- Jesus read Isaiah 61:1-2 to cast His Kingdom vision. (Consider reading the passage.)
- Each and every single person matters in God's Kingdom.
- Whatever you do Monday to Saturday, everyone has a role to play in God's Kingdom. Your everyday activities carry weight in God's Kingdom.
- God's purposes are so big that no one can do what needs to be done on their own. Collaboration and cooperation need to be the rule, not the exception for God's people.

Chapter Reflections



Light Bulb:

What stands out or shines from the chapter?
A new thought? An illustration? A quote?



Question Mark:

What was hard to understand?
What's a question you would like to explore?



An Arrow:

What do you need to apply to your life?

Discussion with Questions

1. Does Jesus' mission to bring good news to the poor, freedom for prisoners, sight for the blind, hope for the oppressed and the proclamation of God's favor inspire you? How?
2. What hinders you from being more of a kingdom seeker?
3. Where do you see people on the margins? Are you already responding or, if not, what are some next steps you can take to respond?
4. Why is collaborating and cooperating important for kingdom seeking? In what ways is this happening in your life? What are some practical ways you could work more with others to further God's purposes?

Prayer Ideas

Since each member of the group has a role in God's work in the world, pray a commissioning blessing over each person—their role in a family, neighborhood, school, workplace, church, community, etc.

Read Isaiah 61:1-2 and pray for God's heart to be realized in our world.

Pray the prayer on page 136 together.

What's Next?

Determine...

- When and where will we meet next time?
- What is our homework?
- Who is on to help?

Chapter 12 - Point the Lost to Him (pp. 137-147)

Starter Question

What was/is your worst/hardest subject in school? Why?

OR

Have you ever been lost? What was it like? How did you find your way?

Chapter Summary

- Jesus tells three stories in Luke 15 with the same point: lost people matter to God. Jesus came to “seek and save the lost.”
- The term “lost people” may make you cringe, but the term isn’t used to shame or judge. Instead, it relates the precious value of each person to God.
- Anyone who follows Jesus is automatically appointed as one of His ambassadors.
- Our example in life, words and actions can point people to the gate of Jesus.

Chapter Reflections



Light Bulb:

What stands out or shines from the chapter?
A new thought? An illustration? A quote?



Question Mark:

What was hard to understand?
What's a question you would like to explore?



An Arrow:

What do you need to apply to your life?

Discussion with Questions

1. What do the three “lost” parables teach you about God’s heart toward people who are spiritually lost? (You can reread the parables in Luke 15 to refresh your memory.)
2. Why does God not want anyone left out of His Kingdom? Why do you want others to know and follow Jesus?
3. Is it right to share your faith with someone of no faith or a different faith in hopes that they will know and follow Christ? Why or why not?
4. Are you currently embracing or hesitating in your role as one of God’s ambassadors pointing people to Jesus? What’s working? What’s holding you back?

Prayer Ideas

Read and pray Colossians 4:2-6.

Share the names of people you long to see follow Jesus. Pray.

Read the prayer on page 147 together.

What's Next?

Determine...

- When and where will we meet next time?
- What is our homework?
- Who is on to help?

Chapter 13 - Build Bridges to Him (pp. 149-162)

Starter Question

Do you have a favorite (or least favorite) bridge? Describe it and share why.

OR

What's a picture from the Gospels of Jesus with people that is meaningful to you? Why?

Chapter Summary

- Jesus was constantly breaking down barriers and building bridges to connect people to God.
- In John 4, Jesus' interaction with the Samaritan woman broke down cultural, racial, gender and religious barriers.
- Jesus doesn't just build bridges, His sinless life, death on the cross and triumph over the grave make Him the bridge.
- To join Jesus in His mission of bridge building, we first need to see the people around us. We will never look into the eyes of another person whom God does not love enough for Jesus to have died for.
- Most Jesus followers don't know their neighbors. There is a great opportunity right outside our doors!
- It is important to develop "third places" outside of work and home where we can interact with people who aren't following Jesus.
- Being 10% more friendly with people in everyday interactions is a practical way to build bridges.
- Listening for people's deeper needs, our own example and telling our story are three more ways we can be bridge builders.

Chapter Reflections



Light Bulb:

What stands out or shines from the chapter?
A new thought? An illustration? A quote?



Question Mark:

What was hard to understand?
What's a question you would like to explore?



An Arrow:

What do you need to apply to your life?

Discussion with Questions

1. What are some reasons why it may be hard to really see people and get to know their deeper needs?
2. The book, *The Art of Neighboring*, suggests drawing a tic-tac-toe grid. This grid represents your neighborhood. Mark your home and then mark the names of all the neighbors you know around your home. Of the eight empty spots, how many names do you know? Of those names, do you know facts about each neighbor? Do you know deep values or heart cries for each neighbor?
3. Do you have a “third place”? Describe it and specify whether or not you’ve been able to be intentional as an ambassador with Jesus. If you don’t have a third place, can you think of a place that could work?
4. Are you up for doing a one-week trial of being 10% more friendly? What could this look like?
5. What’s your story? Identify one significant thing Jesus has done in your life. Whether you look back to long ago or last week, how would your life be different if Jesus hadn’t done that one thing or been there? What’s the deep need that Jesus addressed in you that others might relate to?
6. Whom are you not “giving up” on to come to faith? Pray for this person now.

Prayer Ideas

Share who helped build the bridge of faith for members in the group and thank God for these people, e.g., their hearts, love, faithfulness, perseverance, boldness, prayerfulness, etc.

Share the names of people you long to see follow Jesus. Pray.

Pray the prayer on page 161 together.

What's Next?

Determine...

- When and where will we meet next time?
- What is our homework? Note: You may wish to plan to do both Chapter 13 and the Conclusion next time.
- Who is on to help?

Chapter 14 - Pray for Others to Follow Him + Conclusion

(pp. 163-172) + (pp. 173-177)

Starter Question

Can you think of an unexpected time or place when you prayed? Briefly share about it.

OR

Share about someone you know about who is faithful in prayer.

Chapter Summary

- A story is shared about a large youth event where the hosts prayed that God would fill every single seat in the auditorium with a young person who needed to hear the gospel. They even prayed for each toilet seat!
- Prayer was central to Jesus' life and ministry. It's also important for leading more to Jesus.
- We need to be faithful in prayer even when we can't see what God is doing from our vantage point. Prayer is a way to partner with God in His work in the world.
- Often our prayers can be focused mostly on ourselves. To be Jesus centered, we need to make praying for lost people a priority, not an afterthought.
- Colossians 4:2-6 tells us to "devote yourselves to prayer..."
- Over a dozen practical ideas are shared to turn up the temperature on prayer for more people to know and follow Jesus.

Chapter Reflections



Light Bulb:

What stands out or shines from the chapter?
A new thought? An illustration? A quote?



Question Mark:

What was hard to understand?
What's a question you would like to explore?



An Arrow:

What do you need to apply to your life?

Discussion with Questions

1. If all the people you prayed to come to faith last week did indeed come to faith, how many people would have come to faith? How do you feel about your answer?
2. What hinders your prayers for people who don't yet follow Jesus? What helps your prayers?
3. The last section of this chapter shares a number of practical ideas to help you pray for lost people. Is there an idea that you would like to start implementing? Which one?
4. Take a few moments and start praying right now for people who don't yet follow Jesus. Identify three people or people groups who don't yet follow Jesus and pray for them now.
5. If you also read the Conclusion for this meeting, then ask for some reflections on the book overall. Where do you think God wants you to focus more: being led more by Jesus, living and leading more like Jesus or leading more to Jesus? What are your next steps?

Prayer Ideas

Look up the “Unreached of the Day” or “Operation World” app and share with the group. Then pray for the group identified.

Share the names of people you long to see follow Jesus. Pray.

Pray the prayer on page 171 together.

Consider closing with the Opening Prayer at the start of the book, and just omit the second paragraph.

What's Next?

- How can you continue to encourage one another to center your lives on Jesus?
- Will the group continue to meet?

About Steve A. Brown

Steve is husband to Lea and dad to three teens—Luke, Ainslea and Lauren. Based near Vancouver, British Columbia, Steve develops Jesus-centered leaders around the world as president of Arrow Leadership.

Communicating, coaching and creating Jesus-centered resources are Steve's heartbeat. In addition to *Jesus Centered - Focusing on Jesus in a Distracted World*, he's the author of *Leading Me: Eight Key Practices for a Christian Leader's Most Important Assignment*, *Great Questions for Leading Well* and free monthly e-resources at **www.sharpeningleaders.com**.

With experience in local church, denominational, parachurch and marketplace roles, Steve has also earned degrees from Wilfrid Laurier University (HBBA), Tyndale Seminary (MDiv) and Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary (DMin). In addition, he's thankful to be a graduate of the Arrow Leadership Program™.

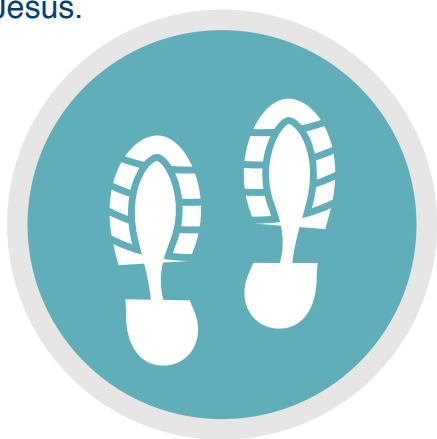
You can connect directly with Steve at **www.steveabrown.com** or **www.jesuscenteredbook.com**.



About Arrow Leadership

Our world needs Jesus-centered leaders! For more than thirty years, Arrow Leadership has focused on developing leaders who are led more by Jesus, lead more like Jesus and lead more to Jesus.

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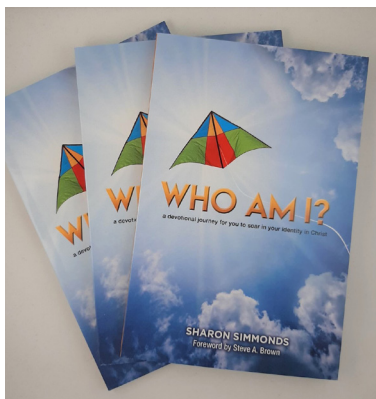
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