



Leading Small Groups Bible Study Preparation Worksheet



Quick Start Guide 5

This is a worked example based on the Quick Start Guide to Bible Study Preparation.

What to study?

Group of new Christians—some have said they are getting opposition from friends/family about their new faith and are tempted to say nothing or withdraw from Christian activities for the sake of peace.

Choose the Bible passage

Matthew 10:26-39 - Jesus tells his disciples that they should trust in God who values them greatly and that they should expect opposition even from their own family members.

Understand Matthew 10:26-39 first for yourself

How does the Bible passage fit into the book it is taken from?

The disciples are learning from Jesus as he goes about his earthly ministry—they are especially learning that being a disciple is not easy! Jesus has warned them of this but they have yet to see him die on the cross and rise again.

How does the Bible passage fit into the overall storyline of the Bible?

This happens between the incarnation and Jesus dying on the cross—it is a time of amazing miracles as Jesus reveals he is the Son of God but also anticipation of Jesus dying for our sins.

Notes on the details—what did you notice that you didn't before?

V.27 is clear that the disciples are to be bold in speaking of Jesus. V.36 says a disciple of Jesus will have enemies in their family—for the disciples who came from a close family based culture this would have been shocking.

Who is involved? Why are they saying/doing that?

Jesus is speaking to his disciples (not to unbelievers or seekers) – he wants to prepare and encourage them.

When and where did this happen? (how was the world back then different/similar to now?)

First century Israel (occupied by Romans) amongst Jews. They thought of Romans and other unbelievers in God as enemies. They had close family ties which were also bound up in their religious beliefs as Jews. We think of enemies as people who we don't like. We don't have such close family ties but they are still important to us.

So what was going on in the passage?

Jesus was saying that the disciples need to understand that for the kingdom of God, the enemies of the kingdom are those who do not believe—even those closest to them but in the face of this huge challenge they are to trust God and follow Jesus even if it means losing what they had held most dear.

What about their need of Christ/what Christ does for them is the same for us in our broken and sinful world?

We need to follow Christ just as much as they did and we need his help to do that.

Over the page
for the next step

What does it mean for us today? (What is the same/different/equivalent?)

Some of us may not have good family relationships because we may live further apart but we often have close friendships which are nearly if not as strong as family bonds. For some of us family may be just as important to us now as it was then. The disciples' families would have been Jews and if they rejected Jesus it was because they did not recognise him as the Messiah. Our families/friends reject Jesus because they don't believe in God and don't want his morality—they want to be free to do what they want. They may be afraid we are joining a cult or are becoming 'holier than thou' or are no longer fun because we don't join in their sinful behaviour. They may feel challenged by the change they see in us. They may make fun of our beliefs because that's what other people do...

Prepare the Bible study for the group

Choose one focus (state in one sentence)

Our 'nearest and dearest' may oppose our faith in Jesus but He wants us to follow Him without being afraid of what they think or say.

Prepare the questions

1. (Before reading the passage). What opposition have you experienced to your faith in Jesus and from who?
2. Who is speaking in this passage and who is he speaking too? (seek a deeper answer than just 'the disciples')
3. What do you imagine family ties were like back then? How would religion have affected these?
4. How big a challenge would it have been for them to love Jesus more than their family?
5. Nevertheless, what does Jesus expect the disciples to do in verse 27 and 32? (speak of Jesus)
6. Jesus says the disciples should take up their cross (remember this was before he died!) which was the most horrific way to be executed back then—what does this say about the cost of being a disciple?
7. Some of us may not be especially close to our family but we may have close friends who don't believe. What are we tempted to do when they oppose our faith in Jesus?
8. How can we take comfort in how much more God loves us than anyone else we know? Look at verses 29-32.
9. Being a Christian involves starting a new life in Christ – in verse 39, what does it mean in your experience to have the life of Christ in you? Follow up question: have you discovered a deeper awareness of this in the face of opposition?
10. How can we allow this life of Christ in us to lovingly overflow to those close to us in what we do and say?