

BURN THE SHIPS "COURAGEOUS GRACE" MATTHEW 9:9-13

This Week's Core Competency

Humanity – I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior. John 3:16, *For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.*

What if we changed the creed for the Core Competency Humanity to: I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus to be their Savior *and Teacher*? Perhaps that would address the current division between being a Christian and being a disciple, the division that makes *learning from Jesus how to live your life like he would live it if he were you* an afterthought. Currently we seem to think that discipleship is for super Christians only. Dallas Willard debunks this notion in his thought provoking, insightful book, *The Great Omission*. He writes: "The word 'disciple' occurs 269 times in the New Testament. 'Christian' is found three times and was first introduced to refer precisely to disciples of Jesus—in a situation where it was no longer possible to regard them as a sect of the Jews (Acts 11:26). The New Testament is a book about disciples, by disciples, and for disciples of Jesus Christ" (3).

Unfortunately, we talk as if once we're saved, following Christ is optional. He goes on to observe:

The New Testament is a book about disciples, by disciples, and for disciples of Jesus Christ.

– Dallas Willard

"For at least several decades the churches of the Western world have not made discipleship a condition of being a Christian. One is not required to be, or to intend to be, a disciple in order to become a Christian, and one may remain a Christian without any signs of progress toward or in discipleship" (4).

And in a sense rightfully so; salvation is not obtained by works, and that which is not obtained by works in the first place, can hardly be lost by the absence of works in the next place. BUT that does not mean that following Christ as his disciple is optional, any more than obedience to Jesus is optional, or spiritual formation is optional, or sanctification is optional.

Willard continues: "That, of course, is no secret. The best of current literature on discipleship either states outright or assumes that the Christian may not be a disciple at all—even after a lifetime as a church member. A widely used book, *The Lost Art of Disciple Making*, presents the Christian life on three possible levels: the convert, the disciple, and the worker. There is a process for bringing persons to each level, it states. Evangelizing produces converts, establishing or 'follow-up' produces disciples, and equipping produces workers. Disciples and workers are said to be able to renew the cycle by evangelizing, while only workers can make disciples through follow-up.

"The picture of 'church life' presented by this book conforms generally to American Christian practice. But does that model not make discipleship something entirely optional? Clearly it does, just as whether the disciple will become a

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'worker' is an option. Vast numbers of converts today thus exercise the option permitted by the message they hear: they choose not to become—or at least do not choose to become—disciples of Jesus Christ. Churches are filled with 'undisciplined disciples,' as Jess Moody has called them. Of course there is in reality no such thing. Most problems in contemporary churches can be explained by the fact that members have never decided to follow Christ.

"In this situation, little good results from insisting that Christ is also supposed to be Lord. To present his Lordship as an option leaves it squarely in the category of the special wheels, tires, and stereo equipment. You can do without it. And it is—alas!—far from clear what you would do with it. Obedience and training in obedience form no intelligible doctrinal or practical unity with the 'salvation' presented in recent version of the gospel.

"A different model of life was instituted in the 'Great Commission' Jesus left for his people. The first goal he set for the early church was to use his all-encompassing power and authority to make disciples without regard to ethnic distinctions—from all 'nations' (Matthew 28:19) . . . But in place of Christ's plan, historical drift has substituted 'Make converts (to a particular faith and practice) and baptize them into church membership'" (*The Great Omission*, 4-5).

Discipleship isn't for super Christians only; it's for every Christian because Jesus is every Christian's Savior and Teacher.

For Discussion

Rather than tell people who are Christians that they should *become* disciples, perhaps we should tell them because they *are* disciples they *should be* disciples in the same way we tell them because they *are* holy they *should be* holy. Make sense to you?

day 1 ENCOUNTER – read God's word to put yourself in touch with him.

Matthew 9:9-13

9 As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector's booth. "Follow me," he told him, and Matthew got up and followed him.

10 While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house, many tax collectors and "sinners" came and ate with him and his disciples. 11 When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and 'sinners'?"

12 On hearing this, Jesus said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. 13 But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

Cf., another translation

9 As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax booth. "Follow me," he said to him. And he got up and followed him. 10 As Jesus was having a meal in Matthew's house, many tax collectors and sinners came and ate with Jesus and his disciples. 11 When the Pharisees saw this they said to his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" 12 When Jesus heard this he said, "Those who are healthy don't need a physician, but those who are sick do. 13 Go and learn what this saying means: 'I want mercy and not sacrifice.' For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners." (NET)

EXAMINE – what the passage says before you decide what it means.

- * Circle "there" in v. 9.
- * Circle "Matthew" in v. 9.
- * Underline "tax collector's booth" in v. 9.
- * Highlight "follow me" in v. 9.
- * Put a forward slash at the end of v. 9 indicating a temporal break.
- * Bracket "tax collectors and sinners" in v. 10.
- * Underline "ate with him" in v. 10.
- * Circle "saw" in v. 11.
- * Box "but" indicating *contrast* in vv. 12, 13 (2x).
- * Circle "learn" in v. 13.
- * Bracket the quotation from the OT in v. 13.
- * Circle "the righteous" in v. 13.

day **2**

EXPLORE – the answer to these questions to better understand what the passage means.

Consult the explanation of the message and the notes to follow if you need help.

1. "There" is *where*? Put the calling of Matthew in its context.
2. Jesus drafts Matthew to join his team of disciples. Do the other four team members approve? Explain.
3. What are Jesus and his disciples doing in Matthew's house? Put what happens next in its context.
4. Describe Matthew's cadre of dinner guests.
5. Why would the Pharisees care who Jesus is eating with?
6. Describe the *tone* of the Pharisee's question. They're not just asking Jesus' disciples for information, are they?
7. Do Jesus' statements in verses 12 and 13 mean that the Pharisees do *not* need him? Explain.
8. Put the point Jesus is making by quoting Hosea 6:6 in your own words.
9. **Discussion:** Discipleship is an important theme in Matthew's Gospel. Talk about what he wants his readers to learn about following Jesus from this passage.

day 3

EXAMINE – an explanation of the message to better understand the meaning of the passage.

Matthew 9:9-13 consists of two parts: 1) the calling of Matthew (v. 9); and 2) the dinner controversy at Matthew's house (vv. 10-13). So far in Matthew's Gospel, Jesus has called Simon Peter and Andrew his brother, as well as the brothers James and John to "follow" him (4:18-22). Jesus has other disciples (i.e., followers) to be sure (8:18-22); theirs, however, are the first four names on the list of twelve mentioned for the first time in 10:1-4. And now Matthew makes five.

Matthew's calling is unremarkable; it fits the pattern of the previous four. Jesus saw him, told him, "Follow me," and immediately, "Matthew got up and *followed* him" (v. 9). What's remarkable is *where* Matthew was and *what* he was doing there when Jesus called him. He was "sitting at the tax collector's booth" presumably collecting taxes on behalf of Herod Antipas. The very idea that Jesus would draft him to be on his team of disciples is mindboggling. One writer's comment on this is truly a lesson in understatement: "The expected tax revenue was a heavy toll to extract from the people of Galilee, who already had a hard life. So Matthew is likely not well respected in the region. In fact, the population probably considers him a traitor, selling out his own people to Roman occupation and rule" (Michael J. Wilkins, *NIV Application Commentary: Matthew*, 364).

What's also remarkable is the fact that Matthew would leave such a lucrative position to follow Jesus. His immediate response suggests that, like the four, he has likely been under the influence of Jesus for some time. The same writer comments further: "For Matthew discipleship has an immediate cost, for collecting taxes not only filled the coffers of the governor but also meant a lucrative income for the tax collector (cf. Zacchaeus, Luke 19:1-10). A fisherman could always go back to fishing, but it is less likely that a tax collector could return to the booth. But our author doesn't expand on what that sacrifice entails, perhaps a subtle indication of the identity of the humble Matthew as author of this first Gospel" (365). One thing's for sure, Matthew's calling and response are entirely out of the ordinary and result in nothing short of miraculous turnaround in his life.

It doesn't take long before Matthew is seen doing

what followers of Jesus do, making disciples. The tax collector turned disciple maker hosts a dinner for friends at his home and invites Jesus to be his guest of honor. Apparently it was no small affair. "Many tax collectors and 'sinners' came and ate with him and his disciples" (v. 10). We can be reasonably sure that no Pharisees were on Matthew's guest list and absolutely sure that had there been, none of them would have accepted his invitation. Exactly how and exactly when the Pharisees learned of it is hard to say. Perhaps they noticed the crowd of unsavory types gathering at Matthew's house, or perhaps they heard about the shindig shortly thereafter simply because word travels fast in a small community. In any case, once they learned of it, they were appalled. Tax collectors were traitorous scum, and "sinners" were just that, *sinners*. What's more, they were not just irreligious types—Jews who were lax in their observance of food laws, tithes, and ritual baths, etc.—but grievous sinners—people who were guilty of flagrant moral offenses as measured by any Jewish standard. To eat with such people was beyond the pale. It would be tantamount to condoning such behavior, and on top of that, it would render the person unclean.

But rather than question Jesus about his scandalous behavior, the Pharisees question his disciples. Their question carries with it an implicit rebuke, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and 'sinners'?" Jesus overhears their question and answers by clarifying his mission. He explains that he eats with tax collectors and "sinners" because they need him just like the sick need a doctor. They need mercy, and he has come to show mercy. Put differently, he has come to call sinners, sick people, not the righteous, healthy people. This implies that he pleases God while the Pharisees don't, because God desires mercy while they desire religiosity. So he tells them to "go and learn," a standard charge delivered by rabbis to their disciples. According to one commentator, "Jesus is dealing the Pharisees a double rebuke by treating them first as learners rather than teachers and second as beginners who have yet to learn Scripture correctly. His logic is impeccable; the Pharisees have no reply" (Craig L. Blomberg, *Matthew*, NAC, 157). By the way, it would be a

mistake to conclude on the basis of verses 12 and 13 that references to "the healthy" and to "the righteous" imply that the Pharisees do not need Jesus or that he has not come for them, too.

Paradoxically, they are among those who need Jesus the most although they are the last to recognize it.

The Message of the Passage

Every Christian is to follow Jesus and to make disciples by introducing others to him and his teaching.

day **4** **EMBRACE** – how God spoke to you in his word.

Our desire is to not be merely hearers of the word, but doers of the word as James teaches in James 1:22. Reflect on 3 "living questions" to apply what you have learned this week.

- **Journal your thoughts on the passage:**

- Write about how God is making himself known to you . . .

- Write about how God wants to change you . . .

- Write about how God is calling you to change your world . . .

notes **N** STUDY – the commentaries to answer the questions.

- v. 9 **There** A reference to Jesus' "own town" (v. 1) where "a paralytic lying on a mat" (v. 2) was brought to him, i.e., Capernaum. These words are "general and transitional" (cf., v. 27; Hagner, 237).
- v. 9 **Matthew** "Only Matthew uses the name 'Matthew' here (but cf. Mark 3:18; Luke 6:15; Acts 1:13). Mark and Luke call this disciple Levi. It was common for first-century Jews to have two or three names. Sometimes more than one name was Jewish; more commonly one was Jewish and one Greek (cf. Saul-Paul). The name 'Levi' harks back to the third son of Jacob (Gen 29:34). 'Matthew' comes from the Aramaic for *gift of God*" (Blomberg, 155).
- v. 9 **tax collector's booth** "Matthew's tax booth probably stood at some place where the Via Maris passed close by the lakeshore on the outskirts of Capernaum. He may have collected tolls from the commercial traffic traveling through this area or taxes for the fish caught on the Sea of Galilee, for both of which Herod Antipas was responsible" (Michael J. Wilkins, NIV Application Commentary: Matthew, 364). One commentator thinks "this was in fact an open-air tax market where tax farmers such as Matthew would have been selling tax collecting privileges, tax lots, to others" (Hagner, 237).
- v. 9 **follow me** See 4:19 (cf., vv, 20-22); 8:22 (cf., v. 19). "It is possible that this [is] a dramatic first encounter between Jesus and Matthew and that the forcefulness of Jesus' authoritative person and call demands immediate obedience. But more likely this is the culmination of a prior relationship, similar to the call of the two sets of brothers-Peter and Andrew, James and John (see comments 4:18-22). The wording of Matthew's call is somewhat different from that used of the four, but it carries the same connotation, and the wording used to describe his response is identical—he 'followed him'" (365). "This is paradigmatic discipleship for Matthew: the command followed by immediate obedience (cf. 8:22)" (Hagner, 238).
- v. 10 **while** There's a temporal break between verse 9 and 10. "On some later occasion, Matthew throws a party for Jesus (cf. Luke 5:29, in which the antecedent of 'his' [i.e., Levi's house] is less ambiguous than in the Greek of Matthew" (Blomberg 155-56).
- v. 10 **tax collectors** "Tax collectors, or tax farmers, in that culture were despised as greedy, self serving, and parasitic. They grew rich at the expense of the poor by extorting from them more than was required by their superiors in order to fill their own pockets. They furthermore often compromised regulations for purity in their handling of pagan money and their dealings with Gentiles. That Jesus should call a tax collector to be his disciple must have been in itself scandalous" (Hagner, 238). "In Palestine tax collectors were employed as representatives of the Roman governing authorities, collecting the prescribed duties and generally seeing to public order. They usually came from the native population, so that they knew the local people and local customs. They were required to collect a certain amount of tax money for the Roman authorities, and whatever extra they collected constituted their own commission. A tendency to excessive extortion made them despised and hated by their own people (cf. Luke 19:8), and they became proverbial of a person with a self seeking outlook (Matt. 5:46) . . . The derision that many felt generally for tax collectors was aggravated because they were regarded as ceremonially unclean through their continual contact with Gentiles and because they worked on the Sabbath" (Wilkins 364, 367).
- v. 10 **"sinners"** "The NIV puts 'sinners' in quotation marks because first-century Judaism used the term in at least two specialized senses: (1) *Am-ha-arets* ('the people of the land'), i.e., the vast majority of Jews who did not follow the stricter sectarian regulations of the Pharisees; and (2) particularly grievous sinners—the most criminal and disreputable types of people in society. Here 'sinners' carries this second sense, since Jesus and his disciples themselves were *am-ha-arets* and would have provoked no objection simply by eating with their own kind. The combination of 'tax collectors' with 'sinners,' 'prostitutes' or 'Gentiles' ('pagan[s]') recurs throughout the Gospels (Matt 11:19; 18:17; 21:31-32; Luke 15:1). Such references became idiomatic, demonstrating how unwelcome the tax collectors were to the Pharisees" (Blomberg, 156).
- v. 10 **ate** "In the minds of the Pharisees, for Jesus to share a meal with these types of persons [i.e., tax collectors and sinners] indicates that he includes them within his own fellowship; it also suggests to them that he condones their behavior" (Wilkins, 367).
- v. 11 **saw** "The Pharisees' criticism may well have occurred later. They would not likely have attended such a party, but word in the close-knit communities of ancient Judaism would have spread at once, though it is possible they might have been watching not too far outside Matthew's home. 'Saw,' however, does not necessarily imply literal vision" (Blomberg, 156).
- v. 13 **mercy, not sacrifice** Cf., Hos 6:6. "'Not X but Y' is a Semitic idiom for 'more Y than X.' Hosea did not abolish the sacrificial cult but graphically emphasized the priority of interpersonal relationships over religious ritual" (Blomberg, 157). "' . . . and not' here can mean 'more than'" (Hagner, 239).
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Family Talk

Encouragement from one parent's heart to another

Wouldn't it be boring if we all looked and acted the same? Diversity is a beautiful gift from God! Each one of us is uniquely created. Some of us have green eyes or brown skin. We may be tall or have big ears. Some of us are outgoing while others are reserved. The Body of Christ is filled with a variety of people and we all work together to accomplish God's purpose on earth. But what about those outside our church? What about those who not only look different but act different? As parents, we have a responsibility to teach our kids how to think about those who are different from us. I need to, first of all, examine my attitude towards others. Do I judge or have compassion? If I am following Jesus' example, I should have compassion on others regardless of how "different" they are. In our text, Jesus ate at the home of a despised tax collector with other sinners. It is a humble reminder that we are all sinners. There are only two types of people in the world - those who have responded to God's call on their lives and those who need to. It's about grace. "While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Ro 5:8). Be intentional about teaching your children to see others through the compassionate, full-of-grace eyes of Jesus.

What Does The Bible Say

Read: Read Matthew 9:9-13

1. What did Jesus ask Matthew to do?
2. What did Matthew do?
3. Why were the Pharisees upset?

What Do You Think

1. What did Jesus mean by saying it's "not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick"?
2. Who do you know that needs to know about Jesus?

What R U Going To Do

Look for opportunities this week to serve or pray for people who are really different from you. Keep a prayer log and keep praying for them. We serve a mighty God who answers prayer and He wants everyone to know and follow Him!

MEMORY TIME

Core Comp

Humanity - I believe God loves everyone and we all need a Savior.

Memory Verse

Philippians 3:10a - *I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings.*

KIDPIX COUPON

I memorized CC ____ and Verse _____. Family completed **Say** _____ **Think** _____ **Do** _____

Child's name _____ Grade ____ Parent's signature _____

Earn tokens by completing the Bible study portion of this page.
Questions: Kids@pantego.org

30 CORE COMPETENCIES

10 CORE BELIEFS

Trinity 2 Corinthians 13:14

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Salvation By Grace Ephesians 2:8-9

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

Authority of the Bible 2 Timothy 3:16-17

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Personal God Psalm 121:1-2

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Identity in Christ John 1:12

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Church Ephesians 4:15-16

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Humanity John 3:16

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Compassion Psalm 82:3-4

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

Eternity John 14:1-4

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

Stewardship 1 Timothy 6:17-19

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

10 CORE PRACTICES

Worship Psalm 95:1-7

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Prayer Psalm 66:16-20

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Bible Study Hebrews 4:12

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-mindedness Matthew 6:33

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts Romans 12:4-6

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Biblical Community Acts 2:44-47

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Giving Away My Time Colossians 3:17

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Money

2 Corinthians 8:7

I give away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Faith Ephesians

6:19-20

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Life Romans 12:1

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

10 CORE VIRTUES

Joy John 15:11

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace Philippians 4:6-7

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself, and others.

Faithfulness Proverbs 3:3-4

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Self-Control Titus 2:11-13

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Humility Philippians 2:3, 4

I choose to esteem others above myself.

Love 1 John 4:10-12

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Patience Proverbs 14:29

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness 1 Thess. 5:15

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

Gentleness Philippians 4:5

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Hope Hebrews 6:19-20

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.

About the Authors

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Wendy Hollabaugh (B.S.W. University of Texas at Arlington) is the Children's Minister at Pantego Bible Church. Wendy has over ten years of experience in Children's Ministry. She has a passion for leading families to connect with God and each other. She enjoys creating compelling environments where kids fall in love with God and His Truth. Wendy and her husband, Greg, are also involved in their own personal youth ministry as they are training their three teenagers, Hannah, Aaron and Noah.



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