

# FEARLESS CONVERSATION™

## WHY IS JESUS SO RADICAL?

DISCUSSIONS FROM  
MATTHEW AND LUKE

PARTICIPANT GUIDE

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# LESSON 3: WHAT DOES IT REALLY MEAN TO FOLLOW JESUS?

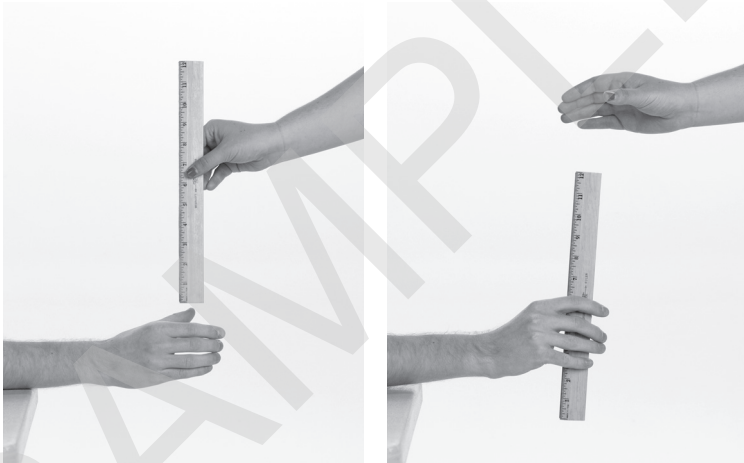
## GREETING

### BEHIND THE SCENES

When we meet Jesus in Matthew 4:18, he's left Nazareth for Capernaum, and then he continues through Galilee. Verse 23 indicates he taught in synagogues and healed every sickness among the people. His ministry wasn't reserved for those who had the most teaching. It wasn't reserved for Jews. He reached beyond the expectations of others as he connected with the Gentiles. People from many surrounding areas reached out to him, trusting him to teach and heal (verse 25). Jerusalem and Judea were Jewish regions, while Decapolis was primarily Gentiles, and Galilee was a region with a mixture of Jews and Gentiles. Jesus attracted and ministered to them all. He walked among all classes of people. He healed every disease (verse 24). Jesus didn't meet people's expectations. He exceeded them.

How does this challenge the social boundaries of life today?

Extend your arm on a flat surface with your wrist extended just beyond the edge with the index finger and thumb positioned as if they're ready to clasp together and grab something. Your partner will hold the ruler (or other object provided by your leader) vertically above your hand. Make sure the end with zero on it is just above your finger and thumb, but make sure it's not touching. Your partner will drop the ruler, and you should catch it as soon as possible. Write down the centimeter mark from the ruler where your finger and thumb clasp onto the ruler. (If you're using something other than a ruler, just write the approximate length where it was clasped from the end of the object.) Repeat this three times; then switch so that each person gets to test his or her reaction time.



**My reaction times:**

**What surprised—or didn't surprise—you about your reaction time?**

**When you have the opportunity to lead, what do you expect of those who follow you?**

# G R O U N D I N G

## God's Word: Matthew 4:18-25

<sup>18</sup> As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. <sup>19</sup> "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will send you out to fish for people." <sup>20</sup> At once they left their nets and followed him.

<sup>21</sup> Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them, <sup>22</sup> and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

<sup>23</sup> Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people. <sup>24</sup> News about him spread all over Syria, and people brought to him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed; and he healed them. <sup>25</sup> Large crowds from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea and the region across the Jordan followed him.

**What are the first questions that come to mind about this passage? What sort of jumps out at you and catches your attention? Capture those thoughts here.**

# GRAPPLING

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## GOING DEEPER

Some questions are left unanswered, and that often makes us uncomfortable. We want to understand. We want the “411.” Our desire to understand may cause us to explain something the best we can and call it truth because it’s the best we can do. But we’re never going to have all the answers. If we did, we’d be equal to God. He wants us to seek him, but let’s trust him through the process. God knows what we need to know and when we need to know it.

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## BEHIND THE SCENES

Matthew 4:18-25 describes Jesus’ calling of four men (Simon Peter, Andrew, James, and John) into ministry with him. Jesus didn’t wait to see who would come to him. He met them where they were. Jesus didn’t go to the Temple and get the experts of the Law to follow him. Jesus knew he needed people who could minister to, relate to, and provide for people in practical ways. He wanted people who could fish, as these men could. He promised them he’d teach them a different kind of fishing, but he would build on what they already knew to develop them into the disciples he knew they could be.

**As you read this passage from Matthew, how would you describe the way the disciples followed Jesus?**

**When Jesus calls followers today, does he expect them to react by dropping everything immediately and following him on the spot? Explain your answer.**

INTERESTING THOUGHTS SPARKED  
BY OTHERS IN MY GROUP:

## BEHIND THE SCENES

This wasn't the first experience Andrew and Simon Peter had with Jesus. Andrew was one of John the Baptist's disciples who encountered Jesus as John identified him as the Lamb of God (John 1:35-40). The first thing Andrew did was tell his brother, Simon Peter, and take him to Jesus, where Simon Peter had his first interaction with Jesus (John 1:41-42).

There are two primary words translated into "know" in our English Bibles. One (*ginōskō*) indicates an insight, awareness, and understanding. It's what God gives us. We might not be aware of every bit of knowledge he's given us, but it's something we don't have to actively learn or experience. He gifts it to us, and it's as if we know it by intuition. The other kind of knowing (*nous*) is what we acquire by learning. We have to experience it somehow—through hearing, reading, doing, and so on—in order to gain the knowledge. Just because we know *about* Jesus doesn't mean we *know* Jesus.

How do you know him?

**What does the variety of Jesus' actions and interactions in Matthew 4:18-25 tell you about his ministry—and what it might look like for you to follow Jesus?**

# G R O W I N G

## **BEHIND THE SCENES**

When Jesus commanded Simon Peter, Andrew, James, and John to follow him, it wasn't a passive invitation. They left what they knew to follow who they wanted to know. Jesus wouldn't just teach them what he knew; he taught them who he was. Following him involved more than accompanying him; it required sacrifice and commitment. It required setting themselves aside and emulating Jesus.

"Then he said to them all: 'Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it' " (Luke 9:23-24).

**How has your reaction time changed, and why?**

**Write your observations here.**

**How would you describe your reaction time to God? What influences how quickly you respond to God?**

**Write your reflections here.**



## BEHIND THE SCENES

Matthew tells us that the first disciples immediately followed Jesus when he called them. But that immediate response to Jesus' calling didn't mean that they followed him without questions or problems. Far from it. In fact, the Gospels indicate that the disciples wrestled with their commitment, even after Jesus' resurrection from death. Even at the end of Matthew, the 11 remaining disciples went to the mountain where Jesus told them to meet him. When they got there, "they worshipped him; but some doubted" (Matthew 28:17). Nonetheless, Jesus commissioned the disciples to go and make disciples of all nations.

How has a mixture of belief and doubt marked your own discipleship?

**As we move through this quarter, we'll continually be wondering on the question, Why is Jesus so radical? Based only on what we've discussed today, what's one sentence that might answer that question?**

**Write your thoughts here.**