

## **Neighborhood Life Group Guide**

Matthew: Jesus Calls the First Disciples

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Matthew 4:12-25

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**Prayer:** Ask God to bless the Olathe Bible Church mission team members as they head to India to preach, teach, and encourage a growing generation of Christian believers in a persecuted country.

**Read:** Take a few minutes to read and mark up the following passage on your own.

### **Matthew 4:12-25**

<sup>12</sup> Now when he heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew into Galilee. <sup>13</sup> And leaving Nazareth he went and lived in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, <sup>14</sup> so that what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled: <sup>15</sup> "The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles— <sup>16</sup> the people dwelling in darkness have seen a great light, and for those dwelling in the region and shadow of death, on them a light has dawned." <sup>17</sup> From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

<sup>18</sup> While walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon (who is called Peter) and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. <sup>19</sup> And he said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." <sup>20</sup> Immediately they left their nets and followed him. <sup>21</sup> And going on from there he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets, and he called them. <sup>22</sup> Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

<sup>23</sup> And he went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction among the people. <sup>24</sup> So his fame spread throughout all Syria, and they brought him all the sick, those afflicted with various diseases and pains, those oppressed by demons, those having seizures, and paralytics, and he healed them. <sup>25</sup> And great crowds followed him from Galilee and the Decapolis, and from Jerusalem and Judea, and from beyond the Jordan.

### **Discussion Questions**

1. After reading Matthew 4:12-25, share some observations from the verses you've just read.
2. What from this week's sermon impacted you?
3. Who had John the Baptist arrested? Why did they do it? (See Matthew 14:3-4)

4. A reader might expect the Messiah to go and free John the Baptist from prison, but Jesus doesn't do that. Instead the Bible tells us he begins preaching John's message: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (See Matthew 3:2 & 4:17).

- Why are John the Baptist and Jesus telling people to "repent"?
- Of all the ways Jesus could begin his ministry, he begins by preaching on repentance. What should this tell us about God's view of sin?
- Why would it be good news for someone to hear: "the kingdom of heaven is at hand"?

5. Notice that when Jesus calls the first disciples, there is an ***invitation*** and a ***promise*** – "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Matthew 4:18-22).

- If you are a Christian, how is following Jesus both a matter of obedience and blessing?
- Jesus promises to make his followers "fishers of men" (Matthew 4:19). Can someone be a Christian and not be a fisher of men? Why or why not?
- The first disciples don't even hesitate; they "immediately" respond to Jesus' call. What can we learn from their example in Matthew 4:18-22 about following Jesus?
- If you're a Christian, how's your "fishing"?

6. Matthew 4:23 says Jesus traveled throughout Galilee "proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom."

- At this point in Matthew, Jesus has yet to go to the cross or raise from the dead. How might he have preached and explained "the Gospel" at the very beginning of his ministry?

7. What is one encouragement or conviction that you took away from Matthew 4:12-25?

**Personal Reflection:** Take a few minutes to reflect upon how you have been living out your faith for Jesus Christ this past week.

- ❖ **Word:** Have I read God's Word every day this week? What has God been teaching me?
  
- ❖ **Prayer:** Have I prayed to God every day this week? What have I prayed for?
  
- ❖ **Fellowship:** Have I gathered with other believers for fellowship and worship this week? How have I encouraged other Christians? How are other Christians encouraging me?
  
- ❖ **Confession:** Where am I struggling with sin, temptation, doubt, or hardship? Is there someone I need to seek forgiveness from? Is there someone I need to forgive?
  
- ❖ **Praise:** How have I seen God at work this week? What fruit have I seen in other people's lives?
  
- ❖ **Mission:** How have I been on mission this week? Who needs to hear the Gospel? Who can I invite to church? Who can I encourage or pray for this week?

**Prayer:** After you've spent some time in personal reflection, share one prayer request – a praise, a need, a confession, etc. Write down your group's prayer requests and commit to praying for them this week.