LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

PRAY
TOGETHER

Father God, thank You that You see us, know us, and love us just as we are. Thank You that our past mistakes, our insecurities, and the labels others may place on us do not define who we are in Your eyes. Help us recognize that our identity is found in Christ and that You have a purpose for each of our lives. Open our eyes to the people around us who may feel overlooked, forgotten, or far from You. Give us hearts of compassion, the courage to respond to Your calling, and a willingness to be Your hands and feet wherever You send us. As we talk today, help us encourage one another and discover practical ways to make a difference in the lives of others. In Jesus' name, amen.

ICE
BREAKER

If you could have a behind-the-scenes look at someone's job, hobby, or daily routine for a day (without having to actually do the work yourself!), whose would you choose and why?

SERMON
OVERVIEW

Pastor Steve Poe reminds us through the story of Matthew (Matthew 9:9–13) that Jesus sees beyond our past, our mistakes, and the labels others place on us. Although Matthew was a despised tax collector, Jesus saw his value, called him to follow, and gave him a new purpose. The same is true for us: God sees us, calls us, and sends us. Our identity is found in Christ, not in our past, and our calling is to extend the same love and compassion we've received to others. Like Matthew, we don't need all the answers to make a difference; sometimes it starts with simply building relationships, inviting someone to "come and see," and creating opportunities for others to encounter Jesus. And whether we're serving in visible ways or quietly behind the scenes, we can find joy in knowing that God sees our faithfulness.

READ
SCRIPTURE

MATTHEW 9:9-13; JOHN 1:43-46; 2 CORINTHIANS 5:17-20; EPHESIANS 1:3-6

CONNECT
RELATIONALLY

1) When Jesus looked at Matthew, He saw more than a tax collector with a questionable reputation. He saw a person with value and potential. What do you think Jesus saw in Matthew that others overlooked? What does that tell you about the way Jesus sees people?

2) Tell us about a time when you felt invisible, overlooked, or unappreciated? What made that experience particularly difficult, and what difference would it have made to know that someone genuinely saw and valued you?

3) The message emphasized that our identity is found in Christ, not in our past mistakes, occupations, accomplishments, or the labels others place on us. Why do you think it's sometimes difficult to separate who you are from what you've done or what others think about you? What helps you remember how God sees you?

GROW
SPIRITUALLY

4) Jesus didn't tell Matthew to clean up his reputation, get his life together, or become a better person before following Him. He simply said, "Follow me." What are some things that might cause you to hesitate when you sense God inviting you into something new? What is an area of your life where you might need to stop waiting until you feel ready and simply take a step of faith?

5) Pastor Steve challenged us to pay attention to the people we encounter regularly rather than simply passing them by. Think about your workplace, neighborhood, school, or everyday routines. Who might be someone you're around frequently but haven't really taken the time to get to know? What is one practical way you could begin to see that person differently?

6) After following Jesus, Matthew immediately invited his friends and acquaintances to his home to meet Jesus. Philip similarly invited Nathanael to "come and see" (John 1:45–46). Neither needed to have all the answers; they simply created an opportunity for someone else to encounter Jesus. What are some ways you can make sharing your faith feel more natural and relational rather than intimidating or forced?

LIVE
GENEROUSLY

7) When the Pharisees criticized Jesus for spending time with tax collectors and sinners, Jesus responded that healthy people don't need a doctor, sick people do (Matthew 9:12–13). Why do you think it's sometimes easier to gravitate toward people who are like you rather than those who are different from you or might have a questionable reputation? What would it look like for you to demonstrate the kind of compassion Jesus showed?

8) The story of the cathedral builders illustrated people who faithfully gave themselves to work they might never see completed or receive credit for. One builder even carved a tiny bird into a beam that would eventually be covered up, explaining that he did it because God sees. When have you ever served, helped, or done something for someone without anyone else knowing or recognizing it? What helps you maintain a faithful and joyful attitude when your efforts go unnoticed or unappreciated?

TAKE
ACTION

Based on our conversation today, how do you sense the Holy Spirit inviting you to take a next step in practical application? Please complete this statement,
I am feeling convicted to take the following action (keep it simple):

PRAY
TOGETHER

Take a few minutes for each person to share a recent joy or praise, as well as something that's weighing on their heart and in need of intercession. Invite someone to pray over these requests. Be sure to share them with everyone in the group so you can continue praying for one another throughout the week.

ENGAGE
TOGETHER

Christmas Compassion - Christmas Compassion is about serving and loving our neighbors during the holiday season, especially the least of these. Our goal Local Missions Team goal is to connect you to local serving opportunities that allow you to donate your time, talents, and physical gifts to help those in our community for God's glory. Check out all the ways you can serve and give this year. "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me." Matthew 25:40