

SUMMER 2026

YOU[®]



CONNECTING WITH
OTHERS LIKE JESUS DID

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ESSENTIALS FOR
CHRISTIAN LIVING



A BIBLE STUDY ON LIVING IN CONNECTION WITH OTHERS

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We live in a society that increasingly develops ways for people to go without meaningful social interaction. The advancement of technology has only accelerated this reality. The use of apps that allow us to order groceries, take out meals, and virtually anything else we want without having to see or speak to other human beings is seen as a normal part of our daily lives. The societal changes brought about by the pandemic led many companies and corporations to employ people who can work from home. All they need is a computer and a good internet connection. The pros and cons of working from home are debatable, but one thing is sure: working from home can limit human interactions.

Believers, however, have been called to a work that demands human connections. Believers must therefore be intentional in connecting with others. Our faith places a strong emphasis on connection.

Our connections are not meant to end with those inside the church. The people we encounter as we go about the day, who are not part of the body of Christ, need us to reach out to them as well. Connecting with others sounds simple enough until we realize that people are different. What connects with one person may not connect with another. The thought of what we are to do can be overwhelming. Thankfully, we have the example that Jesus set to guide us.

In this study, Jesus models for us different ways to connect with others. In each session, we will see how Jesus demonstrates the priority of building relationships. We will discover ways to connect with others by following His example. As you engage with God's Word over the course of this study, let the Holy Spirit guide you to connect with others like Jesus did.

MEETING NEEDS

Leader pages on pp. 102-105

THE POINT:
MEETING NEEDS IS
AN OPPORTUNITY TO
INTRODUCE OTHERS
TO JESUS.

LUKE 5:12-16, 27-32

¹² While he was in one of the towns, a man was there who had leprosy all over him. He saw Jesus, fell facedown, and begged him, "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean."

¹³ Reaching out his hand, Jesus touched him, saying, "I am willing; be made clean," and immediately the leprosy left him.

¹⁴ Then he ordered him to tell no one: "But go and show yourself to the priest, and offer what Moses commanded for your cleansing as a testimony to them."

¹⁵ But the news about him spread even more, and large crowds would come together to hear him and to be healed of their sicknesses. ¹⁶ Yet he often withdrew to deserted places and prayed.

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²⁷ After this, Jesus went out and saw a tax collector named Levi sitting at the tax office, and he said to him, "Follow me."

²⁸ So, leaving everything behind, he got up and began to follow him.

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²⁹ Then Levi hosted a grand banquet for him at his house. Now there was a large crowd of tax collectors and others who were reclining at the table with them.

³⁰ But the Pharisees and their scribes were complaining to his disciples, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?"

³¹ Jesus replied to them, "It is not those who are healthy who need a doctor, but those who are sick.

MEMORY VERSE

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³² **I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."**

KEYWORDS

Leprosy (v. 12)– Is used to describe several different skin diseases, including what is now known as Hansen’s disease.

Go...to the priest (v.14)–The Mosaic law gave the priests the responsibility of identifying leprosy and also of declaring a person clean or unclean (Lev. 13-14).

Tax Collectors (v. 27)– Worked for the Roman government. They were allowed to keep any additional charges they collected. Jewish people viewed them as thieves and traitors to Israel.

Repentance (v.32)– This is a word that means to change the mind and heart.

HOW CAN WE POINT OTHERS TO JESUS BY MEETING THEIR NEEDS?

The Bible makes it clear that believers should meet the needs of others. Yet we sometimes hesitate, unsure of who has a need that should be met. Did you know there is a test to see if a person has unmet needs? There is! Simply hold a mirror directly under a person's nose and watch what happens. If, after a few seconds, the mirror fogs, that means they have unmet needs. The point is that every living, breathing person has unmet needs. Now we don't need to carry a mirror around in our pockets every day, much less place it under the noses of the people we meet, but we can begin to develop a willingness to help others by seeing and meeting their needs. Keep this in mind as you interact with the people you encounter each day.

In our session today, we see Jesus modeling this for us. He connects with two men who had unmet needs. Jesus demonstrated both awareness of their needs and concern about those needs. Through His willingness to meet their needs, their lives were changed dramatically. Believers can do the same by meeting needs and pointing others to Jesus.

Heal the Sick // Luke 5:12-16

Jesus's primary mission was "to seek and to save the lost" (Luke 19:10). But anyone who has read the Gospels knows that Jesus physically healed many people during His earthly ministry. Healing people physically was secondary to healing them spiritually, but He did both. This tells us something important about Jesus: He had compassion toward all people. Jesus wanted to help people in need. Here's an important principle: compassion moves us to help. Jesus was willing to help others because of the compassion He had for them.

Luke recorded an instance when a man with an unmet need sought out Jesus for help. Luke tells us the man had "leprosy all over him" (Luke 5:12). Leprosy in the Bible can include a variety of skin diseases, some serious in nature and others less so. Yet any form of leprosy in that day presented a huge problem. Not only was there physical

discomfort, but for the Jew, it also meant being ostracized from society. Lepers were cut off from their families, the synagogue, and from any social interactions. The clean/unclean laws of Judaism demanded that lepers shout "Unclean, unclean!" whenever they moved about publicly (Lev. 13:45-46). Anyone coming into physical contact with a leper could potentially be infected, so it's no wonder that the leper, upon seeing Jesus, fell face down and begged for healing.

Notice the leper's statement to Jesus: "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean" (Luke 5:12).



THE POINT: MEETING NEEDS IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO INTRODUCE OTHERS TO JESUS.

The leper didn't express doubt about Jesus's capability of healing his leprosy; of that, he was sure. However, this man had been ill-treated by others; he had seen the revulsion and fear in the eyes of the people around him. He had experienced the rejection and isolation his disease had caused. When the leper said, "if you are willing," he wanted to know if Jesus was going to be like the others. He wanted to know if Jesus cared enough about him to help him.

Verse 13 is a beautiful picture of compassion. Who knows how long it had been since this man had been physically touched? Jesus wanted this leper to know that He cared for him, so Jesus did the unthinkable: He reached out His hand and touched him. Jesus also declared His concern for the leper by saying "I am willing; be made clean." The concrete evidence of Jesus's compassion for the leper is seen in these words: "and immediately the leprosy left him."

Jesus commanded the leper to complete the restoration by fulfilling the requirements of the law: "But go and show yourself to the priest, and offer what Moses commanded for your cleansing as a testimony to them" (v. 14). By showing himself to the priest and participating in a week-long cleansing process, the man could be reintegrated into society. Jesus commanded the man to do so because Jesus wanted to see the man's life fully restored.

We've all been there. We might have looked away to avoid making eye contact with the person holding a sign and asking for money while sitting at a red light. Then we rationalized that decision by telling ourselves we didn't know how the person would have spent the money anyway. Or maybe we actually did share a few dollars with the person so we could get on with whatever we had to do that day. In either case, we moved on from the encounter without fostering a connection with a person who was in need. But is this what Jesus wants?

Compassion can change all that. Compassion is a strong emotion that can be a strong motivator. Compassion moves us to act. It moves us from good intentions to concrete action. When we truly care about the painful circumstances of others, it will motivate us to do something about it. Compassion causes us to think unselfishly and act sacrificially. Compassion motivates us to meet needs completely instead of taking a surface-level approach.

WHAT OBSTACLES DO WE SOMETIMES FACE IN HELPING OTHERS?

Help Some Get Started // Luke 5:27-28

In Luke 5:12-16, Jesus was approached by a man who asked Him for help. In Jesus's connection with Levi the tax collector, we see Jesus taking the initiative by inviting Levi to follow Him. There's no



DIGGING DEEPER A PAINFUL CONDITION

In the Bible, someone described as having leprosy could have been subject to a number of skin diseases. Regardless of the specific type of disease, those identified as lepers certainly suffered dis-ease. They literally were not at ease physically or socially. In the Old Testament, the focus was on maintaining the purity of the people, so those with leprosy were kept apart from everyone else. Chapters 13 and 14 in Leviticus prescribe the specific actions a person with leprosy had to take. The stories of Miriam in Numbers 12 and Naaman in 2 Kings 5 describe two instances of leprosy. When we look at the New Testament, we find that Jesus reveals God's compassion by healing individuals with leprosy. In addition to the story in today's passage, Luke also records a story of Jesus healing ten men of leprosy, one of whom returned to express gratitude (Luke 17:11-19).

How might God use painful conditions for our benefit and His glory?



indication of a prior connection between Jesus and Levi. It's not out of the realm of possibility that the commanding presence and reputation of Jesus, a rabbi who speaks with authority and purportedly could do miracles, was enough to compel Levi to respond immediately and with finality. But it's also possible that Levi had been aware of Jesus's ministry. Levi had most likely seen or at least heard of Jesus teaching in the synagogue, driving out an unclean spirit, or healing a man with leprosy. He had previously seen an authentic picture of who Jesus is and was ready to follow Him when the invitation came.

This can happen today. When people today get an accurate picture of Jesus, it can help them make the decision to follow Him. One of the ways of portraying Jesus to people who are not Christians is by compassionately meeting the needs of others. Our help shows that we care and opens the door for us to share that Jesus cares for them as well. In fact, we should intentionally let others know that it is God's love and compassion toward us that leads us to have compassion for them. That's a strategy believers can follow today.

One of the unfortunate results of society's drift toward isolation and distancing from others is an increased level of cynicism, especially at first contact. Most people we know use a call filter on their phones—and for good reason. We are bombarded by automated calls that try to sell us all kinds of services we don't need or try to scam unsuspecting individuals out of money. Our society has become cautious, even suspicious of unsolicited help.

That's why meeting the needs of others can be so effective in sharing the gospel. Once a person understands that we are helping because we genuinely care about them, they might be more inclined to respond positively to the gospel. But we must not forget to share the gospel. Remember Jesus's example of inviting Levi to follow Him. As verse 28 makes clear, Levi immediately left his tax booth and started following Jesus. Let's compassionately help others and also invite them to follow Jesus.

WHAT HAVE YOU GIVEN UP TO FOLLOW JESUS?

Hang Around Sinners // Luke 5:29-32

Take a good look at Levi's story. After leaving everything to follow Jesus, Levi hosted a banquet in His honor—a fitting first response. Not only that, but Levi also invited people just like him to attend—tax collectors. What should have been a great celebration was marred by the complaints of the Pharisees and scribes. They couldn't celebrate because the "wrong" people showed up. To understand their complaints, we need to learn about the status of tax collectors and the views of the Pharisees and scribes.

Tax collecting often tempted individuals to demand more than what was actually owed, keeping the excess for themselves. Additionally, tax collectors gathered payments from both Jews and Gentiles, placing them in regular contact with Gentiles. Therefore, tax collectors were viewed by many as traitors, thieves, and ceremonially unclean.

On the other hand, scribes and Pharisees were diligent toward the keeping of the law, with great emphasis on the clean/unclean laws. Their zealous desire to be ceremonially clean led them to distance themselves from anyone they considered to be a sinner, which in their view meant someone who had violated the law.

In addition, sharing a meal was viewed by them as an important event. It was a form of fellowship that took on religious meaning and it displayed to some degree agreement among the participants.

These views caused the scribes and Pharisees to voice their complaint in the form of a question: "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and

THE POINT: MEETING NEEDS IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO INTRODUCE OTHERS TO JESUS.

sinners?" (v. 30). In fact, this wasn't a question; it was an accusation. Their view was that a true rabbi would not eat with sinners because it condoned their behavior. Inviting Levi to be a follower meant that Jesus's ministry would allow the thief, the traitor, and the unclean to participate. They believed no true rabbi would do that.

Jesus responded wisely to their accusation: "It is not those who are healthy who need a doctor, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (vv. 31-32). Here we see Jesus's definition of sinner, which is very different from the scribes and Pharisees' definition. To the Pharisees, a sinner was anyone who did not keep the law. To Jesus, the sinner is that person in need of repentance and forgiveness.

Part of the struggle is our sense of worthiness. Sometimes we make the decision to help someone because we believe they are worthy or we withhold help because we deem them unworthy.

Jesus's logic is flawless. The disease of sin is rampant and terminal. Those who are suffering from the disease of sin need the cure. Believers have the cure and can share it, but it requires that we connect with those who are sick and in need of help. We can connect with them initially by meeting their needs.

WHAT ARE SOME WAYS GOD COULD USE YOUR BACKGROUND TO DRAW PEOPLE TO JESUS?

DID YOU KNOW?

There is a saying that people can be so heavenly minded that they are no earthly good. The saying expresses the idea that individuals who are "overly spiritual" either don't know or don't care about what's going on down here on earth. This is not the case for followers of Jesus. In the Bible and throughout history, Christians have shared their time, talents, and treasures with other people precisely because of their love for God. Our truly being heavenly minded results in doing good on earth. We pray, "Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6:10) and then we live it out. The two are not at odds with each other, or at least they don't have to be. Jesus modeled the balance for us: He proclaimed that the kingdom of God was at hand, and He met the earthly needs of people by feeding and healing them.

Biblical Truth: "In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven" (Matt. 5:16).

How will you let the light of heaven shine in you so that you can do Christ's good on earth?

LIVE IT

Are you demonstrating your love for Christ by meeting the needs of others?

Our love for God and our love for others go hand in hand. Meeting the needs of others is a great way to build relationships and may lead to an opportunity to share the gospel. As you meet others' physical needs, look for ways to move the conversation to how Jesus meets our spiritual needs. Below are some steps you can take as you seek to meet the needs of others:

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- **Confess.** Pray and ask God to reveal sinful thoughts or prejudices that might negatively impact your compassion for people. Confess your sin to God and genuinely repent.
- **Assess.** Prayerfully consider your circle of family, friends, and acquaintances. What unmet needs do they have? Select one person to help and develop an action plan to meet the need compassionately.
- **Express.** Share your desire to serve with your pastor, a staff member at your church, or a mature believer, and consider ways you can meet needs in the church and in your community.

DAILY READINGS

1. VALUABLE TO GOD // PSALM 139:14

We have infinite value to God. Think about it. We have been created in the image of God. Oftentimes we find ourselves in moments of need. During those times of need, we can lose sight of our value to God. Maybe we are facing a matter impacting our emotional or physical health. Maybe we are facing a financial or personal need. If we earnestly call on Jesus during our most vulnerable times, Philippians 4:19 declares that “my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory.” Jesus cares about the things that affect us. There is no issue, problem or concern that He cannot handle. Jesus is not a respecter of persons.

Seek God in our issues and trust they will be met with mercy and compassion.

2. EACH ONE REACH ONE // ROMANS 12:6

Often, we feel that we are not equipped or good enough to reach others and connect them to God. However, God has given each one of us an ability to make a meaningful impact in the life of someone else. In fact, imagine what might happen if each of us reached out to help one person. When we help others, we are displaying the love of Jesus Christ. When those who are in need experience the love of Christ, that experience will guide them toward a life-transforming relationship with Him as well. So, we must never doubt how valuable we are to God. Realizing our value to God breaks down walls and connects others to their value.

You have everything it takes through Christ to help others.

3. THE POWER OF AGREEMENT // MATTHEW 18:19

Jesus was led by a passionate desire to lead others to victorious kingdom living. When we work together, unified to by a desire to connect others to Christ, it will result in a successful outcome. There are many people waiting to be reached and need to feel that they matter. God helps us to show others that their lives have meaning. When we are

led by a desire to help those in need, we can reach the unified goal of changing lives. There is power in agreement. We must remember that no matter the need, when we come into agreement with the will of God, He takes care of that need.

Agreement with God and working with others results in transformed lives.

4. EMPOWERED TO CONNECT// PHILIPPIANS 4:13

We are blessed to be empowered to serve and help others. We have many opportunities to reach out to the lost and hurt. However, it can be uncomfortable stepping outside of our comfort zone. Personality differences, preferences, family upbringing, fears and other factors can present barriers to making connections to those who need a life-changing encounter with Christ. During a key ministry moment, Jesus responds to a ministry request in Luke 5:13 by saying, “I am willing.” Christ strengthens us and helps us to be willing to connect and make a difference in the lives of others. While we may find it difficult to overcome our shortcomings or trepidations, through Jesus Christ, we receive the ability to make a difference.

His strength empowers us to connect with others in meaningful ways.

5. LED BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD// ROMANS 8:14

How we choose to live our life is a reflection of the influences in our lives. We are constantly bombarded by things that are in competition to influence our thoughts and behaviors. Amid the chaos of life, it is important to remember that God cares. He has called us to be His representatives to those who need Him. God’s Holy Spirit leads and guides us to be effective witnesses for Him. He shows us that when we are unified in the mission of witnessing about the hope of Christ, He is glorified. Firmly adhering to Jesus’s model of compassion and mercy effectively reaches the heart and changes lives.

Following the Holy Spirit can never lead you in the wrong direction.

BEFORE YOU TEACH

Prepare to Facilitate:

The success of this lesson will depend upon your preparation as an instructor. Prepare with prayer. Pray for students, God's wisdom, and an open heart to receive from the Holy Spirit. Prayer for yourself that you would surrender to the leading of the Holy Spirit. As you prepare, it is also good to do some research. Do not be afraid to use resources beyond this material.

Promote the Class:

To promote the study, send an email to the class sharing the study title, session topic, Scripture, and point. Ask learners to write down three things that stood out and be ready to discuss in class. You can find ready to use messages for text, email and social media in the YOU Leader Pack.

LOOK BACK

Remind your learners of the significance of remembering from the Spring edition of YOU: "Don't Forget to Remember." Share briefly your salvation experience or another display of God's goodness and faithfulness in your life. Invite your learners to take a few minutes to share their own journey, and the impact of God in their lives.

TEACHING PLAN

INTRODUCTION

PACK ITEM: Display **Pack Item 1, the "Connecting with Others Like Jesus Did"** poster, to introduce the major theme of this study, along with the focus of each session.

DO: Begin a brief discussion about the purpose of hospitals and various reasons people have to visit them.

ASK: "What is the purpose of a hospital?" Allow the learners to list five to ten items, emphasize something they think will change someone's life forever.

SAY: "People come to hospitals in order to have a physical need met. Similarly but far more, people come to Jesus to have not only physical needs met but also mental, emotional and most of all spiritual needs."

TRANSITION: Share **The Point: "Meeting needs is an opportunity to introduce others to Jesus"** and the Session Question: **"How can we point others to Jesus by meeting their needs?"**

DIG INTO THE TEXT

Heal the Sick // Luke 5:12-16

PACK ITEM: In advance, make copies of **Pack Item 3, "Introduction to the Gospel of Luke"** handout to provide an overview of the gospel. Share with learners, that all lessons for this study will come from Luke.

READ: Ask for a volunteer to read Luke 5:12-16.

GUIDE: Direct learners to the "Key Words" just below the Scripture passage (p.xx). Invite them to share any other words that stand out after they have read. Ask everyone to pay attention and listen intently on the words that the Holy Spirit may bring to the forefront of their minds.

GUIDE: Use the commentary (p.xx), to explain the context of verse 12 and the condition of leprosy.

DIGGING DEEPER: Use "Digging Deeper" (p.13) to further expound on leprosy. Discuss the questions that follows.

EMPHASIZE: Point out the significance and power in asking for divine help. Too often, we underestimate the strength and impact through the simple act of prayer. And yet, Scripture reminds us time and time again that God responds to those who cry out to Him.

ASK: "How would you have handled this situation if they were the ones Jesus had healed? Would your first response be in worship, praise, shocked, awe, or completely numb?"

DISCUSS: Read the paragraph from the learner pages that begins "Luke recorded..." (p. 12), and lead learners in a discussion on the leper.

THE POINT: MEETING NEEDS IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO INTRODUCE OTHERS TO JESUS.

GUIDE: Use the commentary (p. xx), to further explain verse 14 and the importance of the leper showing himself to the priest according to the Old Testament law.

EMPHASIZE: Remember that individuals with leprosy were not allowed to approach anyone. So, his posture towards Jesus was one of humility, worship, and unworthiness. In doing so, he revealed his heart to Jesus and received his life back by the mercy and grace from a savior with plenty to give.

PACK ITEM: Display the **Pack Item 2, “Character Comparison”** chart to be used in sessions 1-6; group works together to determine the character’s role in the story and what they represent.

Help Some Get Started

// Luke 5:27-28

READ: Ask for a volunteer to read Luke 5:27-28.

GUIDE: Use the commentary (p.xx), to provide background about Levi.

ASK: “What stands out to you about Jesus’s call to Levi and his response?”

DISCUSS: Read the first paragraph under this section from the learner pages (p.xx). Lead learners in a discussion on the events of Levi’s calling. Encourage them to describe the situation, what was happening, what was at stake.

ASK: “What have you given up to follow Jesus?”

DISCUSS: Invite a learner to read Luke 9:23 and lead learners in a discussion on the three key things that must occur in our lives to be a fully devoted follower of Jesus.

Hang Around with Sinners

//Luke 5:29-32

READ: Enlist a learner to read Luke 5:29-32.

GUIDE: Use the commentary (p. xx), to explain Levi’s banquet in verse 29 and the meaning of “reclining at the table” during Jesus’s time.

DISCUSS: Read the paragraph that begins “Take a look...” from the learner pages and discuss Levi’s transformation story further. Highlight that Jesus was not unaware of the societal implications of Him eating with a tax collector. He knew what the scribes and Pharisees were thinking and but not respond emotionally or defensively.

GUIDE: Use the commentary to explain verses 30 and 31 to learners. Provide background on who the scribes and Pharisees were and their position in Jewish society.

DISCUSS: Read the paragraph that begins “On the other hand...” (p.xx), from the learner pages and the paragraph that follows and discuss.

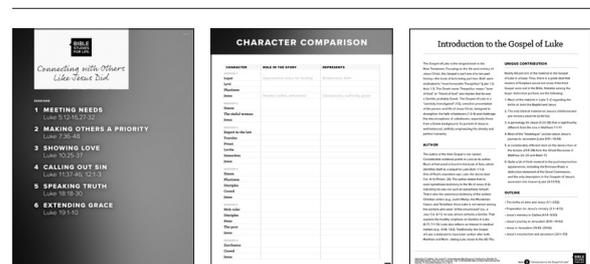
ASK: “What do these verses teach us about the character of Jesus, the scribes and Pharisees?”

Discuss: Re-read verse 31 and discuss Jesus’s statement to the Pharisees about the sick needing a doctor and not the healthy. Take some time to identify those in our society who are “sick” and in need of the Great Physician.

EMPHASIZE: Highlight Jesus’s reason for coming and His earthly ministry in verse 32. Use the commentary (p. 105), to explain the meaning behind these verses and repentance.

DISCUSS: Read the paragraph that begins “Jesus’s logic...” (p. 15), from the learner pages and discuss how society’s way of thinking differs from Jesus’s way of thinking and acting. Ask the discussion question at the end of this section.

DO: Wrap up this section by adding Levi to the **Pack Item 2, “Character Comparison”** chart. Identify what Levi represents and his role in this portion of Scripture.



PACK ITEM 1 PACK ITEM 2 PACK ITEM 3



OBJECT LESSON

GUIDE: Ask a volunteer to come forward and attempt to tie their shoe with one hand. Once the attempt is complete, take a moment to discuss feelings, anxiety, or frustrations. Then allow the learner to use two hands again and discuss.

DISCUSS: Notice the frustration, limitation, and difficulty to perform the simplest of tasks. Point out that many people around us live in this same state on a daily basis. Some struggle to complete the simplest of tasks and simply need an extra hand.

EMPHASIZE: The presence of limitation does not negate the potential for success, it just sets the stage for Jesus to show up. Sometimes, He shows up through His people.

CHALLENGE: This week, seek to encourage someone feeling limited by life. Remind them of the joy and safety in the presence of the Lord. Offer more than an encouraging word, but something tangible to demonstrate God's love.

CLOSE THE SESSION

EMPHASIZE: Remind your learners that they are not defined or hindered by their limitations. On the contrary, those spaces become the place where Jesus demonstrates His greatest power.

PRAY: "Lord, we thank you for this opportunity to share this lesson. Grant us the desire to trust you with our limitations, knowing that you have the power to free us from things that keep us bound. May we walk in obedience to you for the rest of our days. In Jesus's name, Amen."

COMMENTARY

LUKE 5:12-16

Connection to the Point: Jesus was willing to meet the need of a leper.

Context. This passage includes two stories of miraculous healings set within the larger context of the beginning of Jesus's earthly ministry.

Verse 12. Leprosy. This term is used to describe several different skin diseases, including what is now known as Hansen's disease. Depending on the severity of the disease, this can range from simple scaling of the skin, such as in psoriasis, to open sores and numbness of the nerve endings in the extremities. This man was willing to violate Jewish law by approaching Jesus (Lev. 13:45-46). Since the most serious form of leprosy was contagious, lepers were separated from society and were to associate only with other lepers. Because this man's situation was desperate, he was willing to experience the wrath of public opinion. *If you are willing.* There was no doubt in this man's mind of Jesus's ability to heal him. What he did doubt was Jesus's mercy and willingness to heal him. With this statement, the leprous man was casting himself on the mercy of Jesus.

Verse 13. Jesus's response confirmed the leper's faith that Jesus had the authority to heal. Jesus employed two different means to bring about this healing – His touch and His command: "Be made clean." Touch was often a means Jesus used to heal. The astonishing thing here is that Jesus reached out and touched a leper, a ceremonially unclean and contagious man. No rabbi would ever defile himself by touching a leper. Jesus responded out of love and compassion for the man in this seemingly hopeless situation. Jesus was not made unclean by touching the leper; instead, Jesus cleansed the leper with His touch.

Verses 14-16. Many wanted healing, but only a small group wanted to hear and heed His teachings. To combat this, Jesus often

instructed those He healed not to spread the word of their healing so that people would not come to Him solely for the miracles of healing. Jesus wanted people to hear His message and respond in faith.

Go . . . to the priest. Interestingly, the Jewish religious leaders did not believe in Jesus, yet for one of them to declare this man clean was an admission that the healing by Jesus was legitimate.

Often withdrew. The Gospels highlighted Jesus with drawing often for prayer and time with His Father. The Greek construction of the verse suggests an ongoing practice of Jesus. Jesus spent time in prayer even with unceasing demands on His time.

LUKE 5:27-28

Connection to the Point: Jesus invited a tax collector to follow Him.

Verse 27. The tax collectors charged the citizens a tax with a significant surcharge that they profited. Because these tax collectors were Jews who worked for the Roman government, Jewish people hated them for being a thief and a traitor to Israel.

Levi. In the first century AD, Jewish people often had two names, one being either Hebrew or Aramaic, and the other either Greek or Latin. Levi was a distinguished Hebrew name stretching back to one of the twelve sons of Jacob.

“Matthew” was Levi’s Greek name, meaning the gift of Yahweh. Both the Gospels of Mark and Luke use the name Levi for this disciple; Matthew’s Gospel refers to him as Matthew.

Verse 28. Matthew responded by leaving all, just like the fishermen called by Jesus in Matthew 4:18-22. All the disciples gave up everything. The cost to Matthew might have been significantly higher due to the lucrative nature of serving as a tax collector.

LUKE 5:29-32

Connection to the Point: Jesus was willing to associate with those who needed His help.

Verse 29. Matthew hosted a lavish banquet at his house in honor of Jesus. It is possible that Matthew was repaying some of the honor shown to him by Jesus by hosting a banquet in His honor. In a first-century banquet, a host would invite colleagues and subordinates to a feast. Most Jews would not have welcomed tax collectors to their homes. Matthew may have wanted other outcasts to encounter Jesus.

Reclining. Reclining indicates this was a lengthy dinner. Tables were low to the ground, and diners reclined on an elbow to share in the meal. Such practice allowed for closeness of fellowship and deep conversation.

Verse 30. The Pharisees were one of the most prominent Jewish religious sects during Jesus’s time. They strictly followed the Mosaic law and its interpretations. They were the chief opponents of Jesus. Jesus denounced them as hypocrites. They constantly monitored His teaching and activity and accused Him of breaking the law. However, it was their interpretation of the law that Jesus opposed.

Scribes. Originally, scribes used their writing skills to record valuable information. In addition, they were seen as experts in the Mosaic law and its interpretation. Most scribes belonged to the party of the Pharisees. As a result, the scribes united with the Pharisees as chief opponents of Jesus. *Disciples.* This is the first reference to the Greek term translated “disciples” in Luke’s Gospel. Luke formally lists these disciples in 6:12-16.

Verses 31-32. Jesus began building a contrasting rebuttal to the accusations of the Jewish leaders. Using the analogy of a doctor whose job is to bring healing to sick people, not healthy ones, He pointed to the identity of those who needed the ministry of the physician – the sick!

Repentance. This change was what the Pharisees needed since they considered themselves righteous. The path of salvation for them was to change and realize that they were sinners in need of God’s forgiveness through His Messiah, Jesus Christ.

Note: Additional commentary can be found at you.lifeway.com.

CONNECTING WITH OTHERS LIKE JESUS DID

We recognize there are doctrines taught in Scripture that are essential to knowing God—but that’s not enough. Too many people give a head nod to these truths and think if they simply believe the right things that’s all they need. Those truths, though, are seen in how we live. Those truths become evident in our lives as we let them transform us. In Paul’s instruction to the church in Corinth, he revealed several ways we are to live out our faith in community with other believers.

ESSENTIALS FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING

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