

BIBLE DISCUSSION GROUP QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

**New Testament
Weeks 1-5**



book of faith
Open Scripture. Join the Conversation.

Reading Through the Bible

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

WEEK ONE

Matthew 1 – 3

Matthew's genealogy traces three periods of 14 generations from _____ to _____.

Can you list the four women who are identified in 1:5-6? What is Matthew saying by including these women?

Why do you think David is highlighted in 1:17?

What single word is used to describe Joseph?

What prophetic name is given to Jesus? What does it mean and how does it relate to 28:18-20?

What response do the wise men give to the new born king in vss. 2,8,and 11 of chapter 2?

What do you notice about vss. 5, 15, 17, + 23 of chapter 2?

Why does Joseph take his family to Egypt?

John the Baptist's message is captured in his words,

“_____ for the kingdom has come _____.”

Jesus answer to John about why he must baptize him was that it must be done “to fulfill all _____.”

Matthew 4-6

Give Jesus' responses to the three temptations that he faces:

- a.
- b.
- c.

Jesus withdrew to begin his ministry in Galilee where the _____ people lived.

Who were the first two disciples called by Jesus?

The disciples James and John were sons of _____.

What two metaphor images are used to describe the life of discipleship? (5:13-14)

Jesus tells the disciples that their righteousness must _____ that of the scribes and Pharisees(5:20), and then says that they must be _____ (5:48).

What part of the Lord's prayer in Matthew is missing from what we normally pray?

Worrying (or being anxious) is a way of life for many people. What does Jesus say about worrying?

Jesus says, "*where your treasure is, there your _____ will be*" and to "*strive first for the _____ of God.*"

Matthew 7-9

What does Jesus tell his disciples they must first do in order to see clearly? (7:1-5)

With what phrase does Jesus summarize the Law and the Prophets? (7:12)

How does Jesus explain that one can know the true nature of people? (hint: he refers to trees; 7:16-20)

Who will enter the kingdom of heaven according to 7:21?

Wise people build their houses upon rock just as followers build their lives on Jesus' _____? (7:24-27)

At what did Jesus marvel when the centurion came to ask about him coming to help his suffering servant?

What Bible verse from Isaiah is being referenced in 8:17?

What is the meaning of Jesus' words in 8:22?

Answer the disciples' question in 8:27 about what kind of man Jesus is?

Why do you think the people of the city ask Jesus to leave? (8:34)

Why did Jesus have compassion on the people?

What is the harvest Jesus is referring to? Who are the workers?

What type of workers are needed most today in God's harvest?

How do you think Jesus' authority to forgive sins relates to the paralytic's healing? (9:2-8)

What do Jesus' words in 9:13 mean?

What typically happens when you put new wine into old wineskins? Think of a modern day example.

Matthew 10-11

Can you list the 12 disciples?

To whom did Jesus send the 12 disciples? What did he tell them to do?

(see if you can list at least five things; 10:5-15)

What does it mean to be shrewd as serpents and innocents as doves?

(10:16)

Jesus tells his disciples that someone speaks through them. Who? (10:17-20)

Who is it that Jesus says will be saved in 10:22?

In order to be one of Jesus' disciples what must you do? (10:37-39)

Who do you think are "the little ones" that Jesus mentions? (10:42)

The writer of Matthew has us reflect upon Jesus' identity through a question that John asks. What is John's question? (11:3)

Note that Matthew repeatedly (14x) uses the phrase "take offense" (or stumble) to describe how people keep from having faith (11:6).

With whom does Jesus identify John the Baptist? (11:14)

What reason does Jesus give for his harsh words upon cities where he performed miracles? (11:20-24)

Jesus talks about his unity with God the Father and invites people into relationship by telling them to "take my yoke upon you." What does he mean? What is promised? (11:27-30)

Matthew 12-14

What were the disciples doing that was unlawful? (12:1)

What does Jesus mean by saying, "For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath?" 12:8

Who does Jesus call his family? (12:46-50)

Chapter 13 is packed with the "parables of the Kingdom."

Which parable most speaks to you? Why?

Sower and the Seed (v.3-9); Tares Among Wheat (v.24-30);

Mustard Seed (v.31-32); Leaven (v.33-35); Hidden Treasure (v.44);

Costly Pearl (v.45-46); Dragnet (v.47-50).

Why did Herod do away with John the Baptist? 14:1-11

What happens when the disciples bring their concern of scarcity (only five loaves and two fish) to Jesus? 14:13-21

Jesus calls to Peter to walk to him on the water. The disciples observe Jesus' authority to calm the wind and worship him as God's Son.

How has God called you "out of the boat" to have faith and to overcome doubt? 14:22-33

WEEK TWO

Matthew 15-17

What is it that defiles a person? From where do these things come? 15:11,15-20 How does this apply to living one's faith? (hint: see 15:8-9)

How did the Syrophenician Woman reveal her faith? 15:21-28

How is the story of the Feeding of 4000 (15:32-39) different than the previous story of Jesus feeding the 5000 (14:13-21)?

To what sign does Jesus keep referring when asked? 12:38-41 and 16:1-4

What are the climactic (considered pivotal to the whole Gospel of Matthew) words of Peter's confession of faith?

What did Jesus mean by calling Peter the "rock" upon which the church would be built and giving him the keys of the kingdom of heaven?

Jesus gives the first of three predictions of his coming death (16:21).

Why did Jesus rebuke Peter? (16:22-23)

What is necessary for one to be a disciple? (16:24-25)

According to 16:27 upon what will God's judgment focus?

What two figures appear with the transfigured Jesus? Why are they important?

With whom is Elijah associated? 16:10-13

Why weren't the disciples unable to cast the demon out of the boy? (16:14-21)

From where did Jesus tell Peter to get the temple tax for the Capernaum tax collectors? (16:24-27)

Matthew 18-20

How is it that we are to imitate and become like children?

Who do you think are the “little ones” of whom Jesus speaks? 18:5-10, 14

Of what stumbling blocks do you think Jesus was referring? Can you identify some of your personal stumbling blocks?

What message do you hear in the Parable of the Finding of the One Lost Sheep? 18:12-14

According to Jesus how should we go about resolving disagreements in the church? How many times should we go through this process?

To what do the terms “bind” and “loose” refer in 18:18?

Jesus tells Peter to forgive his brother 70x7 times. The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant is an example of what petition of the Lord’s Prayer? 18:21-35 and 6:9-15

To which verse in the Bible does Jesus refer in responding to the Pharisees question about divorce? 19:4-6

How did Jesus respond when the disciples rebuked people for bringing children to him? 19:13-15

What question did the man ask Jesus? 19:16-26

What three commands did Jesus give to the man who kept the commandments but said he was still lacking?

Is it possible for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven? If so, what do you think is necessary based upon Jesus’ words? 19:23-26

Jesus promises reward for those who make sacrifices in following him.

What does he mean when he says, “many who are first will be last, and the last, first?” 19:27-30

The parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard is not a very good model of how to run a successful business operation. What is the point of the parable? Why do you think Jesus told it? How is the repeated phrase “the last shall be first and the first will be last” understood with this parable?

What is the mother’s (of sons of Zebedee) request? 20:20-21

To what does the term “drink the cup” refer?

What is necessary to be great in Jesus’ kingdom? 20:25-25

Matthew 21 – 22

Upon entering Bethphage what instructions did Jesus give the two disciples?

What provoked Jesus to raise a ruckus in the temple?

Jesus said the disciples could make the fig tree wither just as he did and more if they had what? 21:18-22

How does the Parable of the Two Sons (21:28-32) relate to Jesus' statement that tax collectors and harlots will get into the kingdom of God before the chief priests and elders?

Why did the chief priests and Pharisees take offense at Jesus' words? 21:42-46

To what type of stone does Jesus refer in 21:42-44?

In the Parable of the Wedding Banquet (21:1-14) why weren't the invited guests considered worthy (vs.8)? What do you think the wedding clothes symbolize?

How do you understand Jesus' distinction, "render to Caesar the things that Caesar's and to God the things that are God's?" How do you render all that you have to God?

What are the greatest two commandments?

- a.
- b.

How do the whole Law and the Prophets depend on these two commandments? What does Jesus mean?

Matthew 23-26

List four guidelines Jesus gives for discipleship in 23:8-12:

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.

Count the number of hypocritical actions Jesus describes of the scribes and Pharisees(23:1-7,13-36).

What animal is used to portray the lament over the rebelliousness of God's people? 23:37-39

When Jesus speaks of the signs to come, what does he say is necessary for salvation? (24:13)

Jesus speaks of many cataclysmic events but gives what promise in 24:31? At what hour will the Son of Man come? How can we be ready for him?

In the Parable of the Ten Maidens (25:1-13) what happens when some of the maidens go to purchase additional oil?

How do you keep your lamp trimmed and burning?

According to “The Parable of the Talents” Jesus how does God want us to use the gifts entrusted to us? How does he not want us to use these gifts? (21:14-30)

In the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats (25:31-46) who would you say are “the least of these” in today’s world? What does this parable say about what is necessary to enter the kingdom of heaven and eternal life?

Why did the chief priests and elders not try to seize Jesus during the festival? (26:1-5)

What rationale did Jesus give for costly perfume being poured upon him? (26:6-13)

How much did Judas get for turning Jesus over?

What festival and meal did Jesus celebrate with his disciples for the last time? (26:17-35)

To what is Jesus referring at the Garden of Gethsemane what he refers to “drinking the cup?” (26:39, 42)

When Jesus says, “the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak,” with what human struggle do you most identify?

With what sign or act does Judas make his final betrayal?

To what title does the high priest ask for Jesus’ response? (26:57-68)

What was Peter’s reaction after he heard the cock crow for the third time?

Matthew 27 – 28

Why could the chief priests not put pieces of Judas’ silver in the temple treasury? What did they do with it? 27:1-10

What was name of the notorious prisoner who was released due to the festive custom?

Who was appointed to bear Jesus’ cross?

What were Jesus’ last words from the cross?

According to the Gospel of Matthew, what things happen at the moment of Jesus’ death (27:51-53)?

On the day after Jesus' burial the religious leaders meet with Pilate.

What concerns do they have about Jesus' tomb? What steps do they take? 27:57-66

Who rolls away the stone in Matthew's story of Jesus' resurrection?

What instructions are given to the women at the tomb?

What description is given of the woman's departure from the tomb?
28:8

To whom does Jesus tell the disciples to take his word? (28:10)

What attempt is made to discount Jesus' resurrection in 28:11-15

How is the title "Emmanuel" fulfilled in Jesus' last words? How is mission Jesus gives to the disciples described in 28:16-20? (i.e. What are the disciples told to do?)

In what name are the disciples told to baptize?

WEEK THREE

Mark 1 – 3

How is the beginning of Mark different from the beginning of Matthew?

What does God "say" at Jesus' baptism (1:11)? Imagine God saying this to you as you live following Christ. What do you think being "pleased" means?

What does the "immediate" reaction of the disciples mean for you? Jesus prays when it is "very dark" (vs1:35). What does dark mean?

When have you prayed when it was "very dark"?

People bring the paralytic (2:3) to Jesus. Which characters can you connect with in the story?

For whom was the Sabbath made?

Who are Jesus' brothers and sisters?

Mark 4 – 7

If the growth of God's kingdom has small beginnings like a mustard seed, name some "kingdom seeds" in your life.

What types of "ground" does God's Word fall on today?

Why were the people afraid when they saw the man who had been possessed, sitting there in his right mind (5:15)?

What kind of response did Jesus get in his hometown?

How do Jesus and Herod differ in their kingdoms, character, and the use of power?

Why would Jesus tell the disciples to give the people something to eat?
(6:37)

What message is Jesus giving by healing the Syrophenician woman's daughter?

Mark 8 – 9

Whom do you relate with most in the feeding of the 4000: someone in the crowd, the disciples, the Pharisees?

Why did the disciples worry about bread after leaving the crowd? What do the numbers 7 and 12 signify?

What four things does Jesus prophesy about himself in 8:31-32?

According to 8:34-38 what is involved with being a follower of Christ?

What ministry event happens immediately after the mountain top experience?

How would you describe your relationship with God now: in the valley, climbing, on the mountain top, other?

What were the disciples arguing about as they traveled to Capernaum?

Mark 10 – 13

What was God's intention for marriage? List some causes for divorce today.

Who will never enter the Kingdom of God?

Why did the rich young man ask the question in 10:17? What was missing in his life?

How does the blind man get Jesus' attention (10:48)?

How does faith help us to see?

What was unexpected about the way Jesus entered Jerusalem?

What was Jesus threatening when he called the Temple a den of robbers (see Jeremiah 7:9-15)?

How does the parable of the vineyard answer the question about Jesus' authority?

Should we pay taxes?

Why are the 2 commandments in 12:12:30-31 the greatest?

Jesus Who put the greatest offering into the temple treasury? How much?
What did Jesus say would not pass away?

Mark 14 – 16

How much do you think the disciples understood when Jesus spoke of his
body and blood?

Why did Peter deny Jesus? How do we deny Jesus?

What does Jesus mean in 14:38? How do you apply these words to you?

As he was dying whom did Jesus think had forsaken him?

What was the reaction of the women to the message that Jesus had been
raised?

WEEK FOUR

John 1 – 4

What facts about the “word” can you find 1:1-5; 10-18?

What phrase does John the Baptist use to identify Jesus?

What is the first miracle that Jesus does in John’s Gospel?

Who was confused about being born again or born from above? What is
necessary to enter the Kingdom of God?

What two ideas of birth are Jesus and Nicodemus discussing?

What did Jesus ask of the woman of Samaria? What did he offer her?

What is significant about Jesus choosing this woman as the first person to
whom he revealed himself (see 4:39-42)?

John 5-9

How do you picture the setting of the healing story at the pool? What is
the smell? Any noises? Visualize the people?

At the end of Ch. 5, How does Jesus refute the religious leaders with their
own Scripture?

The feeding of the 5000 is the only miracle recorded by all four Gospels.

What does John’s account of the miracle report that the other three
don’t?

Why did the people follow Jesus (6:2)?

What claims does Jesus make in 6:35-40? What do they emphasize about
his being the bread of life? God’s will?

What teaching are hard to accept (6:54-60)?

Why did the religious leaders want to kill Jesus (5:18; 7:19)?
How does Jesus respond to the woman caught in adultery?
What can you learn from Jesus about helping a friend who has fallen/erred?
What blindness is the result of sin (9:39-41)?

John 10-13

What do the sheep, shepherd, sheep pen, and stranger represent?
Why does Jesus deliberately delay seeing Lazarus (11:6)?
What do the disciples fear (11:8,16)?
What worried the chief priests and Pharisees about Jesus' performing signs? What was the final solution?
Given the value of the perfume (12:5), how would you have reacted as you watched Mary?
Why a lowly donkey for Jesus (see also Zach. 9:9)?
How is Jesus like a light (12:46)?
What did Jesus know that escapes the disciples attention (13:1,3,11)?
How does Jesus challenge the disciples' idea of what it means to be a follower?

John 14-17

Put Jesus' statement in 14:6-7 in your own words.
How are the disciples to show love (14:15)?
If vine branches ((15:2) were human lives, what pain would be associated with pruning? What tools? What fruit?
What does Jesus mean by "world" and "hate"(15:18-19)?
How would you paraphrase the three goals of the Spirit's work (16:8-11)?
If you were a disciple, how would hearing verse 16:16 make you feel?
What does Jesus' ultimate desire (17:24) reveal about his love for us?

John 18-21

Seeing how he deals with the soldiers (18:4,8) and Peter (18:11), what do you learn about Jesus?
How do you account for the difference between Peter in 18:17 and 18:10?

What feelings must Peter have had after the rooster crowed (18:27 ... also 13:37-38)?

What is the implied threat to Pilate in 19:12?

As Jesus may have recited Psalm 22 from the cross (Mt. 27:46), how might he have felt as he watched the soldiers take his clothes (19:23-24 ... Psalm 22:18)?

What feelings do you think Mary had as she watched her son die?

Why did secret believers, Joseph and Nicodemus, risk public exposure now (19:38-40)?

What flowed from Jesus side when pierced with the spear?

Who was the first person to witness the risen Lord?

Would you have responded to the news from the tomb more like Mary, the Disciples, or Thomas?

What is the purpose of the Gospel book of John?

What are Jesus' instructions to Peter?

WEEK FIVE

I Corinthians 1-4

According to 1:1-2, I Corinthians is a letter written from the perspective of two people. Who?

What is the title given to those for whom this letter is intended?

What issue is at hand that the writer addresses? (1:10-11)

People were showing favoritism toward particular leaders (Apollos, Cephas). How can this practice be damaging to the Body of Christ? What does Paul suggest?

What is the cross to those who being saved?

How would you describe the message of the cross? Why is it considered foolish by the world?

According to 1:30 Jesus benefits those who belong to him in four ways. What are they?

It is Paul's hope that the Corinthians faith not be based on _____ but on the _____ of God. 2:4-5

What has no eye seen, nor ear heard, nor heart conceived?

Who is it that causes growth in those to whom we minister? 3:4-7

Who is the foundation upon which we build our lives? 3:9-13

What do you think Paul means by saying that as followers of Christ we are to be regarded as “servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God”(4:1)?

I Corinthians 5-7

What does Paul suggest when he says in 5:6-8 when he says “clean out the old leaven?”

How would you consider applying Paul’s teaching in 5:11-13 to modern day situations?

How does one understand Paul’s words of condemnation in 6:9-10 with what he says in 6:11? There are three Greek words that are used in 6:9 that are translated into our English versions using various words.

How do we understand these words (6:9-10) and other Bible passages that condemn particular sinful behavior in light of other admonitions such as Matthew 7:1-5?

What does Paul mean by saying that “your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit?” 6:19

What does Paul stress in 7:17-19?

I Corinthians 8-11

How would you describe Paul’s approach in 8:1-3 to the controversy of whether Christians should eat food used in sacrifice to idols?

What does Paul say about a Christian’s freedom (or liberty) in 8:9-13? What is Paul’s solution to controversy?

What purpose does Paul give in 9:19,22 of being free yet a slave to all people? Talk about the ways that you become “all things to all people.” How have you done this? What limitations would say there are?

In 9:24-27 Paul refers to the metaphor of running to highlight the importance of spiritual discipline and self-control. What ways have you found to be effective in disciplining yourself? How has it paid off?

Who is the spiritual rock from which God’s people have drunk? 10:1-4

According to 10:13 what does God want his people to do in the face of temptation? Do you have examples from your life that demonstrate this verse?

What do you think the terms “sharing in the blood of Christ,” “one bread,” and “one body,” in 10:16-17 say about the practice of Holy Communion?

How would you describe eating the bread and drinking the cup of Holy Communion in a “worthy” manner? 11:27-30

I Corinthians 12-14

According to 12:7 each person is given something by God? What is it? For what purpose is it given?

How are these spiritual gifts given? 12:11

The Greek word for gifts is “charismata” (charis-grace; mata-gifts).

What grace gifts has God given to you?

In 12:12-30 Paul uses the metaphor of “one body” to help the Corinthians to understand the unity of the church. How are the strong and weak told to relate? What happens when someone suffers? How do we live this out in our lives?

12:31 speaks of a more excellent way of using the spiritual gifts gives to us. What way is this? (hint: 13:1-13)

Why is love necessary when living as part of a community? (13:1-13) Think of ways that people have been/are an example of this love.

What things does Paul say that we put away (or behind us) as we grow in maturity? 13:11-12 Identify some of these behaviors of which God calls us to go.

In 14:1-33 Paul addresses the practice of the gift of speaking in tongues because without interpretation and understanding it has resulted in disorder. How does he instruct the Corinthians? (13:9,17-19, 26-28)

How do we understand Paul’s specific words about “women keeping silent in the churches?” Why do you think he says this to the Corinthians and their situation? What basis of interpretation do we use that allows for woman to speak in the church today?

I Corinthians 15-16

15:3-5 is thought to be one of the earliest forms of a creed or simple statement of belief in the gospel. What issue or question does Paul address in 15:12-19?

Why does Paul call himself the least of the apostles?

Paul gives a description of who will be raised in the resurrection and uses the term “firstfruits.” See Leviticus 23:10. How does the practice of this offering speak to what Paul is saying about the resurrection?

Who is the last enemy to be abolished? 15:20-27

What is the mystery of resurrection that Paul highlights (15:50-52)?

What is the sting of death? What is the power of sin?

What is Paul’s final admonition in regard to living in the hope of the resurrection?

Why does Paul ask for people to set aside a collection the beginning of each week? (16:1-4)

What does 16:19 tell us about where many of the first churches were meeting?