

Small Group Study in the Book of Matthew
January 25, 2026

A suggested format for your group time

15 min – Fellowship

15 min – Prayer (using the four quadrants of the SG prayer sheet)

45 min – Study (see below)

Matthew 9:1-17

Passage Summary

Chapter 9: Jesus' Authority and Mission of Inclusion

Jesus' actions continue to provoke controversy. He heals a paralytic man, while also declaring his authority to forgive sins, deeply offending religious leaders who consider this blasphemy. Jesus demonstrates his mission of seeking and saving all people by calling Matthew, a despised tax collector, to become one of his disciples.

<https://biblewise.com/matthew-chapter-summaries/>

Jumpstart Questions

- What are some things that irritate you? (**slow vehicle, late people, wrong food order**)
How do you normally respond when you get irritated?
- What was it about the message and ministry of Jesus that caused the Pharisees to stay irritated at Him? What is it about the message and ministry of Jesus today that cause people today to resist and rebel against Him?

Matthew 9:1-8

- In what way did Jesus see the faith of the friends of the paralytic man? (**They brought the man to Jesus**). How is it possible for people to see our faith today?
- How did the Pharisees respond to Jesus when he extended forgiveness to the paralytic man? What is blasphemy? What did Jesus do to authenticate His authority to forgive sins?
- Is it true that only God can truly and fully forgive sins? If Jesus forgives sins, then what does that say about who Jesus was claiming to be? (**He is God!**). Do you think the Pharisees understood the implications of what Jesus said and did?
- Why do you think most people are ready to receive Jesus as Savior but not as Lord?

Matthew 9:9-13

- What was Matthew's occupation? Why did the Jews despise tax collectors? Why would the command, "Follow Me," be shocking to Matthew? To the other disciples? To the Romans?
- What does this invitation to Matthew about those who calls to follow Him? Why did the Pharisees get upset when they saw Jesus eating with tax collectors and sinners? What did Jesus say about those who were sick? Did the tax collectors know they were sinners? Did the Pharisees consider themselves as sinners?
- Why does a person have to see their need before they come to Christ? What does the phrase, "I desire mercy and not sacrifice" mean? (Jesus is not looking for people who merely go through the motions of religion, but demonstrate real love others by bringing them to Him)

Matthew 9:14-17

- What question did the disciples of John the Baptist pose to Jesus? How did Jesus respond to their question on fasting?
- What point do you think Jesus was trying to make by using the illustration of the unshrunk cloth and new wine? (Jesus was not coming to reform Judaism but to create a new man through regeneration...transformed by grace and not the law).
- How does this understanding of the message, ministry, and mission of Jesus impact the way we think and react to Him? (If we see ourselves as helpless and hopeless sinners, then we will come to Him and surrender ourselves to Him).

Practical suggestions:

1. Please feel free to modify any question and include other text-based questions that you might find helpful for your group to help them think through the passage - specifically questions that lead participants to make comments *based on the text* (not just to give opinions).
2. Invite group members to make other observations they see in the passage. Have them to identify the specific verse where that observation is made.
3. Ask what application can be made out of these verses that will help a person to put into practice the truths in the passage?
4. Ask for volunteers to read the various sections. **Make sure you know the person you are asking to read is comfortable doing so. Please don't just assume and put someone on the spot.*
5. Be intentional about including everyone into the conversation. Asking an 'open' question directed to a specific person who remains fairly quiet is one simple way of inclusion (in other words, a question that may not have a specific right or wrong answer). An example of an 'open' question is: *What's your favorite part of this passage? Why?*
6. Remain sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit and make both ministry and teaching a priority of your group time together.