

A large grid of small grey dots for taking notes.

"Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

MATTHEW 28:19 NIV



B.L.E.S.S.

DISCUSSION GUIDE

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Why Does Sharing the Good News Feel So Bad?

Open: How did you first learn about the love of Jesus and choose to follow Him?

Dig: What is your greatest fear or frustration when it comes to loving people and sharing the good news of Jesus with those around you?

Read Matthew 28:19, Acts 1:8, and Peter 3:15. What is your gut-level, first reaction to these scriptures? In what ways are you motivated or demotivated by these scriptures?

Why do we resist God's call to go? What excuses do we let stand in the way of following this command?

What is your reaction to the story of how Shawn started a church on the dock with his water-skiing friends?

Matthew 18:20 reminds us: "For where two or more come together in my name, I am there with them" (NET). How does this verse encourage you to be on mission with others to B.L.E.S.S. the people around you? Can you think of someone or a group of people with whom you could start a B.L.E.S.S. small group?

Reflect: What do you need to do in order to follow through on these two commitments?

Commitment #1: Use one B.L.E.S.S. practice every day.

Commitment #2: Begin your group by asking, "Who did you B.L.E.S.S.?"

A B.L.E.S.S. Strategy for Changing the World

Open: What is your fondest memory of being on a team or with a group of people who accomplished something greater than they could have on their own?

Dig: Read Genesis 12:1–3 and Luke 10:1–3. What do these passages tell you about the character and nature of God?

One of Jesus's last statements to His closest followers was, "Go and make disciples of all nations." To "go" may mean going somewhere in particular, like a move across town or across the globe. It also means "as you go" wherever you go, to be a blessing. Where do you believe God is asking you to go to be a B.L.E.S.S.ing?

What are you hoping to learn or gain from reading this book?

Think about the three qualities people said they want in someone with whom they would discuss spiritual matters. How well do you exhibit these qualities to your friends and neighbors who don't know Jesus? What steps can you take to grow in these areas?

Jesus's nickname was "friend of sinners" (Matthew 11:16–19 NIV). What changes might you need to make in order to be known as a friend of sinners?

Reflect: Who are some of the people around you that you would love to impact with the love of Jesus?

Pray for the people you hope to B.L.E.S.S.



Could Simply B.L.E.S.S.ing People Really Work?

Open: What images or thoughts come to mind when you hear the words “evangelize” and “convert”?

Dig: Are you more naturally a “blesser” or “converter” when it comes to reaching people who are far from God?

Read Genesis 12:1–3, Luke 19:1–10, and Galatians 3:7–9. What do these passages tell you about God’s plan for His people to be a blessing to those around us?

Which of these everyday ways to love your neighbor and change the world do you most look forward to practicing? Which one will you find most challenging? Explain.

What would it take for you to become a “Have-to-Do” person with regard to “loving your neighbors?”

Reflect: Who are the eight people you want to B.L.E.S.S.?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____

Are you willing to sign the B.L.E.S.S. Pledge and commit to blessing the people around you every day?



Are You Ready to Be a B.L.E.S.S.ing Every Day?

Open: Are you more of a “Nothing-to-Do”, an “Always-Something-to-Do” or a “Have-to-Do” person? Why?

Dig: Read John 4:1–42. What strikes you as most interesting about this encounter between Jesus and the Samaritan woman? What are some of the ways that Jesus blessed her?

If someone were to ask you, “What does it mean to love your neighbor?” how would you respond?

Based on the brief descriptions in this chapter, which of these five B.L.E.S.S. practices do you think will come easiest to you? Which will require more effort for you to put into action?

How could simply being a B.L.E.S.S.ing be a strategy for loving our neighbors and changing the world?

What do you find most interesting or encouraging about Michael’s story of finding his way back to God?

Reflect: Who in your life has been the greatest B.L.E.S.S.ing to you in your spiritual journey? How can you begin to emulate his or her approach as you seek to reach the people around you?



B: Begin With Prayer

Open: What are your earliest memories of praying? Did you recite a particular prayer? Did you pray in a specific place or with particular people?

Dig: Right after Jesus was baptized but before He began His ministry, He went into the wilderness to fast and pray (Luke 4). In Luke 6:12–16, we find that He prayed before He selected His disciples. What do you notice from these examples about the emphasis Jesus placed on time alone with God in prayer?

What do you find most challenging about prayer?

Which of the “Reluctant Reasons” for sharing your story do you relate to most?

Read John 9:1–11. How would you have felt if you were the man who was blind since birth and suddenly could see? How would you explain what happened?

What is your reaction to the simplicity of his story, “I was blind but now I see” (John 9:25)?

Reflect: If someone were to casually ask you, “How did you come to know the love of God in Jesus?” how would you respond?



S: Story

Open: What is your favorite story of all time? It could be a book, movie, or bedtime story from when you were a child.

Dig: Read John 3:1–17. What do you find most interesting about this encounter between Jesus and Nicodemus? How much of what Jesus said do you think Nicodemus understood?

When did you first come to understand the meaning of John 3:16? “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (NIV). How would you convey the meaning and impact of these words if someone were to ask you about them?

When have you found prayer to be most helpful?

Prayer is a conversation in which we talk to God and He talks to us. Have you ever felt a prompting from God to reach out to someone? How did you respond? What was the result?

Reflect: Who are the people you can begin to pray for, asking God to give you opportunities to B.L.E.S.S. them? Use the B.L.E.S.S. tool provided to write down the names of eight neighbors where you live, work, or play. Then begin with prayer!



L: Listen

Open: What is your most memorable “Mondegreen Moment” when you misheard a word or phrase that made sense in your head but was entirely incorrect?

Dig: Why do we have such a difficult time truly listening to the people around us?

Have you ever felt unheard? What was that like for you?

Read Luke 18:35–42. What impresses you most about Jesus’s interaction with the man who was blind? How would you have felt if you were that man?

Read Mark 7:31–37. What stands out to you about this encounter between Jesus and the deaf man with the speech impediment?

Jesus served in *proximity*, He served *personally*, and He served *powerfully*. Which of these qualities is most difficult for you to exhibit when it comes to serving the people around you?

Reflect: Who do you think God wants you to serve this week?

Use R-P-M-S to describe some ways you will begin serving the people God is calling you to serve.



S: Serve

Open: What would you say is the greatest change or paradigm shift of your lifetime?

Dig: Why do we resist serving even the people we care about most?

Read John 13:1–17. Why did Jesus choose to wash His disciples' feet the night before His crucifixion? How would you have felt if you had been there?

When was the last time you truly felt listened to, known, and loved? What was so special about that experience?

Read Acts 17:21–23. How do you think the people of Athens felt when Paul spoke to them?

Reflect: Review “Listening to the Four Ps of Place: Pain, Pennies, Power, and Parties.” Use one of those to describe a community around you.

Choose one area—where you live, work, or play—and answer two or three of the Listening Questions. Record your answers below.



E: Eat

Open: Pick one to answer:

If you could eat anywhere for dinner, where would you go?

What is your most memorable meal ever?

Dig: Have you ever experienced sharing a meal with someone, and suddenly that acquaintance became a friend? What is it about sharing a meal that seems to deepen a friendship so quickly?

Read Matthew 9:9–13. Why do you think Jesus chose to eat with Matthew? How do you think Matthew felt about sharing a meal with Jesus?

What point was Jesus making when He said that He “came eating and drinking...” (Luke 7:34 NIV)? What does this say about how He wanted to be known?

Why is eating with someone such an effective way to bless them?

Which of the excuses for not sharing a meal with someone do you relate to most?

Reflect: Who will you share a meal, dessert, or coffee with this week?