

Home Group Leaders Discussion Guide  
Luke 5:1-11

In this week's passage we're going to be looking at the calling of the first disciples. Below is a link to a short video that gives a little background on the first century rabbi-disciple relationship. (Please note, the speaker in the video is highly controversial, and by including a video by him I am NOT endorsing or supporting everything he says elsewhere. But this video is good and helpful. How's that for a disclaimer? ☺)

<https://youtu.be/kM3qHBAekhg>

- Q. How do you feel about crowds? Enjoy them, get energy from them? Hate them, avoid them at all costs? Somewhere in between? Describe the last "crowd" you were a part of. (Possible icebreaker)**
- Q. Now be open and honest ☺ are you the type of person who "gets on the bandwagon" of the newest, latest, greatest trend or are you more of a skeptic/cynic of such things? Give an example. (possible icebreaker)**
- Q. How proficient/competent are you at your job? (Or what is something you believe you are highly proficient/competent at?) How would you feel if someone who presumably has no experience at what you have a lot of experience at came along and told you how to do it?**
- Q. What is your mental image of Simon Peter, Andrew, James, and John. How old are they? What are they like, personality wise, in your mind's eye?**

We see that Jesus was now a full-fledged celebrity. He apparently couldn't go anywhere without drawing a crowd. And Jesus graciously obliged their interest by teaching the people the Word of God. To help manage the crowd as He was trying to teach them, Jesus commandeered a boat so He could teach without being crowded. We're not told exactly what He taught in this incident. We can assume that the fishermen were within ear shot of Jesus' teaching.

So try to imagine the scene in your mind. The seashore, the crowd, the energy..."what is Jesus going to do and say next?" ...oh, the anticipation!

- Q. Knowing the type of person you are, if you were living during this time and place, and the hub-bub of this Jesus guy was in your vicinity, do you think you would have been part of the crowd? Would you have gone out to see Jesus, or would you have stayed at home/work minding your own business?**

Again, we don't know exactly what Jesus taught on this occasion, though we can assume it was something about the kingdom of God breaking into their reality. And after He was done

teaching He did something rather peculiar. He told the nearby fishermen to go out and try to catch some fish. Now this was not the time of day to try to catch fish, and the fishermen had already tried all night and hadn't caught anything. We're told that it was specifically a fisherman named Simon (the same Simon whose mother-in-law Jesus had healed of a fever in the previous passage) who Jesus spoke to.

Of all of Jesus' original 12 disciples the one we are most familiar with, the one we know the most about, is Simon Peter. How old do you think he was when he encountered Jesus? Keep in mind that Jesus was about 30 years old. In that culture, an older person wouldn't follow a younger person as a rabbi. So Simon and the rest of the early disciples would likely have been late teenagers, early 20's perhaps. Younger than the Jesus movies would have us believe. Yes, Simon Peter was married, but keep in mind they got married pretty early back then.

A common misconception is that the early disciples dropped everything and followed Jesus upon their very first meeting of Him. That's not really accurate. This is why it's important to take all the Gospel accounts into consideration to get a clearer/more accurate picture. The parallel of this account is found in Matthew 4:18-22 and Mark 1:16-20. But what is particularly telling is John's Gospel. Most harmonizers of the Gospels place John chapters 1-4 prior to this event in Luke (and the parallel passages in Matthew & Mark). It appears that the early disciples had some previous encounters/interactions with Jesus prior to the invitation to leave everything and devote themselves to Him full-time. Which only seems reasonable. Jesus had built up some credibility, and some intrigue, prior to calling them. So it seems the "discipleship process" actually started earlier than we're reading about in this week's passage.

And this (some previous experience with Jesus) may account for Simon's response to Jesus, *"...but because You say so..."*. All his fishing experience would have told Simon that this was a dumb idea. But his previous experience with Jesus was enough for him to give it a go. That's what trusting Jesus is often like, isn't it? Everything in us would tend to go against what Jesus is asking. Trust often feels counter to our better judgement.

- Q. Describe a time when trusting Jesus went against your own instincts and everything experience had taught you up to that point. How did it turn out? (Or for that matter, have you ever allowed yourself to trust Jesus that much?)**
- Q. Who in your life carries the authority/weight of "...because you say so..." I'll do it? (a parent/grand parent, teacher, mentor, trusted friend, etc.)**

Obviously the lesson for Simon (as well as Andrew, James, and John) here is that Jesus knows best. But that's also the lesson for us too.

- Q. Is there anything you're currently wrestling with that's coming down to you knowing best vs. Jesus knowing best? Describe.**

We see something of Simon Peter's character in that statement, "...but because You say so...". That would be a good life motto for all of us as we strive to follow Jesus.

**Q. Is there anything going on in your life right now for which you need to let "...but because You say so..." take over? As a HG how can we encourage one another in this?**

So running with the idea that these early disciples had some experience with Jesus prior to this event, we can perhaps get a grasp on the significance of this miraculous catch of fish. This wasn't simply Jesus showing off. He was about to call/invite them to leave their business (and their families) to follow Him. By giving them an abundance of fish, again their livelihood, Jesus was making a statement of His care for them, and their loved ones. There's a subtle but implied message in this miraculous catch...Jesus can provide.

Now let's revisit the whole idea of trusting Jesus. As Americans, thus some of the most affluent and economically secure people on the planet, how do we trust Jesus to provide? (Or do we have that covered...i.e. "I got this Jesus, thanks anyway.")

**Q. If you had to take a good, hard look at your personal fellowship/discipleship of Jesus, how do you trust Him with your provisions (especially your physical/material/financial provisions)? How have you allowed His Lordship to be over those areas?**

Let's reflect on Peter's response after the miraculous catch, "*Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!*" (vs 8). Again, Peter's character comes out. I think in both of his responses in this passage (vs 5 and vs 8) we see what made him a good candidate to be a disciple. He's humble. His humility is seen in his sense of unworthiness and in his willingness to follow directions (even if a bit reluctantly). Peter was not expectant or entitled, instead he felt very undeserving to associate with Jesus.

**Q. Have you ever been overwhelmed by the holiness of God...and the subsequent unholiness of yourself? Explain.**

Jesus' response to Peter is also worth meditating upon. "*Do not fear...*" (vs 10). In the original Greek this statement is an imperative, it's a command. We all know that "*Love God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength; and love your neighbor as yourself.*" are the most important commands in Scripture...but "*Do not fear...*" is the most frequent command in scripture and probably needs to be placed very close to the Love God, Love Others command. The reason: if we fear, we won't love God and love others well. In fact, fear is probably our biggest hindrance. What keeps us from trusting, and thus obeying (thus loving) God? Usually fear. What keeps us from loving others well? Often fear. Let's take it a step further: we often think of hate as being the opposite of love...but fear is the root of hate. Fear is something we need to be intensely on the lookout for in our lives. Fear is probably the most crippling weapon our enemy can use against us. We need to vigilantly seek to identify and root out fear in our lives. Ask God to reveal any fear in our lives we're not aware of. Ask those close to us if they

see any fear in our lives. We live in a fear-based society. We are conditioned to fear without even realizing it. But as Christ-followers and kingdom citizens fear should never rule the day.

**Q. What are you afraid of? How does fear effect your life? Describe a past decision you made that was rooted in fear. Is fear looming in your life right now? (\*\*HG Leaders, as we seek to shepherd and disciple people fear will be a reoccurring theme. We want HG's to be a safe place where fears can be identified, discussed, lovingly dealt with.)**