

## 5 | GROUP PRAYER

Rather than going around the group and sharing prayer requests, you might consider simply bowing your heads and taking turns praying for the things on your heart or that the Holy Spirit brings to mind.

# NEXT STEPS AFTER GROUP

## 1 | SCRIPTURE FOCUSED

• Verse to Memorize: \_\_\_\_\_

• Other Passages to Read: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## 2 | PRAYER FOCUSED

- How can you pray for people in your group this week?
- Is the Holy Spirit speaking to you about something you need to repent of and turn over to Jesus?
- How are you going to respond to this truth and put it into action?

## 3 | OTHERS FOCUSED

- Did anyone in your group share a need that you might be gifted to help with?
- Consider inviting a friend from group to meet up for a meal or a hang out time.
- Is the Holy Spirit bringing someone to mind with whom you can share the things you've learned today?

# GROUPS

## STUDY GUIDE

### Why Would I Prepare BEFORE My Lighthouse Group?

Reading, thinking, and praying about the primary passage your Lighthouse Group is studying ahead of time may be one of the most pivotal ways to make your Lighthouse Group discussions powerful and meaningful. When you do prepare beforehand, you're coming with thoughtful insights and ideas you've been wrestling through. That's different from grabbing at the most accessible thoughts in real time.

### How Do I Prepare BEFORE My Lighthouse Group?

#### 1 | PRAY

Ask God to open your eyes, mind, and spirit to His truth. Your desire is not to "get the right answer," but rather to know Him as He has revealed Himself so that you can trust and rely on Him more fully.

#### 2 | READ

Read the main passage. Consider reading the same passage in multiple versions, like ESV, NIV, AMP, and NLT. All of these can be found at [BibleGateway.com](http://BibleGateway.com). For better context, read the paragraphs before and after the study passage as well.

#### 3 | REFLECT

What does this passage teach you about God? Maybe something to praise Him for? Does this passage reveal an area of your life you should confess as sin to God? What does this passage lead you to ask God for? How does this passage point to Jesus work on the cross and out of the grave?

Think through some of the questions you'll be discussing during your Lighthouse Group time.

#### 4 | WRITE

This is when you cross over from reading into study - writing down truth that you are discovering. Write down questions that come to mind as you are reading.

We've included space on the next page of this guide for you to write down insights, questions, and more that you can bring up in your Lighthouse Group discussion time.

# PREP BEFORE GROUP

PRIMARY PASSAGE: Matthew 5:43-48

WRITE YOUR INSIGHTS & QUESTIONS HERE:

ADDITIONAL CROSS-REFERENCES: Leviticus 19:13-18; Luke 6:32-36; 10:25-37; Romans 13:8-10; 1 Peter 2:21-23

# DISCUSSION GUIDE

For the week of: October 14-20

1 | **PRAY:** Ask the Holy Spirit to lead your group in truth and spiritual growth.

2 | **READ** Matthew 5:43-48

One volunteer reads the passage in the ESV or NIV. Another volunteer reads the passage in AMP or NLT.

3 | **CONSIDER SITUATIONAL/HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

This passage is part of the “Sermon on the Mount” in which Jesus shocked his hearers with radical teachings that contradicted everything they’d ever heard or believed. (His Kingdom truly is not of this world, John 18:36!) If this is what God wants from His people, it’s impossible for *anyone* to please God, because no one can live like this. No one, that is, except Jesus, the only human to ever live a sinless life and please the Father in every respect. When we put our faith in his work of redemption on the cross and his defeat over death through his resurrection, he declares us forgiven of ALL our sin. And if God by His grace has forgiven us despite the depth of our sin, how dare we see others as unforgiveable?

4 | **DISCUSSION**

## CONTENT QUESTIONS

1. Did the Jews of Jesus’ day hate their enemies because God commanded them to?
2. What does it mean in v. 45, that God makes the sun to rise on the evil and the good and sends the rain to the righteous and the unrighteous?
3. How can Jesus tell his followers to be perfect? Isn’t that impossible?

## TRUTH QUESTIONS

1. Does Jesus contradict the Jewish law here?
2. Does Jesus encourage people to think of themselves as better than pagans and tax collectors?
3. How does Jesus differentiate between personal enemies and evil people?

## APPLICATION/PERSONAL QUESTIONS

1. Do I see myself exempt from this teaching because my situation is different from what Jesus talked about?
2. Why does God bless everyone with life, beauty, provision, love, etc., even if they don’t acknowledge these gifts—or even deny that He exists?
3. Is there anyone who I need to stop seeing as an enemy, but as a person (or people) whom God deeply loves and longs to forgive?