

HOW TO USE THIS GROUP GUIDE

CONNECT (10 MINS)

- Pick one or more of the warm-up questions and have all the group members give a response to the question(s).
- Make sure everybody gets a chance to speak. Don't let talkative people dominate the conversation, but graciously welcome everybody to participate.

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TRUTH (15-20 MIN)

- Read the scriptures and paragraphs in this section to clearly communicate what the Bible says about the week's topic.
- **"DISCUSS" sections:** These sections get people discussing the practical implications of the truth being discussed. Have one or two people give an answer, but don't spend too much time on these questions.

GRACE (5 MINS)

- Read the grace scripture and section which shows how the passage points to Jesus Christ and God's grace.
- This section is really important, because it shows that life change begins with the grace of God and not our own efforts.

CHANGE (10-15 MINS)

- Have everyone give an answer to each of the change questions.
- Take a good amount of time here. Really encourage people to think through how they can practically put truth into action.

PRAYER (10-15 MINS)

- Read through the prayer focus points and have one or two people in the group pray.
- Make sure not to rush through prayer. The things we want God to change in our lives will often happen through prayer.

DISCIPLESHIP CHECK-IN (2 MINS)

- This final portion aims to get people reading the Bible for themselves and thinking about engaging others with the gospel.

ἔξουσία

*AUTHORITY /
POWER*

GROUP GUIDE

CONNECT

*BREAK THE ICE AND
GET PEOPLE TALKING*

- What's an environment that you really like to be in to recharge? (Walking, in a library, etc.)
- Describe the last time you had a really interesting and engaging conversation with someone.
- What pictures come to mind when you hear the word "power"?

TRUTH

*UNDERSTAND AND DISCUSS
THE SCRIPTURE'S MEANING*

Last week we learned that the gospel calls for a simple response—obedience to Jesus as Lord. This demand might make us nervous. After all, history is filled with corrupt leaders demanding obedience and exploiting people. Jesus is different, and his motivation for calling us to believe and obey is different. In an exchange with a Roman centurion from Matthew 8, we can see that putting our faith in the Lordship of Jesus puts us in a position to experience his power.

Faith That Makes Jesus Marvel

READ: Matthew 8:5-10

DISCUSS: Why do you think the centurion's faith makes Jesus marvel?

The centurion had been watching Jesus, and he was connecting the dots. If Jesus had the kind of power to make diseases leave a body, or to open blind eyes, it meant something about his authority. After all, as a centurion, his job title came along with the power to get stuff done. Yet he was powerless to do anything to help his paralyzed, suffering servant, so he came to the man with greater authority and power. This shows us that faith isn't about thinking less, but thinking more! It means connecting the dots—that if Jesus is

capable of this kind of power, then
that must mean he is the Lord.

Positioned for His Power

READ: Matthew 8:11-13

DISCUSS: How do you think a picture of eating in the kingdom with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob relates to the centurion's situation?

Let's be honest. If we were eagerly awaiting Jesus to heal someone we cared about, and he launched into a story about an end-times dinner party, we might be confused and impatient. Jesus is making the point that by faith you get a place in the eternal kingdom. However, it's not just a future place, but a present place in the kingdom. It's also not just future power, but present power. Jesus then brought the future promise of restored bodies rushing into the present, and a man who was

paralyzed stood up. Faith puts us in a position to experience Jesus's eternal, kingly power here and now.

GRACE

SEE HOW THE PASSAGE CONNECTS TO JESUS

The centurion came to Jesus when he was powerless, putting his faith in the power of the Lord. The truth is, sooner or later we all realize that we are powerless until we come to Jesus—paralyzed like the servant in sin, suffering like the servant under the brute force of death. When we come to Jesus, we come to One who had such great power, but then became powerless for us. The Great King became the suffering Servant, immobilized on a cross. When we put our faith in him as Lord, the same power that raised him from the dead comes alive in us. Thanks be to Christ our Savior!

CHANGE

*APPLY THE PASSAGE TO OUR
THOUGHTS, FEELINGS, AND ACTIONS*

In the moment when he was powerless, the centurion “came... to [Jesus], appealing to him.” To position ourselves to experience God’s power, we must also come to him and appeal to him.

- How does the interaction between Jesus and the centurion impact the way you think about faith?
- What tends to get in the way of you coming to Jesus when you feel powerless?
- In what ways does Jesus’ willingness to become powerless for you help you trust him more?

PRAYER

RESPOND TO THE PASSAGE IN PRAYER

- In what specific way do you need God's power to show up in your life right now?
- Spend some time praising the authority and power of Jesus.

Discipleship Check-In

- Have you read your Bible consistently the past week?
- Who is someone you're engaging with the gospel?



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