

# **WEEKLY GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE**

**Week of Sunday January 11, 2026**

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

**02**

Introduction

**03**

Discussion Questions

**04**

Application Questions

**05**

Questions for Families | Bible Reading Plan

**06**

Commentary

## INTRODUCTION

In **Mark 2:13–17**, Jesus walks straight toward a man everyone else has written off and simply says, “Follow me.” Jesus is not building a movement by collecting the most impressive religious resumes; He’s inviting broken, ordinary people into real transformation and mission. That confronts a tension many of us live with: we want to be close to Jesus, but we also want to stay safe behind our “booths” and keep up appearances. This week, we’ll talk about what it looks like to leave what’s comfortable but deadly, come to the table with intentional relationships, and trust Jesus as the Doctor who heals what we cannot fix.

### **Main Passage:**

Mark 2:13–17

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

# Leave the Booth!

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### READ ALOUD

Mark 2:13–17

### DISCUSS

**Opening Question:** When you think about “following Jesus,” what’s the first thing you assume He might ask you to change or surrender?

- Levi responds immediately to Jesus’ “Follow me.” What do you think made that invitation hit him the way it did, even with no recorded conversation beforehand?
- The sermon described Levi as “wealthy yet rejected.” Where do you see people today chasing something that looks like it should satisfy, but still feeling empty or isolated?
- Why was Jesus eating with Levi and the “tax collectors and sinners” such a big deal to the Pharisees?
- The Pharisees questioned the disciples instead of Jesus. Why do you think they tried to plant doubt in the followers first? Where do you see that kind of “wedge” strategy in relationships or church life today?
- Jesus says, “It is not those who are well who need a doctor, but those who are sick.” How does that statement challenge both shame (“I’m too far gone”) and pride (“I’m fine”)?
- The sermon repeated that Jesus doesn’t just forgive Levi—He recruits him. What does that teach us about how Jesus views people with messy pasts?

## APPLICATION QUESTIONS

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### DISCUSS & APPLY

- The sermon described a “hospital culture” with commitments like: no one fakes it, nobody sits alone, no one gets shamed, and we expect healing. Which one do you personally find most difficult to live out, and why?
- “Victory goes to the vulnerable.” What’s one area where you tend to “fake fine”? What would healthy vulnerability look like in a life group setting?
- “Grace is not permission to stay where you are; grace gives power to change.” Where do you most need grace and truth together right now?

### RESPOND

- **Leave the booth:** What’s one thing holding you back from obeying Jesus? What’s one step you’ll take this week to leave it?
- **Come to the table:** Who’s one person you can move toward this week? What’s one simple first step to build a relationship?
- **See the Doctor:** Where do you need Jesus to heal you? What would honest surrender look like this week?

### PRAY

Take a quiet moment and name your “booth” to Jesus—without excuses and without shame. Ask Him for courage to obey quickly like Levi. Pray for one person by name that you want to move toward this week, asking Jesus to open doors for a table relationship. Close by thanking Jesus that He is the Doctor for the sick, and asking Him to make your group a safe “hospital” where grace and truth lead to real healing.

## QUESTIONS FOR FAMILIES

Mark 2:13–17

- What do these verses tell us about who Jesus is?
- Why do you think Levi chose to follow Jesus right away?
- Why was it a big deal that Jesus ate with Levi and his friends?
- What is one way our family can follow Jesus together this week?

*For younger children:* Talk about what it means to listen to Jesus and follow Him, even when it's hard.

*For older kids or students:* Discuss what a “booth” might look like in their lives (image, approval, habits, peer pressure, fear). What would it look like to leave it and follow Jesus?

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## BIBLE READING PLAN (OPTIONAL)

**Scripture to read as you pray this week:**

- Day 1: Mark 3:1–6
- Day 2: Mark 3:7–12
- Day 3: Mark 3:13–19
- Day 4: Mark 3:20–30
- Day 5: Mark 3:31–35

## What's Going On?

This scene happens as Jesus' influence is growing and crowds are following Him after visible miracles. Jesus calls Levi, a tax collector viewed as a traitor and outsider, and then shares a meal in Levi's home with other outsiders.

The religious leaders are offended not just by who Jesus talks to, but by the public closeness of table fellowship—Jesus is signaling that His kingdom is for sinners who know they need a Doctor, and that He is actively seeking them.

## A Bit of Background

Tax collectors in the Roman world often worked as local agents in a system that was widely resented, especially among Jewish communities living under Roman oppression. Because they were associated with Rome and often suspected of overcharging for personal gain, they were socially and spiritually stigmatized.

Sharing a meal in that culture communicated acceptance and relationship—so *Jesus eating at Levi's table was a public statement of mercy* that challenged the boundary-marking religion of the Pharisees.