

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. 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.

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.

PREP BEFORE GROUP

PRIMARY PASSAGE: PRIMARY PASSAGE: MATTHEW 15:1-20

WRITE YOUR INSIGHTS & QUESTIONS

ADDITIONAL CROSS-REFERENCES: Exodus 20:7, 12; Leviticus 20:9; Proverbs 28:24; Isaiah 29:13; Jeremiah 17:9-10; Mark 7:1-23; Luke 11:37-39.

DISCUSSION GUIDE

For the week of: March 2-8, 2026

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

2 | WARM-UP QUESTION: Can you think of a time when someone was offended by you doing the right thing? How did you respond?

3 | READ MATTHEW 15:1-20
Once you've read the passage, close your Bibles and ask the group to tell what happened from memory. Invite everyone to join in by asking, "What happened first?" and "What happened next?" and finally, "Was there anything else?"

4 | OBSERVATION QUESTIONS

Was this God's law the Pharisees accused Jesus of breaking, or their own tradition? Did Jesus ever break God's law?

In v. 9, what did Jesus say constituted worshipping God "in vain"? How does this relate to the commandment to not take the Lord's name in vain (Exodus 20:7)?

What is Jesus saying in vv. 17-20 about the difference between ceremonial/religious purity and actual moral purity?

5 | TRUTH QUESTIONS

What's the result of being well intentioned but mistaken in our beliefs? Do good intentions count when we're on the wrong path?

What do our words and behaviors tell people about our relationship with God?

What did Jesus mean about the source of defilement in v. 11?



6 | APPLICATION QUESTIONS

In what way(s) do I allow cultural conditioning to override what God says regarding my actions and beliefs?

In what way(s) do I take God's name "in vain", either through my words or my actions?

Who's more aware of my true motives: me, or God? Does God care about my motives, or is He mostly concerned with my audible words and visible actions?

7 | OPEN PRAYER

Based on our discussion, how should we pray? Is the Holy Spirit leading someone to surrender their whole self to Jesus?

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?

