



Discussion Guide Red Letter Challenge – Part 1 LEADER GUIDE

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*Hey small group leaders! We are very excited to have started the “Red Letter Challenge” this week! This is the **HEART** of this series: that our church family will see and embrace that the best thing for their lives is to SEE Jesus as He truly is, be YOKED to Him, find REST for their souls, and BUILD their lives on His word. Would you pray with and for your small group over the next 7 weeks?*

Thank you for shepherding a group of people to Love God, Love Others, and Live Sent!

NEED A RESOURCE, HAVE A QUESTION, OR WANT TO HAVE A CONVERSATION?
Let us know how we can help! Contact your groups director or discipleship@rockbridge.cc

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“In this truth lies the secret of the easy yoke: the secret involves living as he lived in the entirety of his life – adopting his overall lifestyle.”

[Dallas Willard]

LEADER RESOURCES || Leader Note *We do our best to equip, empower, and encourage you to shepherd your group well. Access a resource by clicking on the underlined title and share them with your group!*

- **Passage Summary**
 - At the close of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 7:24-29), Jesus invites His listeners to build their lives on His words, which on the surface seems incredibly hard. In Matthew 11:25-30, Jesus then invites people to be yoked to Him, but He describes His yoke as easygoing, pleasant, and welcoming. Accepting the yoke of Jesus is the way to live, the path of purpose, and the key to abundance. However, to accept His yoke, we must see Jesus for Who He really is, confront false ideas and images about Him, renounce all known pride, and decide to be His student (“learn from Me”).
- **Ch. 11 Commentary & Devotional**
 - Use this commentary and devotional video for background and encouragement. These would be good resources to share before you gather.
- **Be Free ... Live in Jesus' Easy Yoke!**
 - This would be an encouraging resource to share with your group after you gather.

ENGAGE & CONNECT || Leader Note *The goal for the icebreaker is to prepare your group for the conversation ahead by connecting with one another’s hearts and building joy together.*

What is something that you “built” your life in the past that didn’t fully satisfy your heart and soul? What made you realize that?

***OPTIONAL* DEVOTIONAL RECAP || Leader Note** *If all or the majority of your group is using the personal devotional book, this is an opportunity to allow people to share the main thing they gleaned from the previous week’s readings. This should be kept short (30 seconds per person) so there is time for the discussion and prayer time. Another option is to allow people to share this through a group text/chat.*

What is one thing that God taught you, convicted you of, or invited you to begin doing as you read the devotional book last week?

BEGIN WITH PRAYER || **Leader Note** *Begin your time together by thanking God for his presence and praying His word back to Him. Ask a few people to pray, beginning in a posture of humility and dependence!*

Spend a moment praying this passage, beginning your time together in humility and gratitude!

*“Taste and see how good the LORD is!
The one who takes refuge in him is truly happy!”*
[Psalm 34:8 CEB]

BIG IDEA || **Leader Note** *Read this aloud so your group knows the theme of today’s reading and discussion.*

We all wear “yokes”, but are we “yoked” to Jesus? Being yoked to Jesus is the path to Kingdom abundance and the “easy” way to do hard things.

PASSAGES & DISCUSSION || **Leader Note** *Have someone read aloud each of the passages below slowly. Remember, your role is to FACILITATE the conversation, so keep your group moving and encourage multiple people to share, looking for opportunities to point out the grace and glory of God! Here are two REMINDERS: 1) Every question does NOT have to be answered ... there is freedom to go where the Spirit leads! 2) The answers do NOT have to be read aloud ... they are simply there for guidance!*

Have someone read aloud Matthew 7:24-29 slowly.

1. *This is a good opportunity to go first!* Think about your life today. How can the "rock" of Jesus' teaching be applied to an important decision you're getting ready to make? *Building on the rock means living out Jesus' teachings, even in difficult situations. This might involve forgiving when wronged, serving others sacrificially, or remaining faithful during hardships. It is about aligning decisions with God's values rather than worldly wisdom.*
2. What area of your life might you currently be building on areas of sand? How can you surrender this area to God's wisdom and truth instead? *Answers may vary: adjusting involves regularly immersing oneself in scripture, prayer, and fellowship to realign any part of life where worldly influences may have crept in.*
3. How do you see the people around you (i.e. coworkers, neighbors) building on sand? What other foundations could you offer them? *Many build on the sands of wealth, power, success, or social approval, which are fragile and unreliable. Offering the foundation of Christ involves sharing His teachings about humility, self-denial, service, and trust in God's provision rather than false securities.*

Have someone read aloud Matthew 11:25-30 slowly.

4. In the sermon we heard, *“The words of Jesus will conflict with the voices of pride in our lives.”* What “voice” of pride in your life is conflicting with the words of Jesus? *Here are a few examples: “God isn’t interested in me or willing to do much with me.” || “I’m not perfect but I’m a pretty good person. I just do the best I can.” || “Compared to those people, I’m good. Those people are ruining our nation.”.*
5. What does Jesus mean that His yoke is “easy” and His burden “light,” especially in comparison to other burdens we carry? *Jesus’ yoke is easy because it’s carried with Him. Unlike the burdens of legalism, guilt, or striving for worldly success, His burden is light because it brings peace, purpose, and rest. Discipleship involves sacrifice, but it’s underpinned by grace, making it lighter than self-reliance.*

6. How is rest for your soul different from physical rest? What would soul-rest look like in your life? *Soul-rest is deeper than physical rest; it is a state of spiritual peace, trust, and contentment in God. It means freedom from anxiety, striving, and guilt. In practice, it may look like surrendering control, trusting God's timing, and finding joy in the present, even amid uncertainty.*
7. Why does Jesus invite the "weary" and "burdened" to come to Him? How do we recognize when we are spiritually weary? *Jesus invites the weary because only He can provide the deep rest our souls need. We recognize spiritual weariness through signs like anxiety, constant striving, distance from God, or emotional exhaustion. Coming to Jesus involves laying down these burdens and accepting His grace.*
8. In the sermon we heard, "Jesus is proposing a close partnership with Himself." How do you notice yourself resisting Jesus' invitation to a close partnership? What barriers are currently preventing you from experiencing this? *Barriers could include pride, self-sufficiency, fear of losing control, or disbelief in God's ability to provide real peace. Some may struggle with surrendering to God, fearing vulnerability or believing they must earn their way to rest rather than simply accepting it.*
9. What is the connection between learning from Jesus (v. 29) and finding rest? How can we practically "learn" from Him? *Learning from Jesus involves adopting His humility, gentleness, and submission to God's will. We find rest by aligning our lives with His example, prioritizing spiritual practices like prayer, scripture meditation, and reliance on the Spirit. Practically, this means daily following His teachings and cultivating a heart that seeks His wisdom.*
10. What would it look like for your small group to intentionally take on Jesus' yoke together? How can you support each other in this process? *Answers may vary: Taking on Jesus' yoke together could involve sharing burdens openly, praying for one another, and holding each other accountable to trust Jesus' guidance rather than worldly pressures. It could also include practical steps like studying scripture together, serving the community, and encouraging rest in Christ.*

STEP OF OBEDIENCE || **Leader Note** This is an opportunity for people to put into practice what the Spirit is inviting them to do and live in obedience to God for the sake of love! You can encourage your group to be accountable to one another and use these to follow up with one another throughout the week.

Here is the beauty and truth of being yoked to Jesus → There is **no problem** that being yoked to Jesus cannot solve AND **no purpose of God** that being yoked to Jesus cannot attain. Based on the Holy Spirit's wisdom, what is a step of obedience that you can take? Here are a few questions to ask yourself so that you can be yoked to Jesus ...

- Did I learn THIS from Jesus? (name the bad yokes in your life)
- What is God SAYING to me? (i.e. build on the rock, give up something, trust)
- Am I truly a STUDENT of Jesus? (If not, am I willing to be?)

Give your group a few moments to reflect on their answers to the questions above. Then have your group answer the question aloud. Feel free to separate into smaller groups of 3-4 for this question.

PRAYER FOCUS || **Leader Note** We want to commit to praying for OTHERS as a unified church who is dependent upon God for everything. Be intentional about saving at least 5 minutes for prayer at the end of your gathering each week to pray together. You can pray for one another as well as the prompt below!

Yoked to Jesus

- Father, may we choose to accept Jesus' yoke in our daily lives, walk in step with Him, and trust His guidance. As we align our lives with Jesus and His ways, we will find true freedom to love others more deeply, serve without exhaustion, and walk in peace.
- God, help us release the burdens we've been carrying and fully accept the yoke of Jesus. As we do, may we experience the freedom and joy that comes from walking closely with Him, and may that overflow into how we love and serve others.

MEMORY VERSE || Leader Note *Through this series, we want to encourage your group to memorize the passage below, as it is one of the foundational truths upon which the "Red Letter Challenge" is based on. Psalm 119:11 tells us, "I have treasured your word in my heart so that I may not sin against you."*

*"Therefore, everyone who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain fell, the rivers rose, and the winds blew and pounded that house. Yet it didn't collapse, because its foundation was on the rock."
(Matthew 7:24-25)*

RLC RESOURCES || Leader Note *Below are additional resources that you can share and/or use before, during, or after you gather. If you have any questions about this, please contact your groups director or discipleship@rockbridge.cc*

- **Rock Bridge RLC Website** → rockbridge.cc/red
 - This contains an overview video and links to a 40 day Bible reading plan and Time With God, which complement and enhance the Red Letter Challenge series.
- **Personal Devotional Book**
 - These are for PERSONAL study and are NOT required for use with the discussion guides. If everyone in your group (or a majority) is using the devotionals, feel free to take 10-15 minutes to share your highlights. Another option is to have people share highlights through a group chat.
 - Books are for sale during our services (while supplies last). In addition, people can find these for sale online by searching "Red Letter Challenge devotional".
 - [HERE](#) is a free audio version available. NOTE: this was made by another church, so please disregard the specific language used by them at the beginning :)
- **Participant Assessment** → [HERE](#)
 - This free tool helps participants discover how they are doing in the five targets: Being, Forgiving, Serving, Giving, and Going. It has 40 questions and takes about 7-8 minutes.
 - It is recommended that people take this at the beginning of the series, so you should share the link with your group via text or email when you get it.
- **Videos** → [HERE](#)
 - These short videos (6-8 minutes) can be sent to your group before you gather, watched at the beginning of your gathering, or sent to your group as a way to follow up the discussion. Use these videos in a way that best supports your group! They are NOT the main content of the discussion, just an enhancement!
- **Red Letter Disciple Podcast** → [HERE](#)
 - This is a podcast by the creators of the Red Letter Challenge. It does NOT go along with the series, but does have podcasts about discipleship that will equip and encourage you. This would be best for people to listen to on their own.