



Discussion Guide Red Letter Challenge — Part 7 LEADER GUIDE

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Hey small group leaders! We are so GRATEFUL for your commitment to leading your group through the "Red Letter Challenge"! We hope that you have already and will continue to see fruit in your life and the life of your small group as the words of Jesus continue to take root in your hearts, minds, souls, and bodies!

Next week, we will start a short series called "Your Kingdom Come", leading us into the election season. It's our hope and desire that as the people of God's Kingdom, we will remember that there is only one gospel that saves. That gospel didn't come out of a courthouse—it came from an empty tomb in Jerusalem!

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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***"All God's plans have the mark of the cross on them,
and all His plans have death to self in them."***

[E.M. Bounds]

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**
 - Jesus spells out what it means practically to know Him as "Messiah" and be part of His Kingdom. Following Him is the safest and surest path to true life and superior joy. He uses extreme language to bring clarity to His worth and the life He offers His disciples. This clarity solidifies the intention we must have and that obedience logically follows.
- **Commitment Card**
 - During the final week of the Red Letter Challenge, we invited every Rock Bridger to commit to taking a step in one (or more) of the areas we focused on. We hope you'll continue to challenge and encourage your members to take a step! Here are three questions to consider in moving forward and not leaving this series behind:
 - *How can you encourage your members to SHARE their step with one another?*
 - *How can you hold one another ACCOUNTABLE to follow through?*
 - *What step could you take TOGETHER as a group?*
- **Luke 9 Commentary & You Are Not Without Him**
 - Use this commentary and article for background and encouragement. These would be good resources to share before and/or 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 you really enjoyed about your childhood home? *If your childhood home was not a safe or pleasant place, share about another home during your lifetime.*

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!

*“But I will sing of your strength; I will sing aloud of your steadfast love in the morning.
For you are my fortress, my refuge in times of trouble. You are my strength,
I sing praise to you; you, God, are my fortress, my God on whom I can rely.”*
[Psalm 59:16]

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

True rest, joy, satisfaction, and life can only be found in discipleship to Jesus!

PASSAGE & DISCUSSION || Leader Note Have people read aloud the passage as instructed. Your role is to FACILITATE, so keep your group moving along, encourage multiple people to share, and look for opportunities to point out the grace and glory of God! Here are two reminders: 1) Every question does not have to be answered ... go where the Spirit leads! 2) Answers do not have to be read aloud ... they’re for guidance!

Have someone read aloud Luke 9:18-27. Consider having another person read it aloud again, possibly in a different translation.

1. In the sermon we heard, *“The soul is an investor and a profit-seeker.”* How have you invested in and sought out profits for your life that were not in the ways of Jesus? What was the result? *This is a good opportunity to go first!*
2. Jesus said to take up your cross daily. How have you been hesitant to do that in the past? Why do you think that is?
3. In what ways do you at times prioritize “saving your life” rather than losing it for Christ's sake? *Answers will vary: saving one’s life” can mean prioritizing personal comfort, security, and control over following Jesus wholeheartedly. We might do this by avoiding risky faith steps, such as sharing the gospel or making sacrificial choices for the Kingdom. By contrast, “losing one’s life” means surrendering personal ambitions and trusting Jesus with everything, even when it involves loss, sacrifice, or hardship.*
4. Jesus speaks of losing one’s life to save it. How does this paradox challenge the way we view success and failure? *Jesus’ paradox turns the world’s view of success on its head. While society often equates success with accumulation, achievement, and recognition, Jesus teaches that true success is found in giving up these things for the sake of His Kingdom. This challenges Christians to redefine success in terms of obedience, service, and faithfulness to Christ, even if it means apparent “failure” by worldly standards.*
5. What does it look like for you to truly treasure Christ above all else in your daily life? *Answers will vary: treasuring Christ above all else means that He becomes the ultimate source of your identity, meaning, and joy. Practically, this might look like structuring your day around time with God, making decisions that honor Him, and being willing to forgo comfort, approval, or material gain for His sake. It’s about valuing your relationship with Jesus more than success, relationships, or personal achievement, and letting that priority shape your actions and decisions.*

6. How do you understand the relationship between suffering and discipleship based on Jesus' words in this passage? How hard is that for you to believe and live out? *Suffering and discipleship are intertwined because following Jesus often involves opposition, sacrifice, and discomfort. Jesus calls His followers to take up their cross, which symbolizes not just hardships but the willingness to endure suffering for the sake of the Gospel. This teaches that suffering is not an obstacle to discipleship but part of it, helping believers grow in dependence on God and witness to the world.*
7. How do our modern-day "crosses" differ from the true meaning of cross-bearing Jesus speaks of? *People often think of their "cross" as any burden or difficulty, but Jesus meant complete surrender to God's will, even unto death. Modern inconveniences, while challenging, don't typically compare to the profound call Jesus gives to follow Him no matter the cost. Cross-bearing in Jesus' sense involves embracing a lifestyle of sacrifice, service, and prioritizing God's Kingdom over personal desires.*
8. What is one area of your life where you feel called to "deny yourself" more fully? How can you take a step toward that this week? *Answers will vary: making decisions that prioritize others or God's will over personal preferences; giving up time, money, or energy for service; setting aside personal ambition to pursue something God is calling you to. Practically, you could volunteer, spend time in prayer for others, or give financially to a cause you feel God nudging you toward.*
9. What does it mean to "gain the whole world" and yet forfeit your soul? How do you struggle with that at times? *Gaining the world refers to accumulating wealth, status, or success while neglecting the state of one's soul and relationship with God. The pursuit of career success, fame, or material wealth at the expense of spiritual health might offer temporary satisfaction, but ultimately leads to spiritual emptiness if Christ is not at the center.*
10. Why do you think Jesus emphasizes the DAILY nature of taking up one's cross? *The daily nature of cross-bearing emphasizes that discipleship is a continual process, not a one-time decision. It involves constant surrender and a daily commitment to follow Jesus, even when it's difficult. This reflects the reality that spiritual growth and transformation happen incrementally, and that following Jesus requires an ongoing choice to live according to His values, not our own.*

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.

True rest, joy, satisfaction, and life can not be found without discipleship to Jesus. If we truly believe this truth, then the only real "deal" in life is to surrender ourselves to Jesus as revealed through His Words! Based on the Holy Spirit's wisdom, what is a step of obedience that you can take to live out the "*Red Letter Life*"? Here are a few additional questions to consider ...

- Are you decisively committed to become a *DEVOTED disciple* of Jesus?
- What *enduring COMMITMENT* to live the specific words of Jesus will you take?
- Is this commitment from the heart and authentic to who God *called YOU* to be?
- Take a look at the [**Commitment Card**](#) for more ideas!

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!

Finding Our Home In Jesus

- Let's take a moment to reflect on where our souls find rest. We often seek satisfaction, peace, and joy in the world—in accomplishments, relationships, or comfort. But Jesus invites us to find our true home in Him, in living according to His ways. *Allow for a moment of quiet.*
- Let's invite the Holy Spirit to reveal the areas of our lives where we're still searching for peace outside of Jesus. Let's ask for a deeper commitment to discipleship, trusting that only in following Jesus—His teachings, His love, His example—can our souls find the true satisfaction, rest, and joy we long for.

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

- Red Letter Challenge [WEBSITE](#), [VIDEOS](#), & [PODCAST](#)
- Would you share your Red Letter Challenge STORY with us? If so, complete [THIS FORM!](#)