



**“Home Field”**  
**Luke 5**  
**Small Group Plan**

Let us never forget that diversity is God’s idea. This was brought home to me again when I received an email from a close friend who is working on his PhD in Spiritual Formation. He wrote:

*My class this semester is made up of a Cuban, an Ethiopian, someone from China, Korea, and Indonesia, and then me — a Tennessean transplanted from Ghana. Our professor is a Korean man. Last week I ate at the home of a couple from our program who are Korean and Chinese. I also had a meal with a Kenyan and a man from Rwanda. I live in a rural community in Ghana, and I tell you that meeting all these people and hearing and seeing their stories of faith has an impact on one’s worldview and one’s Kingdom view. It is a blessing to be able to meet so many people from around the world.*

Once again, I find myself agreeing with Mark Twain who wrote, “Travel is the enemy of prejudice.” Yes ... diversity ... mixture ... variety ... God’s idea.

**OPEN IT / INTRODUCE IT ...**

- What are some of the difficulties of interfacing, socializing and mingling with people who are not like you?
- What have been the surprising joys of being with people who are not like you?

## LOOK AT IT / STUDY IT ...

### — DIVERSITY —

#### Luke 5:27-32

<sup>27</sup> After this, Jesus went out and saw a tax collector by the name of Levi sitting at his tax booth. “Follow me,” Jesus said to him, <sup>28</sup> and Levi got up, left everything and followed him. <sup>29</sup> Then Levi held a great banquet for Jesus at his house, and a large crowd of tax collectors and others were eating with them. <sup>30</sup> But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law who belonged to their sect complained to his disciples, “Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and ‘sinners?’” <sup>31</sup> Jesus answered them, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. <sup>32</sup> I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”

- Why is it significant that Levi “left everything and followed him” (v. 28)?
- Why would it be awkward for Jesus to have a man like Levi following him?
- Why did Jesus consistently work with people from every level of society?
- Why did Levi want Jesus to meet and come to know his friends (the banquet)?
- What made such people want to share meals with Jesus?
- In Jesus’ mind, everyone is salvageable. At what point do we sometimes conclude that a person has moved beyond hope? Why do we think this way?
- What did Jesus mean when he said, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick?” Is he calling the Pharisees and teachers of the law “healthy” or does he have another message in mind? Explain.

### — FLEXIBILITY —

#### Luke 5:33-39

<sup>33</sup> They said to him, “John’s disciples often fast and pray, and so do the disciples of the Pharisees, but yours go on eating and drinking.” <sup>34</sup> Jesus answered, “Can you make the guests of the bridegroom fast while he is with them? <sup>35</sup> But the time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them; in those days they will fast.” <sup>36</sup> He told them this parable: “No one tears a patch from a new garment and sews it on an old one. If he does, he will have torn the new garment, and the patch from the new will not match the old. <sup>37</sup> And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the new wine will burst the skins, the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. <sup>38</sup> No, new wine must be poured into new wineskins. <sup>39</sup> And no one after drinking old wine wants the new, for he says, ‘The old is better.’”

- What does the “new wine” represent for Jesus?
- What does the “old wine” refer to? Why do they not mix well?
- Describe the heart and character of a “new wine” person?
- How and why does organized religion often become cold, hard and sterile?
- How can Jesus be both fresh air to some people and a threat to other people?

## **USE IT / APPY IT ...**

- Jesus worked with every level of society. Why is it difficult for us to leave our comfortable levels?
- Jesus wasn't concerned with his image. What happens to **US** when our chief concern is our image? What happens to **OTHERS** when our chief concern is our image?
- How do you respond to someone's admission of failure? What are some of our typical "*acceptable*" and "*unacceptable*" failures? Why the difference? Who determined that **this** failure is acceptable while **that** one is not?
- Why are some believers flexible and open (new wineskin), while others are closed and inflexible (old wineskin)? How can our flexibility or lack of it impact our relationship with people?
- What can we do in our own city to reach out to those considered unacceptable?
- With these names and faces in mind, close by asking God for the heart of Jesus to respond in love and service.