

# Strength for the Journey

## “Christ the King”

Matthew 4:17



### Group Study Introduction

Use the following questions and exercises as your group time allows. Feel free to skip one or more questions in each section as necessary. If you have less than thirty minutes for group discussion, we recommend skipping the “Getting Started” section. Be sure to save time for prayer at the end of your meeting, using the “Strength through Prayer” section.

### Getting Started:

Joe Stowell shares about a recent occasion when he didn’t get invited to the White House, along with other Christian leaders, to meet with the President—even though he had been invited to do so in the past.

- Recall a time when you have been passed over, either as an adult or as a child, even if the distinction of that situation had significance for no one but you.
- Like Joe’s experience in an airplane, can you remember being deeply hurt by someone and then agonizing over how to respond? How do you feel about how things turned out?

### Strength through Scripture:

Open your Bibles to Matthew 4 and have a volunteer read verse 17 out loud.

1) In this segment, Joe continues to address the traits that characterize kingdom people. The first two, covered in the previous segment, are that we have a new authority—Jesus Christ—and that we operate under a new management system. The third trait is that we care about a whole new class of people: the lost, the losers, the lame, the poor, and the oppressed. Read Matthew 11:1–6. If we truly shared Jesus’ values, as identified in this passage, how would we be different?

2) How do you feel about Joe’s challenge to care about and give to the poor? What can you do to implement this kingdom value in your life?

## “Christ the King”

- Lesson 1
- Lesson 2
- Lesson 3
- Lesson 4

### Notes:

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“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.”

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Notes:

3) The fourth trait that characterizes kingdom people is that we have a new attitude. Joe states that this new attitude includes celebrating the fact that the King has come and the King is coming. Read Matthew 9:14–15. How does this passage speak to this issue?

4) Jesus said, “In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). Do you have trouble with expecting to be fully happy and comforted in this world, rather than taking up your cross and following Christ with celebration and courage?

### Digging Deeper:

If your group has enough time (i.e., you’ve listened to the audio on your own), answer one or more of these optional questions.

1) What is your church doing to bring a taste of heaven to your community?

2) What could you do to help motivate your church, and yourself, to get excited about reaching out to those with overwhelming needs—e.g., the homeless, patients in an AIDS clinic, kids at risk?

3) What does Joe mean when he claims that this teaching of Jesus in Matthew 4:17 is the tipping point—the reason why Christ came to earth?

### Strength through Sharing:

1) What is one action you could do in the near future to show concern for the poor?

2) What step could you take toward considering ongoing opportunities to reach out to the poor?

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Notes:

### Strength through Prayer:

Spend a few moments as a group in silent, personal prayer. Read the call to action below. Picture yourself falling on your knees before Jesus, gladly surrendering to him the throne.

You may want to begin your prayer with these words:

“Lord Jesus, I offer to you the throne of my life. This is your rightful place, for you are my King!”

When you are finished with this time for silent, personal prayer, you may want to move into a time of group prayer, praying for one another.

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### Closing Call to Action:

Envision your heart—all your thoughts, desires, decisions, responses to people—like a throne room. See yourself comfortably sitting on a huge throne, pulling the levers. And then Jesus walks in. There is no way that anyone who understands the majesty and rightful authority of Jesus Christ would stay on the throne. If we really envisioned life like that, we would be off the throne in a flash. Understanding that we are children of the King means that we put the King on the throne, his rightful place.