

Church Resource Guide

Session 1: Preamble to a Cause (chapters 1–3)

1. What would it look like if you, your discussion group, or your church found your cause and pursued it? Describe the changes that would take place.
2. In order for Matthew to discover the cause God had placed on his life, God had to destroy the cause Matthew had set up for himself—the cause of being a “successful” pastor and building a megachurch in Los Angeles. Examine the goals you pursue in your own life and in the life of the church. Are there any “causes” that God might be asking you to relinquish? Are there any causes that God might be asking you to pursue more attentively?
3. How did Matthew’s time on the streets refocus his ministry? Why? What might it take to cause a similar refocusing in your life or in the ministries you are involved in?

Extra Assignment: If your group or church has a mission statement, review it and evaluate how well your group or church is fulfilling it. If your group or church does not have a mission statement, consider writing one. Then, as time allows, brainstorm practical ways you might be able to work toward fulfilling your mission.

Session 2: Preparing for Your Cause (chapters 4–5)

1. Think about Matthew’s statement on page 41: “Your cause is somehow related to marrying your own passions, interests, and abilities with the needs of people.” Take a few minutes to catalogue your own passions, interests, and abilities. How can these be used to serve others? Brainstorm ideas of opportunities to serve.
2. “[Our acts of love and service have] opened up many opportunities for us to do even more acts of service and reach greater numbers of people with the love of God” (p. 44). Have you experienced this in your life or in your church’s life? What would it look like for this “ripple effect” to take place?
3. Discuss Matthew’s response to Todd’s research project on page 48. What are the roles of Scripture study and service in the church? Are you better at one or the other? Is your group or church? What would a healthy integration of these two aspects look like in your life and the life of your group?

4. Examine the ways Matthew suggests your cause might be discovered. Have you experienced God's voice in one of the ways Matthew mentions? If so, give examples. If not, is there a way you can yet discover your cause following Matthew's suggestions?

5. Matthew suggests serving in any area or capacity that needs servants in order to find your cause. What are some practical ways that you, your group, or your church can get plugged in to a cause that is already started? What are some places that could benefit from your service?

Extra Assignment: Take question five a step further: actually plan a date and time to serve with one of these causes together as a group.

Session 3: Pushing Past Obstacles to Your Cause (chapters 6–7)

1. What obstacles or misplaced priorities do you face that could be keeping you from fulfilling your cause? How might you overcome them?

2. Is your group or church allowing "miracle space" for God to work? Have you been trusting God to do things that only God can do? Explain with examples. How might God be calling you to allow more miracle space?

3. What is the overlap between reaching out in faith and being good stewards of the resources God has given you? How do you reconcile these ideas? How does this apply to your group or church's operations?

4. As you think about moving forward in your cause, what obstacles or antagonism do you anticipate? How should you respond to them?

5. How does your attitude while serving change the service environment?

6. "The whole emphasis on success has nestled its way into almost every nook and cranny of our society, including many of our churches" (p. 110). Do you agree with this statement? How does your group or church define success?

Extra Assignment: Do an attitude audit of your group or church. What is the prevailing attitude at meetings, at services, while reaching out, etc.? What impact does that attitude have on morale and the way things are accomplished? How can that attitude be improved?

Session 4: Pursuing Your Cause (chapter 8)

1. On page 117, Matthew says the keys to progress in fulfilling your cause are courage and consistency. How would you define courage and consistency? What would courage and consistency look like in your ministry?
2. “Increased size should be a by-product of delivering something that people really need at a level of quality that respects the intended recipients. Establishing bigness as a goal simply puts pressure and stress on you and diverts your attention from investing yourself and others in the things that matter: changed lives” (pp. 118–119). Discuss this idea and how it relates to your organization.
3. Consider how your church or organization handles ministering to urgent needs. How much discussion and planning go into your decisions? Compare and contrast your process and results with the Dream Center’s. What is the best way for your organization to respond to future needs?
4. Why does Matthew stress the points of sensing the urgency of needs, earning the right to be heard, and changing the atmosphere in the pursuit of your cause? How might you, your group, or your church practice these points?

Extra Assignment: Take an inventory of the needs around you—in your immediate sphere of influence, in your church, in your community, etc. Which needs can you meet now? Which needs may require planning? Resolve and take steps to meet the needs you can.

Session 5: Partners in Your Cause (chapter 9)

1. “The glue that binds partners together is their mutual passion for the cause” (p. 144). How does mutual passion bind people together in ministry? Can you think of any examples of this in your life or church?
2. Discuss Matthew’s advice to Aaron: “If you’ll fall in love with the people of this city, you won’t be afraid of it” (p. 149). How might this advice apply to your own ministry?
3. Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 and consider Matthew’s statement on page 151: “In a great team, everyone plays a critical role; the team cannot survive without each person bringing his or her unique contribution to the table.” What great teams have you seen, and what are their characteristics? How do they exemplify 1 Corinthians 12 and Matthew’s statement about teamwork?
4. What are the core principles that are central to your group’s mission?

5. Reread Matthew's suggestions on pages 156–157 for following God's leading in pursuing your cause. What advice stands out to you? What advice do you think your group already follows? What advice do you think would strengthen your group if you put it into practice?

Extra Assignment: Spend an extended time in prayer following your discussion. Ask God to partner with you in fulfilling your cause corporately and independently. Spend time speaking to God, but be sure to leave time for you to listen to God as a group.

Session 6: Persevering in your Cause (chapters 10–11)

1. How can the principles of giving your cause one more day and of realizing that breakthroughs often happen soon after wanting to quit help your ministry to persevere through times of discouragement?

2. Discuss the burnout rate in your group or church. What is the reason for burnout? How can it be prevented?

3. Make a list of the victories and landmarks that you have experienced in your ministry. How can these victories encourage you in times when you feel like quitting?

4. What joys have you experienced in serving others? Recount a few stories among your group.

Extra Assignment: Now that you've finished *The Cause within You*, think about how your life will be different. Where can you serve others? How can you help others fulfill their causes? Take a few minutes and write down your goals for life after this book. Have each discussion group member share their goals, and work out a plan to keep each other accountable. Pray for one another before you leave.