

Bible Study Guide: Choosing Self – The Challenge of Surrender **Luke 9:51-62**

(An Orderly Account: Encountering Jesus in the Gospel of Luke)

Hook (5–7 minutes – get the conversation going)

Ask everyone to share one quick story:

“Tell us about a time you signed up for something—sports team, job, club, or even a relationship—thinking it would be mostly upside, only to discover it demanded far more than you expected. What happened?”

This sets up the tension in the text: many people want to “add” Jesus to their lives, but Jesus insists on total kingship.

Brief Outline & Summary of the Main Passage

Luke 9:51 marks a major turning point in the Gospel. Jesus “set his face to go to Jerusalem”—a deliberate, resolute decision to walk the road to the cross. The passage falls into two clear movements:

1. The Journey Begins (vv. 51–56)

Jesus sends messengers into a Samaritan village. The Samaritans reject Him because His destination is Jerusalem (their rival holy site). James and John want to call down fire from heaven in judgment. Jesus rebukes them.

2. Three Would-Be Followers (vv. 57–62)

Three men express interest in following Jesus, but each receives a sobering reply:

- First man: “I will follow You wherever You go.” → Jesus warns him of homelessness and total cost.
- Second man: “Lord, let me first go and bury my father.” → Jesus says, “Leave the dead to bury their own dead... proclaim the kingdom of God.”
- Third man: “I will follow You, Lord, but let me first say farewell to those at my home.” → Jesus declares that looking back disqualifies one from the kingdom.

Core Truth (Reformed & Christ-centered summary):

Following Jesus is not moral improvement or adding a helpful teacher to your life. It is a sovereign transfer of citizenship from the domain of darkness into the kingdom of God’s beloved Son (Col. 1:13). Jesus demands *exclusive, patient, costly, absolute, and immediate* allegiance because He is King—not a consultant. Yet the same King who demands everything has already given everything: He obeyed perfectly in our place, died for His rebellious subjects, and now sends His Spirit to empower the very obedience He requires. Self must be surrendered; Christ must be enthroned.

Discussion Questions (choose 3–4; 30–40 minutes)

1. **Content / Kingdom Transfer**

The sermon says Christianity is not “learning doctrine or going to church any more than going to McDonald’s makes you a hamburger.” According to this passage and Colossians 1:13, what actually happens when someone becomes a Christian? Why is a “total transfer of allegiance” so hard for us to accept?

2. **Content / The Five Marks of Discipleship**

Jesus shows that following Him must be exclusive, patient, costly, absolute, and immediate. Which of these five feels most challenging to you right now, and why? How does the Samaritan rejection (vv. 52–53) and the disciples’ desire for fire (v. 54) illustrate two of them?

3. **Application / Delayed Obedience**

Jesus tells the third man that “no one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom.” The preacher’s dad said, “Delayed obedience is disobedience.” Where in your life right now are you tempted to say, “I will follow You, Lord, *but first...*”? What does that reveal about who (or what) is truly lord in that area?

4. **Christ-Centered Application / The Easy Yoke**

The passage is hard—but the sermon says following Jesus is also “the easiest thing in the world.” How do Jesus’ own obedience to the cross (v. 51), His death for us, and the gift of His Spirit (Col. 1:11) make the demands of the kingdom possible and even joyful? What would it look like this week to “surrender to the King who died for you”?

Hints for Adult Neighborhood Group Leaders

- Keep the group Christ-centered: after every share, gently ask, “How does the gospel of the King who died for us speak into that?”
- Reformed emphasis: remind people that no one seeks God on their own (Rom. 3:11); God must transfer us into the kingdom. This protects against both legalism (“I just need to try harder”) and easy-believism.
- Baptist conviction: urge personal examination—“Have you personally crossed the border into Christ’s kingdom by faith alone, or are you still serving an old king?”
- End with prayer: invite specific repentance of “but first...” areas and fresh surrender to King Jesus. Close by reading the hymn stanza at the end of the sermon.

Hints for Middle & High School Sunday School Teachers

- Make it relatable: compare “following” Jesus to social-media “follows” (easy to unfollow when it costs something) versus true allegiance (like pledging to a team captain who already ran the hardest drills himself). Use the Lord of the Rings oath example if they know the story—it’s a powerful picture of fealty.
- Keep energy high: have students act out the three conversations or rewrite Jesus’ replies in modern teen language (“Bro, you sure? I don’t even have a couch to crash on...”).
- Youth application: family pressure (“but my parents want me to... first”), future plans (college, sports, career), or peer approval (“I’ll follow Jesus publicly after I get through this season”).
- Reformed & Christ-centered: emphasize God’s sovereign grace— “You weren’t looking for this King; He came and found you!”—so teens don’t feel they have to manufacture their own faith.
- End with hope: Jesus doesn’t just demand; He *supplies* the power. Pray for the Holy Spirit to make obedience joyful, not burdensome.

May the Lord use this study to move every heart from “I will follow You... but first” to full-hearted, joyful surrender to King Jesus.

“Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all.”