A six-session group guide to
Encountering the Greatest Teacher
in Your Hardest Moment

"DO YOU CARE?"

DISCUSSION GUIDE · SIX SESSIONS

Benson B. Baniwas

AT A GLANCE

Six meetings finish the book

Chapters run eight to ten pages, so paired sessions ask about seventeen pages of reading — one sitting for most readers.

#	READ BEFORE	PAGES	THEME
1	Introduction	**1–6**	The question everyone is really asking
2	Chapters 1–2	**7–24**	The Teacher: His credential and His method
3	Chapters 3–4	**25–42**	Two hearts: the seeker and the closed heart
4	Chapters 5–6	**43–59**	Pressing in, and what sticks
5	Chapters 7–8	**60–77**	The storm, and a short life
6	Conclusion + prayers	**78–90**	Peace, be still — and a prayer of your own

Sessions 2 through 5 use the Reflective Questions already printed at the end of each chapter — pages 14, 24, 33, 42, 51, 59, 68 and 77. The Introduction and the Conclusion carry none in print, so Sessions 1 and 6 use questions written for this guide.

The same four moves, every time

About an hour. Nobody has to prepare a lesson. The person leading asks the questions and keeps time — that is the whole job.

1 · LOOK BACK 10 MIN

What did you do about the commitment you made last time? Who did you tell about it? Skip this in Session 1.

2 · LOOK UP 15 MIN

Read the session's passage aloud, then close the Bible and retell it together from memory. Then: what does this show about God? About people?

3 · LOOK IN 25 MIN

The chapter's own Reflective Questions, plus one question that puts the book's argument on trial.

4 · LOOK OUT 10 MIN

Each person finishes two sentences: *This week I will…* and *I will tell…* Close in prayer.

> THREE RULES THAT MAKE IT WORK
>
> **The leader is not the teacher.** When someone asks what a passage means, hand it back: "Where do you see that in the text?"
>
> **Rotate after Session 2.** A member who has sat through two meetings can run the third.
>
> **Nobody has to answer.** Silence is an answer. Move on without comment.

Retelling from memory is not a drill. Chapter Six argues that Jesus taught in stories because stories survive. The retelling is that claim being tested in the room.

BEFORE YOU COME

Three marks

Read the chapters with a pencil. Mark three things in the margin as you go — no notes to write up, no summary to prepare.

MARK	MEANS	BRING TO
!	A line that stopped you. Something that struck, convicted or surprised you.	Look up
?	Something you did not understand, or did not agree with.	Look in
→	A line that is about you. Something you would have to change.	Look out

Aim for one of each per chapter. If you only managed one mark in the whole reading, come anyway — one honest mark is worth more than a chapter you skimmed to be ready.

Everyone shares a mark. That is how the room stays level: a member who has read the Bible for thirty years and a member who opened it last month both come with the same three marks, and both have something nobody else can supply.

READ ALOUD IN SESSION 1

The group covenant

From Session 2 on, the leader reads only the first line as a reminder.

> *What is shared here stays here. Nobody has to answer any question. Nothing said in this room becomes a joke, a rumour, or a weapon.*

> *We will finish the book together in six meetings, and we will start on time and end on time, because some of us are joining after a full shift.*

> *We will not fix each other. When someone tells the truth about a storm they are in, the right response is thank you — not advice.*

> *We will ask our real questions, including the ones that sound unspiritual. A question kept quiet for six weeks is a question that leaves with us.*

> *We are family. We will still be family in week seven.*

The book earns this. Session 5 asks every person to name the storm they are in right now. A group that has not agreed to these lines should not be asking that question.

SESSION ONE

The question everyone is really asking

Read before: Introduction, pp. 1–6 · **Passage:** Mark 4:35–41 · **Time:** 60 minutes

> *Two questions facing each other across the same storm. Theirs: Do you care? His: Do you trust?*

SET IT UP 15 MIN

Read the covenant aloud. Then walk through four things: the six sessions and what to read before each; the three marks; that leading rotates from Session 3; and that the group finishes the book, whatever else happens. Hand out the reading schedule.

Go round the room: *What made you pick up this book?* One sentence each. The leader goes last.

LOOK UP 15 MIN

Read Mark 4:35–41 aloud. Close the Bible and retell it together — someone starts, others fill in what was missed. Then: what does this show about God? What does it show about people?

LOOK IN 20 MIN

The Introduction has no printed questions, so use these three:

1. The disciples had already seen the unclean spirit leave with a word, the fever leave at His touch, the crowds coming from four directions, and a full day of parables. Then one storm convinced them He did not care. What have you already seen God do that a storm made you forget?
2. They did not say "Lord, save us." They asked whether He cared. What is the difference between those two prayers — and which one have you actually been praying?
3. Benson writes that this question "does not always come out in those exact words." Where have you heard someone ask it this year without using them?

PUT THE BOOK ON TRIAL 5 MIN

The Introduction claims Jesus is not only the greatest Teacher but the *most trustworthy* one, and that He proved it. If that claim is true, what should be different about how you handle your next storm? If you are not sure it is true, say so now — that is what the next five weeks are for.

LOOK OUT 5 MIN

Each person: *This week I will…* and *I will tell…* Keep them small and specific.

CLOSE IN PRAYER

Ask God for the thing the disciples did not ask for. Pray for the person on your left by name, that between now and Session 2 they would see one piece of evidence that He cares.

Before Session 2: *read Chapters 1 and 2, pages 7–24. Mark three things.*

SESSION TWO

The Teacher: His credential and His method

Read before: Ch. 1 *The Credential* (pp. 7–14) & Ch. 2 *Why Parables?* (pp. 15–24) · **Passages:** John 15:13; Matthew 13:10–13 · **Time:** 60 minutes

> *The teaching does not stand apart from the teacher. They are inseparable. Always.*

LOOK BACK 10 MIN

What did you do about last week's *I will*? Who did you tell? If nothing happened, say that — the question is asked every week, so there is no point performing.

LOOK UP 15 MIN

Read John 15:13, then Matthew 13:10–13. Retell the Matthew exchange from memory: the disciples ask, Jesus answers. Then: what does this show about God? About people?

Share one **!** mark each — the line from these two chapters that stopped you.

LOOK IN 20 MIN

1. ***p. 14*** — The disciples doubted His care, not His power. Which is harder for you to trust: that He can, or that He cares?
2. ***p. 24*** — Jesus came down to where people were. Who has met you where you were?
3. ***p. 14*** — What is one truth you believe but have not yet fully lived out? What would it look like to start this week?

IF YOU HAVE TIME

Who is one leader you trust because their life speaks louder than their words? (p. 14) · Do you push people to understand, or do you give them room to grow? (p. 24) · Who needs a hard truth spoken gently this week? How will you say it? (p. 24)

PUT THE BOOK ON TRIAL 5 MIN

Chapter 1 calls the cross "a credential rather than a catastrophe." Someone grieving might hear that as too tidy — a death turned into an argument. Is the book right, and how would you say it to someone standing at a graveside?

LOOK OUT 10 MIN

This week I will… and *I will tell…* Question 3 has already done most of this work — name the one thing you will start.

CLOSE IN PRAYER

Thank God for one person who met you where you were. Ask to be that person for someone this week.

Before Session 3: *read Chapters 3 and 4, pages 25–42. Mark three things. Note who is leading.*

SESSION THREE · NEW LEADER THIS WEEK

Two hearts: the seeker and the closed heart

Read before: Ch. 3 *For Those Who Seek* (pp. 25–33) & Ch. 4 *The Veil and the Vision* (pp. 34–42) · **Passages:** Matthew 7:7–8; Matthew 13:14–15 with Isaiah 6:9–10 · **Time:** 60 minutes

> *The veil does not create blindness. It reveals it.*

LOOK BACK 10 MIN

Last week's *I will*, and who you told.

LOOK UP 15 MIN

Read Matthew 7:7–8, then Matthew 13:14–15. Retell what Jesus says happens to the two kinds of hearers. Then: what does this show about God? About people?

SPLIT THE ROOM 5 MIN

These two chapters are mirror images, so read them against each other. Pair up. One argues from Chapter 3 what makes a seeker; the other argues from Chapter 4 how a heart closes. Ninety seconds each, then report in one sentence per pair: *the difference between them is…*

LOOK IN 20 MIN

1. ***p. 33*** — Two people heard the same story. One went home unchanged. Which one were you last month?
2. ***p. 42*** — A closed heart is built through small refusals. What have you been refusing lately?
3. ***p. 33*** — What question about God have you stopped asking? Bring it to Him again this week.

This is the week to bring your ? marks. Chapter 4 is the chapter most likely to have produced one.

IF YOU HAVE TIME

What has kept you too busy to slow down and ask God what you really want to know? (p. 33) · Which Bible verse have you heard so often that it no longer moves you? (p. 42) · Read that verse again this week. What might God be asking you to notice this time? (p. 42)

PUT THE BOOK ON TRIAL 5 MIN

Chapter 2 called the parables acts of pastoral care. Chapter 4 says they also concealed truth from people whose hearts were closed. Can concealing be caring — or is the book holding two things that do not fit together? Argue it out.

LOOK OUT 5 MIN

If question 2 landed on something, start there — name the refusal, not a general resolution.

CLOSE IN PRAYER

Pray Matthew 7:7 back to God out loud, in your own words, each person one line.

Before Session 4: *read Chapters 5 and 6, pages 43–59. Mark three things. Note who is leading.*

SESSION FOUR · NEW LEADER THIS WEEK

Pressing in, and what sticks

Read before: Ch. 5 *The Invitation to Go Deeper* (pp. 43–51) & Ch. 6 *Stories That Stick* (pp. 52–59) · **Passages:** Luke 8:9–10; Luke 15:8–10 · **Time:** 60 minutes

> *In every area of life, depth is proportional to pursuit.*

LOOK BACK 10 MIN

Last week's *I will*, and who you told. Session 3 asked people to name a refusal — ask gently whether anything moved.

LOOK UP 15 MIN

Read Luke 8:9–10. Four words changed everything: *what does this mean?* Then read Luke 15:8–10, the woman and the lost coin. Close the Bible.

TELL IT, DO NOT EXPLAIN IT 5 MIN

Pair up. Tell each other the story of the lost coin from memory, as a story — the lamp, the sweeping, the neighbours. No lesson at the end. Chapter 6 says a principle gets filed while a story gets entered; see which one you just did.

LOOK IN 20 MIN

1. ***p. 51*** — Are you simply near God, or are you actually seeking Him? Be honest.
2. ***p. 59*** — Which story of Jesus has stayed with you? What keeps drawing you back to it?
3. ***p. 51*** — What do you not understand but pretend to? Find someone you trust and ask this week.

Question 3 is the hardest question in the book to answer out loud. The leader answers it first.

IF YOU HAVE TIME

The disciples asked after the crowd left. What does their timing reveal? (p. 51) · Jesus used ordinary things: seeds, coins, fathers. What ordinary part of your life might God be using? (p. 59)

PUT THE BOOK ON TRIAL 5 MIN

Chapter 6 argues that stories outlast arguments — that we remember the woman with the lamp and forget the sermon. But this book is mostly argument *about* stories, not stories. Does its own form work against its claim? What would you tell Benson to do differently?

LOOK OUT 5 MIN

This week's commitment is already written for you, from page 59: *Tell someone one of His stories this week. Don't explain it. Let the story speak.* Name the story and name the person.

CLOSE IN PRAYER

One line each: *Teacher, what does this mean?* about something real in your life.

Before Session 5: *read Chapters 7 and 8, pages 60–77. Mark three things.*

SESSION FIVE · NEW LEADER THIS WEEK

The storm, and a short life

Read before: Ch. 7 *He is Still with You in the Storm* (pp. 60–68) & Ch. 8 *A Short Life, An Eternal Teacher* (pp. 69–77) · **Passages:** Mark 4:39–41; John 6:66–69 · **Time:** 75 minutes — give this one longer

> *The Teacher you carry into eternity matters more than anything you acquire in time.*

LEADERS, READ BEFORE THE MEETING

This is the session the covenant was written for. Question 2 asks people to name the storm they are in right now. Expect someone to cry, and expect someone to say nothing. Your only jobs are to thank whoever speaks, to keep anyone from offering advice, and to make sure nobody is left holding something alone at the end. Do not schedule this on a night you have to rush away.

LOOK BACK 5 MIN

Who did you tell a story to? Keep this short tonight.

LOOK UP 15 MIN

Read Mark 4:39–41. Retell it from memory — the fourth time the group has come back to this storm, so see how much the room now holds without the text. Then read John 6:66–69, where Peter says *to whom shall we go?*

LOOK IN 30 MIN

Go slowly, and leave silence after each one.

1. ***p. 68*** — Silence can mean someone has left, or someone is sitting beside you. Which did you believe?
2. ***p. 68*** — What storm are you facing right now? What has that storm made you believe about God?
3. ***p. 77*** — Name one decision you've made this month. Would you make the same choice if Jesus were truly your Teacher?

After question 2, do not move on straight away. Have each person turn to the one next to them and say one sentence: I heard you, and I am praying for this.

IF YOU HAVE TIME

Peter chose Jesus. Was it desperation or conviction? What is driving your choice? (p. 77) · Life is short. What are you building that will not last? (p. 77)

PUT THE BOOK ON TRIAL 5 MIN

Chapter 7 says the silence of God is not absence — that He was in the boat the whole time. For someone whose storm did not end, is that comfort or an explanation that costs nothing? Say what you actually think.

LOOK OUT 10 MIN

Then pair off for the week: each person checks on one other person in the group before Session 6. Write down who you have.

CLOSE IN PRAYER

From page 68: this week, ask *"Who are You?"* instead of *"Why did You wait?"* Pray it out loud now, each person one line, naming nothing but the question.

Before Session 6: *read the Conclusion and both prayers, pages 78–90. No marks this week — read it slowly, and come ready to finish.*

SESSION SIX

Peace, be still — and a prayer of your own

Read before: Conclusion *Peace, Be Still* (pp. 78–83), *A Prayer Over You* (pp. 84–86), *A Prayer of Your Own* (pp. 87–90) · **Passage:** Mark 4:39 · **Time:** 60 minutes

> *Faith is not the elimination of those realities. It is the decision to remain in the boat anyway.*

LOOK BACK 15 MIN

Not just last week — all six. Go round the room twice. First: *what did you commit to that you actually did?* Then: *what did you commit to that you did not do?* The second round matters more, and the leader goes first on it.

Ask your Session 5 partner, in front of the group, how their week went.

LOOK UP 10 MIN

Read Mark 4:39 once more. Then read aloud, around the room, one sentence each: *Peace. Be still.* — and stop there. The group has now read this storm five times across six weeks. Ask one question only: *what do you see in it now that you did not see in Session 1?*

LOOK IN 20 MIN

The Conclusion has no printed questions, so use these three:

1. Benson writes plainly that this book "cannot answer every question." Six weeks in, name one question it did not answer for you. Nobody will try to answer it tonight.
2. The disciples stepped off that boat "changed. Not fixed." What is one way you are changed but not fixed since Session 1?
3. After the calm, Jesus asked, "Why are you so fearful?" — not as condemnation, but as the question He asks everyone who has been in a storm. Answer Him out loud, as though He is asking you tonight.

READ THE PRAYER OVER EACH OTHER 10 MIN

The leader reads *A Prayer Over You* (pp. 84–86) aloud over the group, slowly. Then sit in silence for a full minute. Do not fill it.

Then say this, exactly once, with no eyes on anyone: *The last pages are a prayer of your own. If tonight is the night you want to pray it, pray it — here with us, or alone on the way home. Nobody will ask you afterwards.*

LOOK OUT 5 MIN

- Who, outside this room, are you each giving the book to? Name the person.
- What is this group doing in week seven? The covenant said we would still be family. Decide tonight, not by text later.

CLOSE IN PRAYER

Each person prays one sentence for the person on their right. The leader closes with the last line of the book: *He cares.*

FOR LEADERS

Care and safety

Six to twelve people. Below six, the silences get heavy; above twelve, someone sits through all six weeks without speaking.

- Never press anyone to share. “I’ll pass” is a complete answer, and the leader should use it once early on so the group sees that it is allowed.
- When someone opens up about a personal struggle: thank them, do not panic, do not fix. Then follow up privately within the week.
- If anyone hints at self-harm or hopelessness, treat it as urgent and involve a leader that same night. Do not wait for the meeting to end.
- Follow up one-on-one with anyone who went quiet, especially after Session 5.
- Session 5 is the heaviest. Do not put it on a night you have to rush away, and do not let it be someone’s first meeting with the group.

Handing it on

Lead Sessions 1 and 2 yourself, then hand the guide to someone else from Session 3. A member who has sat through two meetings can run the third — that is the whole design. Tell them the job: ask the questions, keep time, and when someone asks what a passage means, hand it back to the group.

If you want the group to keep going, the rotation is already the answer: by Session 6 three or four people have led, and any one of them can start a group of their own.

> TWO THINGS TO TELL THE GROUP IN SESSION 1
>
> The Reflective Questions in each session are printed in the book, at the end of each chapter. They are repeated here so the leader is not flipping pages mid-discussion.
>
> Three questions per session are marked core. Paired sessions have six available. Do not try to finish all of them — a session that covers three questions honestly has done its work.

Printing. One copy per member, or one for the leader and the book for everyone else. The sessions are self-contained, so a leader who prints only their own session page has everything they need for that night.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Benson B. Baniwas

TEACHER · FOUNDER OF BUILDERS

He did not set out to write a book. He set out to find words for a small group of teachers who wanted to care for one another the way Christ did. They called themselves the Teachers' Care Group, and they met with a simple conviction: that the people who spend their days shaping others need shaping too. That group became Builders, and what began around a table has grown to include OFWs, young professionals, and young couples building a life of faith far from home.

He knows that distance himself. He has been an overseas Filipino worker since 2014. A licensed professional teacher with a master's degree in English, he completed his ministry training in Baguio City, the city he calls home, and now teaches English at a university in northern Thailand — his second home, where he lives with his wife, Christy Joy Seno, who is also an OFW teacher in Chiang Rai.

He writes as a fellow traveler rather than an expert. He is still surprised by how short a life is. He is still learning to spend it well on the One who gave it. If this book finds you in a hard moment, he would count that a kindness worth the writing.

Do You Care? Encountering the Greatest Teacher in Your Hardest Moment is his first book.

"Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life." —John 6:68

KEEP BUILDING

Where to find us after week six

Builders began as one care group around a table. If these six sessions did something in your room, do not let it end with the last page — bring your group into the wider community, and tell us how it went.

WRITE	**bensonbaniwas.writes@gmail.com** *For readers, group leaders and speaking invitations.*
WEBSITE	**builders-hub.org** *The Builders community — Sunday recaps, events and how to join.*
BUILDERS	**facebook.com/buildershub.org** *Building lives that contend for their God-given identity and purpose.*
AUTHOR	**facebook.com/bensonbaniwas** *Honest questions for building a life that lasts — new writing every week.*

The ebook is coming. *Do You Care?* will be available as an ebook in the store at builders-hub.org soon. This discussion guide is free, and stays free — pass it on to any group that wants it.

> ONE ASK
>
> If your group finishes the six sessions, send a photo and a line about what happened. It may end up encouraging a group on the other side of the world that is only on Session 1.

THE LAST LINE OF THE BOOK

HE CARES.

He is the greatest Teacher who ever lived. He cared enough to prove it with His life.

Do You Care? Encountering the Greatest Teacher in Your Hardest Moment · Benson B. Baniwas · First Edition, 2026