

Metamorpha Study Guide: Suggested Use

When doing any kind of group study, many temptations can arise to make the study unfruitful. One such temptation is to do the study guide merely for the purpose of completing it, rather than using the study guide as a means for further discussion and as a launching pad for community. The overall purpose of this study is to help foster authentic relationships, to help people open their hearts to God, and to help develop the kind of life to which Jesus has called us. What I offer here is a suggested format for small groups who wish to use *Metamorpha: Jesus as a Way of Life* as a way towards deeper and more authentic spirituality.

As an example, I will use a 6:00 pm to 8:30 pm (or later) small group time.

Logistics:

- *Meeting time* 6:00-6:30 (time for small talk and catch up)
 - I have found that it is helpful to allow for some general small talk at the beginning, since it is inevitable that some people will be late and the group members will want to ease in to the discussion.
- *Silence and Reading* 6:30-6:45
 - Read one (or more) of the biblical texts highlighted in the study guide, and have the group sit with the Lord in silence as they contemplate the text. This will help the group members to calm their hearts before the Lord and open up to God's work prior to engaging in the study activities.
- *Discussion* 6:45-7:30
 - Break into twos or threes for the purpose of discussion. Keep these smaller groups intact from week to week and encourage them to talk about the book outside of the meetings as well. A major mistake in small groups is to assume that all the members of a group of ten-to-twelve people can equally engage one another. With this format, the smaller groups will walk through the guide together and really dig into the questions and activities rather than only having time to have everyone read off their answers and move on.
- *Prayer* 7:30-8:00
 - For this time, with the group divided into twos and threes, have the members pray over one another. This time should be used to focus specifically on the issues that arose during the guide. For instance, someone may be particularly moved by the story concerning belief, and now see that they don't believe that prayer works. Bring this person before the Lord and ask for mercy, guidance and the power of the Spirit to reveal their unbelief and open their heart to God.
- *Group Discussion* 8:00-?
 - For the remainder of the time, talk together as a large group about issues that arose or questions that remain. Utilize this time as a means to ask the ever-important question, "How now shall we live?"

Note: If this study consists mainly of individuals who will be leading future groups (in this or any other study), I encourage you to keep the two-to-three person small groups intact to co-lead future studies. The sense of community and level of accountability they develop over the course of this study will benefit them whether they are experienced teachers or new to leadership.