

BIBLE STUDY GUIDE

SIX SESSIONS



TASTE and SEE

Discovering God Among Butchers,
Bakers, & Fresh Food Makers

MARGARET FEINBERG

TASTE
and
SEE

ALSO BY MARGARET FEINBERG

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Bakers, & Fresh Food Makers

BIBLE STUDY GUIDE | SIX SESSIONS

MARGARET FEINBERG



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Taste and See Bible Study Guide

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Margaret Feinberg is a popular Bible teacher and speaker at churches and leading conferences such as Catalyst and Women of Joy. Her books and Bible studies, including *Scouting the Divine*, *Fight Back with Joy*, *Wonderstruck*, and *The Sacred Echo*, have sold more than a million copies and received critical acclaim and extensive national media coverage from CNN, the Associated Press, *USA Today*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Washington Post*, and many others.

She was named one of the 50 women most shaping culture and the church today by *Christianity Today*. Margaret lives in Park City, Utah, with her husband Leif who serves as a local pastor, and their superpup, Hershey.



Now that you've read the official bio, here's the kick-off-your-shoes-and-drink-iced-tea-on-the-back-porch version:

Margaret spends most mornings with her good friends, Coffee and God. Without coffee, mornings would be difficult. Without God, life would be impossible.

You'll often find Margaret (puppy-in-tow) adventuring outdoors—she enjoys hiking, river rafting, and scanning the night sky for the Northern Lights and shooting stars.

She boasts an exceptionally dry sense of humor that she attributes to her Jewish father. Little known secret: He was recently inducted into the Surfer's Hall of Fame, and her mom earned her captain's license for sixty-ton ships.

Married to Leif for more than a decade, Margaret's known for losing things like her sunglasses on her head, keys in her hand, and her phone for the twelfth time in the same day. Always up for an adventure, Margaret is known to drive fifty miles to chase down a food truck and snag Groupons for river rafting on a whim. She prefers watching comedies and laughing until her tummy aches over doing sit-ups.

One of her greatest joys is hearing from her readers. Go ahead, find her on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram (@mafeinberg), or check out her website at margaretfeinberg.com.

Dear Leader,

I am so grateful for you! I wish I were with you right now to give you a huge hug and whisper thank you in your ear—*thank you, thank you, thank you for taking the time to lead participants through this book and Bible study.*

You are busy. Your time is precious and limited. You're pulled in many different directions. Yet here you are willing to step out in faith and courageously serve others, as they grow closer to Christ. Wahoo! I give God thanks for you.

I have a few hopes and prayers for you:

1. Over the upcoming weeks, I pray God will use you to nourish communities with friendship and belonging as people share their lives, their recipes, their love with each other.
2. I pray the content and questions in this study will become a springboard for deeper exploration of the Bible and the goodness of God.
3. I pray the adventures described in the videos and book will spur your group to embark on their own spiritual culinary adventures.
4. I pray that God awakens each person to the rich connection between the Lord's Table and our daily tables.
5. I pray that you will have your eyes opened and spirit filled so that you never read the Bible the same way again.

I've also asked God to overflow your spiritual reservoirs, too. Drop us a note at hello@margaretfeinberg.com and let us know when your group is meeting; we want to pray for you and your participants during this time.

Thank you, friend, for being courageous enough to lead others deeper in their relationship with Jesus. I can't wait to meet you and give you a big hug in person as we feast on the goodness of God together.

Blessings,

Margaret



Leader's Guide



This brief leader's guide is designed to help you take participants through the book and Bible study. As you prepare for this study, go ahead and watch several sessions of the video ahead of time so that you'll have a feel for the study's direction.

You'll want to make sure you and your participants pick up a copy of the *Taste and See* book. Reading the book in advance will prepare you for leading the study and provide you with all kinds of additional insights and background. Some group members may prefer an ebook, audiobook, or paperback version to get the most out of the experience.

As you prepare for each session, here's a basic outline of what to expect:



HOMEWORK GROUP DISCUSSION

In each session (with the exception of the first) you will lead the group in a review of the homework from the previous week. Encourage participants to share what they're learning and how the Holy Spirit is at work in their lives.



TASTY ACTIVITY

Depending on the amount of time you have to meet together and the resources available, you'll want to engage in the Tasty Activity. You will find this activity on the group page that begins each week. This interactive icebreaker is designed to be a launchpad for group engagement as well as to move people toward the ideas explored in the teaching. Read ahead to the following week's activity to note the supplies needed and how participants may be able to contribute. You should not have to provide all the food on your own. Consider inviting different people to be responsible for gathering the necessary items, cooking a tasty treat, and leading the group through the activity each week. This is a great way to raise up leaders and get more people in on the fun.



PLAY SESSION VIDEO

After you've finished the homework discussion, it's time to play the video. The teaching presentations will range from 18–24 minutes. Encourage participants to jot down notes, questions, and details as they watch the video, using the space provided.



VIDEO DISCUSSION

Dive into the video discussion questions next. Based on the amount of time your group meets, you may need to prayerfully consider which questions are best suited for your group and its needs. Don't feel as though you need to ask every question. Rely on the Holy Spirit for guidance on any additional or follow-up questions that need to be asked as the discussion progresses.



CLOSING PRAYER

Always save time for prayer before you close. Ask the Holy Spirit to open everyone's eyes and hearts to taste and see God's goodness in greater measure.

DISCLAIMERS

I must make a couple of disclaimers before we go further.

Disclaimer # 1: I have been privileged to grow up in an area of the world with many aisles of food inside grocery stores. Billions of people on the planet don't have that privilege. Even in the United States it's estimated that more than thirteen million children live in food-insecure homes, meaning they regularly do not have enough food to eat. To even talk about food and the Bible and know where our next meal is coming from . . . is a privilege.

I never want us to forget that. You'll notice that throughout this Bible study, some of the activities on Day Five of each session will challenge you to collect food, donate food, or become more educated about food scarcity. I've also teamed up with Compassion International, to which I am donating a portion of the proceeds of this Bible study. Not only do they work with local churches around the world to help children have access to education and healthcare, but they also ensure every child enrolled receives a meal each day at the Compassion centers. I'd encourage you or your group to consider sponsoring a child at compassion.com/margaret-feinberg. **Please see the Compassion International page at the back of the study guide.**

Disclaimer #2: I know that food is a source of pain for many of us. I've struggled both with eating disorders and disordered eating throughout my life, and I hope you will be sensitive to those who wrestle with these and other food-related issues as well. Some days I think I am the last person who should be exploring food and the Bible. Yet the more I study, the more I'm convinced that God wants to redeem food just as he is redeeming us.



You're Invited to
the Table

GETTING STARTED (10–15 minutes)



TASTY ACTIVITY: THE IN-A-PINCH MEAL

What you'll need:

- As a leader, select five random food items—either bring them from your home pantry or borrow them from church kitchen (ask permission, if necessary)—and display them at the group session so everyone can see each one.
1. Invite everyone to imagine that it's 6 p.m. and you need to cook a meal that only includes these ingredients and some spices.
 2. Discuss the following:
 - Looking at your ingredients, what dish might you create? On a scale of 1–10 (1 = let's order takeout; 10 = let's add to the menu rotation), how much do you think you'll like it?
 - What's your go-to, in-a-pinch meal when you don't have time?
 - How many times a week do you eat your meals with someone else around the table?



PLAY SESSION 1 VIDEO (18 minutes)

See the full recipe for honey mustard dressing in the Recipe Index at the back of this study guide.

NOTES

Foodie: One who takes a particular interest in food.

In the Gospels, Jesus is either coming from a meal, going to a meal, or enjoying a meal—when he's not multiplying a meal.

Table time is transformation time.

What did Jesus do with the bread? He took it. He blessed it. He broke it. He gave it.

On the road to Emmaus, they *encountered* Jesus on the road, but they *recognized* him at the table.

Four questions to make deeper connections around any table:

- How did you affect someone's life today?
- How did someone else affect your life today?
- What blessed you most today?
- What did you notice today that helped you recognize an area of your life that still needs healing?



VIDEO DISCUSSION

1. What stood out to you from today's teaching or had the most impact on you?
When is the one table time you're going to add to your calendar this week?
2. Read Matthew 18:20 aloud. Margaret describes that many of the miracles Jesus performed and lessons he taught took place around the table. On a scale of 1–10 (1 = hardly expectant; 10 = highly expectant), how expectant are you to experience Jesus' presence when you gather to eat with others? That Jesus will do something extraordinary? Explain.

3. Margaret says, "Table time is transformation time." How have you found this to be true in your own life? Discuss ways you become more intentional about inviting Christ into your table time.

4. Look up the following passages and note who accompanies Jesus during meals: Luke 5:27–32; 7:36–50; 11:37–41; 14:1–6; 22:14–31. How does Jesus challenge notions of hospitality through the "guest list" you just created? How are you challenged to expand your own guest list?

5. Turn in your Bibles to Luke 24:13–35. Take turns reading through the passage, 2–3 verses each. What stands out to you most from this passage?

6. Respond to each of the four questions Margaret raises during the teaching:

- How did you affect someone's life today?
- How did someone else affect your life today?
- What blessed you most today?
- What did you notice today that helped you recognize an area of your life that still needs healing?

7. If you have time to go deeper, reflect on the following questions based on the four actions found in Luke 24:30:

- How is Christ *taking* you deeper in your relationship with him?

- How is Christ *blessing* you?
- How is Christ allowing you to be *broken*?
- How is Christ *giving* you, pouring you out, to the world?

See Bible
Memory Verse
p. 125



BEFORE THE GROUP ENDS . . .

Next session's Tasty Activity is called "A Fun Fruity Tasting." Review the details of the activity on pages 38–39. Ask for three or more volunteers to commit to bring the food and supplies so the cost and responsibility are shared. If your group chooses to skip the activity, you can still engage in the discussion questions.



CLOSING PRAYER

As you close in prayer, ask:

- God to expand each participant's capacity to taste and see God's goodness.
- The Holy Spirit to increase expectancy for Jesus at every meal.
- That each participant would experience Christ's presence during table time.



Personal Study Time

DAY ONE: GOD—THE HOST WITH THE MOST

It's far too easy to read the story of creation from a safe distance when we first open our Bibles. We forget that a garden is a place of chirping and humming, textures and hues, sweet scents and sharp smells, tangy tastes and sweet bites. The land is abuzz with life and taste and flavor. In the garden, we catch our first sights and tastes of God's goodness.

Read Genesis 1. In the space that follows, make a list of the specific sights and sounds you imagine you'd experience if you took a stroll with God in the cool of the day.

SIGHTS:

SOUNDS:

SMELLS:

TEXTURES:

TASTES:

The Garden of Eden can be translated “garden of pleasure” or “garden of delight.” God could have planted humanity in any setting, yet humankind sprouts in a garden amidst orange blossoms and crunchy legumes. Before humans ever practiced hospitality, God practiced it first.



What does the placement of humanity in such a delicious place reveal about . . .

GOD'S CREATIVITY:

GOD'S GENEROSITY:

GOD'S HOSPITALITY:

GOD'S LOVING-KINDNESS:

God gives humanity a specific responsibility within the garden.

Read Genesis 2:15. What were the responsibilities of humankind in the garden?

The garden is the environment God handpicked for Adam and Eve to discover their purpose and place in the world. In tending the land and tasting its fruits, they discover *their* existence within the landscape of *life's* existence. They learn skills of how to care for the earth and care for each other. The very work Adam is called to do opens a pathway for discovery, knowledge, and understanding to experience God's provision and presence more intimately. Through his placement and purpose in the garden, Adam is more fully able to taste and see that the Lord is good.



QUOTABLE: "To live, we must daily break the body and shed the blood of Creation. When we do this knowingly, lovingly, skillfully, reverently, it is a sacrament." –Wendell Berry¹

Somewhere in the shadows lurks a dark lanky creature who whispers in the woman's ear, *this one nibble is better than all the rest*. With a bite they disobey, and soon the couple is banned from the holy banquet.

Read Genesis 3:17–19 below. Circle every mention of food and eating in the passage.

To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat from it,' cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat



food from it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground.”

The broken soil results in painful toil, thorns and thistles, and the sweat of the brow, yet embedded in these words God doesn’t eliminate the need for food. The cursed ground makes life hard but also makes humanity more dependent on God for the soil and the seasons, the water and the weather.

You will eat food all the days of your life.

You will eat the plants of the field.

You will eat your food until you return to the ground.

How are these statements still true of us today?

Rather than banish, God redeems food in a surprising heavenly twist. Throughout the following generations, the Israelites experience and commemorate God’s power, purpose, and rescue through food. They discover community and satisfaction and healing around the table.

When Jesus appears, he reveals himself as foodstuff: the bread of life, the true vine, the one anointed with olive oil, the sacrificial lamb. The Son of God is even described as someone who knocks on the doors of our souls so we’ll invite him in for supper. And when this whole shindig reaches its culmination, God handpicks the menu for the best banquet of all time—one that supersedes anything Adam and Eve experienced in Eden.

God loves us so much that he wants to use everything in our lives—even food—to reveal his goodness.

CLOSING PRAYER

Spend time praying that your senses will be heightened to God's goodness. With each passing page and session, ask God to help you discover another facet of his character, feel the soft pinch of his presence, and step back in astonishment of the One who holds everything together.

DAY TWO: READ AND LEARN

Read chapter 1 of the *Taste and See* book, "An Invitation to a Culinary Adventure." Use the space below to note any insights or questions you want to share at the next group session.

Describe your most memorable meal. How does that memory reveal your deeper heart hunger?



Imagine yourself across the table from Margaret and she asks you, “What are you really hungry for?” How would you answer?

Of all the biblical mentions of food in this chapter, which surprised you the most?

In both the Old Testament and New, God sprinkled hundreds of food references like Hansel and Gretel’s breadcrumbs. From that first bite in Genesis, the great story of God is stuffed with mentions of food and feasts. Everyday edibles become both a source of sustenance and of sacred symbolism. Food often takes on a spiritual dimension, a physical representation of God’s grace and provision. The table doesn’t have to be a place of awkwardness or shame, fear or angst, but food can become a way to feed our bellies and satiate our souls. Indeed, food is an expression of God’s love made edible.

When have you experienced food as God's love made edible?

DAY THREE: A MILLION THANK YOUS

Eating is holy, but it's also humbling. Food was never meant to be worshiped; if anything, it was meant to reveal we are not gods and we are dependent on God for everything.



QUOTABLE: "Thoughtful eating reminds us that there is no human fellowship without a table, no table without a kitchen, no kitchen without a garden, no garden without viable ecosystems, no ecosystems without the forces productive of life, and no life without its source in God." –Norman Wirzba²

The morsels of life that fill our belly remind us that the nourishment of God extends beyond our physical needs to our emotional, relational, and spiritual needs.

If you pray before a meal, what is your common prayer? Write it in the space below.



Reflecting on our source of food reminds us that God is behind everything we eat. God sprinkles snow, releases rain, raises and lowers the sun, tugs on the moon, and crafts creation in a way that sustains life.

When we become more thoughtful about what we eat, we become more connected and grateful.

We celebrate the gardens and fields and rain and sun, the one who provides all things.

We remember the farmer and worker whose sacrifices make our meal possible.

We look for ways to embrace those across the table and pull up an extra chair.

We begin asking questions about food sources and justice and care for those who provide.

Which of the following would you like to start including in your prayers before meals? Place a check by each one:

- ☐ God who provides rain and sun and seasons.
- ☐ Thanks and blessing on those who farm and harvest.
- ☐ Prayers that God would heal our land.
- ☐ Remembrance of those who don't have friends or family and need others.
- ☐ Those who are working for healthier, more affordable food for all people.
- ☐ Other:

In the space below, write out a new prayer you'd like to pray before meals.

Eating reminds us that we cannot exist alone; we are created dependent on others.

Eating reminds us that we are not the creators of life; we belong to the one who creates life.

Read the following passage. Circle the verbs or active words, then underline all mentions of food.

He makes grass grow for the cattle, and plants for people to cultivate—
bringing forth food from the earth: wine that gladdens human hearts, oil
to make their faces shine, and bread that sustains their hearts. (Psalm
104:14–15)

This passage reveals that food is not a commodity as much as it is a gift of grace. Eating together invites us to become more attentive and taste and see the Lord's goodness with greater spiritual depth. Shared meals can become a place to enter into deeper relationships with one another and God.

Review your daily schedule over the next two weeks. Find time for at least one meal that you can share with someone that's not rushed or hurried. If appropriate, say your new prayer before you eat together.



**CLOSING PRAYER**

Spend time asking God to expand your capacity for gratitude before, during, and after meals. Ask God to reveal what he's really giving you as you eat.

DAY FOUR: READ AND LEARN

Read chapter 2 of the *Taste and See* book, "A Flaky Filet of Fish." Use the space below to note any insights or questions you want to share at the next group session.

What surprised you most about Margaret's time fishing on the Sea of Galilee with Ido?

Margaret describes the disciples leaving their full nets to follow Jesus:

“ We read this famous fishing story today with the advantage of knowing that those boats and nets will serve a purpose again. But in the moment, the disciples believe they're leaving them forever. They give up their

transportation, their livelihoods, their futures, not to mention the biggest catch of their lives. They've just won the fishing lottery, but they leave it behind for something far better. ” (p. 41)

Describe a time when Jesus called you to leave something behind for something far better.

Margaret writes:

“ If you stop looking to Jesus as your powerhouse, you may start thinking God is overlooking you, ignoring you, or worse yet, punishing you. If you close your eyes too long to God's presence, you may convince yourself that somehow God has rejected you, or worse, has abandoned you altogether. You'll grow deaf to the One who calls from the shore, the One who wants to fill your nets with the impossible and unimaginable. ” (p. 45)

When are you most tempted to start believing God performs his greatest works in other locations, in other people, in other situations and forget God wants to perform miracles here, now, today?



Where do you need to experience the power of God in your life right now?
Write a prayer in the space below.

DAY FIVE: TASTE AND SEE EXPERIENCES

Choose one (or more) of the following activities to grow more intentional in your relationships with one other and God.

1. Go on a picnic. Get outside (or inside, depending on the time of year) with a friend and be intentional about your conversation and time of connection. Consider using the four questions from the video teaching to connect on a deeper relational level.
2. Make one of your favorite recipes or try a new one (you'll find a collection of tasty ones in the *Taste and See* book) and share with your immediate neighbors. As you cook, pray for each family and home. Ask God to open opportunities for deeper connection and kindness.
3. Plant fresh herbs. Consider using seeds or purchasing inexpensive starter plants of spices such as rosemary, basil, thyme, or lemongrass. Then, as they grow, share with neighbors, friends, or even a local food bank.

4. Help others in your community in one of these ways:
 - Purchase food for a local food bank.
 - Volunteer to serve food at a homeless shelter.
 - Scour your pantry shelves and kitchen cabinets for food you can give away (pay attention to expiration dates).
 - Cook for someone who is experiencing long-term health issues, recently gave birth, or is housebound.



