

Who was  
MATTHEW?

## **Parent Teaching: Matthew—The Tax Collector Who Tracked a Greater Story**

When we open the Gospel of Matthew, we are reading the words of a man whose life was completely transformed by Jesus. Matthew—also called Levi—was a tax collector, which in his time meant he was essentially an accountant working for the Roman government. He was responsible for tracking money, keeping detailed records, and ensuring accuracy. But tax collectors were often disliked by their own people, seen as dishonest or aligned with the occupying Romans.

And yet, this is exactly the kind of person Jesus chose.

In Matthew 9:9, Jesus sees Matthew sitting at his tax booth and simply says, “Follow me.” There’s no long explanation, no list of requirements. And Matthew gets up and follows Him. It’s a powerful reminder for parents: Jesus doesn’t call people because they have perfect reputations—He calls them because He sees who they can become.

### **Why Matthew’s Background Matters**

Matthew’s training as an accountant is not a small detail—it becomes part of how God uses him. As someone skilled in record-keeping and attention to detail, Matthew was uniquely equipped to carefully document the life and teachings of Jesus. His Gospel is structured, intentional, and deeply connected to the Old Testament.

One of the most meaningful ways we see this is right at the beginning: Matthew opens his Gospel with a genealogy—a detailed family line tracing Jesus all the way back to Abraham (Matthew 1:1–17).

For modern readers, genealogies can feel easy to skip over. But for families in Matthew’s time, this mattered deeply.

### **The Significance of Jesus’ Lineage**

Matthew wanted his readers to clearly see that Jesus was not random—He was the promised Messiah, coming through a specific family line that God had been faithfully guiding for generations. By tracing Jesus’ ancestry, Matthew shows that God keeps His promises across time, through ordinary people and families.

Even more beautifully, the genealogy includes unexpected names—women, outsiders, and people with complicated pasts. This would have stood out to Matthew’s audience and reminds us today that God’s story has always included imperfect people.

For parents, this carries a powerful message:

God works through families—real, imperfect, everyday families.

Matthew's careful record-keeping tells us that lineage matters—not in a way that creates pressure, but in a way that creates purpose. The same God who worked through generations to bring about Jesus is still at work in our families today.

### **What This Means for Your Family**

Matthew's story invites us to see two things clearly:

- **No one is too far from God's call.**

Matthew went from a tax booth to a table with Jesus, and eventually to writing part of the New Testament.

- **Your family is part of a bigger story.**

Just as Jesus came through a family line, your faithfulness—reading Scripture, praying together, showing love—becomes part of the legacy you are building for generations to come.

In a world that often measures success by achievement, Matthew reminds us that what God values is availability and obedience. And through something as simple as a list of names, he shows us that God has always been writing a story through families—one that your family is now a part of.

\*This teaching was generated in part using AI.

While AI is an incredible resource that is capable of many wonderful things, it is imperative to test everything you read or hear about God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit against the Bible.

If you're not familiar with reading the Bible, a children's version is a great place to start!

These are a few our family has enjoyed reading together over the years:

- [The Beginners Bible: Timeless Children's Stories](#) (ages 2-6)
- [The Jesus Storybook Bible: Every Story Whispers His Name](#) (ages 4-8)

- [Brave Girls Bible Stories](#) (ages 5-9)
- [The Adventure Bible: God's Redemptive Story](#) (ages 8+)

The Bible I read (and highly recommend!) is the [NLT Life Application Study Bible](#), which provides contextual information on things like customs and culture, as well as biographies, maps and summaries. It also connects prophecies made in the Old Testament to the fulfillment of them in the New Testament through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

To receive a free Bible, visit your local church, library, or thrift store, or [order one online here](#).

If you prefer to read online, there are countless Bible apps to choose from.

I often use [Biblehub.com](#) when looking to compare different translations of the same verse and, when looking to dive deeper into a particular topic (or verse), I visit [GotQuestions.org](#).

The ULTIMATE source of knowledge and wisdom is - without a doubt! - the Holy Spirit, which we receive by the grace of God when we claim Jesus as our Lord and Savior.

If you have not yet done that, rest assured for Romans 10:9 explains:

***"If you declare with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."***

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