

THE
DISCIPLESHIP
GOSPEL
WORKBOOK

MULTIPLY DISCIPLES WITH
THE GOSPEL OF MARK

Ben Sobels & Bill Hull

Dedicated to Cypress Community Church

The Discipleship Gospel Workbook: Multiply Disciples with the Gospel of Mark
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Dear Reader,

Whether you've believed in Jesus for a short time, long time, or never before, this workbook is for you. We've designed it to help you learn Jesus' gospel and how to follow him. It will be especially helpful for those who have never been intentionally disciplined by someone. By completing this discipleship experience, you will learn these skills for following Jesus:

- How to read and study the Bible
- How to start putting Jesus' teachings into practice
- How to start living out the foundational practices of discipleship
- How to let Jesus change your life by experiencing his gospel for yourself

This workbook leads you through the Gospel of Mark in the Bible, so you'll need your own Bible for individual study. We use the *English Standard Version* throughout this material, but you can use any translation of your choosing. As you complete each lesson, use the answer key in the back of this workbook. Make sure to look there *before* each group meeting, not after. Take at least twenty minutes *before* each session to use that key to fill in the answers as you prepare. Looking at the answers for this workbook ahead of time might seem counterintuitive, but doing so will show your commitment to the group, help you contribute to the discussion, and give your group's discussions a solid baseline from which to start.

We suggest you read *The Discipleship Gospel* (to which this workbook is a companion) as you go through this material because it contains vital context to help you understand the content of this workbook. In the leader's guide below and at the end of the workbook, we suggest specific chapters of *The Discipleship Gospel* that will take you deeper into the core content of this workbook.

One of the strengths of this discipleship experience is that you get to "count the cost" before you fully commit. Do the first session! See what it's like by trying it out. If you realize it's not for you, you can bow out if you choose, but try the first session before you decide. We think you'll find that Jesus is too intriguing to stop. Jesus is the most important and most beautiful thing that has happened to this world, and we can't wait for you to experience him!

For the advancing of Christ's kingdom,

Ben & Bill

www.thebonhoefferproject.com

WORKBOOK LEADER'S GUIDE

What We Have Learned by Leading Others

1. As a general rule, it's best to have someone lead you through this workbook before you try to lead others through it. If someone else has not led you through it, see if that's possible first. Then, take others through it.
2. Pray hard before inviting people to join your discipleship group (as Jesus did in Luke 6:12-13). Don't just look for people you enjoy the most or with whom you feel the most comfortable. Let God direct you through prayer to the people *he* wants you to disciple.
3. Don't let your discipleship group devolve into a mere *knowledge-based class*; it should be an *obedience-based experience*. It's not about "getting through the workbook" but about learning to live with Jesus and love others like Jesus.
4. When a discipleship group forms, the leader should ask each member to begin praying for two or three people they know who aren't yet following Jesus that they would begin following Jesus.
5. Encourage your group members to use the "Answer Key" in the back and emphasize with them to use it *before* your group meetings. This might seem counterintuitive, but it will greatly enhance your group's discussions when you all start with "the right answers." Set the tone as the leader by filling out the answers for yourself, even if you know the answers or have been through this material before—speed of the leader, speed of the pack.
6. There are notecards in the back of the workbook to help your group complete the memorization projects. Encourage everyone to use these as they memorize definitions of the gospel, discipleship, and memory verses from the Gospels of Matthew and Luke.
7. Carefully follow the instructions of this workbook by answering each question and doing each project without skipping *this* or *that*. If you skip things, your group experience will decline with increasing measure. This includes reading each chapter out loud as a group. In the first century, disciples would read Scripture aloud, so make that a priority for your group, too.
8. This workbook is most effectively facilitated in gender-specific groups of three or four participants (Tit. 2:1-8), including the leader. It has been used

in mixed groups and with other sizes, but in our experience, that's not as effective. And it's not designed to go through on your own—not at all.

9. Be sure to set a weekly meeting time based on input from those in your group. Once your group sets the time, keep it. As the leader, if you repeatedly miss sessions or change the time, you'll quickly lose momentum.
10. While it may be convenient to meet on your church campus, meetings for this workbook work better in "the public square," so meet at a coffee shop, restaurant, or another public space. This offers a practical way of making your faith public from the beginning.
11. Important: Once your discipleship group completes Mark 8, ask each person to lead *at least one chapter* (two is even better!) of the studies that cover Mark 9-16. It's not hard to facilitate the group and it gives people much-needed confidence. So let them lead (under your supervision) and help them if they falter, affirming them with grace, patience, and encouragement.
12. Also important: This discipleship experience isn't finished when your group completes this workbook. That's just the halfway point. It's not complete when we've merely *been disciplined*. Full obedience to Christ includes *making disciples*, too (Matt. 28:19-20). That's why we used the term "multiply" in the subtitle of this book. Encourage group members to multiply by leading their own group. If you think members of your group may not be ready to lead their own group, ask them to be an apprentice leader with you in your next group.
13. When your discipleship group meets to read the next chapter of Mark's Gospel, we recommend that your leader start the discussion by asking *one of these four* relational, others-focused questions, which we call "Discipleship Group Starter Questions":
 - How have you seen God's goodness this week?
 - How are you doing with loving the people God has already put in your life?
 - How has God been speaking to you through his Word and prayer?
 - Who are two or three people who are not yet following Jesus that you are praying for?
14. You will also find in the back of the workbook a page called "Share Your Jesus Story." Once your discipleship group finishes Mark 16, meet one more time so each member of your group can share their "Jesus Story," along with the gospel in three to five minutes. Use this time to talk through next steps for multiplying your group.

MARK 1: GOSPEL BEGINNINGS

Mark's Gospel is one of the most helpful, reliable, and historically verifiable sources on the life of Jesus. Read Mark 1:1-45 out loud with your discipleship group. Your leader will help you answer the observation, interpretation, and application questions. If you're not comfortable reading, let your leader know.

OBSERVE: What Do You See?

- Mark 1 serves as the introduction to this Gospel and is filled with activity: Jesus was baptized by John, was tempted by Satan, and began his public ministry. He was about _____ years old at the time (Luke 3:23).
- When Jesus began his public ministry in Mark 1, he began preaching the _____ (Mark 1:14) as his main message. If we are going to truly understand Jesus, we must grasp his _____.

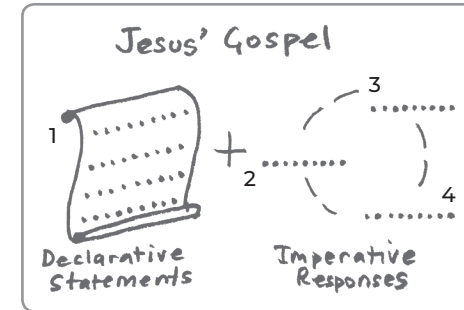
1. The major declaration of Jesus' gospel in Mark 1:15 was about the kingdom of God. What did Jesus declare about God's kingdom?

2. How did Jesus call people to respond to his declaration about God's kingdom? Read Mark 1:15-17. What were the three aspects of Jesus' call?

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3. The Primary Call of Jesus' Gospel: Two of the most powerful words Jesus ever said were "_____." These words call us to begin living a new life with Jesus; a life of *seeking first the kingdom of God* (Matt. 6:33).

4. Jesus revealed four of the seven essential elements of his gospel in Mark 1:14-17. With your leader's help, fill in these four gospel elements by the following drawing. (*Clue: One goes with the Declarative Statements, three with the Imperative Responses.*)



INTERPRET: What does it mean?

5. Read Romans 1:16 and 1 Corinthians 15:1-3. What does each of these verses teach us about Jesus' gospel? What questions does this study of the gospel raise for you so far?

APPLY: How does it apply?

The "Follow" Project: You've just finished the first session—well done! Now you need to decide whether or not you want to keep learning how to follow Jesus. Take time to decide this week. Count the cost. Maybe you're not ready. When you've made your decision, let your group leader know. If you decide to continue, you're making five commitments:

- I will finish this study of Mark's Gospel with my discipleship group.
- I will make our weekly sessions a high priority on my schedule.
- I will be on time, come prepared, and participate.
- I will transparently share and keep confidential what others share.
- I will multiply this experience by leading a discipleship group myself.

Your Signature

Pray: A.C.T.S. This is a helpful acronym for praying. **Adoration:** Start praying by focusing on God and his goodness. **Confession:** Acknowledge your need for God and confess any sin in your life to him. **Thanksgiving:** Give thanks to God for his forgiveness and for the Holy Spirit who empowers us to obey Jesus. **Supplication:** Pray for others and for various things in your own life.

MARK 2: WHO IS JESUS?

Application Follow-Up: Why did you commit to joining this discipleship group?

Read Mark 2:1-28 out loud with your discipleship group, and your leader will help you answer the observation, interpretation, and application questions.

OBSERVE: What Do You See?

- Take note: Mark 2 is structured around four questions about Jesus (vv. 7, 16, 18, 24). In each case Jesus' answers led his listeners to consider who he really was—specifically, if he truly was _____, God's Son.
- Three of the four questions in Mark 2 were asked in the context of eating a meal. Including this event, Mark's Gospel records seven different meals during which Jesus ate with his disciples, and these meals carried with them very important discipleship moments.

Read the four verses below and write out the question asked in each verse on the lines. Then, follow the instructions to learn how Jesus answered them.

1. Mark 2:7: _____ ?

Read Jesus' answer in verses 9-12. (Clue: What did he have the *authority* to do?)

2. Mark 2:16: _____ ?

Read Jesus' answer in verse 17. What did Jesus imply he was able to do? (This is a hard question. Clue: It has to do with declaring sinners righteous.)

3. Mark 2:18: _____ ?

Read Jesus' answer in verses 19-20. How many times did Jesus describe himself

as *the bridegroom*? ____ Read Isaiah 61:10, which is an Old Testament prophecy of the coming Christ. Who did Jesus imply he was?

4. Mark 2:24: _____ ?

Read Jesus' answer in verses 25-26. To which Old Testament person does Jesus liken his actions? _____ (1 Sam. 21:1-6). In Jesus' day, one title people used for God's promised Savior was "_____." Like "the bridegroom" referenced earlier, associating himself with King David was a claim to be the Christ, God's Anointed King.



INTERPRET: What does it mean?

5. As you think through Jesus' four answers in Mark 2, write a summary of who Jesus claimed to be and what he claimed to have authority (or power) to do.

APPLY: How does it apply?

The "Dinner with Disciples" Project: Some of Jesus' most poignant moments with his disciples happened around a dinner table. Just as we saw Jesus eat with his disciples in Mark 2, get together as a discipleship group for dinner in your leader's home. If you're married, your spouse is welcome. During dinner, share with each other where you are in your journey with Jesus.

Pray: A.C.T.S. – Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication

MARK 3: DISCIPLE

Application Follow-Up: What did you learn by having dinner together?

Read Mark 3:1-35 out loud with your discipleship group, and your leader will help you answer the observation, interpretation, and application questions.

OBSERVE: What Do You See?

- Mark 3 highlights when Jesus began intentionally discipling a few men. The word “disciple” means *learner*. In ancient times, disciples literally followed their teacher to learn how to live *like him* by living *with him*.
- As you answer the following questions, pay special attention to Mark 3:13-19, which contains a critical moment of Jesus’ ministry. He set apart twelve men to disciple them. It is important to note the number he chose, which reveals that discipleship is most effective in small groups.

1. Carefully reread Mark 3:14-15. What was Jesus’ first stated purpose for The Twelve disciples, the first thing he wanted them to do (v. 14)?

First:

2. In these verses, Jesus set apart twelve men for three purposes. What are the other two purposes for which Jesus set his disciples apart?

Second:

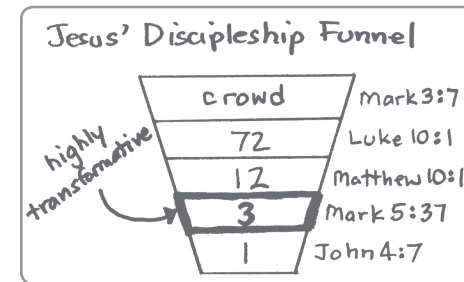
Third:

INTERPRET: What does it mean?

3. At its core, discipleship is spending time *with Jesus*: learning to live *with* him and love others *like* him. Jesus spent 90 percent of his time with _____ men (Bill Hull, *Conversion and Discipleship*, 145). It’s also important to note that he spent more time with just _____ disciples. As we keep reading through Mark’s Gospel, we see Peter, James, and John were with Jesus during his greatest highs and lows (1:16-20; 5:37; 9:2; 13:3; 14:33).

4. Read Acts 4:13. What did the religious leaders recognize about Peter and John in this verse that was unique to them as “uneducated, common men”?

Jesus preached to crowds and taught in large groups, but he intentionally trained his disciples in a small group of twelve men with a focus on just three of them. Of all the group sizes, the relational dynamics of his group of three disciples proved to be most transformative.



5. In what ways is time with your discipleship group also time with Jesus?

APPLY: How does it apply?

The “Discipleship Definitions” Project: Congratulations! As you study Jesus’ teachings and put them into practice with your discipleship group, you’re already being discipled and learning how to make disciples. To keep building clarity, memorize the discipleship definitions in the back of this workbook and be ready to recite them during your next meeting. Go ahead and practice here:

A disciple is a person who is _____
_____.

Disciple making is Jesus’ intentional process of _____
_____.

Pray: A.C.T.S.

MARK 16: JESUS' RESURRECTION

Application Follow-Up: Do you truly believe in your heart that Jesus died for your sins? Are you committed to taking up your cross daily to follow Jesus?

Read Mark 16:1-20 out loud with your discipleship group and answer the observation, interpretation, and application questions.

OBSERVE – What do you see?

- Jesus made his entire ministry dependent on one miraculous sign: his _____ (Matt. 12:39-40). This miraculous sign alone proves Jesus is the Christ, God's _____ .
- Jesus' resurrection has more supporting evidence than almost any event in ancient history. One introductory resource for the evidence for Jesus' resurrection is Lee Strobel's book *The Case for Christ*.

1. How does Mark 16 describe the circumstances when the women discovered Jesus had been raised from the dead?

2. Read Mark 8:31, 9:31, and 10:34. Jesus told his disciples about his resurrection before he was raised from the dead. Why do you think he did this?

3. What did Jesus say to his disciples after his resurrection (vv. 14-16)?

INTERPRET: What Does It Mean?

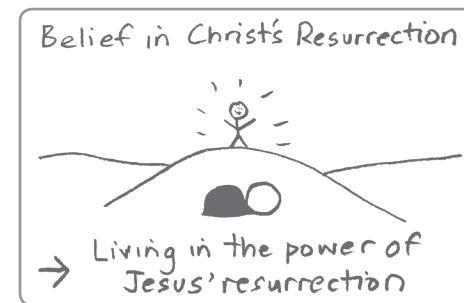
4. Read Romans 10:9. What does this verse teach us about conversion?

5. If you are going to follow Christ, it is crucial to understand the apostle Paul's teaching that *the same power that raised Christ from the dead lives in you* and _____. What do the following verses teach you about the power of Jesus' resurrection dwelling in us?

Romans 6:1-11:

Romans 8:9-11:

Ephesians 1:16-20:



6. Read Romans 6:3-11. In what ways does being baptized in water enact our faith in the gospel as we commit ourselves to new life in Jesus?

APPLY: How Does It Apply?

Believe and Be Baptized: If you believe in the gospel, which climaxes with Jesus' resurrection, you will obey Jesus' command to be baptized (Mark 16:16). If you are ready to commit your life to following Jesus with no conditions and no excuses, talk to your discipleship group leader about being baptized. Remember, the Holy Spirit will empower you to follow in Jesus' footsteps, including being baptized like Jesus (Mark 1:9-11).

Note: Many early manuscripts do not include Mark 16:9-20, but we have included it here to honor the translations and traditions which include it.

Pray: A.C.T.S.

AFTER YOU'VE BEEN BAPTIZED, WHAT'S NEXT?

If you have begun following Jesus and been baptized, consider taking these next steps:

Read *The Discipleship Gospel*

The Discipleship Gospel goes deeper into the ideas in this workbook. As we mentioned at the halfway point, Chapters 1-9 introduce and describe the seven elements of the gospel. Once you've read those chapters, pick up with Chapter 10 and read through the end to learn more about how to be a disciple and make disciples in the life-giving community of a local church.

Join a Gospel-Preaching Church

The church is critical to Jesus' plan for advancing the gospel of the kingdom throughout the world. If you aren't a member of a gospel-preaching church, join one in your area as soon as possible (1 Cor. 12:12-13; Heb. 10:25, Philem. 6). Your unity with others who worship and love Jesus will spur you on to serve his kingdom-advancing purposes in the world. Talk to your discipleship-group leader about joining their church as a member.

Lead a Discipleship Group

It's one thing to be *led* through this discipleship experience; it's a very different thing to *lead* a discipleship group yourself. It requires you to rely upon the Holy Spirit! You complete your discipleship training in "the elementary doctrine of Christ" and the basic commands of Jesus when you have not only been discipled, but have also made disciples (Matt. 28:19). Talk to your discipleship leader about what's involved in leading a group and whether or not you are ready to lead (or be an apprentice leader).

Discover Your Spiritual Gifts

The Holy Spirit dwells in all followers of Jesus, but he also uniquely gives "spiritual gifts" to each individual follower of Jesus (Rom. 12:1-8; 1 Cor. 12:1-31, Eph. 4:1-16). To begin discovering your spiritual gifts, you might want to take a free online "spiritual gifts analysis for individuals" by visiting www.churchgrowth.org (or another reliable assessment provider). After that, talk with your discipleship group leader about the results and how your gifts might be uniquely matched with a kingdom-advancing ministry of your local church.

ANSWER KEY

As You Go Through This Workbook

Take advantage of these helpful supplemental resources that we've selected specifically for this workbook. They will help you go deeper into this study, in addition to reading *The Discipleship Gospel* to which this workbook is a companion:

- N.T. Wright's *Mark for Everyone* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004): A helpful and accessible commentary on Mark's Gospel.
- Howard Hendricks's *Living By The Book* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1991): A guide for learning how to study Scripture.
- Bill Hull's *Conversion and Discipleship: You Can't Have One Without the Other* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016): A description of the most common false gospels today.
- John Walvoord and Roy Zuck's *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* (1983), and I. Howard Marshall and A.R. Millard's *New Bible Dictionary* (1996): A Bible commentary and a dictionary for learning to study God's Word.

MARK 1: OBSERVE: thirty // gospel, gospel. 1) Jesus declared, "The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand." 2) Repent of sin, believe in the gospel, follow me. 3) follow me. 4) Kingdom, Repent, Believe, Follow. **INTERPRET:** 5) Rom. 1:16: The gospel is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes; 1 Cor. 15:1-3: The gospel is of first importance.

MARK 2: OBSERVE: the Christ. 1) Mark 2:7: *Who can forgive sins but God alone?* Jesus had the authority to forgive sins. 2) Mark 2:16: *Why does Jesus eat with sinners?* Jesus implied he has the power to justify sinners (to declare them righteous before God). 3) Mark 2:18: *Why weren't Jesus' disciples fasting?* Three / Jesus implies he's the Bridegroom, which fulfills Isa. 61:10. 4) Mark 2:24: *Why didn't Jesus' disciples observe Sabbath rules? / David / the son of David* (see also Mark 10:47). **INTERPRET:** 5) Jesus claimed to be the Christ—the Bridegroom and the son of David of the Old Testament—with the power to forgive sins and the authority to justify sinners.

MARK 3: OBSERVE: 1) First: To be with Jesus. 2) Second: To preach the gospel; Third: To cast out demons with authority (and heal the sick, Matt. 10:1). **INTERPRET:** 3) twelve / three. 4) The religious leaders recognized that Peter and John had been with Jesus. 5) Jesus is at the center any discipleship group: We read about him, talk about him, learn his teaching, put his teaching into practice, pray in his name, and he promises his presence is with us (Matt. 28:18-20). **APPLY:** A disciple is a person who is... learning to live with Jesus and love others like Jesus / Disciple making is Jesus' intentional process of... servant-leadership training that multiplies disciples a few at a time to build up the church and advance God's kingdom throughout the world.

MARK 4: OBSERVE: 85 / God's Word // Twelve. 1) Bible / teachings of Jesus / gospel.