

The Discipleship Gospel

Basic Training for Following Jesus

Dear Friend,

If you don't yet believe in Jesus, if you're a new believer in Jesus, or if you're a believer who has never been intentionally discipled by someone else, this workbook (and discipleship experience!) is for you. It's been designed for you to learn the basics of following Jesus from someone who has already gone through it with one or two others. If you complete this training experience, you will have learned at least seven things –

1. How to read and the study the Bible using Mark's Gospel
2. How to put Jesus teaching into practice, including serving others
3. How to pray, including memorizing Lord's Prayer
4. How important eating meals together is to following Jesus
5. What Jesus' gospel of the kingdom is and how He calls us to respond it
6. What some foundational practices of following Jesus are, including forgiving others, sharing the Lord's Supper, and being baptized
7. What Jesus teaches about His Second Coming at the end of time

One of the strengths of this discipleship training is that you get to try it before you commit to it. Do the first session. Try it. If you realize it's not for you right now, you can bow out – no questions, no awkwardness. But try the first session first. As we write in our book, *The Discipleship Gospel*, "Jesus is the most important and most beautiful thing that has happened to this world." We can't wait for you to experience Him!

For the advancing of Christ's kingdom,

Ben & Bill

Ben Sobels & Bill Hull,
thebonhoefferproject.com

Workbook

Leader Instructions

(a.k.a. 10 Lessons We've Learned from Leading Others)

1. If you haven't been disciplined through this workbook, you should *not* try to lead a group with it. Trust us on this. Be led through this workbook before trying to lead others with it.
2. Pray a lot before inviting people to join your discipleship group (Luke 6:12-13). Don't just look for people you feel comfortable with or that you like. Let God direct you through prayer to the people *He* wants you to disciple.
3. Don't let your discipleship group devolve into a knowledge-based class. It should be an obedience-based experience. It's not about "getting through the workbook." It's about learning to live with Jesus and love others like Jesus.
4. There is an answer key in the back. Use it. Encourage your group to use it *before* you meet. This might seem counter-intuitive but it will greatly enhance your group discussion when you all start with "the right answer."
5. As you study through Mark's Gospel using this workbook, follow the instructions. Answer each question. Do each project. Don't skip *this* or *that*. The more you skip things, the faster your group experience will decline.
6. This workbook is designed to be most effective in gender-specific groups of three or four (Titus 2:1-8). It has been used in mixed groups of other sizes, but not as effectively. It's not designed to go through on your own – not at all.
7. Be sure to set a time to meet weekly. Get input from those in your group when you set the time. Once the time is set, keep it. As the leader, if you keep missing sessions or changing the time, you'll leak momentum quickly.
8. While it might be convenient to meet on your church campus, it's better to meet in "the public square." Meet at a coffee shop, restaurant, or some other public place. It's a practical way of making your faith public.
9. After your discipleship group has completed Mark 8, ask each person to lead at least *one* chapter (*two* is 3X as good!). It's not hard to lead a group but people need confidence. Let them lead under your supervision.
10. Important: This discipleship experience doesn't end when you complete Mark 16 with your group. They are at the halfway mark. The experience is complete once they have led their own discipleship group using this workbook. Then they've experienced being a disciple and making disciples.

Mark 1 – The Gospel, Part 1

Mark's Gospel is one of the best, most reliable, and historically verifiable sources on the life of Jesus.¹ 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.

Observation – What do you see?

- Mark 1 is the introduction and a lot happens in the first chapter. Jesus is baptized by John, tempted by Satan, and begins His public ministry. He was about years old at the time (Luke 3:23).
- As Jesus begins His public ministry in Mark 1, He begins preaching the (Mark 1:14). It was His main message. If we are going to truly understand Jesus, we must grasp His²

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

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

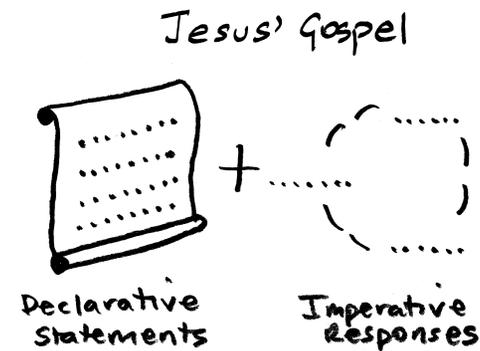
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The Primary Call of Jesus' Gospel. Two of the most powerful words Jesus ever said were "..... ." These words call us to begin living a new life with Jesus; a life of *seeking first the kingdom of God* (Matthew 6:33).

¹ A helpful and accessible commentary on Mark's Gospel is N.T. Wright, "Mark for Everyone" (Westminster John Knox Press, 2004).

² The word "gospel" has its origins in the Greek word *euangelion*, which literally means *good news*. In ancient times, *euangelion* described a king's announcement of victory or celebration that would be proclaimed through the streets of the city. This is how we are to think about Jesus' gospel.

Jesus reveals four of seven essential elements of His gospel in Mark 1:14-17.³ With your leader's help, fill in the gospel diagram below.



Interpretation – What does it mean?

Read Romans 1:16 & 1Corinthians 15:1-3. What do these verses teach us about Jesus' gospel? What questions does all of this raise for you?

Application – How does it apply?

The "Follow" Project – You've just finished the first session! Well done! Now you need to decide whether you want to keep learning more about following Jesus. Take time this week to decide. Count the cost. Maybe it's not the right time for you. When you've made your decision, let your discipleship 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, prepared, and participate
- I will share transparently and keep things we share confidential
- I will multiply this experience by leading a discipleship group myself

.....
Your Signature

Prayer – A.C.T.S.⁴

³ Jesus reveals the other three essential elements in Mark 8.

⁴ **A.C.T.S.** is a helpful acronym for praying. **A is Adoration:** Start prayer by focusing on God and His goodness; **C is Confession:** Acknowledge you need God and confess any sin in your life to Him. **T is for Thanksgiving:** Give thanks to God for His forgiveness and for the Holy Spirit who empowers us to obey Jesus. **S is Supplication** – Pray for others and for different things in your own life.

Mark 2 – Who Is Jesus?

Application Follow-Up: Share why you committed to 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.⁵

Observation – What do you see?

- Take note: Mark 2 is structured around four questions (vv.7, 16, 18, 24). In each case, Jesus' answers lead His listeners to consider who He really is and, specifically, whether He is, God's Son.
- Three of the four questions in Mark 2 were asked in the context of eating a meal. Mark's Gospel records seven meals Jesus ate with His disciples – each meal was a very important discipleship moment.⁶

Read the four verses below and write-out the question asked in each verse on the dotted lines below. Then follow the instructions to learn the answers.

1. **Mark 2:7** –?
Read Jesus' answer in verses 9-12. What did He have the *authority* to do?

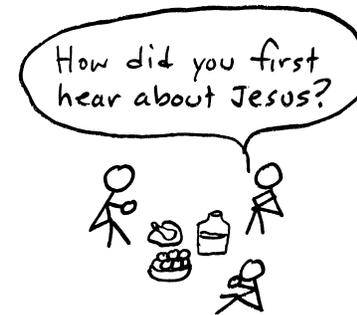
2. **Mark 2:16** –?
Read Jesus' answer in verse 17. What did Jesus imply He was able to do? (This is a hard question. Clue: It has to do with declaring sinners righteous.)

⁵ There are three basic skills of Bible study: 1. Observation, which answers the question *What do you see in the passage?* 2. Interpretation, *What does this passage mean?* 3. Application, *How does this passage apply in your life?* You can learn more about studying the Bible by reading Howard Hendricks: "Living By The Book" (Moody Press, Chicago, 1991).

⁶ See 2:15-22 Levi's House, 6:35-44 Feeding Five Thousand, 7:1-8 Unwashed Hands, 8:1-9 Feeding Four Thousand, 14:3-9 Simon's House, 14:22-25 The Last Supper, 16:14-15 Post Resurrection Meal.

3. **Mark 2:18** –?
Read Jesus' answer in verses 19-20. How many times does Jesus speak of Himself as *the bridegroom*? Read Isaiah 61:10, which is an Old Testament prophecy of the coming Christ. Who is Jesus implying He is?

4. **Mark 2:24** –?
Read Jesus' answer in verses 25-26. Which Old Testament person does Jesus liken His actions to? (1 Samuel 21:1-6). In Jesus' day, one title people used for God's promised Savior was "....." (cf. Mark 10:47). Like "the Bridegroom" reference earlier, associating Himself with King David was a claim to be the Christ, God's anointed King.



Interpretation – What does it mean?

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/power to do?

Application – How does it apply?

The "Dinner with Disciples" Project: Some of Jesus' most poignant moments with His disciples happened while eating around a table. Just as we see Jesus eating 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.

Prayer – A.C.T.S. (Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication)

Mark 3 – Discipling

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.

Observation – What do you see?

- Mark 3 highlights Jesus’ beginning to intentionally disciple of a few men. The word “disciple” literally means *learner*. In ancient times, disciples literally followed their teacher to learn to live like him.
- Pay special attention to Mark 3:13-19. It’s a critical moment of Jesus’ ministry. He set apart twelve men to disciple. It is important to note how many he chose. Discipleship is most effective in small groups.

Read Mark 3:14-15 carefully. What was Jesus’ first stated purpose for these twelve disciples?⁷ What was the first thing he wanted them to do in verse 14?

#1 -

Jesus set apart these 12 men for 3 purposes. We noted the first (above). What are the other two? What did Jesus also set His disciples apart for?

#2 –

#3 –

Interpretation – What does it mean?

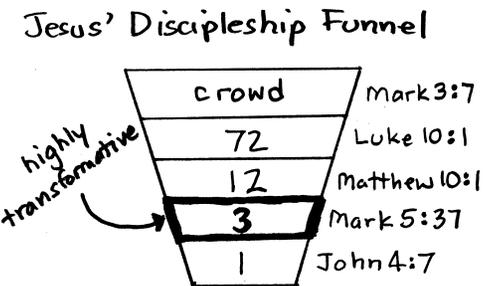
At its core, discipleship is spending time *with Jesus*; learning to live with Him and love others like Him. Jesus spent 90% of his time with men.⁸ It’s also important to note that He spent more time with disciples. As we keep reading through Mark’s Gospel, we’ll see Peter, James, and John were *with Jesus* during His greatest highs and lows (1:16-20, 5:37, 9:2, 13:3, 14:33).

⁷ The words “so that” (ESV) indicate purpose. There was purpose in Jesus choosing these twelve men to disciple.

⁸ Bill Hull, *Conversion & Discipleship: You Can’t Have One Without the Other* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016), 145.

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

Jesus preached to crowds and taught large groups. But He intentionally trained His disciples in a small group of twelve men, three men in particular. Of all the different sized groups Jesus disciplined, the relational dynamics of groups of three and four prove to be most transformative.



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

Application – How does it apply?

Discipleship Definitions Project: Congratulations! As you study Jesus’ teaching and put it into practice with your discipleship group, you’re being disciplined and learning to make disciples. To keep building clarity, memorize the discipleship definitions (See p.???) and be ready to recite them next time you meet.

Who is a disciple? *A disciple is a person who is*

.....⁹

What is discipleship? *Discipleship is a process of*

.....

.....

Prayer – A.C.T.S.

⁹ A *disciple* of Jesus, a *follower* of Jesus, and a *Christian* are the same thing.