

# THE DISCIPLESHIP GOSPEL

## Discussion Questions

We are so glad you're interested in digging deeper into *The Discipleship Gospel*. The following discussion questions will help you do just that. We recommend discussing these questions with a small group as you read through *The Discipleship Gospel*. While you may answer these questions by yourself, you'll miss the valuable insights of others by doing so. The process of forming a discussion group is an eye-opening learning experience in itself, and the relationships you form in your group may allow you to transition into a discipleship group, which would be fantastic! Process each chapter by asking the questions below.

By the way, we created these questions to reinforce key points in the book. We also hope that these questions provide you with additional insights, resources, and Scriptures to better equip you to *believe in* and *live out* Jesus' discipleship gospel. May God bless you with power and love as you multiply disciples using Jesus' gospel! We also recommend the companion to this book, *The Discipleship Gospel Workbook*, which you can purchase through [www.himpublishations.com](http://www.himpublishations.com).

—Ben Sobels and Bill Hull, authors of *The Discipleship Gospel*

## **Chapter 1 – The Discipleship Gospel (a.k.a. The Kingdom Gospel)**

- How would you articulate in your own words the problem about the gospel the authors introduce in this book?
- What are your initial thoughts on this statement from page 24: “You can’t make Christ-like disciples from a non-discipleship gospel”?
- If you took a hard look at the gospel in which you currently believe, does it make discipleship a natural part of salvation? Or does it make discipleship optional?

## **Chapter 2 – Wait, What is the Gospel?**

- Take one minute (even time yourself) to write out your answer to the simple question “What is the gospel?”
- What did this basic exercise reveal to you?
- Go to [www.himpublishations.com/downloads](http://www.himpublishations.com/downloads) for a free download of the “Six Gospels Chart”. To which of the discipleship gospels have you personally been exposed to the most?
- On page 29, the authors write, “The gospel that was crystal clear to the first century church and began a world revolution isn’t as clear to the twenty-first century church.” How have you experienced this foggy about the gospel among Christians today?

## **Chapter 3 – The Essential Elements of Jesus’ Gospel**

- How would you articulate the relationship between the four declarative statements of the gospel and the three imperative responses to the gospel?
- As you encounter the authors’ treatment of the gospel Jesus preached in Mark 1:14-17 and Mark 8:27-31 (along with 1 Corinthians 15:3-4), what questions does this seven-element framework raise for you?
- The seven elements of Jesus’ gospel are revealed in other Scripture passages, too. Read Acts 2:22-47 and Romans 1:1-6, for example. How do these passages describe the seven elements, even though they use different language?

## **Chapter 4 – Preach the Kingdom**

- What are your thoughts about the following statement from page 50 of the book? “Instead of telling the gospel story of God’s kingdom come through Jesus Christ, we’ve reduced salvation to hearing a truncated gospel with a short, one-time prayer tacked on the end.”
- After considering the centrality of God’s kingdom, how would you clearly and succinctly explain how it lies at the heart of Jesus’ gospel?

- How is the axiom from page 54, “Wherever Christ is ruling, there the kingdom of God is,” helpful to you for articulating that God’s kingdom has *already but not yet* come in all its fullness?

### **Chapter 5 – Proclaim Jesus as the Christ**

- What does the title “Christ” mean?
- To declare “Jesus is the Christ” is to commit to obeying Jesus’ commands, beginning with being baptized, just as Jesus said in Matthew 28:19-20. Is Jesus’ emphasis on obedience reflected in the local church of which you are a part? What about in your own life?
- As with Jesus’ disciples, one of the best ways to discover Jesus as the Christ is through discipleship. That’s why the authors write on page 65, “At its core, discipleship is being with Jesus—as we spend time *with him* our knowledge *about him* becomes our experience *of him*.” How have you experienced this to be true? If you have not, what do you sense is lacking in your experience of him?

### **Chapter 6 – Disciple Unto Death and Resurrection**

- Of everything you read in Chapter 6, what stood out to you most?
- What do you think of this thought-provoking statement from page 70? “A common characteristic of many non-discipleship gospels is that they ask people to have faith in Christ’s death, but they stop short of calling them to die to sin each day.”
- The underlying message on page 76 is that believing Christ was raised from the dead is also to experience the power of Christ’s resurrection through the Holy Spirit unto obedience in your life (Rom. 8:11). Read Romans 8:11, then discuss what questions it raises for you.

### **Chapter 7 – Follow Jesus and Be Saved**

- On page 70, the authors state, “The fundamental problem here is that because of the proliferation of non-discipleship gospels, people think they can believe the gospel and be Christians without following Jesus.” Do you think you can be a Christian and not follow Jesus?
- How does the discussion of the rich young ruler and the cost of discipleship on pages 81-82 help you consider how Jesus’ gospel calls us to more than praying a one-time prayer, but to a new life of denying ourselves, taking up our cross, and following Jesus (Mark 8:34)?
- How would you explain to someone that following Jesus is essential for salvation, not just an optional add-on to the gospel?

## **Chapter 8 – Repent and Believe the Gospel**

- The authors ask on page 93, “Is a gospel without repentance consistent with Jesus’ gospel?” How would you answer that question? Use specific Bible verses to support your answer.
- On page 97, the authors write, “You don’t need to believe in much to believe in many of the non-discipleship gospels being preached!” Discuss one or two reflections you have about this statement.
- Belief isn’t just mental assent, as many today consider it to be; belief is enacted, lived-out faith. It puts Jesus’ words into practice (Matt. 7:24). It proves itself to be true in Holy Spirit empowered obedience (1 Pet. 1:22-23). What is your response to these statements?

## **Chapter 9 – Finally, A Gospel Definition**

- What stood out to you the most in Chapter 9?
- The authors write in it, “We want to define the gospel in a way that equips the church—everyone from the pulpit to the pews and beyond—with a full understanding of Jesus’ gospel, one that empowers disciples to make disciples.” Are you equipped with a clear gospel definition that is empowering you to make disciples? Does your church have a clear definition of the gospel to which all members know and adhere? Why or why not?
- As the authors discuss in this chapter, knowing that the gospel is “of first importance” (1 Cor. 15:3) and that it is “the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes” (Rom. 1:16), how is the gospel statement on page 109 a helpful crystallization for you of Jesus’ gospel? Is there anything you would add, change, or take away? If so, why?

## **Chapter 10 – Discipleship Begins in the Pulpit**

- If you’re not a pastor, what’s one takeaway from your reading of Chapter 10? If you are a pastor, what are two takeaways?
- Understanding how important the four New Testament Gospels are for shaping our understanding of the fullness of Jesus’ gospel, will you commit to reading through either Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John as you finish reading this book? This will help you focus on the gospel Jesus preached and the way he made disciples.
- What are your reflections on the following statement from page 116? “A gospel that calls people to be disciples and make disciples is the only thing that continues to empower disciple making in the church; it’s the only sustainable fuel.”

## Chapter 11 – From the Pulpit to the Pew

- Chapter 11 begins with a quote from D.L. Moody: “If this world is going to be reached [with the gospel], I am convinced it must be done by men and women of average talent.” Are you personally convinced of this?
- Whom are you discipling now? What are their names? How are you discipling them? You may want to consider using a tool like *The Discipleship Gospel Workbook* to make disciples. It is the companion to this book and available for purchase at [www.himpublications.com](http://www.himpublications.com).
- If an unbelieving person approached you and was hungry to learn more about Jesus, how would you “disciple” them into a full understanding of the gospel so that they might know it’s essential to follow Jesus?

## Chapter 12 – Discipleship is Evangelism

- The authors write on page 131, “One of the greatest weaknesses in local churches today is that we lead people to Christ and then, basically, abandon them. It’s ‘hit and run’ evangelism.” Have you seen or experienced this in your own life or in the life of your church?
- Because we have separated conversion from discipleship, we also think of evangelism and disciple making as two completely different things. However, there is great crossover. How do you understand discipleship to be an effective form of evangelism and evangelism a critical aspect of discipleship?
- On page 135, the authors discuss “rocky soilers,” which refers to those who are like the seed that fell on the rocky soil in Jesus’ parable of the sower from Mark 4. What steps can you take to ensure you’ve done all you can so that no one you lead to Christ falls away from him?

## Chapter 13 – Creating a Disciple-Making Movement

- The authors write on page 139, “In our opinion, a church shouldn’t be allowed to refer to the Great Commission as ‘great’ if they’re ignoring it.” Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Why?
- Does your church have a process for making disciples that is clearly and consistently communicated to the congregation? If so, what is it?<sup>1</sup>
- If your church has a disciple-making process, does it include a specific method for discipling people whom have never been disciplined? Is it a comprehensive strategy, meaning that making disciples is the purpose of every ministry of the church?

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<sup>1</sup> If not, visit [www.thebonhoefferproject.com](http://www.thebonhoefferproject.com) to learn more about being in a cohort that will help you and your church create a clear and compelling discipleship process that reflects the message and methods of Jesus.

## **Chapter 14 – Bringing It Down to Earth**

- On page 152, the authors state that “the work of making disciples is long and arduous” and necessitates that we learn to have a satisfied soul. Is your soul satisfied?
- “When you come to the point where for you to do anything other than to make disciples is a grievous sin, then you’ll know that you have the disciple-making-first DNA,” write the authors on page 150. Have you come to this point yet?
- As you near the end of this book and consider all that you’ve been reading, begin reflecting on a few specific next steps on which you will commit to taking action so that “disciple-making DNA” continues to take root in your life.

## **Chapter 15 – Developing Your Plan**

- Most pastors don’t expect church members to make disciples, and most church members think disciple making is the pastor’s job. The authors write, “It’s a substantial upgrade from the norm to expect every member to become a disciple maker.” What are specific steps you can take to work toward this “upgrade”?
- The things that a church “counts” become the things that matter most to the church. Most churches count two things: attendance and giving. What would it be like if your church began counting how many church members were actively evangelizing as disciple makers?
- Page 163 says, “Jesus is the most important and most beautiful thing that has happened to this world.” As you come to the conclusion of this book, will you bow at Jesus’ feet right now and give him thanks and praise for being such a loving, powerful, and grace-filled Savior and King?