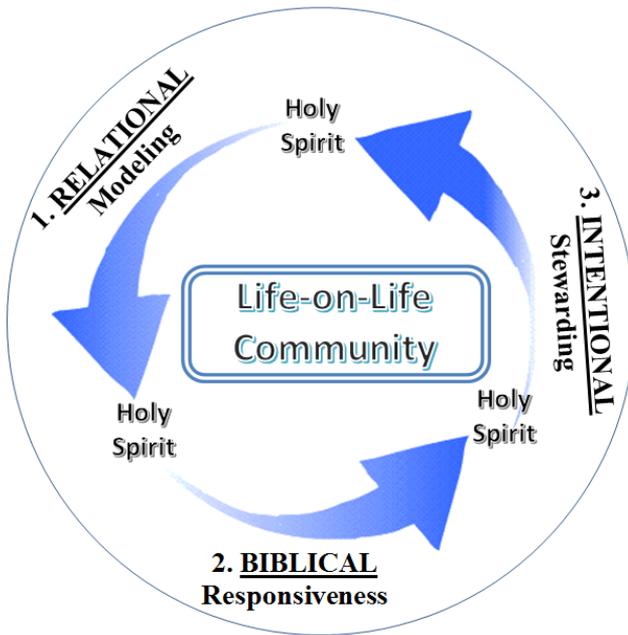


Carriers of God's Authority

Mark



DiscipleMaking Companion Series

Jim Fredericks

Acknowledgements

Thanks to the many in the past who have joined me in small, interactive groups orbiting around the Bible. We have grown together in this invigorating environment of give-&-take as we prepared before the group so we could bring “fresh spiritual bread” to our group for our mutual benefit and enjoyment. Now I can offer others a tried and proven way to engage Scripture.

When I read a book, I like to first know the basic orientation of the author. In short, I’m a follower of Jesus, deeply in love with the Father, Son and Spirit. Where we stand affects how we understand this Book-of-books, the Bible. I attempt in all my thinking and responding to begin with the relational Trinity and the incarnation of Jesus, both of which fry my mental circuits. Our Family-of-Three designed us as image-bearers, as much like Him as a created being could be. **Why?** So He can bless us. Now we may relate with Him in intimacy and as intimate co-rulers partnering with Him on His epic adventure to restore people to His love.

Quotations for Mark from John Wimber’s ground-breaking book, *“Power Evangelism.”* To grow to our full stature in Christ, we must stand on the shoulders of those who have come before us.

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A Brief Overview of "*DiscipleMaking Companion*"

I have a passion to help Jesus' disciples grow.

A disciple is a *learner*. Not merely a learner of information, but a life-learner & life-**doer** (James 1:22), especially where God's Word cuts across the grain of our self-life. My vision aligns with Jesus' vision to "*make disciples of any and every people group*" (Matthew 28:20). Each "*DiscipleMaking Companion*" is more than a Bible study, although it will escort you directly into key books of the Bible in a way that leads to personal response to God's heart.

The Bible is God's invitation into fuller life. I "*flip*" the usual learning process by relocating the information transfer to outside the group. We optimize God's provision through obedience-focused learning. Only **doing** God's Word reveals true knowledge. **First** prepare, then respond and reflect **before** we gather together in our learning community. Now we share our "fresh bread" with each other, accelerating growth and learning. My desire is "*to teach you to fish and not merely to give you a fish.*"

The "*DiscipleMaking Companion*" series taps into cutting-edge learning, aligning with how God wired us to learn. This powerful, easy-to-use and reproducible approach focuses active learning directly on foundational books of the Bible to build deep Family relationships around Scripture with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and with other group members. Each "*Companion*" provides a simple, flexible structure with a measured pace. This releases freedom to progressively learn over time, one layer of insight building on previous learning. Now a year is fifty-two weekly, incremental steps toward LifeChange.

To this end, I encourage you to aim to read (or listen to) the weekly passage daily **prior to** the weekly meeting to develop lifelong habits that work for you. Reading the entire book rapidly once per week also aids healthy *BIG-small-BIG* natural learning. Mark up the Bible text **before** reading the two pages of helps that follow the text.

Enjoy the process since it's ever evolving as **you** change.

Mark

Author: Mark Date: A.D.

Central Message

As the most action-oriented of the four gospels, one of Mark's key words is "*immediately.*"

Thumbnail Overview

Mark wastes no time! An event has taken place that radically changes the way we experience God, ourselves and the world. Mark can't wait to tell us about it. This earliest of the Gospels reveals Jesus as the Servant, restoring God's original Eden-intent and raising up followers to continue His ministry. Mark reveals Jesus as a man of power and action (he repeats "*immediately.*").

Additional Learning Options

My aim is to make this digestible where **you** currently are on **your** lifelong journey. I believe in "*layer learning*" so stretch yourself enough, but not too much. Tailor-make it for what **you** need. Either level is fine, if it fits you. At a minimum as **Level 1 Engagement**, mark up the text, do the "*Personally Discovery,*" put it into practice and share in group. If it's helpful, use the **S-T-U-D-Y** at the end of this material as a convenient place to house your thoughts. In addition,...

1. **Level 2 Engagement:** Add the "*Expanded Reading*" for the context for increased depth and breadth
2. **Level 3 Engagement:** You may also want to read an outside book along with the Bible. A suggestion for this "*Companion*" is John Wimber's *Power Evangelism*.

1. Focus Passage: Mark 1:1-38

Extended Passage: Mark 1:1-45

Read this text BEFORE the following helps

Mark it Up!	 INSIGHTS from the text with verse references.	 DIFFICULTIES from the text ("Deuteronomy 29:29 Bucket")
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- 1:1** The beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God, 2 as it is written in Isaiah the prophet: “I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way”—3 “a voice of one calling in the wilderness, ‘Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.’”
- 4 And so John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. 5 The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River. 6 John wore clothing made of camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. 7 And this was his message: “After me comes the one more powerful than I, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. 8 I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”
- 9 At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. 10 Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. 11 And a voice came from heaven: “You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.”
- 12 At once the Spirit sent him out into the wilderness, 13 and he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him.
- 14 After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. 15 “The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!”
- 16 As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. 17 “Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will send you out to fish for people.” 18 At once they left their nets and followed him.

- 19 When he had gone a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat, preparing their nets. 20 Without delay he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him.
- 21 They went to Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach. 22 The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law. 23 Just then a man in their synagogue who was possessed by an impure spirit cried out, 24 “What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!”
- 25 “Be quiet!” said Jesus sternly. “Come out of him!” 26 The impure spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek.
- 27 The people were all so amazed that they asked each other, “What is this? A new teaching—and with authority! He even gives orders to impure spirits and they obey him.” 28 News about him spread quickly over the whole region of Galilee.
- 29 As soon as they left the synagogue, they went with James and John to the home of Simon and Andrew. 30 Simon’s mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they immediately told Jesus about her. 31 So he went to her, took her hand and helped her up. The fever left her and she began to wait on them.
- 32 That evening after sunset the people brought to Jesus all the sick and demon-possessed. 33 The whole town gathered at the door, 34 and Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also drove out many demons, but he would not let the demons speak because they knew who he was.
- 35 Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. 36 Simon and his companions went to look for him, 37 and when they found him, they exclaimed: “Everyone is looking for you!”
- 38 Jesus replied, “Let us go somewhere else—to the nearby villages—so I can preach there also. That is why I have come.” 39 So he traveled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons....



1. Discover Personally: Mark 1:1-38

Extended Passage: Mark 1:1-45

Read the text several times BEFORE this

Connect God's invitation to full life with our daily living through this interactive look into **Mark**. Obedience-focused learning and all-in allegiance to God especially help when a passage cuts across the grain of our self-life. "*God has not hidden truth **from** us, but **for** us to increase our desire for Him.*"

Mark was the first of the Gospel writers to write down the oral story of Jesus' life. From his first words, Mark describes the inbreaking into history of King Jesus, the Son of God. He creates a sense of crisis as He brings His authority to rupture the status quo. Mark stirs up desire for change by pointing to Genesis 1-3.

The arrival of the Kingdom (1:15) launches God's restoration plan for all that was lost in Genesis 3. "*Repentance*" does not mean "stop sinning." Jesus calls us to "*change our mind*" about our strategy for living. The result will be less sin, yet the focus is changing our source of life and satisfaction and value. In any turnaround, personal or national, the presence of God in the Kingdom leads the way by telling others about the Good News. "*Gospel*" or "*Good News*" means history-making, life-shaping news, not daily news. It calls for decisive action wielding the delegated authority Jesus gives (note "*immediately*" in Mark). This "*Good News*" is really great news because it ushers us freedom like God designed us for (Genesis 1:26-28). Jesus' attractive walk in freedom with His Father and His words and His works all powerfully reveal the full extent of the Kingdom authority Jesus carries (1:21-28). By the way, this is the **same** authority that Jesus delegates to us (Mark 6:7; Matt 28:18-20). His followers soak in the Gospels to really see Jesus.

QUESTIONS and QUOTES for Reflection.

1. “*Repent*” = “*change mind about where we find life.*” As Jesus highlights the Good News and Kingdom nearness, how does this strike you (14-15)?

2. How does Jesus’ 1st century call challenge **you** today (1:16-20)?

3. Read rapidly through Mark 1. How did Jesus train His disciples in this 2nd tier of training, especially to sharing the Good News (“*Come & Follow Me*)?

“ Clearly, Jesus and the disciples did not consign the kingdom of God to a future millennium; Jesus came to usher in the kingdom now, in our age....The church is the instrument of the kingdom. As disciples we are called to proclaim and demonstrate the kingdom of God, which includes healing the sick and casting out demons. As Christ’s instruments, we war on satanic strongholds, replacing their dominion with the kingdom of God” (Wimber, “Kingdom Come”).

ELEMENTS for learning group next week.

- *Starters.* (1) One thing this week you are grateful for; (2) *Recap* last week’s passage; (3) *Tell* a fresh story from what happened this week.
- *Read* the passage out loud in a circle, a few verses each.
- *Debrief* insights from the passage with each other as both a learner and a teacher.
- *Share* a 15-30-second personal request. Then pray our best 30-second prayer. Also pray at times for our city.

2. Focus Passage: Mark 2:1-3:2

Extended Passage: Mark 2:1-3:12

Read this text **BEFORE** the following helps

Mark it Up!	 INSIGHTS from the text with verse references.	 DIFFICULTIES from the text ("Deuteronomy 29:29 Bucket")
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- 2:1** A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home. 2 They gathered in such large numbers that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and he preached the word to them. 3 Some men came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them. 4 Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus by digging through it and then lowered the mat the man was lying on. 5 When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralyzed man, "Son, your sins are forgiven."
- 6 Now some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves, 7 "Why does this fellow talk like that? He's blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?"
- 8 Immediately Jesus knew in his spirit that this was what they were thinking in their hearts, and he said to them, "Why are you thinking these things? 9 Which is easier: to say to this paralyzed man, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take your mat and walk'?" 10 But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins." So he said to the man, 11 "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home." 12 He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all. This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this!"
- 13 Once again Jesus went out beside the lake. A large crowd came to him, and he began to teach them. 14 As he walked along, he saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax collector's booth. "Follow me," Jesus told him, and Levi got up and followed him.
- 15 While Jesus was having dinner at Levi's house, many tax collectors and sinners were eating with him and his disciples, for there were many who followed him. 16 When the teachers of the law who were Pharisees saw him eating with the sinners and tax collectors, they

asked his disciples: “Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?”

17 On hearing this, Jesus said to them, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”

18 Now John’s disciples and the Pharisees were fasting. Some people came and asked Jesus, “How is it that John’s disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees are fasting, but yours are not?”

19 Jesus answered, “How can the guests of the bridegroom fast while he is with them? They cannot, so long as they have him with them.

20 But the time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them, and on that day they will fast.

21 “No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment.

Otherwise, the new piece will pull away from the old, making the tear worse. 22 And no one pours new wine into old wineskins.

Otherwise, the wine will burst the skins, and both the wine and the wineskins will be ruined. No, they pour new wine into new wineskins.”

23 One Sabbath Jesus was going through the grainfields, and as his disciples walked along, they began to pick some heads of grain. 24 The Pharisees said to him, “Look, why are they doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath?”

25 He answered, “Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry and in need? 26 In the days of Abiathar the high priest, he entered the house of God and ate the consecrated bread, which is lawful only for priests to eat. And he also gave some to his companions.”

27 Then he said to them, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. 28 So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.”

3:1 Another time Jesus went into the synagogue, and a man with a shriveled hand was there. 2 Some of them were looking for a reason to accuse Jesus, so they watched him closely to see if he would heal him on the Sabbath.



2. **Discover Personally: Mark 2:1-3:2**

Extended Passage: Mark 2:1-3:12

Read the text several times BEFORE this

Read **rapidly**, focusing on the Big Story. It's OK if we don't grasp every nuance. We have a lifetime to return and deepen our grasp, one layer after another.

Mark does not write a dry history, but writes in the present tense, repeatedly using words like "*immediately*" to unpack the drama in breathless action as if "*you are there!*" This "Good News" is **really great** news! Because King Jesus has come, we don't need to stress to earn our way to God (as if we could!) Jesus has already paid the price for us, a free gift through His sheer grace. The Gospel has never been about choosing to follow advice or rules. It's about being called to abandon ourselves fully to the *freedom* we have in Jesus to experience fullness of life now. Jesus' call draws us into willingly orbiting our lives around His attractive life as center so we can obediently show the Good News to others.

Also observe how Jesus continues widening the perspective of His followers since God designed His people to belong to a bigger story. Our generation has mostly lost its own story. If we don't have our own story, we will end up attaching ourselves to society's smaller story. Jesus calls us to an active and epic adventure. Put yourself in the story in these few short verses. Jesus is on the move, and calls others to follow Him, including you (2:14).

QUESTIONS and QUOTES for Reflection.

1. How do you think a current-day parallel would look of the "*Levi Party*" in Mark 2:13-17)?

2. What crucial barrier to spiritual growth is Jesus attempting to expose in His disciples with the old/new win/wineskin teaching (2:2)

“Jesus empowered the disciples to overcome Satan. When Jesus instructed the Twelve and Seventy-two to preach the kingdom, he also instructed them to demonstrate the kingdom by performing signs and wonders” (John Wimber, “Kingdom Come”).

3. What impresses you most about Jesus’ *walk & word/works* ministry?

“Jesus said the kingdom of God had come in him. The divine invader was going on record: ‘I’m here. Watch out. I’m going to set everything straight. This is the beginning of the end of Satan and evil.’ ‘The reason the Son of God appeared,’ 1 John 3:8 says, ‘was to destroy the devil’s works’” (John Wimber, “Kingdom Come”).

ELEMENTS for learning group next week.

- *Starters.* (1) One thing this week you are grateful for; (2) *Recap* last week’s passage; (3) *Tell* a fresh story from what happened this week.
- *Read* the passage out loud in a circle, a few verses each.
- *Debrief* insights from the passage with each other as both a learner and a teacher.
- *Share* a 15-30-second personal request. Then pray our best 30-second prayer. Also pray at times for our city.

3. Focus Passage: Mark 3:13-4:34 (part) Extended Passage: Mark 3:13-6:56

Mark it Up!	 INSIGHTS from the text with verse references.	? DIFFICULTIES from the text ("Deuteronomy 29:29 Bucket")
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3:13 Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted, and they came to him. 14 He appointed twelve that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach 15 and to have authority to drive out demons....

3:20 Then Jesus entered a house, and again a crowd gathered, so that he and his disciples were not even able to eat. 21 When his family heard about this, they went to take charge of him, for they said, "He is out of his mind."

22 And the teachers of the law who came down from Jerusalem said, "He is possessed by Beelzebul! By the prince of demons he is driving out demons."

23 So Jesus called them over to him and began to speak to them in parables: "How can Satan drive out Satan? 24 If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. 25 If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand. 26 And if Satan opposes himself and is divided, he cannot stand; his end has come. 27 In fact, no one can enter a strong man's house without first tying him up. Then he can plunder the strong man's house. 28 Truly I tell you, people can be forgiven all their sins and every slander they utter, 29 but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; they are guilty of an eternal sin." 30 He said this because they were saying, "He has an impure spirit."

31 Then Jesus' mother and brothers arrived. Standing outside, they sent someone in to call him. 32 A crowd was sitting around him, and they told him, "Your mother and brothers are outside looking for you." 33 "Who are my mother and my brothers?" he asked. 34 Then he looked at those seated

in a circle around him and said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! 35 Whoever does God’s will is my brother and sister and mother.”....

4:13 Then Jesus said to them, “Don’t you understand this parable? How then will you understand any parable? 14 The farmer sows the word. 15 Some people are like seed along the path, where the word is sown. As soon as they hear it, Satan comes and takes away the word that was sown in them. 16 Others, like seed sown on rocky places, hear the word and at once receive it with joy. 17 But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. 18 Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word; 19 but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful. 20 Others, like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop—some thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times what was sown.”

21 He said to them, “Do you bring in a lamp to put it under a bowl or a bed? Instead, don’t you put it on its stand? 22 For whatever is hidden is meant to be disclosed, and whatever is concealed is meant to be brought out into the open. 23 If anyone has ears to hear, let them hear.”

24 “Consider carefully what you hear,” he continued. “With the measure you use, it will be measured to you—and even more. 25 Whoever has will be given more; whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them.”....

4:33 With many similar parables Jesus spoke the word to them, as much as they could understand. 34 He did not say anything to them without using a parable. But when he was alone with his own disciples, he explained everything.



How is God inviting me to live this out? *"I will..."* **AND** Pass on *one* idea to one person.

3. Discover Personally: Mark 3:13-4:34 (part)
Extended Passage: Mark 3:13-6:56
Read the text several times BEFORE this

Mark focuses on Jesus' actual words and actions as he sketches out an incredible narrative of His life. Like any great storyteller, Mark is revealing Jesus gradually. News of Jesus spread like wildfire with crowds soon surging forward to see and hear Him, although He avoided drawing large crowds. What a dramatic scene on the shore (4:1). When Jesus came, He brought the Kingdom since He embodies it. The Kingdom has come in authority/power over sickness and demons, over the material world and weather. The question is whether King Jesus has unrivaled authority in in your life as His image-bearer, and whether we use His authority.

Although Jesus welcomed the crowd with a warm *"come & see,"* He focused the majority of His life on His few disciples. Jesus needs "all-in" followers to carry on His ministry so He trained them in this 3rd training tier, *"Come & Be with Me"* (3:13-19) The Hebraic culture was strong on family values, yet Jesus said that those who obey Him are His true family, the Family of God (3:33-35). Jesus sketches out the ongoing advance of the Kingdom of God through evangelism by living it out attractively, by proclaiming the Good News that King Jesus is here, by demonstrating the reality as He multiplies disciples (*Walk & Word/Works*).

QUESTIONS and QUOTES for Reflection.

1. What gripped you about the nature of the Kingdom in 4:1-34?

“The kingdom of God is the dynamic reign or rule of God. Jesus has absolute rule in heaven. On earth, he actively and visibly exercises rule over his willing subjects and over the forces of evil. Jesus is the reign of God come to claim what was rightfully his” (Wimber, “Kingdom Come”).

2. When Jesus sent His apprentices out, what did they say and do (6:7 + 12-13)? If you had been there, how would you have felt?

“We are living between times, as it were, between the inauguration and the consummation of the kingdom of God....We live in ‘the presence of the future.’ [His] kingdom is both future and present, it has been fulfilled in Christ’s first coming and will be consummated in his second coming....We live between the ‘already and the not yet....’ We have the assurance of eternal life now, and we experience the benefits of the kingdom, though only in part” (John Wimber, “Kingdom Come”).

3. What impressed you most about Jesus’ *walk & word/works* ministry?

ELEMENTS for learning group next week.

- *Starters.* (1) One thing this week you are grateful for; (2) *Recap* last week’s passage; (3) *Tell* a fresh story from what happened this week.
- *Read* the passage out loud in a circle, a few verses each.
- *Debrief* insights from the passage with each other as both a learner and a teacher.
- *Share* a 15-30-second personal request. Then pray our best 30-second prayer. Also pray at times for our city.

4. Focus Passage: Mark 7-8 (parts)

Extended Passage: Mark 7 & 8

Read this text BEFORE the following helps

Mark it Up!	 INSIGHTS from the text with verse references.	 DIFFICULTIES from the text ("Deuteronomy 29:29 Bucket")
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7:1 The Pharisees and some of the teachers of the law who had come from Jerusalem gathered around Jesus 2 and saw some of his disciples eating food with hands that were defiled, that is, unwashed. 3 (The Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they give their hands a ceremonial washing, holding to the tradition of the elders. 4 When they come from the marketplace they do not eat unless they wash. And they observe many other traditions, such as the washing of cups, pitchers and kettles.)

5 So the Pharisees and teachers of the law asked Jesus, “Why don’t your disciples live according to the tradition of the elders instead of eating their food with defiled hands?” 6 He replied, “Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written: “‘These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. 7 They worship me in vain; their teachings are merely human rules.’ 8 You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to human traditions.”

9 And he continued, “You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe your own traditions! 10 For Moses said, ‘Honor your father and mother,’ and, ‘Anyone who curses their father or mother is to be put to death.’ 11 But you say that if anyone declares that what might have been used to help their father or mother is Corban (that is, devoted to God)— 12 then you no longer let them do anything for their father or mother. 13 Thus you nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And you do many things like that.”....

8:27 Jesus and his disciples went on to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked them, “Who do people say I am?”

28 They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets.”

29 “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?”

Peter answered, “You are the Messiah.”

30 Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him.

31 He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again. 32 He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him.

33 But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. “Get behind me, Satan!” he said. “You do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.”

34 Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. 35 For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it. 36 What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? 37 Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? 38 If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his Father’s glory with the holy angels.”



4. Discover Personally: Philippians 3

Extended Passage: Mark 7 & 8

Read the text several times BEFORE this

Chapter 8 in Mark's Gospel is the pivotal chapter, the climax of the first act that launches the reader into His march to Jerusalem to full His destiny (four mentions, 8:31, 9:12, 9:31, 10:33-34). Jesus "**must be killed and after three days rise again.**" Not "would die," but "must." That the "Son of Man" (which pointed to Jesus as Messiah, from Daniel 7:13-14) could die was unthinkable to the Jewish mind (8:32). From a NT perspective, the world cannot be rescued and restored, nor can your life, unless Jesus died. In summary, Jesus is saying: "*I'm a King, but a King who must go to a cross and die.*" Who can give to others with no intrinsic need to receive back? **Jesus!** Remember the dance of the Trinity? The Father, Son, and Spirit have been knowing and loving one another perfectly for all eternity. Within Himself, God has forever had all the love, all the fulfillment, all the joy that anyone could possibly want...all that the human race now lacks. And Jesus adds, "*Since I'm a King on a cross, if you want to follow Me, you must also willingly take up your own cross*" (8:34-38). Jesus embodies our essential questions: "***What is God like?***" "***How does God see me?***"

QUESTIONS and QUOTES for Reflection.

1. What does Jesus' powerful words in 7:5-13 say to us today about the danger of unchanging religious traditions?

“Our job is to know the will of the Father and cooperate with his work here on earth. He has a strategy, though we may not always (if ever) discern it. Our part is to pray, ‘Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.’ Then trust and obey”
(John Wimber, “Kingdom Come”).

2. Jesus reveals Himself as the King, then asks His disciples. “*Who do you say I am?*” (8:29). What’s your answer to Jesus’ crucial question?

3. In chapters 9-16, Mark describes Jesus’ steadfast journey to His own cross. He first points to our cross. In 8:34-38, how does Jesus describe His disciples, including His 21st century followers

“I realized that at the very heart of the gospel [message] lies the kingdom of God and that power for effective evangelism...relates directly to our understanding and experiencing the kingdom today” (“Kingdom Come”).

ELEMENTS for learning group next week.

- *Starters.* (1) One thing this week you are grateful for; (2) *Recap* last week’s passage; (3) *Tell* a fresh story from what happened this week.
- *Read* the passage out loud in a circle, a few verses each.
- *Debrief* insights from the passage with each other as both a learner and a teacher.
- *Share* a 15-30-second personal request. Then pray our best 30-second prayer. Also pray at times for our city.

5. Focus Passage: Mark 10:17-45

Extended Passage: Mark 9-13

Read this text BEFORE the following helps

Mark it Up!	 INSIGHTS from the text with verse references.	 DIFFICULTIES from the text ("Deuteronomy 29:29 Bucket")
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- 17 As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. “Good teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?”
- 18 “Why do you call me good?” Jesus answered. “No one is good—except God alone. 19 You know the commandments: ‘You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, you shall not defraud, honor your father and mother.’” 20 “Teacher,” he declared, “all these I have kept since I was a boy.”
- 21 Jesus looked at him and loved him. “One thing you lack,” he said. “Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”
- 22 At this the man’s face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth. 23 Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, “How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!”
- 24 The disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said again, “Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! 25 It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.”
- 26 The disciples were even more amazed, and said to each other, “Who then can be saved?” 27 Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God.” 28 Then Peter spoke up, “We have left everything to follow you!”
- 29 “Truly I tell you,” Jesus replied, “no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel 30 will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age: homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields—along with persecutions—and in the age to come eternal life. 31 But many who are first will be last, and the last first.”

32 They were on their way up to Jerusalem, with Jesus leading the way, and the disciples were astonished, while those who followed were afraid. Again he took the Twelve aside and told them what was going to happen to him. 33 “We are going up to Jerusalem,” he said, “and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles, 34 who will mock him and spit on him, flog him and kill him. Three days later he will rise.”

35 Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to him. “Teacher,” they said, “we want you to do for us whatever we ask.” 36 “What do you want me to do for you?” he asked.

37 They replied, “Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory.” 38 “You don’t know what you are asking,” Jesus said. “Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?” 39 “We can,” they answered.

Jesus said to them, “You will drink the cup I drink and be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with, 40 but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared.”

41 When the ten heard about this, they became indignant with James and John.

42 Jesus called them together and said, “You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. 43 Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, 44 and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. 45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”



5. Discover Personally: Mark 10:17-35

Extended Passage: Mark 9-13

Read the text several times BEFORE this

Chapters 9-10 describe Jesus' march toward Jerusalem (8:31, 9:12, 9:31, 10:33-34) and 11-13 His teaching during the last week. Compared to the other three Gospels, Mark relates few of Jesus' teachings. Instead he depicts Jesus as a man of action.

Jesus is the Model Man, who walked eternal life out as we are intended to. Look over His shoulder as you read the three passages (Mark 10:17-31, the rich young ruler; 10:32-34, Jesus predicts His death; 10:35-45, authentic influence/leadership). How does a true follower of our heavenly Father aim to live life? What attitudes and actions do we observe for our own lives?

The rich young ruler eagerly approach Jesus, yet with a skewed view of what life in Christ is. He asked Jesus what he could "*do*" to inherit eternal life. He entirely missed Jesus' teaching, that it's a gift from God. Jesus asked questions to explore where he was stuck. Then zeroed in on the *one* issue. "*Come, follow me, not your own desires.*" He was unwilling, like many would-be followers because they are blinded to the blessings accompanying all-in, wholehearted allegiance to Jesus.

In 10:35-45, Jesus taught His followers how to maximize our godly influence in the lives of others. Align with God's Eden-intent for His people to be co-rulers through relationship. Jesus recalibrated the disciples' three misconceptions. The cost is high (38), our Father sovereignly selects (40), and leadership is not about position (41-43a). Then teaches that leadership is serving others without considering the cost or return to us (43b-45).

"I trust that you will find the figure of Jesus worthy of your attention: unpredictable yet reliable, gentle yet powerful, authoritative yet humble, human yet divine. I urge you to seriously consider the significance of his life in your own" (Tim Keller, in "Jesus the King").

QUESTIONS and QUOTES for Reflection.

1. What do you see in 10:17-31 that is God's invitation to fuller life to you personally? How can this help as you influence others?

2. Jesus is the Model Man, the One sent from the Father to show us the kind of attitudes and responses He calls us to on our journey. What do you learn about facing tough trials as you read through 10:32-34?

3. What does the passage in Mark 10:35-45 reveal afresh to you about how to authentically influence others?

"For God to reign through us he must reign in us. Seeking the kingdom first means praying that he may be first in our hearts. And as his kingdom reigns in us, he uses us to establish his kingdom in those around us: our families, churches, workplaces, community, and nation"
 (John Wimber, "Kingdom Come").

ELEMENTS for learning group next week.

- *Starters.* (1) One thing this week you are grateful for; (2) *Recap* last week's passage; (3) *Tell* a fresh story from what happened this week.
- *Read* the passage out loud in a circle, a few verses each.
- *Debrief* insights from the passage with each other as both a learner and a teacher.
- *Share* a 15-30-second personal request. Then pray our best 30-second prayer. Also pray at times for our city.

6. Focus Passage: Mark 15:25-16:20

Extended Passage: Mark 14-16

Read this text **BEFORE** the following helps

Mark it Up!		INSIGHTS from the text with verse references.	? DIFFICULTIES from the text ("Deuteronomy 29:29 Bucket")
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- 15:25** It was nine in the morning when they crucified him. 26 The written notice of the charge against him read: the king of the Jews. 27 They crucified two rebels with him, one on his right and one on his left. [28] 29 Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads and saying, "So! You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, 30 come down from the cross and save yourself!" 31 In the same way the chief priests and the teachers of the law mocked him among themselves. "He saved others," they said, "but he can't save himself! 32 Let this Messiah, this king of Israel, come down now from the cross, that we may see and believe." Those crucified with him also heaped insults on him. 33 At noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. 34 And at three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" (which means "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"). 35 When some of those standing near heard this, they said, "Listen, he's calling Elijah." 36 Someone ran, filled a sponge with wine vinegar, put it on a staff, and offered it to Jesus to drink. "Now leave him alone. Let's see if Elijah comes to take him down," he said. 37 With a loud cry, Jesus breathed his last. 38 The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. 39 And when the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, saw how he died, he said, "Surely this man was the Son of God!" **....**
- 16:1** When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus' body. 2 Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb 3 and they asked each other, "Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?"

- 4 But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away. 5 As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed.
- 6 “Don’t be alarmed,” he said. “You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him. 7 But go, tell his disciples and Peter, ‘He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.’”
- 8 Trembling and bewildered, the women went out and fled from the tomb. They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid.
- 9 When Jesus rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had driven seven demons. 10 She went and told those who had been with him and who were mourning and weeping. 11 When they heard that Jesus was alive and that she had seen him, they did not believe it.
- 12 Afterward Jesus appeared in a different form to two of them while they were walking in the country. 13 These returned and reported it to the rest; but they did not believe them either.
- 14 Later Jesus appeared to the Eleven as they were eating; he rebuked them for their lack of faith and their stubborn refusal to believe those who had seen him after he had risen.
- 15 He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. 16 Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. 17 And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; 18 they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well.”
- 19 After the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, he was taken up into heaven and he sat at the right hand of God. 20 Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it.



6. Discover Personally: Mark 15:25-16:20
Extended Passage: Mark 14-16
Read the text several times BEFORE this

Chapters 14-15 describe Jesus' mock trials and death on the cross, and Mark 16 the resurrection and commission of His followers to the ends of the world.

Mark has given us the story of Jesus and declared that His story is the world's only true story. Jesus came to earth to model authentic life, the same life God designed for humanity in Genesis 1:26-28. When Eve and Adam went rogue in Genesis 3, it never caught God by surprise. Jesus is the "*Lamb slain before the foundation of the world.*" To restore the unchanging Eden-intent of our Family-of-Three, Jesus died, was raised the third day and ascended to the Father's right hand after forty days.

Faith in Him alone restores life as we trust in what He has done. Jesus has the love and power to see His vision through to its end, to restore intimacy with His Father. Jesus is the Son of God, the true King of kings. His unhindered reign in our lives releases our highest and best.

Although the focus-verses begin with Jesus' crucifixion, please don't short-circuit your learning experience in Mark by skipping over 14:1-15:24. Read through these as one who loves Jesus, as if you were there, close to Jesus, actively taking in all that is happening. Jesus went through this for **you** because He yearns for intimacy with you and to partner together in ministry.

QUESTIONS and QUOTES for Reflection.

1. *You are there!* What emotions would you have experienced from 16:1-8?

2. The Christian faith rests on the certainty of Jesus' resurrection with at least three clear lines of evidence in Mark 16: (1) the empty tomb, (2) the testimony of eyewitnesses, and (3) the long-term impact on the lives of Jesus' followers. How confident are you that Jesus raised from the dead?

"Still, evil forces seek to destroy his rule; they haven't given up their dream of world dominion. The mere presence of God's kingdom has created a violent confrontation between the old order of evil and the new order of righteousness. The confrontation is necessary for a radical change of power, and today it is still in progress" (John Wimber, "Kingdom Come").

3. Mark concludes his Gospel with the ongoing call on our lives in 16:19-20. What is your **heart** response to this message as a carrier of His authority to do His God-Assignments (heart = mind, affections & will)?

ELEMENTS for learning group next week.

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- *Read* the passage out loud in a circle, a few verses each.
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- *Share* a 15-30-second personal request. Then pray our best 30-second prayer. Also pray at times for our city.

"Live Out Loud" Article **The Greatest Love-Story Ever Told**

I want to retell part of the *greatest love-story* ever experienced, a love-story from which every other love-story stems. This story is about how God designed us for intimacy with Himself.

This love story begins a long, long time ago, even before the creation of the world. C.S. Lewis pictures the interrelatedness of the Trinity before creation as a dance. *"The whole dance, or drama, or pattern of this three-Personal life is to be played out in each one of us [as] a great fountain of energy and beauty spurting up at the very centre of reality."*

Why a dance? In a dance, each orbits around the other in mutual self-giving. By contrast, a self-centered life is a stationary life, static, not dynamic. A self-referenced person views his/herself as the center around which everything else orbits. *"The Trinity is utterly different. Instead of self-centeredness, the Father, the Son, and the Spirit are characterized in their very essence by mutually self-giving love. No person in the Trinity insists that the others revolve around him; rather each of them voluntarily circles and orbits around the other"* like in a divine dance (Tim Keller in *"Jesus the King"*).

So the Father, Son and Spirit chose to create a people as much like Him as a created being could possibly be in order to give and receive love, inviting them to orbit around Him in this divine dance (Genesis 1:26-28). For a time, Adam and Eve enjoyed vast freedom in innocence, in relationship with Him and in giving away His first-love each other.

Jealousy then filled Satan's heart because of the favor God gave humanity as His image-bearers, the crown-jewel of His creation. He immediately set in motion a plan to tear apart humanity from God and from one another. Satan incited a rebellion of humanity against their Creator, and Eve then Adam bit on the enticing deceit.

Through this single act of disobedience launched by Satan's deception (Genesis 3; Romans 5:15-19), the first man and woman went rogue. The Fall of humanity resulted in a horrific break of relationship

from God's presence and provision. The impact was immediate and cataclysmic, not only in them, but on all of creation because God had delegated responsibility over the world to them (Genesis 1:26-28). Since the Fall in Genesis 3, humanity now only has access to what is within and around us in our futile attempt to fill legitimate, God-given needs in illegitimate ways.

Nothing about this rebellion though caught the Father, Son and Spirit by surprise, even His Bride attaching herself to a false and deceitful lover. God's plan always included Jesus as the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world. For His image-bearers to genuinely give and receive love, the possibility of rejection was hard-coded as He fashioned man and woman. Only a love that is freely given from the heart is worthy of God.

In Mark 1, Jesus enters God's Big-story to restore relationship and order. Our ancestors failed the first test of obedience in the Garden. "*Trust & obey Me about the tree.*" The Father said to His Son, Jesus, "*Trust & obey Me about the tree*"—only this time the tree was a cross, and Jesus said "yes." Our willing "yes" to Jesus brings restoration, times of refreshing, and an invitation into a vast freedom, surpassing even the Garden of Eden.

Jesus came the first time to restore God's original and unchanging Genesis-intent. He will come a second time to consummate it. The greatest desire in God's heart has always been to be freely and willingly loved by His people. From Genesis 3:15 to Revelation 21, Scripture is about the outpouring of God's intimate first-love to restore humanity and bring us home.

“Live Out Loud” Project

Basic to spiritual growth and DiscipleMaking is our response to God’s Word. Transformation comes by experiencing what we are learning, not just by storing knowledge. Towards that end, each “*DiscipleMaking Companion*” has a “*Live Out Loud*” Project to reinforce the major value each “*Companion*” emphasizes.

In **Mark**, we emphasize the “***Kingdom mission***”

- As you read through Mark, jot down notes with verse references regarding how Jesus evangelized, and how He gathered and trained His followers.
- Write a short paragraph on each of these two: 1) evangelism, (2) DiscipleMaking.
- Then cap it off with one thing you have done recently to personally practice this.
- Share with your group, and invite further suggestions.

How did Jesus evangelize in Mark? (short summary or bullet points)

**How did Jesus gather and train His disciples in Mark?
(short summary or bullet points)**

What are you doing, and what do you want to do with this? Are you aware of the delegated authority you carry as God's trusted ruler? How are you walking this out? Where can we support you in this?

APPENDIX

Engaging with *S-T-U-D-Y*

You may have already read through portions of the Bible. You marvel over the treasures of the Word of God lying on the surface. These nuggets are so rich and life-impacting, we almost stumble over them. Yet need and desire give you a thirst to dig more deeply and consistently to mine the treasures as Christ invites us into fuller life.

“God does not hide truth **from** us, but He hides it **for** us that the discovery is more precious.”

Let’s take the next step together by looking more closely at chapters of the Bible (or unified passages since a chapter is not inspired, but a convenient way to begin to dissect a book). This is part of the “*small*” in the holistic *BIG-small-BIG* approach to Scripture.

S-T-U-D-Y is a simple, yet extremely helpful and powerful tool. It provides structure and a convenient “gathering place” for your insights, while maintaining flexibility to learn incrementally through an evolving process, one layer at a time. Yes, God can and sometimes does change aspects of our lives in an instant. However, growth normally comes like plants grow over time, more rapidly in some seasons. Learn to soak in an extended passage of Scripture.

“S” (Summary): Write out a short summary of the entire section (5-8 words works well). Don’t get caught up in too many details here or try to master every nuance. Look for the author’s Big-Idea intended to the original readers. In time, look for the flow of the passage.

“T” (The Key Verse): What do **you** see as **the** key verse of the passage? It could be your favorite verse or the central verse. There is no “wrong” answer. Write it out, perhaps memorize the verse. Storing God’s Word in our hearts protects us and provides guidance. This is similar to the following “*U*,” the lowest hurdle, aimed at those new to Bible study since *anyone* can come up with one verse they liked.

“U” (Uplifts): What did God’s Spirit light up like a neon sign for you in this chapter? As I read, I dialog with the Spirit of God, our Resident Teacher: “*What do You have for me, Spirit?*” “*I don’t understand what this means.*” “*Help!*” Uplifts will include timeless truths that are just as applicable for our lives today as to the original

recipients. They include both what brings joy or surprise, delight or conviction, because both should lead to LifeChange. Read with tip-toe expectation, jotting down several uplifts with references. When the group is used to pre-preparation, I combine the “T” and “U” together in the group time.

“D” (Difficulties): Not everything in the Bible is easy to understand. Focus on the “*main & plain*” though, what is both *crucial & clear*. So it’s **OK** if this section is **blank**. Yet when these difficulties cut against the fiber of my self-life, they often mark where I grow the most. Many difficulties will be answered later as you continue to grow in Christ, so put these in your “*Deuteronomy 29:29 bucket*.” God is God and so we practice a “*theology of mystery in awe and wonder*.”

“Y” (Your Response): God communicates to His people, primarily through His Word, yet never contradictory to Scripture. As His presence-people, I want God to communicate His heart, His inner inclinations from His Word. Then quickly obey His wooing presence. Such response to God’s Word leads us to experience growing freedom through LifeChange. **THE** most crucial part of learning the Bible is not information, but **doing** His Word. Although spending leisurely time in Scripture is preliminary, God transforms our minds as we put truth **into practice**, using its truth to evaluate our lives (Romans 12:1-2). If we don’t respond, we deceive ourselves (Jm 1:22). Usually I begin group time here since it’s so crucial

And much of this cuts deeply, to the intentions and aspirations of our heart (Heb. 4:12). Acting on truth raises our level of learning retention from 5%-10% up to 70% and on to **90%** as we pass along a thought we are learning, even casually in conversation. Fifty-two incremental changes per year will lead to significant LifeChange after only one year. Be willing to take “*ant-steps*.”

I encourage you to use the “*DiscipleMaking Companion*” series on my website, www.JimFredericks.com. I have incorporated a number of more recent cutting-edge ideas on learning that recover how God designed us in Genesis 1 as active, natural learners.

The *S-T-U-D-Y* sheet is available as a free PDF download under the “*Christian Growth Tools*” tab.

STUDY

"For Ezra had set his heart to **study** the law of the Lord, and to **practice** it, and to **teach** His statutes and ordinances in Isreal" (Ezra 7:10, NASB).

Date: / / **Book & Chapter/Passage:**

SUMMARY: What's the "big-picture" idea? Trace the flow of the passage.

S

THE Verse: What is my key verse? (either my favorite or the central verse)

T

UPLIFTS: What leaps out, stirring my **mind** &/or **affections**, about God, me, etc.?

U

DIFFICULTIES: What puzzles me from this passage ("*Deuteronomy 29:29 Bucket*")?

D

YOUR Response: What is my "*I Will...*" response to God's invitation into fuller life?
Pass it along: One idea to one person. Who? _____

Y

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Y

For TEACHERS: Suggestions to Use "Companions"

All I have written on my website, JimFredericks.com, have been designed to support us to grow as lifelong learners and doers as we connect with the Father's heart and partner with our Team-of-Three.

I wrote all these "*DiscipleMaking Companions*" with a similar feel to make it easier for us to reproduce by doing in another group what has impacted your life. Spiritual multiplication. Cutting-edge learning theory that aligns with God's creation-design interweave throughout. Everything in the "*Companions*" works together to increase the power of learning as we point one another directly into books of the Bible and trust the Spirit for insight. Here is a brief summary.

1. I begin each new group with a "**zero week.**" *Zero* pre-prep, *zero* commitment. I use this to briefly get to know each other, teach with a short "*burst of teaching*" on natural learning (usually from Luke 2:46-47, how Jesus learned), then lay out the expectations. I hand out the material and invite them back next week. I also give them space to say "*this is not for me*" without any negative judgments.
2. Ideally, "*Companions*" support SmallGroup learning since God made us in His relational image. This style of learning is also what I practice in private, then bring "*fresh bread*" to the group.
3. The four bullet points provide a natural context for learning. The first bullet point acts as a typical "*ice-breaker,*" while launching the group attitude Godward and ultimately deepening connection.
4. Reading the text around out loud increases insight. I'm still surprised how often I get fresh insight, even after pre-preparing.
5. Obedience-based learning releases true learning. The application box at the end of the text and the "**Y**" in *S-T-U-D-Y* both encourage active response (**do one** thing and **pass along one** thing to another). When I lead a group, I begin our group study time with this.
6. True experience happens as we *reflect* on our response to God's Word. We limit the God of the universe in His desire to transform us if we don't put into practice what He highlights. God wired us to learn best by studying the object of the lesson, putting it into practice, reflecting on what we experienced, and passing this on to others. I strive to do my part to maximize this learning experience.

7. Giving *short* prayer requests focuses *more* on prayer and *less* on explaining our need. God knows all the details. Praying our best 30-second prayer frees more people to pray.
8. Every week blends relational modeling, Biblical responsiveness and intentional stewarding of God’s resources towards the three great pathways of discipleship. *Intimate worship*. *Compassionate mission*. *Life-on-life community*. Good habits form more quickly with such daily, incremental “*deliberate practice*.”
9. As teachers whose aim is to *draw out* others so we can teach them to fish, rather than simply give them a fish, we may run into a time when the group is not as highly motivated. Any “*Companion*” makes it simple with its questions and helps to seamlessly retreat to a “*discussion*” format for this one week. Then encourage them with “*how much more*” they could grow if they pre-prepared.
10. Finally, I conceived each “*DiscipleMaking Companion*” to ideally be led by influencers/teachers committed to the primary act of teaching, “*drawing out*” others, rather than what I see as the secondary act, “*putting in*.” By this, I’m not implying one is good, one is bad. Both are necessary...at times. Because **all** those in the group are image-bearers of the creative God, “*draw out*” what God has placed within comes first in a SmallGroup.

Beyond these comments on a “*DiscipleMaking Companion*,” my observation from experience is that this general style is the most life-changing, flexible model for personal change. Go through *one* chapter or portion of Scripture plus *one* item to read from outside the Bible. This could be a printed or online article, a chapter in a book, or something written by someone in the group.

If one aspect falls out from this process, please make it the *outside reading* because God’s Word, inspired and interpreted by the Spirit and applied to our lives, transforms us. Outside books have been extremely powerful for me as they help strip off my spiritual “blinders.” We normally see in Scripture what we have always seen. If we have been Christians for a while, we may be so familiar with portions of the Bible that we reflex to what we have seen in the past, which closes our minds to what the Spirit additionally desires to teach. **Enjoy the process!**

For TEACHERS: Tips to Healthy SmallGroups

God has built laws into the physical universe, like gravity, so we have space to grow in a stable environment. God also has relational principles that influence how we connect with others. A few are: be friendly and helpful, initiate and smile cordially, have a genuine interest in others, be generous with praise and cautious with criticism.

SmallGroups also have principles that influence, all flowing from the first SmallGroup, the relational Trinity, Father, Son and Spirit. Here are a few, although please add your own from current and future experience informed by Scripture. And “*pay forward*” to others.

Bible-based: Jesus was saturated by the Scriptures He had, and passed them along in a natural way. We need *both* the systematic training in the basics of being followers of Jesus from Scripture, and also their spontaneous response into every nook and cranny of the routines in our daily life. Don’t fall for any counterfeit of Jesus’ method that is *either/or* rather than *both systematic and spontaneous*.

Model for Disciples: In 1st century Jewish culture, every Rabbi had his 3 or disciples in a SmallGroup. They learned what he knew, yet equally important, they learned his way of living. Discipling (call it what you want...mentoring, etc....just do it) is about both knowing and doing Scripture. Yes, it’s more than a Bible study. If we don’t put truth into life-practice, we deceive ourselves (James 1:22). This process is more akin to what we would call training or equipping today, done both formally & informally, enveloping both knowing & doing.

Community: Since our Community-of-Three fashioned us in His image, multiplication in community is non-negotiable. Studies reveal the powerful value of mutual interaction between group members. Since the cross when Jesus “*made one new man,*” community releases a powerful dynamic, mutuality as we **all** gather as *both* teachers and *learners*. Pre-preparation, *as if* you were teaching, is a crucial tipping point for growth. At times, I meet one-on-one as an exception, but Jesus spent 20-months *with His Twelve*. Paul had Barnabas and 30+ other teammates on his journey. And we also must raise up disciples in community (Matthew 28:18-20, “*teaching others to do...*”).

Time Limited: Meet together weekly long enough to develop close, life-releasing relationships, yet short enough so these *primary relationships* do not become rigid *primary groups*, like an inflexible old wineskins. I develop long-lasting, *primary relationships* in groups (dictionary meaning: “*first in importance.*”) These often continue over a lifetime, but **not** in the same group. Groups must be relaunched before they become sociologically *primary* groups, a group without room for others, like a clique with insider. Jesus ministered to His Twelve disciples in a temporarily closed group for 20-months.

Sharing our faith: When Jesus did a “religious reboot” for five of His ultimate Twelve, He focused on actively sharing His faith. My aim is that we will be open and prepared to share in our circle of influence. Most **will not** unless this is relationally modelled. Be sure to build in time where you or others take group members to show how to **do** this.

Reproducible: My years of experience discipling teach me that the largest barrier to others multiplying disciples like what was done to them is training with an adaptable method that is reproducible. I wrote the “*DiscipleMaking Companions*” to create a *soil* with the necessary nutrients conducive to fruitful growth. This then provides a flexible structure (*both space and boundaries*) to open up each group-leader and group to the best version of their unique selves. Every group I do has similarities, yet is different since the amazing life within is boundless.

A Potpourri Gathered from Others:

1. Release the power of community by training each to take “*Ant-Steps* with “*deliberate practice*” to encourage and correct.
2. As the leader, don’t do everything. After establishing a pattern, rotate leadership weekly in group-time.
3. Teach them to grow, do and go to give away what they learn each week. We only keep what we give away.
4. Encourage them to be outward-focused “*inviters & includes.*” An easy place to start is the main worship service of the church. Although I also get life from the services, my main focus views it as a “*fishing hole*” to connect with other ready hearts.
5. **Have fun.** Enjoy the process, even though it’s hard at times.
6. Add your own thoughts since these are only suggestive.

Freder's Favorites Books on Amazon.Com

Author's Page: https://www.amazon.com/JimFredericks/e/B07595TDP1/ref=sr_tc_2_0?qid=1526585472&sr=1-2-ent

*Most authors have **one** key message interwoven in all they write. I'm no different. I write to restore an accurate Christian worldview so we see God, ourselves and the world more like our relational Trinity does. Then we multiply disciples like Jesus. A relational Trinitarian, incarnational understanding of God with a high view of God's restored and fulfilled new creation as one new man in Christ weaves itself into all my writings. What follows is **not** for the casual reader*

90-Day Engagement with the New Testament – This companion walks us through the NT in 3-months. Because the books are in the chronological order they were written, this brings out insights of progressive revelation.

Foundation Stones – These “*blog*” length building blocks build into the early fiber of our Christian journey in a format for easy daily ingestion.

Jesus Is Enough! – A meditative guide through Jesus’ “*last words*” in John 15, the life-releasing picture of the Vine and the branches. What a glimpse into how to thrive spiritually, for both new and for mature Christians.

Enjoying His Presence – For our 21st century lives as Christians, nothing is more vital than grasping and responding to the moment-by-moment life God freely offers His people, You Have Overcome the Evil One, even in the routine. Journey through various Psalms.

Created Community – Ephesians is Paul’s model for living a flourishing Christian life. Ephesians reflects the distilled essence of what Paul spoke as he planted and strengthened thriving churches in the 1st century.

Radical Mutuality – In 1 John, the aged Apostle John felt compelled to write what was essential from his perch 25 years after the last NT book had been written. This *ancient/new* 1st century *mental map* turned the world upside down then, as *koinonia* flowing out of the relational Trinity can also today.

Additional CORE, Foundational Books

Big God! Bold Design, A Trilogy – This Trilogy fuses together what God is bringing to light in the last decades to our solid, life-giving historical roots. This primer is a basic, life-oriented theology for what we believe, recapturing the *mystery* of God and the *dignity* of humanity as image-bearers.

Cycles for Lifelong LifeChange – God built life to grow through a process, seed to shoot to flower to fruit. John paints a picture of three stages of spiritual development so we become lifelong *life* learners & doers.

Cultivating DiscipleMaking Communities – This read-along through Paul’s earliest letter flows out of 1 Thessalonians. This key community-building letter, with a thoroughly relational Trinitarian view of life, is Paul’s vision to launch and grow disciples in reproducing faith-communities as His Word works in us. Essential reading for those who wish to multiply ministry.

1. “You Are Strong” [in the Lord]

A Series of 5-Week “DiscipleMaking Companions” – When Jesus rescued us through faith, He drew near to us in order to draw us near to Himself. Each highly interactive 5-6 week *Companion*” is more than a Bible study since the emphasis is on **doing** the Word. These cover eight foundational concepts in the Bible by directly leading us into key Bible books, like Philippians, Genesis 1-4, Mark, Ephesians, 1 Thessalonians, 1 Peter and Psalms.

Times of Refreshing – God’s Family deserves healthy nourishment to stimulate growth aimed at each of our spiritual developmental levels on this lifelong adventure of faith. This short book uses Jesus to focus on two basic concepts, *abundance & forgiveness* from connecting with the *Father and Son*.

2. “The Word of God Lives in You”

Mining God’s Word – This hands-on approach draws our hearts to love God’s Word. It helps all believers build solid Bible study in a time-proven, user friendly approach. Think *BIG-small-BIG* as you soak in God’s Word.

3. “You Have Overcome the Evil One”

Sailing the High Seas – The relational Community-God Himself is our model for all leadership. This more community-based leadership dialog honors positional leadership while releasing God’s people to reach their potential.

I write with three large concerns: (1) that I might convince your mind before God ravishes your heart with His relational love; (2) that you will read these books alone and be helped greatly...and settle for the helpful, but partial, change gained from learning as individuals, missing out on God’s greater call to live as “persons-in-community; (3) that you might in some way view what I write as a finished program that will bring growth like a vending machine! No such thing exists because we are following the Living God.

Other “DiscipleMaking Companions.”

After completing the eight “Companions,” work through the 12-week “*Luke-Acts Capstone: Joining the Family Business.*” Then continue with a similar learning and teaching style as a lifelong life-learner for any book of the Bible.

My books under the “*Freder’s Favorites*” tab on www.JimFredericks.com engage each “Companion” more deeply.

God-Assignments for Discipleship		Foundation for Discipleship			
#	Title	Bible	Theme	Source of Quotes	
1st	Joy Overflowing: Foundation: Word & Spirit	Philippians	Word & Spirit	<i>The Pursuit of God</i> AW Tozer	
2nd	God’s Unchanging Eden-Intent: Foundation: Know God, Know Self	Genesis 1-4 + 22 or 15	Trine Origins	<i>Concise Theology</i> JI Packer	
3rd	Carriers of God’s Authority: Foundation: Kingdom & Family	Mark 1-16	Family/Kingdom Culture	<i>Kingdom Come</i> John Wimber	
4th	Renewed Identity in Christ: Foundation: See Ourselves like God	Ephesians 1-3	Know God, Know Self	<i>Victory over the Darkness</i> Neil Anderson	
5th	Life-on-Life Community: Assignment: Generously Share our Life	Ephesians 4-6	Sharing Lives in Community	<i>Experiencing the Trinity</i> Darrell W. Johnson	
6th	Disciples Multiplying Disciples: Assignment: Make & Multiply Disciples	1 Thessalonians	Multiply Disciples in Christ	<i>The Master Plan of Evangelism</i> Robert Coleman	
7th	Compassionate Mission: Assignment: An Outwardly Focused Life	1 Peter	Evangelism & Mission	<i>Naturally Supernatural</i> Gary Best	
8th	Intimate Worship: Assignment: God’s Presence & Prayer	Selected Psalms	Worship God More Intimately	<i>Practicing His Presence</i> Brother Lawrence & Laubach	

*** “Books & Bible Tools” tab on www.JimFredericks.com for free downloads of additional resources.

After completing these eight “Companions,” work through the *Luke-Acts Capstone: Joining the Family Business.*”

Continue as a lifelong *life*-learner with a similar approach on any Bible book

