

PART ONE: THE BASICS

Summary of Chapter 1 – What is a Disciple?

The purpose of this chapter was to introduce you to Jesus and his call to discipleship—to follow him. We did this by thinking about how Mark begins the gospel.

Who is Jesus?

- He is Christ, the Messiah, also called Son of Man.
- He is the Son of God.
- He was baptized with water and then with the Spirit from heaven.
- He came to do battle with Satan and his demons.
- He preached the gospel—the good news that the kingdom of God was near.

What is a disciple of Jesus?

One who has heard the call of Jesus and has responded by:

- Repenting.
 - Believing the gospel.
 - Following Jesus.
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Summary of Chapter 2 – Do I have to Go to Church?

I asked whether you had to “go to church” to be a disciple. And the answer was YES! But then I asked, “What is the church?”

- It is the community of disciples that Jesus promised he would build.
- It is built on the foundation of the apostles.
- It was seeing how disciples lived together in a church that first gave them the label Christian.

How does the church help you grow as a disciple?

- It is where you will publicly confess Jesus (baptism).
 - It is where you will find spiritual support and nourishment (communion).
 - It is your home base for serving others in the name of Jesus.
 - It is where you will raise a Christian family.
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Summary of Chapter 3 - Learning to Read the Bible and Pray

Two basic tools will enable us to follow Jesus as new or renewed disciples: learning how to read the Bible and learning how to pray.

The Bible:

- Explore the Book—it is more of a library than a single book.
- The big story—all those books tell a single story: Creation. Fall. Redemption. Consummation.
- The authority of the Bible—Jesus received it as God’s Word.
- There are practical questions about copies and translations.

Prayer:

- All people pray—but is it prayer that God hears?
- Memorize the Lord’s Prayer.
- Use the Lord’s Prayer:

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- Pray thinking of a hand: the palm and five fingers.

PART TWO: DISCIPLESHIP THROUGH THE GOSPEL

Step One: Know the gospel itself

Summary of Chapter 4 - The Gospel of God

The most important way to grow as a disciple of Jesus is to dig deeper into the gospel. This is the purpose of Paul's writing his letter to the church of Rome, in addition to telling them about his upcoming visit. Mark told us the gospel, the story of Jesus; Paul tells the same story but also explains more of what it means. Read the introductory verses of Romans (1:1-17) to answer four questions:

- What is the gospel? The story of Jesus, his person, and his work.
- Who was going to hear the gospel? The church in Rome.
- How is the gospel the power of God? By believing it, we embrace the supernatural work of God through Christ.
- What is revealed in the gospel? A revelation of the righteousness of God.

Take in what you can. As a disciple, whether new or renewed, you have a great deal to learn, so don't be discouraged that you don't "get it" all at once.

Step Two: Know how you came to believe the gospel

Summary of Chapter 5 - The Call to Salvation & Discipleship

The call to salvation is the call to discipleship. It is time to think deeply about God's call to you. How does the call work?

- The gospel call goes out.
- The Holy Spirit gives life to the words of the gospel.
- Those who are called find power and wisdom in Jesus.

The effectual call:

- When God calls, we come!
- "What is effectual calling?" (Shorter Catechism no. 31)

You must be born again:

- Jesus' explanation of regeneration: birth through the Holy Spirit.
- The spiritual birthline, comparing physical and spiritual birth.

Summary of Chapter 6 - Conversion

The conversion of Saul was a dramatic event, but not all conversions look like his. Review the teaching of Jesus about conversion:

- We must repent and believe the gospel—we must respond to Jesus' call.
- There is a turning from sin to embrace Jesus—repentance and faith.

But conversion does not mean the same experience for all:

- The X on the spiritual birthline is a dotted line.
- Don't judge your conversion by an experience.

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The test of true conversion—following Jesus:

- Discipleship doesn't come after believing; it is the same as believing.
- A believer in Jesus follows Jesus, even when it is difficult.

Are you converted? This is an important time for asking a hard question. Regeneration and conversion:

- God is the One who must change the heart.
- God, who raised Jesus from the dead, raises us from our death in sin.

Faith and repentance:

- The result of regeneration and conversion is faith.
- It could be called repentant faith because the pattern of repentance and faith will continue as we follow Jesus.
- We now need to understand the meaning of faith in Romans.

Step Three: Know the benefits of believing the gospel (gospel doctrines)

Summary of Chapter 7 - A New Record: Justification

A review of the four steps of discipleship through the gospel:

- The gospel is a true story.
- The gospel is the power of God for those who believe it.
- The gospel reveals a righteousness from God that is ours by faith.
- The gospel changes everything.

Cheer up—you are worse than you think! This is the bad news from Romans. But now a righteousness from God has been made known:

- The good news is that the righteousness we need is found in Jesus Christ.
 - Redemption through his blood.
 - Propitiation.
 - God is both just and the One who justifies.

Justified through faith:

- Justified means to be declared righteous by God.

Two blessings of justification:

- Forgiveness of sin.
- Counted as righteous.

A place to stand: This is bedrock for our faith.

Summary of Chapter 8 - A New Life: Sanctification & Adoption

My summary will be the questions from the Shorter Catechism that describe the benefits that come in this life to those who are effectually called (nos. 32–36):

What benefits do they that are effectually called partake of in this life?

They that are effectually called do in this life partake of justification, adoption, and sanctification, and the several benefits which in this life do either accompany or flow from them.

What is justification?

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Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein he pardons all our sins, and accepts us as righteous in his sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone.

What is adoption?

Adoption is an act of God's free grace, whereby we are received into the number, and have a right to all the privileges, of the sons of God.

What is sanctification?

Sanctification is the work of God's free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness.

What are the benefits which in this life do accompany or flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification?

The benefits which in this life do accompany or flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification are: assurance of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Spirit, growing and persevering in grace to the end of our lives.

Summary of Chapter 9 – A New Future: Glorification

Discipleship cannot be discussed without also considering the matter of suffering; but Romans 8 teaches that suffering will be nothing compared to the glory that will follow:

- The whole creation struggles under the curse.
- When Christ returns to raise his people from the dead, all of creation will also be redeemed.
- Going to heaven when we die is only part of the picture.

Called according to his purpose:

- We are known by God and predestined.
- Those he predestined are called, justified, and glorified.
- Glorification is the completion of our salvation—it is tied to what happened to Jesus at the resurrection.

What can we say to this? WOW!

- God's purpose is clear—to make us become like Christ, our older brother.
- Paul poses a series of dramatic questions.
- Nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ.

Assurance of salvation: We rest in Christ alone.

Putting the pieces together: The wheel.

Step Four: Live a Life that flows from the gospel (Gospel Obedience)

Summary of Chapter 10 - Faith Expressing Itself in Love

Step four of discipleship through the gospel—gospel obedience—is obedience that comes from faith. The call to dedicate our lives to obedient service flows naturally from Paul's long discussion of the gospel mercy. Life in community:

- Participation in the church is assumed as Paul begins to define the obedience of faith.
- Consider what gift you might have to strengthen the body of Christ.

Love must be sincere:

- Love is the summary of all we are commanded to do.
- Love is agape love—a word of action and commitment.

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Love is the fulfillment of the law:

- Learn the Ten Commandments.

Clothe yourselves with Jesus Christ to overcome the enemies of our faith:

- The world, the flesh, and the devil are powerful, but not stronger than Jesus.
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Summary of Chapter 11 - The Gospel Changes Everything

Gospel obedience means that we join with Jesus on his mission. We are missionaries! This means that:

- We learn to view all of life as being under the lordship of Christ.
- We participate in Jesus' work to send the gospel to all nations.

We are called to the renewal of our minds. A Christian worldview should lead to a Christian lifestyle, affecting everything we do. Consider examples of Christian worldview and lifestyle:

- God's purpose for earthly government.
- Use of money and possessions.
- Vocation.
- Care for the weak.

The call to discipleship in our daily lives is the call to understand that the gospel changes everything.

PART THREE: FOLLOWING JESUS ON HIS MISSION

Summary of Chapter 12 - Disciples Making Disciples

What happened to Titus? There is a Titus in the New Testament who became a believer and then grew as a disciple until he was one of Paul's trusted assistants. That is the picture of the kind of growth that I pray will be true for all doing this study.

The Great Commission given by Jesus after his resurrection has the key command to "make disciples of all nations." The other key words tell us how to make disciples:

- By going (we are intentional about making disciples).
- By baptizing (evangelism is the first stage of making disciples, not a separate activity).
- By teaching to obey all things Jesus has taught (making disciples includes both confessing Christ publicly and living a life of obedience).

Partnership in the gospel is illustrated by Paul's trip to Rome and then to Spain, providing a good example of how a church can be involved in the work of the missionary who is making disciples on the front line of gospel expansion:

- By blessing and refreshing them.
- By supporting them financially.
- By praying for them.

"Back to Jerusalem," the story of how the gospel went from Jerusalem out into the world is remarkable, and it is still going on. The gospel will spread out to the nations until the knowledge of the Lord covers the earth. Jesus' disciples have been imperfect, but the plan of God is being fulfilled.