

BOOK ONE

The Gospel

STUDENT EDITION

Discovering Jesus. Understanding the gospel.
Deciding to follow Him.

“

“...teaching them to obey
everything I have commanded you.”

MATTHEW 28:20



SOUTH LAKE
CHURCH OF CHRIST

CLERMONT, FLORIDA

BOOK ONE

The Gospel

Becoming a disciple of Jesus.

Come and see who he is. Hear the good news. Respond to him.

THIS BOOK BELONGS TO

NAME

STUDYING WITH

WE STARTED ON

**Do you understand the gospel,
and how will you respond to Jesus?**

100 SOUTH GRAND HIGHWAY
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WELCOME

What this is

Six studies. One question running through all of them: do you understand the gospel, and how will you respond to Jesus?

That's the whole point of this book. Not to make you an expert. Not to get you to agree with everything this church believes. Just to put you in front of Jesus with an open Bible and let you decide what to do about him.

01 You read first

Each study has one anchor passage and a few supporting ones. Read them and write down what you actually see — not what you think the right answer is. “I don't know” is a real answer and a useful one.

02 Then we talk it through

Whoever is studying with you will go over your answers before you move on. They're not grading you. Their job is to listen and to show you where to look.

03 You decide, at your own pace

Nobody sets a deadline for you. If you're ready before the last study, say so — we won't make you wait. If you get to the end and you're not ready, that's fine, and you're still welcome here.

OUR GUARDRAILS

- ✓ You set the pace. Nobody here will rush you or tell you that you're “not ready yet.”
- ✓ No question is off limits, including the ones you think are stupid or offensive.
- ✓ We will not run down the church you came from, or your family's faith.
- ✓ We read before we conclude. If we say something, ask us where we see it in the text.
- ✓ If any of this ever feels like pressure, say so out loud. We'll stop.

QUESTIONS I'M BRINGING INTO THIS

START HERE

How we'll study the Bible *together*

If you've never used a Bible before, none of this is obvious and nobody expects it to be. Here's everything you need to get started.

Finding a passage

Every reference has three parts. Take **John 3:16**:

John is the *book*. Find it in the table of contents at the front.

3 is the *chapter* — the big numbers.

16 is the *verse* — the small numbers inside the chapter.

A dash means a range. **John 3:16–18** means verses 16 through 18. A comma means skip. **1 Corinthians 15:1–8, 12–20** means read two sections.

Two halves of one book

The **Old Testament** is the first two-thirds — the story of God and the people of Israel before Jesus, including the promises that pointed toward him. The **New Testament** is the last third — the life of Jesus, the birth of the church, and letters written to the earliest Christians. Most of what we read together will be in the New Testament, but not all of it.

How we'll work through a passage

01 Read

Out loud if you can. Slowly. Notice what's actually on the page — who's speaking, who they're speaking to, and what's happening.

02 Understand

What does it mean? What does it show about God, about Jesus, about people? Ask questions. Push back. If something doesn't sit right, say so.

03 Respond

What does this mean for you? This is the part that matters most, and it's the part we'll always finish with.

START HERE • CONTINUED

Talking to God

We'll end every study with prayer. If you've never prayed out loud, you don't have to. Nobody is going to put you on the spot.

Prayer is simpler than you think

Prayer is talking to God. Not a script, not special words, not a particular posture. Jesus warned his own followers against long, impressive-sounding prayers meant to be overheard. He told them to talk to God like a child talking to a father.

A SIMPLE SHAPE, IF YOU WANT ONE

Thank him for something specific.

Tell him the truth about where you actually are — including doubt, anger, or confusion.

Ask him for what you need.

Ask him to show you what's true as you read.

You can pray silently. You can pray in your car. You can pray badly. He isn't grading the performance.

What's ahead

01	Can I trust God's Word?	THE WORD
02	Who is Jesus?	JESUS I
03	Why did Jesus have to die?	JESUS II
04	What if Jesus really rose from the dead?	JESUS III
05	What must I do?	OUR RESPONSE
06	What does it mean for Jesus to be Lord?	FOLLOW ME
—	The decision conversation	NOT A STUDY

STUDY ONE • THE WORD

Can I trust God's Word?

THE BIG QUESTION

Am I willing to let God's Word correct what I already believe?

ANCHOR PASSAGE

2 Timothy 3:14–17

SUPPORTING PASSAGES

Acts 17:10–12 · Mark 7:6–13 · Hebrews 4:12–13 · John 8:31–32

Discover

- 1 In the anchor passage, where does Paul say Scripture comes from, and what does he say it is able to do for a person?

- 2 In Acts 17:10–12, what did these people do with what they were being taught? What does Luke say about them because of it?

- 3 In Mark 7:6–13, what is Jesus concerned about? What is the difference he draws between God's command and human tradition?

- 4 What does Hebrews 4:12–13 say Scripture does to a person — and what does that image suggest?

- 5 In John 8:31–32, what does Jesus connect to actually being his disciple?

STUDY ONE • THE WORD • CONTINUED

THE HEART OF IT

God's Word is not one voice among many. It is the standard we are both coming under — including me.

Respond

Name one belief you hold about God, Jesus, or yourself that you have never actually checked against Scripture. What would it take for you to check it?

Pray

Ask God to open your eyes as you read, and to give you the honesty to accept what you find.

Notes & questions I want to ask

STUDY TWO • JESUS, PART I

Who is Jesus?

THE BIG QUESTION

Who do you say Jesus is?

ANCHOR PASSAGE

Mark 1:14–20

SUPPORTING PASSAGES

John 1:1–18 · Matthew 16:13–17

Discover

- 1 In Mark 1:14–15, what is Jesus announcing has arrived? What two things does he ask people to do about it?

- 2 What does Jesus say to the fishermen, and what do they do? What does following him appear to cost them?

- 3 In John 1:1–18, what does John claim about who Jesus is and where he came from? What words stand out to you?

- 4 In Matthew 16:13–17, what are people saying about Jesus? What does Peter say, and where does Jesus say that answer came from?

- 5 Jesus turns and asks the question directly to the people closest to him. How would you answer it today — honestly?

STUDY TWO • JESUS, PART I • CONTINUED

THE HEART OF IT

Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, sent from the Father. He announces God's kingdom and calls ordinary people to follow him.

Respond

Write in your own words who you think Jesus is right now. If you're unsure, write that. An honest 'I'm not sure yet' is worth more than a borrowed answer.

Pray

Ask God to show you who Jesus really is, and to give you courage for whatever you find.

Notes & questions I want to ask

STUDY THREE • JESUS, PART II

Why did Jesus *have to die?*

THE BIG QUESTION

What did Jesus die for, and what does his death mean for me?

ANCHOR PASSAGE

Romans 3:21–26

SUPPORTING PASSAGES

Isaiah 53:4–6 · Luke 23:32–49 · 2 Corinthians 5:21

Discover

- 1 In Romans 3:21–26, what does Paul say is true of everyone? Where does he say righteousness comes from, and where does it not come from?

- 2 Look closely at verse 24. What word does Paul use, and what does it mean for something to be given freely?

- 3 In Isaiah 53:4–6, who is carrying what, and whose fault is the trouble? This was written centuries before Jesus — what do you make of that?

- 4 Read Luke 23:32–49 slowly. What does Jesus say from the cross? What does the criminal beside him ask for, and what does he receive? What does the centurion conclude?

- 5 In 2 Corinthians 5:21, what exchange is being described? Who gets what?

STUDY THREE • JESUS, PART II • CONTINUED

THE HEART OF IT

The cross shows two things at once: how serious sin is, and how far God's love is willing to go. My problem is sin. God's response is grace. Jesus' sacrifice is the cross.

Respond

The criminal on the cross did nothing to earn what Jesus promised him. What would it mean for you to receive something you could never repay?

Pray

Thank God for what he did before you asked. Tell him honestly where you are with your own sin.

Notes & questions I want to ask

STUDY FOUR • JESUS, PART III

What if Jesus really *rose from the dead?*

THE BIG QUESTION

If Jesus really rose, what does that mean for my life?

ANCHOR PASSAGE

1 Corinthians 15:1–8, 12–20

SUPPORTING PASSAGES

Luke 24:1–12 • Acts 2:22–36

Discover

- 1** In verses 1–8, what four things does Paul say are of first importance? How many witnesses does he name, and what does he say about most of them?

- 2** In verses 12–20, what does Paul say would be true if Christ had not been raised? How much is he willing to stake on this?

- 3** In Luke 24:1–12, what do the women find? How do the others respond to the news at first?

- 4** In Acts 2:22–36, what does Peter say God did with the Jesus they crucified? What conclusion does he reach in verse 36?

- 5** Peter says God has made him both Lord and Christ. In ordinary language, what does the word ‘Lord’ mean?

STUDY FOUR • JESUS, PART III • CONTINUED

THE HEART OF IT

Christianity stands or falls on the resurrection. The crucified Jesus has been raised and exalted — therefore Jesus is Lord.

Respond

If the resurrection actually happened, what in your life does not survive that fact unchanged? Name one thing.

Pray

Tell God honestly whether you believe this. Ask him to settle it in you.

Notes & questions I want to ask

STUDY FIVE • OUR RESPONSE

What must *I do?*

THE BIG QUESTION

How does Scripture tell a person to respond to the gospel?

ANCHOR PASSAGE

Acts 2:36–41

SUPPORTING PASSAGES

Romans 6:1–7 · Galatians 3:26–27 · Colossians 2:12 · Acts 22:16

Discover

- 1 What has just happened before verse 37? What does the crowd ask, and what does it tell you about how they were feeling?

- 2 What does Peter tell them to do? What does he say they will receive? What happens in verse 41?

- 3 In Romans 6:1–7, what does Paul say baptism unites a person with? What is buried, and what is raised?

- 4 In Galatians 3:26–27 and Colossians 2:12, what is said to happen — and who is doing the work?

- 5 In Acts 22:16, Paul had already met Jesus on the road and believed. What is he still told to do, and why?

STUDY FIVE • OUR RESPONSE • CONTINUED

THE HEART OF IT

Grace saves. Jesus saves. Faith trusts. Repentance turns. Baptism responds.
God acts. The Spirit is given. New life begins.

Respond

In your own words: what is a person doing in baptism, and what is God doing? Write both halves.

Pray

Ask God to make you honest about where you stand and unafraid of what he asks.

Notes & questions I want to ask

STUDY SIX · FOLLOW ME

What does it mean for *Jesus to be Lord?*

THE BIG QUESTION

Do you understand who you are choosing to follow?

ANCHOR PASSAGE

Luke 9:18–26

SUPPORTING PASSAGES

Luke 14:25–33 · John 13:34–35 · Matthew 28:18–20

Discover

- 1 In verses 18–20, what question does Jesus ask, and how does Peter answer? What does Jesus say will happen to him next?

- 2 In verses 23–26, what three things does Jesus say a follower does? What word is attached to taking up the cross, and what does that word change?

- 3 In Luke 14:25–33, who is Jesus talking to? What does he tell them to do before following him — and why would he say that to a large crowd?

- 4 In John 13:34–35, what does Jesus say will mark his followers to everyone watching?

- 5 In Matthew 28:18–20, what authority does Jesus claim, and what does he send his followers to do?

STUDY SIX • FOLLOW ME • CONTINUED

THE HEART OF IT

Jesus is Lord. Following him means leaving self-rule, entering his people, learning his way, and continuing to follow even when it costs.

Respond

What in your life will change if Jesus is Lord? Who will be hardest to tell? And are you willing to keep following when it gets costly?

Pray

Tell Jesus honestly what you are willing to give him and what you are still holding.

Notes & questions I want to ask

AFTER STUDY SIX

The decision *conversation*

This one isn't a study. It's a conversation, and it exists so that whatever you decide, you decide it knowing exactly what it means.

There's no trick to it and no right answer we're fishing for. You'll be asked to explain the gospel in your own words. Here are the questions, in advance, so nothing catches you off guard.

- Who is Jesus?
- Why did he die?
- Do you believe he rose from the dead?
- What does repentance mean — for you, specifically?
- What is happening in baptism, and what is God doing in it?
- Why do you want to be baptized?
- What does it mean to you that Jesus is Lord?
- Is this your decision — not your family's, not your friend's, not ours?

If you understand the gospel and you want to respond to Jesus, we'll baptize you. We won't invent extra hoops because someone is nervous. And if you're not there yet, you'll say so and we'll keep going — without anyone treating you differently.

My answers, in my own words

AND THEN

After baptism you'll start **Book Two — The Way: Learning to Walk With Jesus**. Because being handed a congratulations and a service time isn't discipleship. Jesus said to baptize people *and* teach them to obey everything he commanded. Book Two is that second half.