



Downline Builder

Customizable Curriculum for Biblical Discipleship

SAMPLE PACKET

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*Though the leader and student guides for this sample lesson appear on the same document below, this will not be the case when you customize your curriculum in the Builder. Rather, the leader and student(s) will have their own, separate curriculum packet once you're finished building.

6 THINGS TO UNDERSTAND ABOUT THE BUILDER

1 | Doctrinal & Practical Divisions

Once inside the Builder, you will note that each lesson has been assigned one of two icons. The blue icon stands for doctrinal lessons while the green stands for practical lessons. We realize that all doctrinal lessons must be applied in life and that all practical lessons must be rooted in doctrine, but this still seemed like a helpful and appropriate (even if sometimes blurry) division for our library.



2 | Life-on-Life Intentionality

As you are building your customized curriculum, you will be required to plan some “life-on-life” time with your disciple(s) after every two weeks (e.g., in a 10-week curriculum, it would be after weeks 2, 4, 6, 8, and 10). This will ideally function as built-in accountability to keep your relationships from becoming about “head knowledge” alone.

3 | Leader & Student Guides

The main content of the leader and student guides is the same for each lesson. The student guides, however, have room for answering questions, fill-in-the-blanks, etc. The leader guides will fill in all the blanks, give answers to most questions, and even provide discussion helps for the leader. The leader guides will also provide periodic “Teaching Tip” boxes to aid the discipler.

4 | Three Divisions to Each Lesson

Each lesson will be structured around three main headings: (1) **The Big Picture**, (2) **The Main Focus**, and (3) **The Final Word**. The Big Picture will review previous lessons/homework, cover an overview of the study, and give a discussion starter that you can choose to use if it would be helpful. The Main Focus is the meat of the study. The Final Word will suggest an application for the lesson, provide a memory verse, and give some resources for deeper study on the topic. In brief, The Big Picture will prepare you to learn from The Main Focus while The Final Word will prepare you to respond to it.

5 | Goals & Limitations

First, our goal with each lesson was to stick as closely to the Word of God as possible. This doesn't mean that we cover every passage that we could/should cover on any given topic. These lessons aren't meant to be exhaustive, but they should do a good job of getting the ball rolling for you as you seek truth and life transference in the context of your Gospel relationships.

Second, we desire to help disciple-makers “meet people where they are.” However, there is much of this that no system or curriculum can help you accomplish. You still need to do the work of knowing your student(s), adding questions or Scripture references where needed, skipping questions that don't seem to be relevant to your group, and so on. This is not only “allowed,” it is *highly* encouraged!

6 | The Future of the Builder

We're excited about the potential for the Builder over the next six to 12 months. Here are some of the things we're dreaming about: ● Translation into four new languages ● More topical lessons ● Series on Bible books ● “Suggested Lessons” based on YOUR feedback ● Contributions from Christian leaders from around the country ● and MUCH more!

Keep up to date by following us on Twitter @DLbuilder



Downline Builder

SAMPLE LEADER GUIDE: *THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST*

The Big Picture

- **Review:** If this is *not* the first lesson in this set of curriculum, review your previous lesson, discuss homework, memory verse(s), application, or any areas of accountability.
- **Main Point:** This lesson will discuss the Good News of Jesus Christ and its impact on our lives and the lives of those around us.
- **Session Overview:** This session will examine (1) an introduction to the discussion, (2) Scriptures that explain the Gospel message, and (3) application of how the Gospel applies to both people who are not following Jesus and those who do follow Him.
- **Prayer:** Pray with each other to have Spirit-given, Scripture-driven wisdom in this session.
- **Starter:** The greatest message that humanity has ever heard is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is the message that defines reality. It is the message that gives true hope. It is the message that portrays ultimate love. It is the message that explains to us how we can be reconciled with our Creator. While this message is vitally important, there is often a lack of clarity on exactly what the Gospel is. So to begin our lesson, take a moment to write down what you think the Gospel is. After you've done this, read your definition with the rest of your group.

The Main Focus

- **Key Passages:** [Various Passages]
- **Scripture & Discussion:**
 1. The **CLAIMS** of the Gospel – According to the following passages, what does the Bible say about the Gospel?

Romans 1:16-17 –

The Gospel is the power of God for salvation. This means that the message of Christ's death and resurrection is able to raise spiritually dead people to life.

1 Corinthians 1:17-18 –

The Gospel is not human wisdom and therefore is viewed as foolishness to the world. This means we will be opposed for proclaiming this message.

Mark 13:10 –

The Gospel is not just for one type of people, but instead, it's a message for people from all nations. The Gospel foundationally opposes the sin of racism.

2. The **CONTENT** of the Gospel – While there are many passages that inform our understanding of the Gospel, few are as clear as 1 Cor 15:1-5. Take time to read this summary of the Gospel and then discuss the content of the Gospel message.

According to this passage, we see that Christ died, was buried and rose from the dead (v3-4). These are simply the historical facts about what happened to Jesus. We also see the reason Christ died, namely “for our sins” (v3). This is called substitutionary atonement, which simply means that Christ died in our place to take God’s wrath for our sins. Finally, we see that we are saved (from God’s wrath, hell, our sin, death) if we receive and hold fast to the Gospel (v1-2). This means that persevering in faith is required. What you and Jesus did by the bonfire at your Jr. High summer camp doesn’t mean much if you don’t still believe in Him today (Jn. 15:6; 1 Jn. 5:12).

Teaching Tip: Structure of 1 Cor 15:3-5

For the sake of clarity, it might be helpful to explain to your student(s) the structure of 1 Cor 15. The repetition of “according to the Scriptures” after “Christ died” and “He was raised” help to form the backbone of this Gospel message. The other two elements (burial and appearance to many) seem to be the *proof* of his death and resurrection, respectively. Look at it this way, using the NASB translation:

“... that Christ DIED for our sins
according to the Scriptures
(and that He was buried),
and that He WAS RAISED on the third day
according to the Scriptures
(and that He appeared)...”

Therefore, though all of these elements are important, Paul’s basic Gospel message was the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

3. The **CONTEXT** of the Gospel – In order to fully comprehend any message, we need to understand the context in which it is given. To help us better grasp the message of the Gospel, we will consider its context in the Bible. To do this, we will focus on four major ideas presented in the Bible: (1) God, (2) People, (3) Jesus, (4) Response.

Read each of the following statements and the verses that go with each idea. Take a few minutes to discuss each point and why it is important to the message of the Gospel.

- The **God** who created the heavens and the earth made people to love, worship and obey Him (Psalm 24:1; Revelation 4:11; 1 Corinthians 1:9). Since God made us, what should our response be to Him?

Because God is creator, he has ‘rights’ to everything that exists (Ps. 24:1; 50:10-12). Just as a child owes respect and honor to his parents simply because they are his parents, in the same way, God’s creations owe him respect and worship because He gave us life (Rev. 4:11). However, God did not create people simply to submit to Him and nothing else. God is a personal God who created humans not only to worship and serve Him, but also to fellowship with Him (1 Cor. 1:9).

- **People** have rebelled against God and become slaves to sin. As a result, we all stand under God’s holy wrath and judgment (John 3:16-21; Rom 3:23; 5:12-13; 6:23; Rev 20:11-15). Do you think most people realize they stand under God’s judgment?

When Adam rebelled against God, he opened the world to sin, which in turn resulted in death (Rom 5:12-13). Because Adam chose to serve sin rather than God, God gave Adam, and consequently the rest of humanity, over to his own sinful lusts and desires to experience the corruption that sin brings (Rom 1:18-32). The Bible teaches that mankind is enslaved to sin and unable to obey God (Rom 8:1-13; Eph 2:1-3). Because of our natural disposition to sin, every man and woman chooses freely to sin against the Lord and each other (Rom 3:9-18).

Because of humanity's sin, God's wrath now rests on all people (Rom 1:18; Eph 2:1-3). Because God is holy and just (Isa 6:1-5), He hates sin and is angry with those who rebel against Him (Deut 9:28; Ps 11:5; Isa 1:14; Hos 9:15; Zech 8:17). Because of His just anger against sin, God will not ultimately allow sin to go unpunished (Exod 34:6-7; Ezek 18:20; Rev 20:11-15). God allows people to experience the consequences of their sin (Rom 1:18-32), and at the final judgment will judge each person according to their deeds and condemn the guilty to everlasting punishment in Hell. (Rom 2:1-16; Rev 20:11-15)

- **Jesus**, the Son of God died on the cross for our sins and was raised from the dead. He now stands as the Lord who is able to save any sinner who repents before He returns to judge all people (Isaiah 53:3-6; Philippians 2:4-7; Acts 2:23-24; Romans 5:8). What does God's action toward us in Christ teach us about His love for us?

The Gospel and the story of the Bible find their high point in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Because of God's mercy and grace, He made a way for people to be reconciled to Him (Rom 5:10; 2 Cor 5:18-19; Eph 2:16; Col 1:20-22) by sending His Son Jesus who willingly became a man (Phil 2:4-7), died for the sins of the world upon a cross (Matt 27:38-55; 1 Cor 15:3-4), and then rose physically from the grave in victory over the powers of sin, Satan, and death (Rom 1:4; 6:1-14; 1 Cor 15:1-58). God the Father exalted Jesus to His right hand as Lord of heaven and earth (Acts 2:36; 13:30-39; Heb 1:1-14) to wait for the day when He will return to judge the living and the dead (2 Thess 1:6-10; Rev 19:11-15) and establish God's kingdom upon the earth (1 Cor 15:20-28; Rev 20:1-4).

Jesus died in the place of sinners as a substitutionary sacrifice that made atonement for those who will repent and believe (Isa 53:6-12; John 11:50; 15:13; Rom 5:17-19; 2 Cor 5:14-15; 5:21; Gal 3:13; Heb 10:10; 10:12; 1 Pet 3:18). Because of God's righteous wrath against mankind's sins, a sacrifice must be made to turn aside that wrath. Jesus' sacrifice for the sins of the world enables God to extend his mercies to all people who will receive it.

- We must **respond** to the Gospel by turning from our sin (repentance) and believing in Jesus as Lord and Savior (Mark 1:15; Acts 2:37-38; 3:18-20; 17:30-31; 2 Thess 1:6-10).

After reading these verses, we see clearly that God calls for people to repent and believe before Jesus returns to judge the world (Rom 3:22; Acts 2:22-38; 17:30). To repent means to turn from sin to God. To believe simply means to place your trust in Christ and what He has done on our behalf. Repentance and belief / faith are two sides of the same coin. You cannot have one without the other (Matt 3:2; 4:17; Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 11:21; 14:15; 20:21; 26:18; 26:20; 1 Thess 1:9; James 5:20). God does not desire or accept mere outward service, show, or religious ritual; instead He commands whole-hearted devotion and a life that denies self and follows after Christ (Matt 16:24-28; Luke 9:23-27).

4. The **CHARITY** of the Gospel – The Gospel promises that those who repent of their sin and trust in Christ will receive many wonderful promises from the Lord. Take a few minutes to read and discuss how these blessings impact your life as a believer. Also feel free to point out other Gospel promises not listed in this lesson.

Teaching Tip: Proceed with Caution

Don't let this discussion proceed in an unhealthy direction. The blessings of the Gospel are not necessarily things like health, wealth, or even worldly happiness. Reading the Scripture provided should make it clear what is meant here by "the charity of the Gospel," but don't let your *discussion* turn to things that are contrary to the biblical Gospel.

John 1:12; 3:16 –

Rom 5:1-11; 6:1-14; 8:1 –

Heb 8:8-12; 10:11-18 –

1 John 1:9 –

Rev 21:1-8; 22:1-5 –

It is always sweet to reflect upon the promises of God. This should be a regular practice for Christians as it reminds us of our constant need for God's mercy and the unshakable hope that is found in God's grace toward us.

5. The **CONFUSION** of the Gospel – Before we conclude our discussion about the good news of the biblical Gospel, it is important to understand that there are many false gospels being proclaimed in our world today. Read Galatians 1:6-12 and discuss a few examples of messages that might be considered false Gospels.

There are countless false gospels in our world. Certainly groups like Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses and other religious groups proclaim messages that teach that if we just do enough good things, we will earn our way into heaven. These are all false gospels. More subtly, many churches teach a self-righteous positive thinking gospel that says "you can do it if you put your mind to it." Other more theologically liberal churches proclaim a gospel that says "I'm OK and you're OK just the way you are." This message deceives people into thinking their sin is not too bad and God is not holy enough to the point that He needs to judge them. Other churches teach a prosperity gospel that promises that "Jesus will make your life better." While it is true God often blesses His children with countless joys in this life, it is also true that He is not a genie or butler who seeks to grant us our every fleshly wish.

The Final Word

- **Application:**

- Look again at what you said the Gospel was at the beginning of this lesson. Does your definition need to be revised in light of what you've learned in this study? If so, how?
- How did you first hear the Gospel message? How do you think your heart would be affected to regularly reflect on how the Gospel changed your life?
- As a Christian, how does the Gospel apply to your walk with Christ today? Do you find yourself constantly reflecting on the Gospel? How does the Gospel help a Christian press on to maturity?
- What is the name of someone in your every day area of influence that you should share this message of good news with? What are some practical steps you should take to make this happen? How can your group help you?

- **Memory Verse:** Romans 1:16-17
- **For Further Study:** *The Gospel and Personal Evangelism* by Mark Dever; *What is the Gospel* by Greg Gilbert; *The Explicit Gospel* by Matt Chandler and Jared Wilson; *Gospel: Recovering the Power that Made Christianity Revolutionary* by J.D. Greear and Timothy Keller; *Two Ways to Live: The Choice We All Face* by Matthias Media



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SAMPLE STUDENT GUIDE: *THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST*

The Big Picture

- *Review:*

- *Session Overview:*

The Main Focus

- *Key Passages:* [Various Passages]

- *Scripture & Discussion:*
 1. The _____ of the Gospel – According to the following passages, what does the Bible say about the Gospel?

Romans 1:16-17 –

1 Corinthians 1:17-18 –

Mark 13:10 –

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3. The _____ of the Gospel – In order to fully comprehend any message, we need to understand the context in which it is given. To help us better grasp the message of the Gospel, we will consider its context in the Bible. To do this, we will focus on four major ideas presented in the Bible: (1) God, (2) People, (3) Jesus, (4) Response.

Read each of the following statements and the verses that go with each idea. Take a few minutes to discuss each point and why it is important to the message of the Gospel.

- The _____ who created the heavens and the earth made people to love, worship and obey Him (Psalm 24:1; Revelation 4:11; 1 Corinthians 1:9). Since God made us, what should our response be to Him?

- _____ have rebelled against God and become slaves to sin. As a result, we all stand under God's holy wrath and judgment (John 3:16-21; Rom 3:23; 5:12-13; 6:23; Rev 20:11-15). Do you think most people realize they stand under God's judgment?

- _____, the Son of God died on the cross for our sins and was raised from the dead. He now stands as the Lord who is able to save any sinner who repents before He returns to judge all people (Isaiah 53:3-6; Philippians 2:4-7; Acts 2:23-24; Romans 5:8). What does God's action toward us in Christ teach us about His love for us?

- We must _____ to the Gospel by turning from our sin (repentance) and believing in Jesus as Lord and Savior (Mark 1:15; Acts 2:37-38; 3:18-20; 17:30-31; 2 Thess 1:6-10).

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Heb 8:8-12; 10:11-18 –

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Rev 21:1-8; 22:1-5 –

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