

THE GOSPEL

6 weeks, October - November 2011

No verse markings, no study guides,
just your group and the text...

Manuscript
Discovery
Study Method

THE GOSPEL: A MANUSCRIPT STUDY SERIES

“Manuscript Discovery” is a process for observation, interpretation and application of a passage, over two Community Group sessions. It’s a great way to get deep into Scripture as a group.

It involves helping each group member discover the overall purpose and meaning of the passage being studied.

The text is presented without the usual chapter and verse markings, just like the original Greek and Hebrew Scriptures. Thus, we call it a ‘manuscript’.

The aim of this kind of study is to understand the manuscript as a document in its own right - working (individually and as a group) to identify the key themes and the overall purpose of the passage - as well as applying it to our lives today.

We hope your Community Group is blessed by this manuscript study on “The Gospel”.

Adapted from *Leading Better Bible Studies* by Karen & Rod Morris



Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God - the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures regarding his Son, who as to his earthly life was a descendant of David, and who through the Spirit of holiness was appointed the Son of God in power by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord. Through him we received grace and apostleship to call all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith for his name's sake. And you also are among those Gentiles who are called to belong to Jesus Christ.

How it all works...

MAKING THE MOST OF A MANUSCRIPT STUDY

In this series we'll be focussing on three New Testament passages - spending two weeks on each one. The idea is to go deep into the **themes** of each passage, helping one another learn as we go. The following is an explanation of what we plan to achieve each week...

In **WEEK ONE**, all you have is unformatted Bible text. Study Bibles are banned!

5 You'll notice that the lines of text are numbered, use these as a reference in your discussion. 5

Step 1: **Read** the text slowly to yourself. Don't mark it.

Step 2: **Share** your initial thoughts as a group. Have a scribe record these.

Step 3: **Read** the text again slowly to yourself. You can make notes and write questions.

Step 4: **Share** your notes with the group. Have the scribe record your questions.

Step 5: **Read** the text to yourself a final time. Look for major themes and mark them.

Step 6: **Share** what you have discovered to be the major theme(s) of the passage.

That's it! Make sure you keep the record of your initial thoughts, questions and major themes for next week's session. In week two, we'll focus-in on the major themes.

In **WEEK TWO**, you're welcome to use Study Bibles and reference materials.

Review what you recorded in week one, and aim to ask and answer these questions:

What would it have meant to the first readers?

How does it fit into the overall purpose of the book?

What are the questions it raises for Christians today?

How should it be understood and applied today?

Do that 3 times and your CG will have completed our 6 week series on THE GOSPEL!

The Gospel: Week One & Two

EPHESIANS 2:1-15

1 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when 1
 2 you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit 2
 3 who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one 3
 4 time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the 4
 5 rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who 5
 6 is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions - it is 6
 7 by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in 7
 8 the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the 8
 9 incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For it is by 9
 10 grace you have been saved, through faith - and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of 10
 11 God— not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God’s handiwork, created in 11
 12 Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. Therefore, 12
 13 remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called “uncircumcised” by 13
 14 those who call themselves “the circumcision” (which is done in the body by human hands) - 14
 15 remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in 15
 16 Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the 16
 17 world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the 17
 18 blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has 18
 19 destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by setting aside in his flesh the law with 19
 20 its commands and regulations. 20

The Gospel: Week Three & Four

EPHESIANS 4:1-16

1 As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have 1
 2 received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. 2
 3 Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one 3
 4 body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, 4
 5 one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in 5
 6 all. But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. This is why it 6
 7 says: "When he ascended on high, he took many captives and gave gifts to his 7
 8 people." (What does "he ascended" mean except that he also descended to the lower, 8
 9 earthly regions? He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the 9
 10 heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) So Christ himself gave the apostles, the 10
 11 prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, 11
 12 so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the 12
 13 knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the 13
 14 fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, 14
 15 and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of 15
 16 people in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to 16
 17 become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him 17
 18 the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds 18
 19 itself up in love, as each part does its work. 19
 20 20

The Gospel: Week Five & Six

EPHESIANS 4:17-32

1 So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles 1

2 do, in the futility of their thinking. They are darkened in their understanding and 2

3 separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the 3

4 hardening of their hearts. Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to 4

5 sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, and they are full of greed. That, 5

6 however, is not the way of life you learned when you heard about Christ and were taught 6

7 in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. You were taught, with regard to your 7

8 former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; 8

9 to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like 9

10 God in true righteousness and holiness. Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and 10

11 speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body. "In your anger do 11

12 not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a 12

13 foothold. Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing 13

14 something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to share with those 14

15 in need. Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is 15

16 helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. 16

17 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of 17

18 redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with 18

19 every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just 19

20 as in Christ God forgave you. 20