

What We Value: Multiplication Matters

November 7, 2021



Vision '22

Lesson Summary

Main Passages

Mark 1:35-38

Session Outline

1. The Fuel for Discipleship (Mark 1:35)
2. The Pace of Discipleship (Mark 1:36-39)
3. The Fruit of Discipleship (Acts 2:42-47)

Theological Theme

When we share the whole gospel of Jesus Christ with those around us, it sets off a chain reaction of disciples making disciples anywhere, anytime, with anybody. As you invite someone to experience the risen Savior and the hope He brings, that person's life will never be the same.



Leader Guide

What We Value: Multiplication Matters

Introduction

- ❓ Have you ever felt homesick? What are some of the things that you missed most when you were away from home?
- ❓ If you are going on a long trip away from family and friends, what are some things you might bring with you to help remind you of home? What are some of the technologies we use to help stay in touch?

If you were to go on a business trip away from your spouse, children, or friends, you would probably try your best to call, bring pictures, and maybe even send letters or postcards back home. When we are away, we do whatever we can to keep in touch with our loved ones. Worship is staying in touch with God. It is reminding ourselves of who God is and why He is so important to us.

When we gather for fellowship with the church, we surround ourselves with family who remind us of how great our God is. We read the Scriptures and listen to preaching for the same purpose. If we were to miss worship, either private or corporate, our relationship with God would suffer. If we cannot meet with the church for whatever reason, we ought to be homesick for the fellowship of the saints.

Worship is defined by what we value and is an expression of life and love. True worship is always God-centered and experienced as a relationship of submission and adoration. It is not based on our emotions or preferences. As a body of believers, we desire to express our love for God and celebrate His greatness both individually and corporately. As we lives display true worship, we will absolutely be moved to share the good news of the gospel with others. God will use this to multiply his followers throughout our city, state, country, and world.

Session Summary

We believe multiplying matters. When we share the whole gospel of Jesus Christ with those around us, it sets off a chain reaction of disciples making disciples anywhere, anytime, with anybody. As you invite someone to experience the risen Savior and the hope He brings, that person's life will never be the same. We value disciples making disciples, groups forming more groups, and churches multiplying into more churches. The life-changing power of the gospel is contagious, and we get to begin the process of multiplication today by sharing our stories of how Jesus changed everything.

1. The Fuel for Discipleship (Mark 1:35)

In this episode recorded by Mark, Jesus prayed very early in the morning. That isn't to say that He never prayed during other times, because He did. It was at night during His time of prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane. The high priestly prayer of Jesus (John 17) was uttered during the daytime. This account in Mark, however, is different. Mark gave a glimpse into Jesus' secret prayer life. The high priestly prayer was a ministry to His disciples. The prayers in the garden were precipitated by His impending betrayal and crucifixion. The episode in Mark, though, is a picture of Jesus' regular time of prayer.

There are two primary benefits of praying in the morning. One is practical; the other is psychological. But both of these reasons help us avoid the rush of the day and give way to focused prayer.

First, Jesus desired private prayer with His Father. Jesus was becoming increasingly well known in the area and highly sought after. The whole town was at the house just the day before seeking His help. By waking early, Jesus was able to make use of a time when most people would have been asleep. There weren't any demands on Him at this hour. Was He tired? Of course He was. But He craved intimacy with His Father more than sleep. Times haven't changed so much. Early in the morning is still an ideal time for us to have uninterrupted time to pray and seek the one true and living God.

Second, Jesus knew He would face a slew of demands on His time and energy that day, and with them all the worries, stresses, and challenges. By waking early and spending time with His Father, Jesus was able to set His heart and mind on things above before engaging with the earthly. Praying first sets the trajectory for the work of the day. C.S. Lewis explained, "The very moment you wake up each morning...[a]ll your wishes and hopes for the day rush at you like wild animals. And the first job each morning consists simply in shoving them all back; in listening to that other voice, taking that other point of view, letting that other larger, stronger, quieter life come flowing in."¹




Searching for Silence

The motion verbs *got up*, *went out*, and *made his way* describe Jesus's search for a deserted place, the same word used for the wilderness where John preached (v. 4) and where Jesus was tempted (v. 12).

Where we pray and when we pray ought to never become law for us, but where and when we pray does matter. The idea here is that we should take practical, sacrificial steps to give ourselves to prayer as we would do for anything that we highly value and make a priority in our lives.

Jesus woke early and went to a “desolate place.” Jesus was staying at Peter’s mother-in-law’s house along with His disciples, and possibly others. It wasn’t the best place for private prayer, with people all around. By going to a “desolate place,” Jesus was able to pray without hindrance.

Along with waking early, finding a place that is solitary helps us limit distractions and truly pray unhindered. Jesus probably walked some distance from the house and found a secluded place outside. We may need to find a part of our home that is off to itself. There are many places that we go to be alone to pray, but it does take intentional planning.

-  In Luke’s Gospel, he wrote of another time that Jesus was praying and His disciples asked Him to teach them to pray. How might inviting others into our daily patterns of discipleship contribute to the multiplication of disciples in our area?
-  What does it tell you that Jesus made prayer and solitude a top priority, even as people continually sought His presence? If this was true for Jesus, what might be the implications for our discipleship?
-  Application: What regular patterns inform your discipleship? Why is it important that these exist if we are going to be disciples that make disciples?




2. The Pace of Discipleship (Mark 1:36-39)

The events of Jesus’ ministry up to this point had been rapid, coming one after the other. They also would have been emotionally and spiritually exhausting. The humanity of Jesus is evident in these words: “Jesus got up and went off to a solitary place, where He prayed.” This was not a one-time event. Throughout the Gospels we see Jesus setting aside time to engage in daily personal worship.

While Jesus was concerned about focusing on God’s mission for Him, the disciples seemed to be caught up in the increasing popularity of Jesus. Perhaps they felt they should seize the day. Simon and his companions went to look for Him and when they found Him, they exclaimed, “Everyone is looking for you!” Jesus wanted them, and us, to know that we are not meant to live on just the things of this world; we were made to cultivate our relationship with God each day (Matt. 4:4).

Jesus' primary mission was to preach the good news. The miracles of healing and casting out demons were secondary—a means to the end of presenting the gospel and getting people to respond to that good news. With such a challenging and important mission, prioritizing time alone with the Father was central to Jesus' days. This time gave Jesus the opportunity to rest, refuel, and remain connected to God and His will for Jesus' work.

Jesus' time alone with God also provided Him the opportunity to rest. As we walk with God, part of that walking involves resting. But we can only truly enter into that state of Sabbath rest through faith, trusting in God's finished work on our behalf. When we do, we will remember that because of Jesus, there is nothing else we have to do.

-  According to verses 38-39, how did Jesus view His mission? Why would daily personal worship be critical to fulfilling this mission?
-  Why might our ability or inability to rest be more about our worship than the commitments on our schedules? How does this inability to rest impact our kingdom impact and ability to make disciples?
-  Application: How do your priorities of personal discipleship need to change so that multiplication will be a focus in your life on a daily basis?

3.The Fruit of Discipleship (Acts 2:42-47)

Jesus gave examples of personal worship, by going alone to spend time with the Father, and also of corporate worship, by going to the temple on the Sabbath (Luke 2:46-49; 4:16). In Acts, we find the believers coming together regularly for worship. The early church's desire to know the Word of God and to grow together made gathering for worship a priority in their lives.

We worship together corporately on the first day of the week because that is when Jesus was raised from the grave (John 20:1), it is called the Lords day (Rev. 1:10), and it is the day the Holy Spirit was poured out on those at Pentecost (Acts 2:1-36). Just as on the first day of creation God made light and separated it from darkness, we also gather on the first day of the week to celebrate the light of the gospel in Jesus Christ, who has separated us from the world of the darkness of sin (John 1:5, 3:19, 8:12, 2 Cor. 4:1-6).

These early worship services involved confession, singing, reading and studying the Scriptures, and the breaking of bread in remembrance of Christ's sacrifice—many of the same elements included in corporate worship today.

God designed His church very intentionally. One of the church's blessings is coming together to declare our faith to one another and to seek God's face in one accord. Both individual growth and corporate growth in worship are parts of the Christian life.

- ❓ What components of the early church's worship are listed in Acts 2:42-47? How might this have contributed to the multiplication and growth they experienced at this time?
- ❓ In our vision, one of the things we value is the impact our stories have in leading others toward discipleship. What impact did the personal testimonies of the early church make in their lives?

One result of the early church's worship and witness was having favor with all the people. In these early days, the people of Jerusalem were generally open to the Christians. Later on, the Jewish leaders tried to restrict their public preaching (4:1-22). A second result was that the Lord continued to grow the church. We must understand that worship isn't something we do as a weekly traditional duty, but as a communal gathering to encounter God.

- ❓ Application: Who do you need to share your story with this week? How might God use that to multiply the impact He wants to make through you, our group, and our church?

Conclusion

As we see in Mark's Gospel, there were times when even Jesus could not be found. We must learn that there is a critical difference between urgent and important, and just because we can do something doesn't mean we ought to do it. Jesus modeled this for His followers when He sought time alone to rest and worship the Father.

- ❓ How does personal discipleship and corporate worship move you toward making other disciples?
- ❓ Are you feeding yourself on God's Word and praying regularly so that you may encourage others out of the overflow of your private worship of God? Where can you grow in this area?
- ❓ What needs to change in your life so that you might better prioritize your relationship with God in personal and corporate worship? How might you invite others into these disciples both as a means of accountability and discipleship of others?

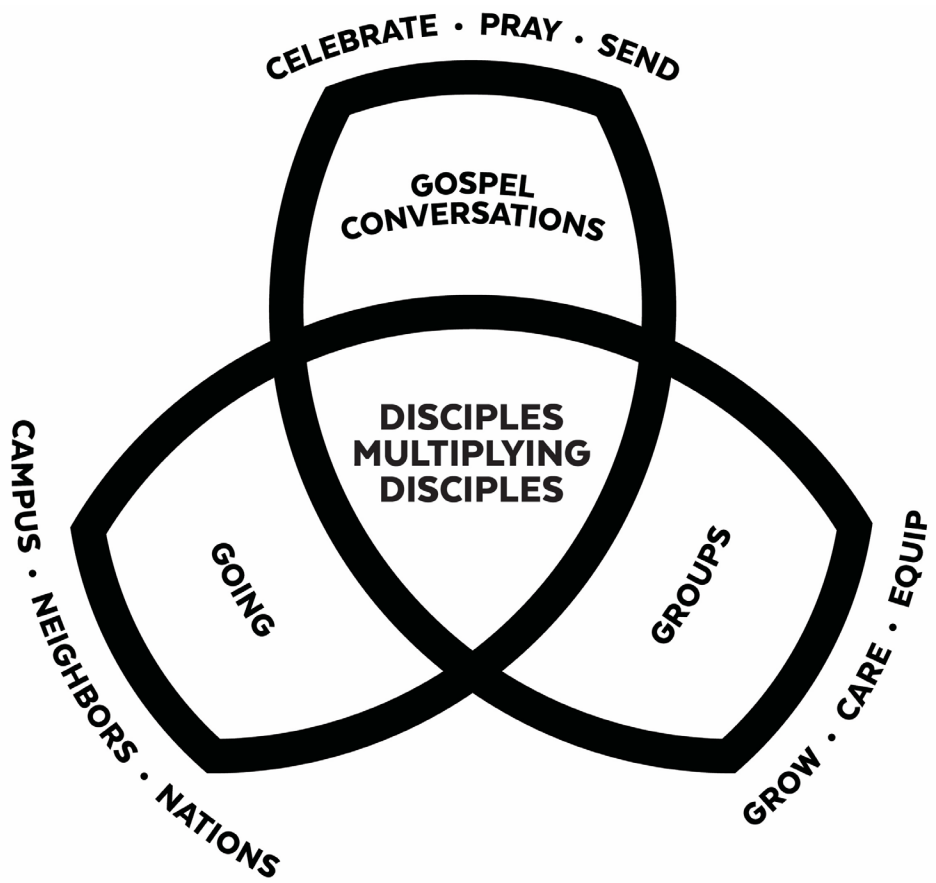
Prayer of Response

Close in prayer asking God to lead each member of your group into deeper discipleship that you might seek to lead others in the same. Ask Him to multiply the kingdom impact through our church as we seek obedience to and worship of Him.

Additional Resources

- *Simple Church* by Thom Rainer and Eric Geiger
- *Discipleshift* by Jim Putman, Bob Harrington, Robert Coleman
- *Sticky Church* by Larry Osborne

Disciples Multiplying Disciples



For Next Week

Memorize

Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he got up, went out, and made his way to a deserted place; and there he was praying.

- Mark 1:35

Historical Context of Mark

Purpose

Mark's Gospel is a narrative about Jesus. Mark identifies his theme in the first verse: "the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." That Jesus is the divine Son of God is the major emphasis of his Gospel. God announced it at Jesus's baptism in 1:11. Demons and unclean spirits recognized and acknowledged it in 3:11 and 5:7. God reaffirmed it at the transfiguration in 9:7. Jesus taught it parabolically in 12:1–12, hinted at it in 13:32, and confessed it directly in 14:61–62. Finally, the Roman centurion confessed it openly and without qualification in 15:39. Thus Mark's purpose was to summon people to repent and respond in faith to the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God (1:1, 15).

Author

The Gospel of Mark is anonymous. Eusebius, the early church historian, writing in AD 326, preserved the words of Papias, an early church father. Papias quoted "the elder," probably John, as saying that Mark recorded Peter's preaching about the things Jesus said and did, but not in order. Thus Mark was considered the author of this Gospel even in the first century.

The Mark who wrote this Gospel was John Mark, the son of a widow named Mary, in whose house the church in Jerusalem sometimes gathered (Ac 12:12–17) and where Jesus possibly ate the Last Supper with his disciples. Mark was the cousin of Barnabas (Col 4:10), and he accompanied Barnabas and Paul back to Antioch after their famine relief mission to Jerusalem (Ac 12:25). Mark next went with Barnabas and Paul on part of the first missionary journey as an assistant (Ac 13:5), but at Perga, Mark turned back (Ac 13:13).

Setting

According to the early church fathers, Mark wrote his Gospel in Rome just before or just after Peter's martyrdom. Further confirmation of the Roman origin of Mark's Gospel is found in Mark 15:21 where Mark noted that Simon, a Cyrenian who carried Jesus's cross, was the father of Alexander and Rufus, men apparently known to the believers in Rome.

Because Mark wrote primarily for Roman Gentiles, he explained Jewish customs, translated Aramaic words and phrases into Greek, used Latin terms rather than their Greek equivalents, and rarely quoted from the OT. Most Bible scholars are convinced that Mark was the earliest Gospel and served as one of the sources for Matthew and Luke.

Special Features

Mark's Gospel emphasizes actions and deeds. Jesus is on the go—healing, casting out demons, performing miracles, hurrying from place to place, and teaching. In Mark everything happens "immediately." As soon as one episode ends, another begins. The rapid pace slows down when Jesus enters Jerusalem (11:1). Thereafter, events are marked by days, and his final day by hours.

Extended Commentary

Mark 1:35-39

1:35–37. The events up to this point had been rapid, coming one after the other. They also would have been emotionally and spiritually exhausting. The humanity of Jesus is evident in these words: Jesus got up and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. Even Jesus needed to recharge his batteries by withdrawing from the crowds and talking with his Father. This was a time of renewal and preparation for Jesus. Two other times in Mark’s Gospel we see Jesus getting away to pray (6:46; 14:32–41). Each time he was preparing for a crisis.

While Jesus was concerned about focusing on God’s mission for him, the disciples seemed to be caught up in the increasing popularity of Jesus. Perhaps they felt they should seize the day: Simon and his companions went to look for him; and when they found him, they exclaimed, “Everyone is looking for you!”

1:38–39. Jesus’ desire to go to the nearby villages showed his desire not to be seen as just a popular miracle worker. He reiterated his purpose by saying, so I can preach there also. That is why I have come. Jesus’ primary mission was to preach the good news. The miracles of healing and casting out of demons was secondary—a means to the end of presenting the gospel and getting people to respond to that good news. Jesus continued a pattern of presenting the gospel by going into their synagogues and driving out demons. The synagogue was the primary place where the Scriptures were interpreted. What better place to proclaim the good news to the people and their leaders? The preaching of the word preceded the demonstration of miracles, showing that the miracles backed up the authority of the Messiah’s proclamations.²

References

1. Lewis, C. S. *Mere Christianity*. New York, NY: Touchstone, 1996, 170.
2. Cooper, Rodney L., and Max E. Anders. *Mark*. Holman New Testament Commentary. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000.

Author Bio

Thom Rainer (Simple Church)

Thom S. Rainer was president and CEO of LifeWay Christian Resources, one of the largest Christian resource companies in the world. He is also a best-selling author and leading expert in the field of church research. Rainer and his wife, Nellie Jo, have three grown sons and three grandchildren and live in Nashville, Tennessee.

Eric Geiger (Simple Church)

Eric Geiger is the Senior Pastor of Mariners Church in Irvine, California. Before moving to Southern California, Eric served as senior vice-president for LifeWay Christian. Eric received his doctorate in leadership and church ministry from Southern Seminary. Eric has authored or co-authored several books including the best selling church leadership book, Simple Church.

Jim Putman (Discipleshift)

Jim Putman is the co-founder and Senior Pastor of Real Life Ministries in Post Falls, Idaho. Real Life was launched in 1998 with a commitment to discipleship and the model of discipleship Jesus practiced, which is called, "Relational Discipleship." Outreach Magazine continually lists Real Life Ministries among the top one hundred most influential churches in America. Jim is also a co-founder and leader with the Relational Discipleship Network.

Bob Harrington (Discipleshift)

Bobby Harrington is the co-founder of discipleship.org and the founding and lead pastor of Harpeth Christian Church (19 years). He is the chairman of the board for the Relational Discipleship Network and the co-author of DiscipleShift, Dedicated: Training Your Children to Trust and Follow Jesus, and Discipleship that Fits. He has been married to Cindy for over 35 years and they have two adult children who are disciples of Jesus.

Robert Coleman (Discipleshift)

Dr. Robert Coleman is the Distinguished Senior Professor of Discipleship and Evangelism at Gordon-Conwell seminary and a prolific author, having written hundreds of articles and twenty-one books, including The Master Plan of Evangelism, which has sold multiple million copies and is the book for which he is best known. He directed the School of World Mission and Evangelism at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School for eighteen years and currently serves on the Mission America Facilitation Committee and several international mission boards and is the president of Christian Outreach. From 1989-2001, he led the Institute of Evangelism in the Billy Graham Center at Wheaton College and served as Dean of the Billy Graham International Schools of Evangelism. He is also a founding member of the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelism and a past president of the Academy for Evangelism in Theological Education. His personal interests include spending time with his family, including his children and grandchildren, and keeping in touch with those he has disciplined.

Sticky Church (Larry Osborne)

Larry Osborne is a teaching pastor at North Coast Church in northern San Diego County. North Coast is widely recognized as one of the most influential and innovative churches in America. Osborne speaks extensively on the subjects of leadership and spiritual formation. His books include *Sticky Teams*, *Sticky Church*, *10 Dumb Things Smart Christians Believe*, and *Spirituality for the Rest of Us*. He and his wife, Nancy, live in Oceanside, California.

C.S. Lewis (Mere Christianity)

Clive Staples Lewis (1898-1963) was one of the intellectual giants of the twentieth century and arguably one of the most influential writers of his day. He was a Fellow and Tutor in English Literature at Oxford University until 1954, when he was unanimously elected to the Chair of Medieval and Renaissance Literature at Cambridge University, a position he held until his retirement. He wrote more than thirty books, allowing him to reach a vast audience, and his works continue to attract thousands of new readers every year. His most distinguished and popular accomplishments include *Out of the Silent Planet*, *The Great Divorce*, *The Screwtape Letters*, and the universally acknowledged classics *The Chronicles of Narnia*. To date, the Narnia books have sold over 100 million copies and have been transformed into three major motion pictures.

Rodney Cooper (Mark)

Dr. Cooper currently teaches at the Charlotte campus of Gordon-Conwell Seminary, but he has also taught at Gordon-Conwell's South Hamilton, Boston and Jacksonville campuses. While in New England, he served as Associate Pastor and led the men's ministries at historic Tremont Temple Baptist Church in downtown Boston.