



SMALL GROUP BIBLE STUDY



FOLLOW ME



LESSON 3 / WEEK OF JANUARY 21, 2007

Key Scriptures: John 14:9-10, 25-26; John 16:12-15; Matthew 4:23-25; John 17

Memory Verse: "I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to You. Holy Father, protect them by the power of Your name - the name You gave Me - so that they may be one as we are one."
John 17:11

COMMENTARY / This portion of the lesson is for the leader's personal study.

Review

In last week's lesson we concentrated on the first component of disciple-making, which is sharing the Word with others. We saw in John 1:29-51 that the foundation of being Christ's disciple is faith in the person of Jesus Christ. We further saw how this belief compelled John the Baptist, Andrew and Phillip to share the Word with others. In the same way, our belief in the person of Jesus Christ should compel us to share the Word with others, which is the first step in disciple-making. This week, we will study another component of disciple-making: *showing the Word*.

A Prayer of Jesus

The accompanying message in worship this week will be from John 17, which is a continuation of the study of Jesus' prayer for His disciples before He died on the cross, was resurrected, and ascended into heaven. In verse 9, Jesus says specifically that He "is not praying for the world, but for those You (God) have given Me." Notice that this prayer is not for those who don't believe in Jesus, but for those who do believe. It is for those who already belong to God according to verse 9.

Why is this? 2 Peter 3:9 says that God doesn't want anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. So why does Jesus spend this time praying for those who already believe in Him?



Verse 10 helps to answer this question. In it Jesus says that He will not physically remain in the world, but His disciples will. How will others come to faith after He is gone? The answer is by His disciples continuing His ministry on earth. That is why Jesus is praying for them specifically. His disciples will manifest (show, make evident) Him on earth, as Jesus has manifested the Father on earth.

The Implications

Instead of spending the majority of our group time on John 17, we are going to spend our time looking at the implications of Jesus' prayer for His disciples. What are the implications of His followers remaining on earth and manifesting Christ? How does this relate to disciple-making? And what does this mean for us today?

After Jesus

It is evident by Jesus' prayer for His disciples that He expects them to continue His ministry of making disciples after He leaves the earth. As they begin to imitate what they learned as His disciples, many will come to faith in Christ. And as they lead others to imitate Christ through disciple-making, the life of Christ will continue in future generations.

Christ will physically leave the earth, but His presence will remain through His disciples, and through their disciples, and through their disciples, etc. They will be Christ's face on the earth. They will share His words with the lost. They will *show the Word* to the world. 2 Corinthians 5:20 communicates this truth. It says, "We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making His appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God."

Ambassadors...

...think about that illustration. An ambassador is a representative in a foreign place. U.S. Ambassadors represent America on foreign soil. This is how the Bible describes Christ's followers. We are His representatives on earth, His presence in the world. How does this look practically in our lives? Remember that a disciple is a lifelong learner and follower of Christ. We simply learn how Christ lived and imitate Him.

This is what the twelve disciples did. They had spent three years being with Christ, learning from Him, and ministering to others with Him. They would now be His ambassadors by imitating His character. At the same time, they would make disciples by intentionally leading others. This applies to all who follow Christ. We are His ambassadors, and He makes His appeal through our lives—be reconciled to God. We, too, must imitate His character.

Jesus Himself modeled this for us while He was on the earth. Jesus was God's ambassador. The purpose of His life was to show people the way to God. God made His appeal through Christ—be reconciled to Me. The following passage shows us how Christ manifested God through His life on earth.

■ **John 14:9-14**

In these verses, Jesus tells His disciples that anyone who has seen Him has seen the Father. In verse 10 Jesus says "I am in the Father and the Father is in Me." He goes on to say that the words He speaks are not His own, but rather it is the Father "living in Me who is doing His work." In verse 12 Jesus says that anyone who has faith in Him will "do what I have been doing."

In this passage we see a striking similarity between how Jesus lived while on

earth, and how His disciples will live after He leaves the earth. Jesus says that the Father is in Him, that He is speaking the Father's words, and that the Father works through His life. For three years the disciples have seen Jesus being obedient to the Father by sharing the Word and *showing the Word*. They have seen His dependence upon the Father in order to accomplish His will.

In verse 12 Jesus says that anyone who has faith should imitate His life by doing what He has been doing. In verses 13-14 Jesus says that He will do anything they ask in His name in order to bring glory to the Father. Just as God has done His work through Christ while He was on earth, now Christ will do His work through His disciples who will remain on earth after He is physically gone. All of this is in order to bring glory to God the Father.

■ John 14:25-26

In these verses Jesus tells His disciples that the Holy Spirit will come to them after Jesus leaves them to teach them all things and remind them of everything He has said.

■ John 16:12-15

Jesus shares more with His disciples about the coming Holy Spirit in these verses. He tells them that the Spirit will guide them into all truth and speak only what He hears from the Father to them. The Holy Spirit will take what is Christ's and make it known to the disciples.

Just as God revealed Himself to the disciples through the life of Christ (John 17:6), now the Holy Spirit will reveal Christ to the world through the disciples' lives.

The disciples have spent three years in an attitude of observation, study, obedience, and imitation of Jesus. As they saw Him, they saw the Father. Jesus was revealing the glory of God to them in the way He lived. Now, they would be His witnesses on earth after He is gone. In Acts 1:8 Jesus tells His disciples that they will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon them and will be His witnesses all over the world. The Greek meaning of the word "witness" in this verse literally means to be a witness unto death, or a martyr (Strong's #3459). Isn't that what they have seen in the life of Christ? A devotion to the will of the Father so strong that He died on the cross?

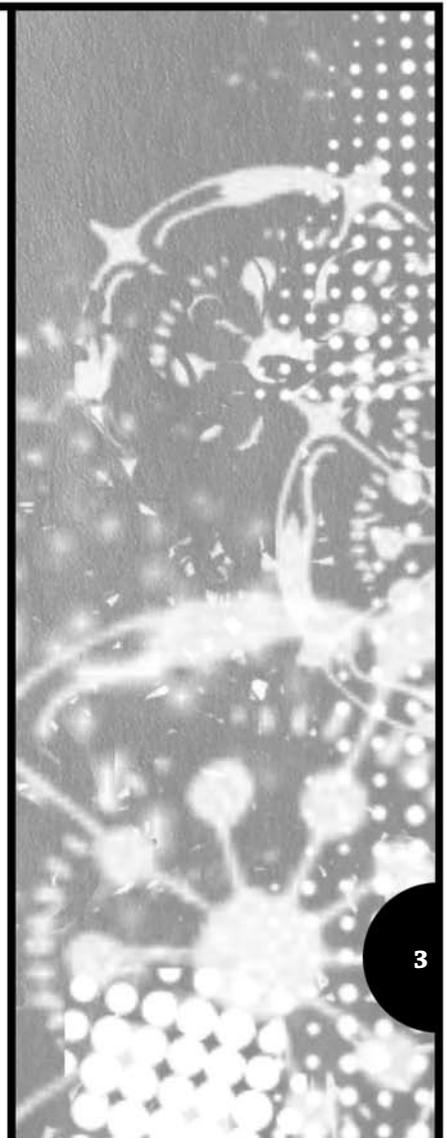
How Great Is the Commitment?

So how will they be His witnesses on earth? By imitating His life. This means not only sharing the Word with words, but also *showing the Word* with their deeds. Ephesians 5:1-2 says, "Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly beloved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God."

■ Matthew 4:23-25

How did Christ *show the Word*? By meeting the physical needs of those He came to save. Throughout the four Gospels we see time after time where Jesus had compassion on the sick and healed diseases and cast out demons. Matthew 4:23-25 is one example of this as we see Jesus demonstrating His love and power as He physically extends mercy to the needy. Verse 23 begins, "Jesus was going throughout Galilee... teaching... proclaiming... healing."

Jesus was going. He wasn't waiting for the sick to come to Him. It was only





after He began going that people began coming to Him for healing. News about Him traveled fast to areas as far as Jerusalem and Syria. Those who were suffering began to come to find Him, hoping to be healed.

Extending Grace and Mercy

Jesus wasn't known only as a teacher, but also as a healer. In order to imitate Him and *show the Word*, His disciples would have to extend the same grace and mercy to the hurting people around them. One cannot call himself a disciple of Christ and ignore the needs of the world. As Jesus shared the Word, He showed the Word. We must do the same.

Jesus' main priority was to share the Gospel with everyone He encountered. But we learn something so important in this passage as He deals with the sick. In order to effectively share the Word, He knew He had to meet their physical needs. This is how He showed the Word.

Looking at Jesus' Example

Below are many more examples of Jesus showing the Word during His ministry. Remember that His disciples lived life alongside Him and saw many of these events firsthand.

- Matthew 9:35
- Matthew 14:14
- Matthew 15:32
- Luke 4:40
- Mark 1:32-34
- Mark 1:40-42
- Mark 2:15-17
- Mark 3:10-11
- Matthew 20:34
- Luke 5:15
- Luke 9:11

We Must Go

Note that in several of these verses the word "compassion" is used to describe how Jesus felt when He saw the hurt, poverty, distress and oppression of people. This compassion compelled Him to act. As disciples of Christ, we must choose to see the needs of those around us. We cannot see if we do not go. Matthew 4:23 tells us that Christ was "going." As we imitate His life and go, we will see needs. We will see needs in our own neighborhoods and city; and we will see needs on the other side of the world. The compassion we feel will compel us to *show the Word*, just as Christ did.

Brought to Jesus

Notice also how many times the Scripture says that people were brought to Jesus to be healed, or came to Jesus to be healed. Luke 5:15 and Luke 9:11 even say that people came to hear Jesus teach and to be healed. Jesus was known for His compassion. At the beginning of His ministry in Matthew 4 we see Jesus going and seeking out people to serve. But as time goes on, we see people coming to Him, seeking Him out.

Today, we are Christ's presence on earth. Are His followers today known for their compassion? How incredible would it be for the lost and hurting to begin seeking out believers because of our reputation for being compassionate. What a picture of Christ that would be!

■ **James 2:14-19**

This passage is such a challenge to those of us who call ourselves Christians. In these verses God asks us the question, "What good is it to say you have faith in Me if your life does not show that you have faith in Me?" To call ourselves Christians (which literally means "little Christ") and ignore the needs of those around us is not biblical, and it is not Christlike. Throughout His life we see

Jesus not only telling others about God, but showing them the character of God. Since we remain on earth as His ambassadors, this is now our mission. Not only to tell others about Christ, but to show others His character with our lives.

James 2:18 says, “I will **show** you my faith my what I do.” As we saw in the verses above, Jesus taught His disciples by word and deed. When the Holy Spirit came upon them they received the power to do the same. Throughout the New Testament we see them being Christ’s witnesses through sharing and showing the Word in the same ways that Jesus did—even to the point of death.

The second component of disciple-making is to show the Word.

If we are going to be disciple-makers, we must follow this example as well. We must share the Gospel not only in word but in deed by caring for the hurting. As we love and serve others with a heart of compassion, they will see Christ in us. As Christ is manifested through us, people will come to faith in Christ. And like Christ, we must intentionally lead others to do the same.

TEACHING / This portion of the lesson is for the entire class.

Opening Activity / 5-10 minutes

Choose one of the following activities to do with your group before you begin discussing this week’s lesson.

Option 1: Charades

Prior to your group time, write the following phrases on strips of paper, fold them, and place them in a bowl...

- “Where there is smoke there is fire.”
- Book Title: *Lord of the Rings*
- Movie Title: *A Beautiful Mind*
- Song Title: *Raindrops Keep Falling on My Head*

Ask for a student to volunteer to come and draw a phrase out of the bowl and act it out for the group. You can give small prizes (like candy) to the first student to guess each phrase if you wish. Repeat several times with different students acting out the phrases.

Explain to the group that today we are going to look at how Jesus *showed* the Word to His disciples with His life. Just like charades, our lives should *show* the character of Christ so that when people see our example, they see Christ.

Option 2: A World in Need

Share the following statistics (taken from the World Health Organization) with the group:

- 11 million children die each year from malnutrition and preventable diseases
- In 2002 alone, 11 million people died of infectious diseases
- Tuberculosis kills 1.75 million people each year
- 40 million people were living with AIDS in 2005
- 3.1 million people died of AIDS in 2005
- 3.8 million people are diagnosed with tuberculosis each year
- 1 million die of malaria each year
- 3,000 children die from malaria each day in Africa
- More than a half-million people died from the measles in 2003
- 600,000 people die from typhoid each year

After sharing these statistics, lead a very short discussion with the group about how many of these diseases we have vaccines for in the U.S. Discuss





the tragedy of so many people dying from diseases that are so easily treated in America. Point out that 1 billion people worldwide have no access to health care (according to the World Health Organization). Have the group share information they know about what is being done about these conditions and by whom. Chances are, celebrity names will be mentioned such as Angelina Jolie, Oprah Winfrey, etc. Discuss what is being done.

Next, share these statistics (taken from the International Mission Board):

- The current world population is 6.5 billion people.
- Of this 6.5 billion, 3.6 billion are unreached with the Gospel of Jesus Christ (as of June 28, 2006).
- “Unreached” is defined as a people group where less than 2% of the population is evangelical.

Ask the group to consider how paying attention and caring for the needs represented in the world health statistics above can lead to opportunities to share the love of Christ with 3.6 billion people who have never heard His name.

Review / 5 minutes

Share with your group that today we will continue our study of disciple-making. Briefly review the main points of the last 2 weeks to refresh their memories. Some possible review questions are:

- What does it mean to be Christ’s disciple?
- What is disciple-making?
- What is the foundation of disciple-making that we studied last week?
- How did we see “sharing the Word” illustrated in last week’s key Scripture (John 1:29-51)?

Key Study / 35 minutes

Have students open their Bibles to 2 Corinthians 5:20. As you begin your study time in God’s Word, pray that God would make the entire class receptive to what He wants to reveal to the group today as you discuss His word. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide the class into all truth (John 16:13) so that He will be glorified through the discussion. Pray that each person’s life will be changed as a result of the truths you learn today (James 1:22).

Opening the Word

Have a student read 2 Corinthians 5:20 aloud to the group. You may even want to write this verse on a white-board before class begins. Using the commentary portion of the lesson, spend a few minutes re-teaching the background for the lesson today. Explain the implication of Jesus praying for His disciples in John 17, especially verse 11 when Jesus says that He will no longer remain on the earth, but His disciples will.

Beyond Sharing to Showing...

Help the group to understand how this prayer demonstrates the disciples’ responsibility to imitate Christ’s life to the world. Explain that this means not only sharing the Word, as we studied last week, but also showing the Word, which we will study this week. You do not have to cover all of the background information from the commentary section. The goal here is to help the group understand that Jesus expected His disciples to manifest His presence on the earth after He ascended into heaven. We, too, are Christ’s ambassadors.

Observation / What does the Scripture say?

Have the group turn in their Bibles to John 14:9-14 and have someone read it aloud. Using the commentary portion of the lesson and the following questions, lead the students to observe these verses.

- According to verse 9, if the disciples have seen Jesus, who else have they seen?
- According to verse 10, whose words had Jesus been teaching? Who had been working through His life?
- What is Jesus' command to the disciples in verse 12?
- What does Jesus promise in verses 13-14?
- How do these verses show that Jesus was God's ambassador?

Now have the group turn to John 14:25-26 and have someone read these verses. Have them flip to John 16:12-15 and have someone read these verses aloud. Using the commentary portion of the lesson and the following questions, lead the students to observe these verses.

- What will the Holy Spirit do in the lives of the disciples according to John 14:26?
- Who will send the Holy Spirit? In whose name will He come?
- According to John 16:12-15, whose words will the Holy Spirit speak to the disciples? What will He make known to them?

A Witness

Read Acts 1:8 to the group and explain that the Holy Spirit would bring God's power into the lives of the disciples so that they could imitate the life of Christ and lead others to do the same. Explain what it means to be Christ's "witness" according to the Greek definition located in the commentary section of the lesson. Lead them in a brief discussion about how Christ modeled this for the disciples with His life. You may use the following questions to facilitate discussion.

- God revealed Himself to the disciples through the life of Jesus. How does this model for the disciples how they are to live after Jesus physically leaves the earth?
- What are some ways that Jesus revealed God to the disciples?
- What are some ways that Christ's disciples reveal Him to the world?
- How does the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives enable us to imitate Christ and show the Word?
- How did Jesus' life demonstrate Acts 1:8 and the definition of "witness?"

Imitating Christ

Share Ephesians 5:1-2 with the group. Explain that Christ's life shows us the character of God. So by imitating Christ, we imitate God. Explain that we will spend the rest of the group time looking at how Christ not only shared the Word verbally (which we studied last week), but also showed the Word physically, which is the second component of disciple-making.

Turn to Matthew 4:23-25 and have a student read the verses aloud. Lead the students in a discussion of these verses.

- How do these verses illustrate both sharing the Word and showing the Word?
- How does verse 23 begin? What action did Jesus take? How does this model intentionality?
- What happened as a result of His action in verse 24?

Interpretation / What does the Scripture mean?

Before your group time begins, assign the following verses for students to read during this portion of the lesson. You do not have to cover all of them if time doesn't permit. You may want to write each verse on a strip of paper and hand them out at the beginning of your discussion time, instructing the students to look them up and mark their places ahead of time.

Have the students take turns reading the verses aloud to the group. It is not necessary for everyone to turn to each verse. Before they begin, explain that





these verses give us a picture of how Christ showed the Word throughout His life. Remind them that the disciples witnessed this firsthand.

- Matthew 9:35
- Matthew 14:14
- Matthew 15:32
- Luke 4:40
- Mark 1:32-34
- Mark 1:40-42
- Mark 2:15-17
- Mark 3:10-11
- Matthew 20:34
- Luke 5:15
- Luke 9:11

Using the commentary portion of the lesson, lead the class in a discussion about how Christ showed the Word to the world and especially to His disciples. Point out that He chose to seek out the needs of others, and this resulted in crowds coming to Him to be taught and to be healed. More importantly, the disciples were watching Jesus, seeing His ministry to the people around Him, and learning from Him how to do what He did.

Discuss how these verses demonstrate His reputation for having compassion on people. Ask the following questions.

- If we say we follow Christ, is it our responsibility as well to imitate His life? Why or why not?
- How can we imitate Christ and show the Word to the world around us?
- Do you think Christians today are known for their compassion? If not, what are they known for in the world?
- How will our lives change if we make it our mission to imitate Christ by sharing the Word and showing the Word?
- The first step in Jesus showing the Word, according to Matthew 4:23-25, was Him “going” and seeing the needs of others. How can we be intentional about seeing the needs in the world around us?
- If we are not showing the Word with our lives, can we multiply true disciples of Christ with our lives? Why or why not?
- How does showing the Word to the world around us also give us the opportunity to show the Word in a more personal way to those we are discipling?

Application / How will this Truth change me?

Have the group turn to James 2:14-19 and have someone read it aloud. Discuss the passage together.

- What question is asked in verse 14?
- How is this point illustrated in verses 15-16?
- How did Christ’s life model verse 18 for His disciples?
- What is the challenge for those who call themselves Christians in this passage?
- This passage is not saying that our works save us. It is, however, describing how saving faith will be demonstrated in the life of a true disciple of Christ. How will saving faith be displayed in our lives?
- How does this description of faith relate to Ephesians 5:1-2 command to imitate Christ with a life of love?
- How does this description of faith compare with the lives of those who call themselves Christians today? Do the two measure up?

A Challenge

Close your time together by encouraging your group members to examine their own lives in light of today’s key Scripture. Challenge them to ask themselves the questions, “Am I showing the Word by imitating the character of Christ to the world? Am I choosing to see the needs of those around me? Am I intentionally going outside of my comfort zone so that I can see those needs? How can I personally meet the needs around me?”

Remind your group that Jesus showed compassion to the crowds as an example for his disciples. While He was showing the Word to the multitudes, His real focus was on the few men who surrounded Him on a day-by-day basis. These few men were at the heart of his disciple-making strategy. To reinforce and apply this truth in your students' lives, hand out index cards or paper to each group member.

Tell them to write down the names of 3-5 people that are within their spheres of influence. This can include people they work with, friends, neighbors, family members, etc. Encourage them to ask themselves the questions, "Am I showing the Word by imitating Christ to these people that I just listed? Am I intentionally sharing and showing the Word to them? Am I intentionally sharing and showing the Word to the world so that these few people see the Word in me?"

Remind them that God has placed these people in their lives for a reason. In the same way that Jesus manifested God to the disciples, Christ wants to manifest Himself through each of us to those He has placed in our spheres of influence.

Challenge them to begin to pray specifically for the people they wrote down, and to pray that they would begin to recognize and use the opportunities and influence God has given them for His glory. As we intentionally show the Word to the people in our sphere of influence, we are beginning to participate in disciple-making!

Pray with your group as you close your time together.

MESSAGE MERGE / Putting the sermon and the Small Group study together.

Lead-in Questions / If your class meets *before* worship

- What have you learned today that is new to you?
- What have you learned today that you can pass on to others?
- How can you apply what you have learned tomorrow at home/work/school?
- How does today's lesson expand on what you learned last week?
- What will you be listening for today during the message?
- How can your classmates pray for you as you go into worship?

Post-teaching Questions / If your class meets *after* worship

- How can you apply what you have learned tomorrow at home/work/school?
- What portion of the message was most impacting for you?
- Were any areas of the message unclear or confusing? Which and why?
- What have you learned today that you can pass on to others?
- What Scripture is the most important for you today?
- What did you learn in Small Group that added to what you heard during the worship message?

