



SMALL GROUP BIBLE STUDY



LESSON 6 / WEEK OF FEBRUARY 11, 2007

Key Scriptures: Matthew 28:16-20; Mark 16:19-20; Romans 8:34-37

Memory Verse: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the Age." Matthew 28:19-20

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

Review

For the past five weeks, we have been studying how Christ multiplied His life through disciple-making. We have seen how He spent three years intentionally pouring His life into twelve men that God gave Him out of the world. And we have seen how Christ expected these men to carry on His ministry by taking what they had learned from Him and investing themselves in the lives of others that God would give them out of the world.

The purpose of this final small-group lesson in the "Follow Me" series is to see how all of the components of disciple-making that we've studied fit together in Christ's final command to "go and make disciples of all nations" in Matthew 28:16-20. We will spend some time reviewing what we've learned for the past five weeks and then take a close look at the Great Commission to see how it contains all four of the components of disciple-making that we have studied. Finally, we will be encouraged as we see in Scripture that Jesus is seated at the right hand of the Father in heaven, always living to make intercession for us as we give ourselves to this mission to make disciples of all nations. In the same way that He interceded for His disciples in John 17 He is interceding for us now.

We have covered a lot of Scripture throughout this series in both the sermons and small-group lessons. Spending a few minutes reviewing will help





your group realize how much they have learned. The review portion of the commentary is divided by week. Reviewing all five weeks together will help us to see how the components of disciple-making fit together. They are not exclusive, but build on one another.

Week One: Follow Me

In this lesson, we studied Jesus' call to His first four disciples. He said, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Matthew 4:19). This call to follow Him required complete obedience. There is a high cost involved, and His disciples must be willing to surrender their lives to His mission. We defined "disciple of Christ" as: A lifelong learner and follower of Jesus Christ who surrenders his or her life to Christ's mission.

The relationship that Christ had with these twelve men was different than His relationship with anyone else on the earth. He called them into a deeper, more intimate relationship so He could invest His life in them. The result of following Him would be that Jesus would make them fishers of men. They would not only be His disciples, but they would become disciple-makers as well.

We also defined disciple-making in this first lesson. The definition is: The simple and lifelong process of following Christ, becoming more like Him, and leading others to do the same. Christ spent three years with His disciples preparing them to fulfill this mission. We saw in John 15:16 that His disciples will bear lasting fruit with their lives if they abide in Him. Apart from Him they can do nothing, but through His power they will change the world.

Week Two: Share the Word

In this lesson we studied the first component of disciple-making, which is to share the Word. We saw how faith in Christ should compel us to share with others what we know about Him. We saw this illustrated in John 1:29-51. In this passage John the Baptist shared the Word with two of his disciples, one of which was Andrew. Then Andrew shared the Word with his brother Simon Peter. Phillip also shared the Word with Nathanael.

These men did not wait until they had it all figured out to go and share the Word with others. Their belief compelled them to share the Word without hesitation. Matthew 9:37-38 says that the harvest is plentiful but the workers are few, so we should pray for the Lord of the harvest to send more workers. He will send them through our lives as we make disciples of Christ. Multiplication was illustrated in this lesson as eventually 3,000 people came to faith in Christ through Peter's sermon at Pentecost (Acts 2:42).

We also realized in this lesson that we are the "lasting fruit" of the disciples' lives of which Jesus spoke in John 15 because we have believed in Him through their message. Because of their faithfulness to share the Word, we believe today.

Week Three: Show the Word

In week three, we studied how Christ would physically leave the earth but would send His Spirit to live in the disciples so they could continue His ministry. The Holy Spirit would bring power so they could be His witnesses (Acts 1:8). We learned that the Greek definition of the word "witness" means to be a witness unto death or a martyr. How would the disciples do this? They would show the Word, which is another component of disciple-making. They would be Christ's ambassadors on earth (2 Corinthians 5:20). He would return to heaven, but they would remain on earth and would manifest (show) His presence with their lives.

Christ had shown the disciples God's glory through His life. Now the disciples would take what they learned from Christ and show Him to others with their lives through the power of the Holy Spirit. Christ's very life had modeled this for them because He spoke only the words that the Father gave Him and allowed God to work through His life. Christ showed the Word through extending mercy and grace to those in need. This included the sick, demon-possessed, hungry, and poor. As His disciples followed Him they saw how He showed the Word, and they learned to do the same.

Week Four: Teach the Word

In this lesson we saw several examples of how Jesus taught the Word to His disciples, which is another component of disciple-making. Christ gave God's Word His disciples and this sanctified them or set them apart. The mysteries of God's will were revealed to these men for the purpose of making disciples after Christ returned to heaven. Because they were set apart, the world would hate them, persecute them, and maybe even kill them.

We looked at examples of how Christ taught the Word through parables, miracles, and common conversation. Jesus' life was His classroom and He was always creating opportunities to teach them from everyday events. We saw how the disciples benefited from Christ's ministry to others because as He shared the Word and showed the Word, He taught the Word to His disciples in a deeper way.

Week Five: Serve the World

The final component of disciple-making that we have studied is serving the world. In this lesson we saw how Christ gave the disciples authority and sent them out to serve the world by preaching the Gospel and healing the sick (Mark 6:7-13). We learned that the disciples are able to participate in the ministry of Christ because of His power at work in them. They cannot do anything apart from His power. We also saw that our purpose as disciples of Christ is identical to Christ's purpose when He was on earth. His purpose was to reveal the Father's glory, and so is ours.

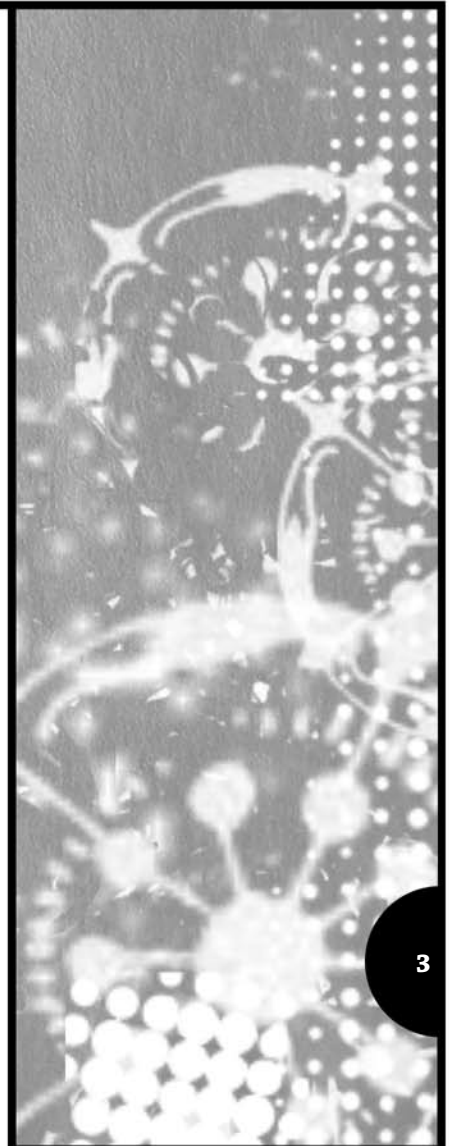
Throughout the four Gospels we saw how Christ provided "on-the-job" training for His disciples while He was still with them on earth. He taught them how to live by both word and deed, and then He empowered them to go out into the world to serve others. It is here that we began to see the blessing of their salvation connected with the purpose for which they had been saved.

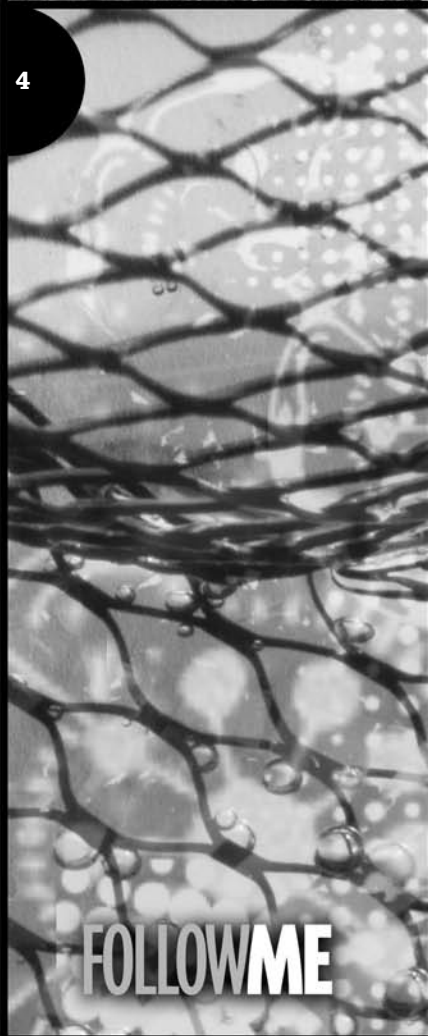
Christ sanctified Himself for their sakes so they may be truly sanctified. Now they are being sanctified (or set apart) for the sake of those in the world who don't believe in Christ. He called them as His disciples so He could multiply Himself in them and then send them out into the world when He physically returned to heaven. These men were His strategy for reaching the world with the Gospel.

Which Brings Us To...

...this week's lesson. We have seen how Christ reproduced His own life in the lives of His disciples. It began with a call and a promise, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." When they answered the call, He spent the next three years sharing, showing, and teaching the Word to them as they served the world together.

This week, we will see the culmination of Christ's ministry to these men as He leaves them with one last command before He ascends into heaven. He says to them in Matthew 28:18-20, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been





given to Me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the Age.”

The Great Commission

This passage is what we know as “The Great Commission.” Jesus prefaces His command to go and make disciples by telling His disciples that all authority has been given to Him. This word “authority” in verse 18 is the same Greek word *exousia* that we studied last week in Mark 6:7 when Jesus gave His disciples authority and sent them out to serve the world. It means, “Power of choice; liberty to do as one pleases; influence; power.”

God has given Jesus all authority in heaven and on earth, and Christ has given to His disciples authority to fulfill the mission for which they’ve been sanctified. What is that mission? Most of us have heard it many times. Most of us would have even agreed before we studied disciple-making that The Great Commission was Christ’s command to us as believers. But how many of us truly understood what it means? And how many of us were living it out personally and intentionally?

His Plan: Make Disciples

His plan revolves around two simple words in this passage—make disciples. The phrase “make disciples” does not appear in the King James translation of the Bible. It actually says, “Go ye therefore and teach all nations...” The phrase “make disciples” (NIV translation) and the word “teach” in both translations is the same Greek word, *matheteuo*. It means, “To be a disciple of one; to follow his precepts and instructions; to make a disciple; to teach and instruct.”

This word, *matheteuo*, is a command verb in the Greek and it is plural. That means that it is a mandate from Christ, a direct command that was issued not just to one person, but to all of the people to whom He was speaking. To whom was He speaking? Verse 16 says the eleven disciples (Judas was no longer with them) went to a mountain in Galilee and Jesus came to them there and issued this command to make disciples of all nations. This command was for all of them, and all who would believe through their message.

Continuing To Be More Like Christ

The Greek definition of “make disciples” helps us to understand what it is that Christ is commanding His disciples to do. He wants them to continue to follow His precepts and instructions and to teach others to do the same. Isn’t this how we defined disciple-making in lesson one? We said that disciple-making is: The simple and lifelong process of following Christ, becoming more like Him, and leading others to do the same.

They have spent three years following Christ and learning from Him. They have also had opportunities to apply what they were learning as Jesus gave them authority to serve others alongside Him. Now the time has come for Him to depart and send them the Holy Spirit, their Helper, who will be with them and in them. It is through the power that the Spirit will bring that they will be able to obey the command that Christ issues to them in this passage (John 16:12-15; Acts 1:8).

In Matthew 28:19-20, Jesus lays out for His disciples how they are to make disciples of all nations. Every component of disciple-making that we have studied during this series is contained in these verses that most of us have heard many times.

- Go and make disciples (share the Word)
- Baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (show the Word)
- Teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you (teach the Word)
- In all nations (serve the world)

It Is Finished

Jesus closes by telling them that He will be with them always. Mark 16:19-20 gives another account of Jesus' ascension into heaven. Verse 19 says that after Jesus spoke this command to His disciples, He was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. The fact that He sat down is significant because it illustrates a completed work. We saw Jesus pray to the Father in John 17:4 that He has, "Brought You (God) glory on earth by completing the work You gave Me to do." Then again in John 19:30 Jesus says on the cross, "It is finished!" The first time He said His work was finished was in reference to revealing God to His twelve disciples.

The next time He said His work was finished was in reference to His redemptive work on the cross to make a way for the world to know God through His blood. His physical work on earth is finished. He has completed what God sent Him to do. His position is also significant because throughout Scripture, the right hand is a symbol of strength, power and authority. It is also a place of favor. Even Christ's position in heaven at the right hand of God is a sign of His authority to reign over all.

Famous Last Words

Before He ascends into heaven to re-claim the seat of honor that He gave up to come to earth, Jesus' last words to His disciples is a command to take what they have learned and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in His name, and teaching them to obey God. Even here we see Jesus giving His disciples authority and power to participate in His ministry to the world, just as we saw Him do throughout His ministry (serve the world). He is the one who makes it possible for mankind to be forgiven. It is His power that accomplishes salvation. Yet, this work will no longer be carried out through His physical presence on earth, but through His disciples as they imitate His life through the power of the Holy Spirit.

How Can Christ Be Finished?

You may be thinking, how is Christ's work finished if He hasn't returned to earth yet? Isn't there still work to be done? Why is He sitting down? This is where it gets really good. We saw in John 17 how Christ poured His heart out in prayer on behalf of His disciples before He went to the cross. He knew what obedience to His mission would cost them, and He interceded to the Father on their behalf. He prayed for their protection as they surrendered their lives to glorify Him in all the earth. This prayer showed us Christ's deep love and concern for His disciples. He wanted them to endure through the hardships they would face.

On to Acts

In the book of Acts we see the beginning of His disciples' ministry as God fulfills His promise and sends the Holy Spirit to indwell and empower them to be Christ's witnesses. So what is Christ doing now? Is He just sitting in heaven watching His plan play out? Romans 8:34-38 tells us that Christ is at the right hand of God also interceding for us. The passage goes on to say that nothing can separate us from the love of Christ. Not hardship, persecution, or even death. For Christ's sake we face death all day long. We are considered by the world as sheep to be slaughtered. But because of Christ, because of His power,





His authority, His position, and His intercession on our behalf, we are more than conquerors in whatever we face. He sits at the right hand of the Father and intercedes for us. So just as He told His disciples in Matthew 28:20, He is with us always, even until the end of the Age.

Hebrews 7:24-25 also teaches this truth. It says that Christ is able to save completely those who come to God through Him because He always intercedes for them. It is still Christ who is able to save forever. He is at the right hand of God interceding for us and for those who will believe through our message. Yes, we will face hardships and persecution if we choose to give ourselves to this command to go and make disciples. But, in all this we will be more than conquerors through Christ. All authority has been given to Him, therefore, He can accomplish this work through our lives if we choose to surrender ourselves to Him.

A New View

This truth should change the way we view our lives. Now, it's not about what we can "do for God" anymore, but about what we will allow Him to do through our lives. It's not about how much we know, but about how much we make Him known to others. It's not about "not doing bad things;" it's about surrendering our lives to make His glory known every minute of every day. Our focus will shift from our lives and our plans to the glory of Christ. The choice is ours to make. Will we continue to live for ourselves in a self-centered, non-Biblical Christianity, or will we go and make disciples by sharing the Word, showing the Word, teaching the Word and serving the world?

What Does This Mean In Our Lives Daily?

Here, finally, is where we must each evaluate the contribution that our life and witness is making to the supreme purpose of Christ. Is anyone following us to Christ? If so, are those who have followed us to Christ now leading others to Him and training them to make disciples? Consider what it would mean to the future of the Church if we each had only one true disciple now to show for our labors. Would this not immediately double our influence? And suppose that we shared, showed, taught and served alongside another, even as the first succeeded in the same way. Would this not multiply our lives four times over? Theoretically, in a manner of multiplication, our ministry alone would soon reach multitudes with the Gospel.

This is what the world needs: not to hear more of our political and religious opinions; not for us to boycott and picket and complain; not for us to point out what everyone else is doing wrong. What the world needs is men and women who know their Redeemer from personal experience, who see His vision and feel His passion for the world, and who are willing to be nothing so that He might be everything - men and women who want only for Christ to produce His life in and through them for the sake of those who do not know Him. The question is, will you be one of those men or women? The harvest is plentiful. Let's get to work!

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

Review / 5 minutes

Spend a few minutes allowing your group to share what this study has meant to them personally. You might facilitate discussion by asking some of the following questions:

- Before we began this series, what were your thoughts about disciple-making?

- How has this study changed your ideas about what it means to be a Christian?
- How has this study changed the way you relate to those in your sphere of influence?
- Has this study changed the way you learn and/or teach?
- How has this study changed your understanding of Christ's mission?
- How has it changed your understanding of your purpose in life?

Key Study / 35 minutes

As you begin your study time in God's Word, pray that God would make the entire group receptive to what He wants to reveal to the group today as you discuss His word. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide the group 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).

Review

Using the lesson commentary, spend a few minutes reviewing what we have studied over the last five weeks. You can use the following questions to help with the review.

From Week One

- How did Christ call His first four disciples? What phrase did He use?
- What does it mean to "follow" Christ?
- What did Christ mean when He said He would make them "fishers of men?"
- What is a disciple of Christ?
- What is disciple-making?
- What is the only way to bear lasting fruit with our lives?

From Week Two

- What is the first component of disciple-making that we studied?
- How did we see sharing the Word played out in the lives of John the Baptist, Andrew and Phillip?
- How did they go about sharing the Word? How quickly, how much did they know, who did they tell, etc?
- What "lasting fruit" was borne through their lives when Peter preached at Pentecost?
- How are we in this room their "lasting fruit?"

From Week Three

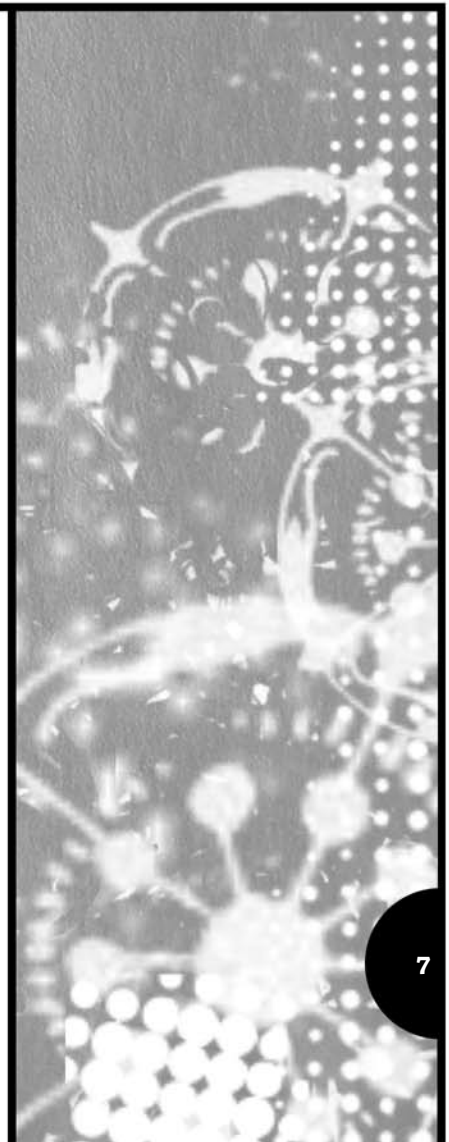
- What is the next component of disciple-making that we studied?
- How did Christ show the Word to His disciples?
- How would they be able to show the Word to others? Who would God send to them to empower them?
- How were they Christ's ambassadors? How are we His ambassadors?

From Week Four

- What is the next component of disciple-making that we studied?
- What were some of the examples we saw of how Jesus taught the Word to His disciples?
- How did He create opportunities to teach them?
- How did the disciples benefit from Jesus' ministry to the world?

From Week Five

- What is the final component of disciple-making that we studied?
- How did Jesus empower His disciples to serve the world while He was still on earth?





- How did Jesus provide “on-the-job” training for His disciples?
- How does serving the world connect the blessing of our salvation with the purpose for which we’ve been saved?

The Great Commission

Explain to your students that today we are going to see how all of the components of disciple-making come together in Christ’s command to make disciples of all nations. Have your group open their Bibles to Matthew 28:16-20 and read it aloud.

Using the commentary, explain the Greek meanings of the words “authority” and “make disciples.” Make sure to tell them that this is a command to all believers in Christ, not just a select few with certain “gifts.” If we have placed our faith in Christ, we each have the Holy Spirit. Therefore, we are equipped with all we need to make disciples.

Using the white board to illustrate, explain how each component of disciple-making is contained in these verses.

- “Go and make disciples” (share the Word)
- “Baptizing” (show the Word)
- “Teaching them to obey” (teach the Word)
- “Of all nations” (serve the world)

Have your group turn in their Bibles to Mark 16:19-20 and read it aloud. Using the lesson commentary and the following questions, lead a discussion about these verses.

- What does verse 19 say Christ did after He gave His disciples the command to go and make disciples?
- What is the significance of Christ sitting down at God’s right hand? How does it illustrate His finished work on earth?
- Is the right hand position significant?
- If He is seated in heaven, how will His work continue on earth?
- Why do you think the Great Commission was His last words to His disciples?

Using the commentary, explain to your group that Christ is still at work on earth through our lives. Our power still comes from Him. He works through our lives. Explain that He does have a ministry even now in heaven.

Have your group turn to Romans 8:34-39 and read it aloud. Holding their place in Romans, have them turn to Hebrews 7:24-25 and read it aloud. Lead a discussion on these verses using the commentary and the following questions.

- What do these verses tell us that we will face as disciples of Christ?
- What is our promise in these verses? Can we be separated from Christ’s love?
- What do these verses say Christ is doing in heaven for us?
- How should this truth affect the way we live our lives as disciples of Christ?
- How can this truth encourage us in the face of a mission that can seem too big for us to achieve?

Application / How will this Truth change me?

Lead a discussion using the following question:

- After all that we have studied in God’s Word, do you think it is possible for your one life to impact the world for Christ? Why or why not?

Spend some time allowing your students to answer this question. Discuss how this series will be lived out in their lives. Discuss practical ways that you as a small group can begin to live it out together. Let this be a time for honest

communication and questions, and a time for your group to make plans to take practical steps together to make disciples of all nations.

Close your time together in prayer.

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?

