

LIFE GROUPS

The Community & Great Commission –

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

ICE BREAKER QUESTION: Are all Christians called to share the gospel? Why or why not?

What's inside of our hearts compels us to action (Prov. 4:23). What that means is that if we're not actively sharing our faith, it is a heart issue. In today's study, we'll explore the reasons why taking the gospel into all the world is a vital part of following Christ and the ways we can help fulfill Jesus' command to be His witnesses to the ends of the earth.

Read back through the passage before going through the questions.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1. What is your biggest takeaway? How was your experience with the Life Tool's this past week?**
- 2. Read Matthew 28:16-20. What claims does Jesus make in these verses? Why are these claims significant in missions?**

Jesus did not begin the Great Commission with a command. He started with the claim that He had all authority, and everything after that claim flows from it. Jesus is the Lord of the universe, and nothing is beyond His sovereign rule and reign. Our mission does not make any sense unless Jesus has all authority. We can be sure that when we go on our mission of making disciples, we do so under the banner and authority of the ruler of the universe. When we invite people to turn from their sin and trust in His name, it is His authority that compels them to respond.

Each one of these commands is an important component of the Great Commission. If you remove any one of these, then reaching all nations with the gospel of Christ is compromised. It is vitally important that the church actively participate in all five of these commands on the macro level. In addition, we as individual believers must help our local church fulfill this commission on the micro level. Each and every church, and thus each and every member of those churches, shares in the responsibility of taking the good news of Jesus to the world.

“Disciple making is not a call for others to come to us to hear the gospel but a command for us to go to others to share the gospel.”

— David Platt, Radical: Taking Back Your Faith from the American Dream

- a. **Why is Jesus’ authority essential to the command He makes in verse 19?**
- b. **What comfort do you receive knowing that Jesus is with you as you go on mission?**

In this familiar passage, known as the Great Commission, Jesus first reminds us that everything He commands us to do is through the authority He was given from God the Father. God doesn’t make promises He won’t keep and doesn’t give commands we can’t obey. If He tells us to go and make disciples of all nations, then it must be possible to reach the world by obeying His commands.

Jesus told His disciples He had received all authority “in heaven and on earth.” Jesus’ resurrection validated His teachings and deeds and proved to the disciples all authority over everything rested with Him. Then the disciples knew the true nature of Christ. Hundreds of years before the birth of Jesus, Daniel had prophesied that the Messiah would be given “authority to rule, and glory, and a kingdom; so that those of every people, nation, and language should serve Him” (Dan. 7:14). The scope of His authority encompasses everything in heaven and on earth.

3. **Who are the nations mentioned in the Great Commission and in Acts 1:8? Who does that represent for our church today?**

“We owe Christ to the world—to the least person and to the greatest person, to the richest person and to the poorest person, to the best person and to the worst person. We are in debt to the nations.”

— David Platt, Radical: Taking Back Your Faith from the American Dream

“The Great Commission is normally fulfilled through planting and growing local churches. . . So the Great Commission involves you, the individual Christian. But the Great Commission also involves you *through* your local church. That is the normal way God means for us to go, make disciples, baptize, and teach.” – Dever, Mark, Understanding the Great Commission, (2)

4. Who is responsible to share the Gospel and carry out the Great Commission? What do you see as your role in sharing the Gospel and carrying out the Great Commission?

“Making disciples by going, baptizing, and teaching people the Word of Christ and then enabling them to do the same thing in other people’s lives—this is the plan God has for each of us to impact nations for the glory of Christ.”

— David Platt, Radical: Taking Back Your Faith from the American Dream

“The church is not fundamentally a human idea, or a human creation. Fundamentally, it is God’s idea and God’s work. In one sense, God is the great church planter!” – Dever, Mark, Understanding the Great Commission, (16)

“We will not wish we had made more money, acquired more stuff, lived more comfortably, taken more vacations, watched more television, pursued greater retirement, or been more successful in the eyes of this world. Instead, we will wish we had given more of ourselves to living for the day when every nation, tribe, people, and language will bow around the throne and sing the praises of the Savior who delights in radical obedience and the God who deserves eternal worship.”

— David Platt, Radical: Taking Back Your Faith from the American Dream

"Every saved person this side of heaven owes the gospel to every lost person this side of hell."

~ - David Platt, Radical: Taking Back Your Faith from the American Dream

“A Great Commission church works to train its members in evangelism, because it knows they will collectively see more non-Christians throughout the week than will ever be able to fit in the church building. So ‘success’ in evangelism is not simply bringing your non-Christian friends to church so that they hear the gospel. Success is sharing the gospel with your non-Christian neighbors and friends.” – Dever, Mark, Understanding the Great Commission, (36)

a. How do we often take the process of making disciples and try to do it in our own strength? Why is it far better to rely on Christ?

This mission is not based on who we are or what we can do. This mission is based on who Jesus is and what He is able to do in and through our lives. The Great Commission is not only accomplished through Jesus’ power, but through His abiding presence. When we try and make disciples on our own, we miss the whole point of disciple making. We can do nothing without Jesus. As we are sent on mission, we rely on His presence.

"This is how God works. He puts people in positions where they are desperate for his power, and then he shows his provision in ways that display his greatness"

- David Platt

5. What would change if we saw ourselves (first and foremost) as those sent by God on His mission?

“As long as you and I understand salvation as checking off a box to get to God, we will find ourselves in the meaningless sea of world religions that actually condemn the human race by exalting our supposed ability to get to God. On the other hand, when you and I realize that we are morally evil, dead in sin and deserving of God's wrath with no way out on our own, we begin to discover our desperation for Christ.”

— David Platt, [Radical: Taking Back Your Faith from the American Dream](#)

a. What would it look like if the Great Commission inspired you daily to reach those around you for the Lord?

6. Why do we do missions? What is the motivation and reason we carry out the great commission?

What this may mean is that the best way to encourage your church in missions is to stop talking about missions for a time and, instead, talk more about the gospel. I've seen churches that have tried to get their members excited about missions without being excited about the gospel. The result was pitiful. Missions became just one more ministry area competing for everyone's attention and interest. Guilt, hype, sad stories—none of them motivate in the best way.¹

Do not try to get your church excited about missions until they love and value (really, deeply value) what Christ has done for them in the gospel. Churches won't extend themselves to commend the gospel until they deeply cherish the gospel.²

“The modern-day gospel says, 'God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life. Therefore, follow these steps, and you can be saved.' Meanwhile, the biblical gospel says, 'You are an enemy of God, dead in your sin, & in your present state of rebellion, you are not even able to see that you need life, much less to cause yourself to come to life. Therefore, you are radically dependent on God to do something in your life that you

¹ Andy Johnson and David Platt, [Missions: How the Local Church Goes Global](#), 9Marks: Building Healthy Churches (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017), 32.

² Andy Johnson and David Platt, [Missions: How the Local Church Goes Global](#), 9Marks: Building Healthy Churches (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017), 32.

could never do.”

— David Platt, Radical: Taking Back Your Faith from the American Dream

"Why make disciples? Because heaven and hell exist, and the end of the world is coming." - David Platt, Radical: Taking Back Your Faith from the American Dream

“Too often, a grotesque competitiveness between churches marks evangelical churches. But a Great Commission church does not compete with other gospel-preaching churches because it knows every gospel-preaching church is *playing for the same team*. . . . The members and leaders are as happy about a new gospel-preaching church as they are about a new restaurant opening up in a land of starvation.” – Dever, Mark, Understanding the Great Commission, (34, 35)

- a. **If we are convinced that eternal suffering in hell is the most pernicious of all human suffering, what else would we prioritize?**

7. But how does God want his mission to go forward? How do we carry out The Great Commission?

The Bible tells us what the mission is: the church’s mission is to display the glory of God by declaring the gospel to all peoples, by gathering churches in every place, and by filling them with disciples who obey God and will praise him forever for his grace (Isaiah 56; Matt. 28:18–20; Rom. 15:7–13; Eph. 3:8–11; Rev. 7:9–10).

The Bible tells us how the mission will go forward: through prayerful dependence, gospel proclamation, biblical discipling, and church planting (Ex. 6:5–8; Rom. 10:17; Col. 4:2–4; 1 Thess. 5:11).

The Bible tells us what kind of missionaries we should support: biblically faithful, methodologically patient, gospel-proclaiming, church-loving missionaries (Acts 16:1–3; Rom. 10:14–15; 2 Cor. 8:23; 2 Tim. 4:1–5; 3 John 1–8).

The Bible tells us what the end goal of missions should be: transformed individuals in biblical churches who will ultimately join a heavenly multitude praising the Lamb of God forever (Rom. 8:1–11; Heb. 10:19–25; Rev. 7:9–10).³

“The story of the gospel’s spread is the story of the spread of churches. . . . [In the book of Acts], wherever the gospel goes, churches show up. . . . Churches are at the center of God’s Great Commission plan.” (18, 19)

³ Andy Johnson and David Platt, Missions: How the Local Church Goes Global, 9Marks: Building Healthy Churches (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017), 28–29.

8. How do we send and support missionaries well as a church? How are you involved in sending and supporting?

Not only should our churches send missionaries wisely, but we should support them appropriately. And our support for workers should be as ample as God's Word enjoins. As we commit to send or support missionaries, we should expect our giving to be serious, significant, and sacrificial. Whether we give directly to missionaries or through some cooperative sending agency, our goal should be workers amply supplied so that they lack nothing.⁴

At its core, it means working deliberately to know their needs and act for their good. Here are just a few important areas to consider.⁵

As long as your church provides for the material needs of missionaries, those missionaries are in some ways accountable to your church, and you are responsible for them⁶

a. What does the Bible tell us about short-term missions and God's place for them in his global mission for his church?⁷

it often seems that our short-term trips can be more about us and our experiences than about encouraging gospel work and glorifying God. Such a misdirection is no small matter. It's often been said that "what we win people *with* is what we win them *to*." If we promote short-term missions based on thinking about our benefits, we run the risk of making short-term missions a selfish enterprise.⁸

From the very beginning we should decide that every short-term trip will aim to benefit the work of long-term missionaries and local believers. Most simply, this means building relationships of trust with people in a place where we hope to labor.

⁴ Andy Johnson and David Platt, [*Missions: How the Local Church Goes Global*](#), 9Marks: Building Healthy Churches (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017), 49.

⁵ Andy Johnson and David Platt, [*Missions: How the Local Church Goes Global*](#), 9Marks: Building Healthy Churches (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017), 53.

⁶ Andy Johnson and David Platt, [*Missions: How the Local Church Goes Global*](#), 9Marks: Building Healthy Churches (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017), 57.

⁷ Andy Johnson and David Platt, [*Missions: How the Local Church Goes Global*](#), 9Marks: Building Healthy Churches (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017), 88.

⁸ Andy Johnson and David Platt, [*Missions: How the Local Church Goes Global*](#), 9Marks: Building Healthy Churches (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017), 90.

It also means asking them what, if anything, they want us to do and, whenever possible, doing exactly what they ask.⁹

Whether we live in our home country or on the other side of the world, in full-time ministry or supporting ourselves with a job, God has laid the nations at our door. In many ways it has never been easier to personally engage other peoples with the gospel. May God give us boldness, wisdom, and creativity to think of ways to respond to his kindness, so that through us and our churches, even the distant islands can sing for joy (Isaiah 42).¹⁰

PRAYER

Thank Jesus for giving you His authority to accomplish His mission. Pray that you would give yourself to being a disciple who makes disciples. Ask God to help you identify one person you can spend the next year of your life helping become a disciple of Jesus.



FURTHER STUDY

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=98N1V5yazTs>

<https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/biblical-basis-missions>

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/essay/the-mission-of-the-church/>

https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/conference_media/the-mission-of-the-church/

<https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/is-the-great-commission-for-every-individual-christian>

⁹ Andy Johnson and David Platt, *Missions: How the Local Church Goes Global*, 9Marks: Building Healthy Churches (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017), 92.

¹⁰ Andy Johnson and David Platt, *Missions: How the Local Church Goes Global*, 9Marks: Building Healthy Churches (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017), 116.